

An American organist in Paris



THE LETTERS OF
LEE ORVILLE ERWIN,
1930–1931

MICHAEL HIX

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All photos in the book from the Erwin Family collection.

To my family and the mentors
who have shaped my life

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a movable feast.

—Ernest Hemingway

From literature to the visual arts and music, France's influence on America's artistic development in the twentieth century was profound. Paris, in particular, held an allure for Americans seeking both the meaning and complexity of the old-world European artistic tradition and the thrill of the early twentieth century's avant-garde. A center of both the "old" and the "new," Paris was and is to this day a focal point for culture, style, and elegance.

In many ways, America's community of expatriate writers in Paris paved the way for the musicians who would later join them. The first generation of twentieth-century American writers, which included Gertrude Stein, Natalie Clifford Barney, and Sylvia Beach, arrived before World War I. Their salons provided a fertile meeting ground for many of the "Lost Generation" of writers—including Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald—who arrived after the war. In Paris, according to Donald Faulkner, these writers

found cheap living, laissez-faire standards of conduct, a sense of community (if at times only among themselves), and equally important, a feeling that they were living, creatively unfettered, at the cutting edge of art in the cultural center of the world.¹

Similarly, the American musical community in the early twentieth century established a strong relationship with France.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many American composers and performers sought advanced training in Germany.² This German influence is also seen in the numerous German musicians teaching in American conservatories in the early twentieth century. After years of Germanic dominance over American musical training, the tide began to turn in the summer 1921 with the establishment of the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France. Its roster of preeminent composers and teachers included Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), Marcel Dupré (1886–1971), Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937), and Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979), who guided the school as its director until her death. Aaron Copland (1900–1990) and Virgil Thomson (1896–1989) were among the first group of American students who came to France and studied with Boulanger in 1921. Copland's memories of his time in France paint a vibrant picture of this exciting era:

Paris was filled with cosmopolitan artists from all over the world, many of whom had settled there as expatriates. It was the time of Tristan Tzara and Dada; the time of André Breton and surrealism; it was when we first heard the name of James Joyce and Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound, and also of the French writers Marcel Proust and André Gide. The painters were enormously active, with Picasso taking center stage and interesting figures like Georges Braque and Max Ernst working in Paris at that time. All kinds of artistic activities were bursting around me, and I was determined to take it all in as fast as possible.³

In the coming decades, others also traveled to France to work with Boulanger, among them Walter Piston (1894–1976), Marc Blitzstein (1905–1964), Roy Harris (1898–1979), Roger Sessions (1896–1985), Douglas Moore (1893–1969), Elliot Carter (b. 1908), and later in the 1960s, Philip Glass (b. 1937). According to Thomson, Boulanger believed that “America in the Nineteen Twenties was very much like Russia in the Eighteen Forties, bursting with inspiration but poorly trained.”⁴ Because of her prodigious talents and keen musical insights, Boulanger became one of the most significant teachers of the twentieth century.

The flowering of this relationship between the musical communities of France and the United States is also evident in the education of American composer and organist Lee Orville Erwin (1908–2000). In the winter of 1930, Prof. Parvin Titus from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music invited his student Erwin to embark upon a yearlong period of study in France. Erwin's parents were not initially supportive of this venture to Europe. They felt that the twenty-one-year-old was too young for an extended period of study overseas. However, with assurances from Titus that he would escort Erwin and help him get established

in France, the parents acceded. Erwin and Titus departed on the *Volendam* from New York on 6 June 1930.⁵

Remaining in France until May 1931, Erwin studied with several of the master musicians of Paris. He was the first American student of organist André Marchal (1894–1980). According to Jacqueline Englert-Marchal, André Marchal, blind from birth,

was admitted to the National Institute for the Blind, where [Louis Victor Jules] Vierne and [Augustin] Barié had studied. . . . When he was 15, he began studying organ with Adolphe Marty, and harmony with Albert Mahaut, both of whom had won the Premier Prix d'Orgue at the Paris Conservatoire in the class of César Franck.⁶

Marchal was famous more for his abilities as a colorist and interpreter than for technical prowess.⁷

There is no doubt that Marchal pushed his new American student. The letters Erwin wrote to his mother attest to this. Erwin revered Marchal and worked very hard to succeed in his lessons. From his time in France until the end of his performing career, Erwin cited Marchal as an important influence. Erwin, indebted to and very fond of Marchal, maintained contact with him and his family through the years.

The weekly organ lesson was not the sole medium through which Erwin learned his craft. The artistic atmosphere of Paris, with its host of musicians and performances, inspired and nurtured Erwin's cultural education. Erwin's connection to Marchal allowed him to spend time with numerous influential French



Figure 1.1. Lee Erwin in France, 1930.

musicians of the twentieth century. It was through Marchal that Erwin met one of the greatest French organists of the century, Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992).

Yesterday Marchal had us to his house in the morning to play a whole bunch of new music for us; some things that have just been written in the past year. Some of the things I liked, and some of them I didn't, but a piece composed by one of Marchal's pupils (Olivier Messiaen) was extremely good. It's very different from anything I have ever heard and it's also very difficult.⁸

Erwin fondly recalled his Sunday mornings in Paris. "After hearing Marchal improvise his Sunday morning service, Erwin and his colleagues made a frantic dash to the Paris Métro to reach Trinité⁹ in time to hear Messiaen's improvisation."¹⁰

In addition to organ, Erwin studied harmony while in France. He worked with a former colleague of Titus's named Jean Verd.¹¹ At one time, Verd had been a faculty member of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, but health problems had caused him to leave America and return to his home in France.¹² Erwin studied harmony, solfège, and piano with Verd, who encouraged and challenged the young musician.

Mr. Verd sees to it that I don't have a single idle moment. The other day he said, "Well now, Sunday is a holiday for you; of course you will study all morning and most of the afternoon and have a French lesson at night, but the rest of the day is your own to do as you like with it!" The "rest of the day" I will take a walk similar to the one last Sunday, but one not quite so long. . . .

To save time, that Mr. Verd says I need to put on harmony and solfège, he has suggested that I cut down on my letters to everybody but you all. He does not say to write less, but to make all the letters very short and to the point, and whenever possible just write a postal card.¹³

In a letter dated 31 August 1930, Erwin speaks of Verd's guidance and his plans to continue his musical education in France.

Mr. Verd is being simply too good to me for words and I am learning much under his guidance. He believes in a person having plenty of work to do and any one that stays around him has to work or else. He has helped me plan my course of study and if I can ever finish it I can then begin to get some insight into what music really is. My musical education has been sadly neglected, but no more than any other American I suppose. Over there a person merely gets a "smattering" of what it's all about whereas over here they plunge into it

head first and even tho it takes twice the time to do it than it does in America when a person finishes he is really a musician with a sound understanding of things.¹⁴

In addition to studies with Marchal and Verd, there is evidence that Erwin studied briefly with Boulanger.

During this period, Erwin's friends and family in America were struggling with the economic hardship of the Great Depression. Many of his letters reflect his concern for his father's business and those of several of his relatives. Because his parents were unable to provide financial support during his year of study in France, Erwin utilized the savings he accumulated playing as a theater organist in Cincinnati and maintained a very strict budget. In a letter dated 12 October 1930, Erwin calculated his monthly living expenses at \$110 and reported that he had \$500 in the bank. Briefly working as a substitute organist at the American Cathedral in Paris, Erwin was also able to secure an additional thirty-five francs each week, as well as an organ on which to practice.¹⁵

In order to remain in France for a longer period of study, Erwin contacted his aunts Julia and Sarah. Both wired him additional funds to help pay for this unique educational experience.¹⁶ As his trip came to a conclusion, Erwin even arranged to sell his car, which was in Huntsville with his parents. When his parents sold the Model T Ford in April 1931, he used the money to repay his generous relatives rather than remain in France. With his savings depleted, Erwin returned to Alabama in May 1931.



Figure 1.2. Erwin (center) on his return trip from France, 1931.

Throughout his letters, Erwin expresses his belief that the training he was receiving was superior to the educational opportunities afforded him in the United States. He also writes often of his finances and his wish to remain in France for a longer period of time. As his savings dwindled and he prepared to return to the United States, he wrote of his plans to return to France for additional training—a plan that never came to fruition. Nevertheless, the year of study Erwin received in France was a tremendous boon to his career, due in part to the technical skills he acquired as well as to the great tradition to which he could attach himself.

As a theater organist and composer, Erwin relied heavily on the technical acumen he developed during his study abroad. This was manifested in his ability to improvise, as well as his harmonic language. His silent-film scores relied heavily on his ability to improvise. According to Jeff Weiler, Erwin's improvisational talent was a direct result of his musical experiences in France. "Lee's sophisticated film scores were strongly influenced by the harmonic vocabulary of the French Romantic tradition."¹⁷ This sophisticated harmonic vocabulary and talent for improvisation, which a *New York Times* critic praised for "maintaining a seamless, dignified flow . . . that was at once solemn and suspenseful,"¹⁸ Erwin simply described as "putting together a jigsaw puzzle."¹⁹

Perhaps even more important for Erwin's career was the credibility that his European education provided him. As a theater organist and composer often working in popular styles, this credibility was significant, because as Erwin observed in a 1981 *New York Times* interview, "Classical organists looked down their noses at the theatre organists."²⁰ According to Thomas J. Mathiesen:

If film music in general was denigrated, the theatre organ was regarded in serious musical circles as a particular aberration, not only because of the type of music it intended to play but also because it represented the exact opposite of the characteristics espoused by the *Orgelbewegung* of the twentieth century.²¹

Erwin's response to this tension between classical and popular/film music is fascinating. Throughout his career, Erwin referenced his pedagogical lineage, which included his French teachers Marchal, Verd, and Boulanger—although in his letters, Erwin mentions Boulanger in only one brief sentence: "I have a class (a new one that I am starting with Mlle. Boulanger) where we all sing the cantatas and church music of Bach in German."²²

Throughout his life, Erwin cited Boulanger as one of his teachers, yet his letters reflect a stronger influence of Marchal and Verd. Perhaps the relationship with Boulanger was embellished because of her fame in musical circles. While Marchal and Verd were obviously important in Erwin's musical development, the name Boulanger ("arguably the greatest teacher since Socrates, certainly the greatest *music* teacher")²³ carried with it associations that lent credibility to a

theater organist whose musicianship would have been continually questioned by classical organists.

Though he never returned to France as a student, this experience shaped his life. According to his student Weiler, Erwin spoke fondly of this exciting educational venture. He reminisced not only of the music and musicians he heard but also of the life lessons he learned.²⁴

The bulk of this book contains the letters Erwin wrote to his mother Mary Estella Shaver Erwin during his time abroad. These letters, which were made available to me by Erwin's late partner Donald Schwing and the Erwin family, paint a fascinating portrait of the young musician's study abroad. However, Erwin's letters provide more than the singular experiences of one young musician; they reflect common experiences shared by the multitude of American composers who studied in France during this time and serve as a window through which the reader can view the musical culture of France in the early twentieth century. These letters are extensively footnoted to provide clarity and background information of the locations and personalities discussed. First, however, we set the stage with a brief biographical chapter on Erwin that outlines his extensive musical career and his impact on the silent-film music revival in the twentieth century.

Notes

1. Donald Faulkner, introduction to Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return* (New York: Penguin, 1994), xiii.

2. Kendra Preston Leonard, *The Conservatoire Américain: A History* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), ix.

3. Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland, 1900 through 1942* (New York: St. Martin's/Marek, 1984), 56.

4. Virgil Thomson, "'Greatest Music Teacher' at 75," *Music Educators Journal* 49, no. 1 (September–October 1962): 43.

5. Lee Orville Erwin Jr., Paris, France, to Mrs. Mary Shaver Erwin, Huntsville, Alabama [hereafter "Erwin to his mother"], 8 June 1930.

6. Allan Evans, "The 1956 Zodiac Recordings: André Marchal, Organ," available at <http://www.arbiterrecords.com/notes/111notes.html>. In 1956, under his new Zodiac record label, Erwin recorded Marchal playing Bach's *Orgelbuchlein*, BWV 603–612 and 614–615.

7. Felix Aprahamian, "Marchal, André," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie, vol. 15 (London: MacMillan, 2001).

8. Erwin to his mother, 27 July 1930. The pieces Messiaen played were probably the *Huit préludes* for piano, composed in 1929.

9. Messiaen began playing the organ at the Église de la Sainte-Trinité in 1930 (at the age of 22). This first year at Trinité coincides with Erwin's stay in Paris. Messiaen played

his own compositions at the noon mass. See Claude Samuel, *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1994).

10. Evans, "1956 Zodiac Recordings."
11. Verd authored the book *Points d'orgue, souvenirs d'un musicien* (1973).
12. Erwin to his mother, 22 June 1930.
13. Erwin to his mother, 17 August 1930.
14. Erwin to his mother, 31 August 1930.
15. Erwin estimated this equaled around \$1.50 a week. Erwin to his mother, 27 October 1930.
16. Erwin to his mother, 5 December 1930.
17. Jeff Weiler, phone interview with author, 24 February 2001.
18. Stephen Holden, "Music: Lee Erwin Score for Silent 'Hunchback,'" *New York Times*, 10 July 1986, C14.
19. Allan Kozinn, "Composing and Playing the Sounds for Silents," *New York Times*, 11 July 1990, C13.
20. Edward Rothstein, "Silent Films Had a Musical Voice," *New York Times*, 8 February 1981, D30.
21. Thomas J. Mathiesen, "Silent Film Music and the Theatre Organ," *Indiana Theory Review* 11 (1990): 81.
22. Erwin to his mother, 19 January 1931.
23. Ned Rorem, *Knowing When to Stop: A Memoir* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 396.
24. Weiler, phone interview with author, 24 February 2001.

CHAPTER 2

The Life and Career of Lee Orville Erwin

1908 TO 1990

Lee Orville Erwin Jr. in Huntsville

Lee Orville Erwin Jr. was the first child of Mary Estella Shaver Erwin and Lee Orville Erwin Sr. According to family records, he was born 15 July 1908 at East Holmes Street in Huntsville, Alabama. During the next fifteen years, Lee would be joined by five siblings: Thelma May Erwin Castator (born 20 April 1911, died 11 March 1988), Sara (Sally) Elizabeth Erwin Hix (born 25 November 1914), Chas Alfred Erwin (born 13 June 1917, died 16 March 1918), Mary Leone Erwin Edwards (born 26 November 1920), and Joseph (Joe) Arthur Erwin (born 13 January 1923).¹

Life in the Erwin household was a comfortable one. Lee Erwin Sr., the founder of the Erwin Manufacturing Company and the Textile Hardwood Manufacturing Company, Inc., was a successful businessman in northern Alabama. The family lived in a large house in West Huntsville until 1918, when they moved to Calhoun Street in present-day downtown Huntsville.² According to Joe, the youngest Erwin sibling, his parents were “fun-loving” and very attentive:

Mother would read stories to us, or get Thelma or Sally to do it. Dad would make up stories, many of which were outlandish and we knew it, but we loved listening anyway. They would take us on hikes, for a ride in the car on Sundays—often including a stop at the Drug Store for an ice-cream cone.³

The Erwin parents exposed their children to the arts and discovered the individual talents of each child: Thelma enthusiastically studied ballet; Sara was interested in the visual arts; Mary loved to write. Although each child was encouraged

to pursue his or her interests, the common discipline among the Erwin family members was music. In a 1970 article by Lloyd E. Klos, Lee Erwin recounts:

One of my first remembrances was listening to music. My mother was the organist of a very small church; she was probably the only member of the congregation who could play.⁴ When I was three or four, I was given a toy piano for Christmas. It must have been a better than average toy, because it was exactly in tune, and it had a keyboard of almost four octaves. Although I couldn't possibly have known at that time that I was gifted with absolute pitch, I realize now that I was demonstrating it regularly by reproducing accurately any group of notes which I heard. So, I found that I could automatically play anything I heard my mother play on her big piano.⁵

When Lee started school, he began his formal lessons with a lifelong friend of the Erwin family, Bessie Pettus (Spragins). Joe Erwin recalls:

All the children studied piano with Ms. Pettus, but only Lee and I developed a sensitivity to musical expressiveness. Miss Bessie, as everyone called her, loved young people and music. She was not a great performer, technically, but played very expressively. Her love of each of us, her students, translated that sense of expressiveness with great flourish and enthusiasm. She had a genuine pride in the accomplishments each of us would achieve.⁶

Various letters and documents reflect the warm relationship between Lee Erwin and Bessie Pettus. While studying in France in 1930, he corresponded with her frequently.⁷ The family's genial relationship with Pettus remained intact through several decades. Sara Erwin Hix's children, William P. Hix Jr. and Elizabeth (Betty) Hix, also studied piano with Pettus when young.⁸

Moving from West Huntsville to the Calhoun Street residence, the family began attending the First United Methodist Church of Huntsville. It is quite possible that it was here Lee began to play the organ, substituting for the regular organist.⁹ But although his religious upbringing and early musical experiences are important to note, Lee Erwin's fascination and lifelong love of the organ commenced in the movie theaters.

During the 1920s, Huntsville had two movie theaters: the Grand Theatre, located on Jefferson Street, and the Lyric Theatre, on Washington Street. Young Lee Erwin was a fixture at both of these movie houses. The Lyric was equipped with a Style L Wurlitzer Pipe Organ-Orchestra, which was played by organist George Hatch. According to Erwin, Hatch could not read music but did a terrific job of improvising music for films. The Grand did not originally have an



Figure 2.1. Lee Orville Erwin Jr., 1915 (age 7).

organ; instead, a pianist accompanied the films. In numerous interviews, Erwin reminisced about his time spent in the Huntsville movie theaters:

After a time I was given permission to play the supper show in both theatres any time I wanted to, but without pay, of course. It did give me the opportunity to attend both theatres without admission—a real prize for a twelve-year-old boy who was already hooked on the theatre organ.¹⁰

In 1924, Lee Erwin made the transition from the adolescent who haunted the movie theaters substituting for regular organists to a serious young man intent on a career in music. At sixteen, he graduated from high school¹¹ and was awarded a scholarship to study at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.¹²

Lee Erwin's Education

Cincinnati provided a tremendous cultural contrast to the small, sleepy Huntsville of the 1920s. Erwin enrolled at the conservatory in 1926 and studied organ with Prof. Parvin Titus. A native of New Jersey, Titus (1897–1973) had studied with organists Marcel Dupré and Gaston Dethier. When he was appointed to the position of professor of organ in 1924, Titus moved to Cincinnati, where he taught at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music until 1965.¹³ Titus was exceedingly supportive of the young Erwin's talent and later arranged for him to study in France.

To earn extra money during his school years, Erwin played the organ seven nights a week in two local movie theaters; the Albee Theatre, located on the south side of Fifth Street, and the Palace Theatre.¹⁴ Because they were an important part of the movie palace experience, theater organists of the silent-film era were handsomely paid musicians. In his autobiography *The Million Dollar Life of Gaylord Carter*, organist Gaylord Carter recalls that during the 1920s “as a theatre organist you would make in a week what a church organist would make in a month.”¹⁵ According to Erwin, he earned \$20 a week—a substantial sum, considering his weekly rent was only \$5.¹⁶ A steady income allowed the young Erwin to amass substantial savings as well as to purchase his first car, a Model T Ford.

In 1929, after three years at the conservatory, Erwin left school to accept his first full-time theater positions. He served as assistant organist at Loew's Temple Theatre and as organist for the Alabama Theatre, both located in Birmingham, Alabama.

Loew's, with its four-manual, sixty-rank Möller organ, featured first-run films and popular vaudeville acts (see figure 2.2). Joseph Stoves, principal or-

ganist for Loew's Temple Theatre, was a powerful influence on Erwin's ideas regarding the theater organ. Erwin felt that Stoves

was a genuine artist, not a retreaded piano player. He really knew classical and popular music, and his improvisations were marvelous. Even his first "cold" performance of a silent film (a new one each week) was nearly always a masterpiece. From his examples, I learned, in an unforgettable way, that an organist should never use current popular music or even well known classical selections as accompaniment for a *serious* film. Any familiar piece of music already has preconceived connotations for any audience, and therefore, draws too much attention to the organ, at the expense of the film. For him, each film had to have a new, completely original score that he improvised on the spot. It was a lesson which very few organists learned, probably because many of them weren't capable. Of course, there were books of cue music to fit any given situation, *except usually it didn't really fit*.¹⁷



Figure 2.2. Lee Erwin, age 21, at the console of Loew's Temple Theatre Möller.

Erwin's long-time involvement with the Alabama Theatre began at the same time.¹⁸ The following telegram details Erwin's job with the theater.

Have opening Alabama Theatre for feature organist play spot solos and accompany orchestral overtures. Two hours a day approximate time actual playing. Salary sixty seven fifty. Wire me at once if interested.—Bert Hollowell Alabama Theatre.¹⁹



Figure 2.3. Lee Erwin at age 22.

An ambitious young man, Erwin also found time to serve as pianist and organist for two Birmingham radio stations, WAPI²⁰ and WRBC.²¹

In June 1930, after a year and half working for the theaters in Birmingham, Erwin embarked on his journey to Paris. The letters he wrote his mother during this time, reproduced in the next chapter, detail this tremendous educational experience that greatly shaped Erwin's life.

Erwin's Work on Radio and Television, 1931–1967

On returning to the United States from France, Erwin went back to work at the Alabama Theatre, though his responsibilities as a musician in the theater were quite different. Due to the popularity of sound films ("talkies") and the economic woes of the Great Depression, the roles of theater musicians during the early 1930s were greatly diminished. Although several large theaters kept orchestras to play overtures and accompany vaudeville acts, between 1928 and 1930 ten thousand musicians lost their jobs.²² As a result, Erwin found himself playing the organ occasionally for sing-alongs,²³ but primarily working as a sync-operator.²⁴ As a sync-operator, he synchronized the sound recordings with the films and newsreels as they were presented. Unhappy with this situation, Erwin moved back to Ohio in 1932 and completed his studies at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.²⁵

In 1932 at the conservatory, Erwin met John Ranck, the man who would become his first long-term companion. A seventeen-year-old piano student, Ranck was just beginning his studies at Cincinnati Conservatory. They moved in together in 1933 at an apartment located on 2814 Highland Avenue²⁶ and remained partners for the next twenty years.²⁷

According to Ranck, Erwin kept a busy schedule playing the organ in a few small theaters, leading a dance band, and holding various other musical jobs.²⁸ Erwin's dance band, Lee Erwin's Musical Troupe, was a popular group in Cincinnati, playing for numerous concerts and radio appearances. This band provided Erwin with his first experience arranging music, a skill that he would eventually master.²⁹

At the same time that sound film was gaining prominence in the American theater, the fledgling radio industry also grew in popularity. By 1930, there were twenty fifteen-minute serials on daytime network radio, totaling seventy-five hours a week.³⁰ Often sponsored by soap manufacturers, these serials were popularly known as "soap operas." Ironically, the only musical score of these "operas" was "the organ music swelling and subsiding in the background."³¹ As



Figure 2.4. Lee Erwin in his early twenties.

a result of the popularity of the soap operas, many theater organists successfully made the transition to work in radio. As Mary Cassata and Thomas Skill observe in their book *Life in Daytime Television*, the soap opera organist was a direct descendant of the pianist or organist who provided the music for silent films.³² Both Lee Erwin and Gaylord Carter are examples of musicians who thrived in this new medium.

Erwin began playing for serials on radio station WLW in Cincinnati in 1933.³³ Proudly called the "Nation's Station," WLW was one of the most powerful radio stations in the history of radio. From 1934 until 1939, the Federal Communications Commission granted special permission to station owner Powel Crosley Jr. to operate at 500,000 watts. This wattage, ten times the power other stations were allowed, was strong enough to broadcast a signal to England and South America, not to mention over the entire United States.³⁴

Arguably one of the most popular shows on WLW was *Moon River*. In *Not Just a Sound: The Story of WLW*, Dick Perry describes *Moon River* as a "program of dreamy organ music, dreamy poetry, and dreamy moods which WLW used to transmit late each night to put old people to sleep and get lovers on with the business at hand."³⁵ First airing in 1930, *Moon River* featured a three-manual, seventeen-rank Wurlitzer organ,³⁶ which was dedicated to the memory of Crosley's mother.³⁷

Each evening the program would begin and end in the same manner, with a reading of the poem "Moon River":

(opening)

Moon River . . .
A lazy stream of dreams,
Where vain desires forget themselves
In the loveliness of sleep
Moon River. . .
Enchanted white ribbon
Twined in the hair of night
Where nothing is but sleep.
Dream on . . . sleep on . . .
Care will not seek for thee.
Float on . . . drift on . . .
Moon River, to the sea.

(closing)

Down the valley of a thousand yesterdays
Flow the bright waters of Moon River.
On and down forever flowing . . . forever waiting

To carry you down to the land of forgetfulness,
To the kingdom of sleep . . . to the realms of . . .
Moon River . . .
A lazy stream of dreams,
Where vain desires forget themselves
In the loveliness of sleep.
Moon River
Enchanted white ribbon
Twined in the hair of night,
Where nothing is but sleep.
Dream on . . . sleep on . . .
Care will not seek for thee.
Float on . . . drift on . . .
Moon River, to the sea.³⁸

The poem reflects the syrupy mood of *Moon River*, a radio show that typified WLW in the 1930s. The announcers during the show's twenty-five-year run included Peter Grant, Harry Holcomb, Palmer Ward, Charles Woods, Don Dowd, Jay Jostyn, Jimmy Leonard, and Ken Linn.³⁹ It featured such singers as the DeVore Sisters, Rosemary and Betty Clooney, Doris Day, Janette Davis, Lucille Norman, Anita Ellis, Ruby Wright, and Phil Brito.⁴⁰ Among the show's organists were Pat Gillick, Fats Waller, and Lee Erwin. Erwin, who replaced Waller in 1933,⁴¹ played on *Moon River* until 1944. According to John Ranck, Erwin was *Moon River* and was responsible for not only playing the organ but also arranging any musical numbers needed for each broadcast.⁴²

Although Erwin was well paid and achieved a certain degree of local fame, his dream was to leave Cincinnati for New York City. A 1938 letter from Erwin's mother comments on his desire to move to Manhattan:

I see you still have New York in the back of your mind, but I would be pretty sure of something more definite, before I turned WLW loose, even though it isn't just what you would like. A weekly salary coming in means a lot, when you read and see so many musicians as well as people in other lines of business, walking the streets looking for a job.⁴³

Before he acted on his dream to leave Cincinnati, however, Erwin pursued another dream: He began flying in 1940. This expensive hobby is evidence of the success Erwin was having financially as a musician in Cincinnati. According to a student logbook found among his belongings, Erwin flew forty-two hours of solo flight time and passed the test for his pilot's license in October 1940. During 1941 and 1942, Erwin flew dozens of flights, mostly in his personal Taylorcraft plane, between Cincinnati and Huntsville to visit his family.



Figure 2.5. Lee Erwin seated at the *Moon River* organ with the DeVore Sisters.

Eventually the allure of life in New York City overcame Erwin. With no job secured, Erwin and Ranck moved to an apartment on East 52nd Street in Manhattan. According to Ranck, Erwin believed that finding work in New York would not be difficult and that the move would “broaden his horizons.”⁴⁴ Based on his reputation from *Moon River*, Erwin was in fact successful in finding a position as the staff organist with CBS. He would provide music for every CBS soap opera filmed in New York that aired during the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁵

Erwin’s first major job at CBS, though, was as an organist on the radio program *Arthur Godfrey Time*, a popular morning radio program hosted by Godfrey. *Arthur Godfrey Time* featured an orchestra, male and female vocalists to sing the hit songs of the day, and a quartet that performed traditional material, including gospel and barbershop. As Arthur Singer explained in his book *Arthur Godfrey: Adventures of an American Broadcaster*, what Godfrey wanted “was not only a versatile group of musicians and performers, but also a flexible group who could fit into his unrehearsed, make-it-up-as-you-go-along style.”⁴⁶

With Lee Erwin, he found just such a versatile musician. Erwin, a classically trained performer with experience in arranging and performing popular music, was an obvious choice. The other band members who were hired—among them, clarinetist Johnny Mince, bassist Gene Traxler, trombonist Sy Schaffer Hank, pianist Ludwig Von Flato, and drummer Joe Marshall—formed an impressive core of accomplished musicians. Many of these musicians had played with some of the most popular swing bands, including those of Ben Bernie, Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, and Benny Goodman.⁴⁷

As the television industry began to emerge, Godfrey made the transition flawlessly. His television programs included *Arthur Godfrey and His Friends* and *Arthur Godfrey’s Talent Scouts*. By the early 1950s, Godfrey’s programs were reaching more than 80 million viewers, and in 1954 they accounted for 12 percent of CBS’s revenues.⁴⁸

Just as many theater musicians made the transition from movie palaces to radio work, many radio musicians, like Erwin, quickly adjusted to the growing television industry. As Godfrey’s importance as a broadcaster grew, so did Erwin’s responsibilities to the numerous Godfrey programs. At one point in his career, Erwin was conducting, arranging, composing, and performing (organ and piano) for CBS. His talent, versatility, dedicated work ethic, and success earned him the nickname “Money-Bags Erwin” with Godfrey, who used the moniker humorously on the air in an ongoing comedy sketch.⁴⁹

When reminiscing about his days at CBS, Erwin recalled, “Mr. Godfrey would give his musicians the title for a song, and then expect them to have the music composed by the next day.”⁵⁰ These songs were sung by Godfrey and “all the little Godfreys”: Janette Davis, Julius La Rosa, Bill Lawrence, Marion Marlowe, Frank Parker, Johnny Nash, Lu Ann Simms, Carmel Quinn, Pat Boone, the Chordettes, the Mariners, and the McGuire Sisters. A number of these songs



Figure 2.6. One version of the *Arthur Godfrey Show* band. Lee Erwin is seated at the piano, and Godfrey is the banjo player seated on the right.

became popular hits, including “Dance Me Loose,” “There Ought to Be a Society,” “Go Now,” and “Goggle Eye Ghee.”⁵¹

An unexplained anomaly in the life of Lee Erwin during this period was his marriage to Jane M. E. Kampf⁵² on 26 June 1957. According to his brother Joe, Lee called him the day before the wedding to invite him and to ask about borrowing a pair of black socks for the ceremony. There was no known courtship and no previous clues that Erwin and Kampf intended to marry. Lacking any evidence of the exact reasons Erwin married her, speculation can lead to two reasonable possibilities: perhaps Erwin felt a union with the wealthy Kampf would prove a good business venture, or perhaps the marriage could have been intended to mask his identity as a homosexual. Not surprisingly, the union lasted only a few months. After the dissolution of his marriage to Jane Kampf, Erwin became involved with Ted Creech, the lyricist for dozens of Erwin’s songs. Erwin and Creech remained partners until the early 1970s.

Erwin's Return to Film Music

In 1967, Erwin made an unexpected career move. After more than twenty successful years with CBS radio and television, Erwin left his well-paying job and resumed his role as a silent film accompanist. Silent films, which had fallen out of fashion after the invention of sound film, had not been produced since the 1930s. But with a sense of nostalgia, cinemaphiles increasingly began to take interest in silent films and their preservation. During the 1960s, many individuals—actors and actresses, film collectors such as Jim Day, film historian and preservationist Raymond Rohauer, and others—began to take action to preserve the rapidly deteriorating celluloid films from the early 1900s.

At the same time, there was a parallel movement to restore theaters and theater organs. Organists and fans of the theater organ joined together nationally in 1955 and formed the American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, which in 1970 became the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS).⁵³ According to an early version of its mission statement, ATOS

is dedicated to the preservation of a unique American art form—the theatre pipe organ and its music. The membership includes musicians, technicians, and enthusiastic listeners—all devoted to the preservation and continued enjoyment of what we believe to be a national treasure.⁵⁴

Erwin credited ATOS more than any other group with the success of theater preservation: “By saving the organs, they have often saved the theaters. But they have helped preserve more than buildings, as they helped preserve an art.”⁵⁵

With the formation of ATOS, many performers, including Erwin, made their way back to the consoles of American theater organs. The first effort to revive the theater organ accompaniment for silent film was initiated by Gaylord Carter in 1959. With film collector Jim Day, Carter originated Flicker Finger Productions in 1959.⁵⁶ Originally film screenings for small private audiences consisting of cue sheet accompaniments, Carter’s presentations sparked a great deal of interest in the theater organ’s original accompanimental role in silent film. Although Erwin did not return to film music until the late 1960s, his role in the revival of silent film cannot be overstated. Having a deep respect for and a profound understanding of silent film as an art form, Erwin began composing original scores for each film, just as he had done in the 1920s.

In early 1967, the New York Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts commissioned Erwin to compose his first film score since the 1930s, for the 1929 Eric Von Stroheim film *Queen Kelly*. The film, starring Gloria Swanson, was Von Stroheim’s last film. In her autobiography, Swanson discusses how

Von Stroheim's megalomania led this film into disaster. His artistic indulgences, incredibly lengthy shoots, and disregard for the film's budget created "\$600,000 worth of unresolved footage" that was never completed or released during his lifetime.⁵⁷ In 1967, Swanson decided to salvage what she could of the film and present it for the public.

The following is an announcement from the New York Theatre Organ Society regarding the commission. It includes many details concerning the performance, including Swanson's role as emcee.

We are proud to announce to you, in advance of our public advertising, that on Monday evening, May 8th at the Beacon Theatre, we will present Gloria Swanson, IN PERSON, in an unusual silent film and theatre organ show, "From Silents to Sounds" with famous N.Y. Chapter Member Lee Erwin at the console of the mighty, better-than-new Beacon Wurlitzer. This great event stems directly from Miss Swanson's thrilling surprise appearance at our memorable Gaylord Carter "Flicker Fingers" Beacon show in February.

In addition to his program of traditional organ novelties and songtime favorites, Lee Erwin has composed a special score to accompany Gloria Swanson's last silent Von Stroheim feature length classic, *Queen Kelly* on the magnificent, 4 manual Beacon organ. Lee's original, imaginative "Queen Kelly" music will make this showing a truly unique experience for every theatre organ enthusiast and silent film fan.

Miss Swanson will explain the dramatic circumstances surrounding her producing and starring in *Queen Kelly*. And, as a special treat, at the end of the main section of this feature she will show the exciting ominous Africa sequence—unreleased footage, from her personal collection, never before seen in public.

After *Queen Kelly*, Miss Swanson will relive for you, for the first time anywhere, her trials and triumphs in maintaining her stardom while she closed the era of the silents and climbed to greater heights in the new worlds of talking pictures.⁵⁸

This film presentation, a turning point in Erwin's career, is also discussed in an article from the *Villager*:

A movie event that may have the makings of fun—or gossip, anyway—has been announced for Monday night, May 8th, at 8:30 when Gloria Swanson will introduce two of her legendary films at the Beacon Theatre. One is *The Trespasser*, her first talking movie, and the other is *Queen Kelly*, her last silent film, and which was never released—never shown even in part.

To add to the fun, there will be an original organ score, written and played by Lee Erwin, an ASCAP composer who drew on his early silent films experiences to create this mood piece.⁵⁹

The performance was a triumph. The Beacon Theatre was filled to capacity (see figure 2.8). In a letter to Erwin, E. J. Quinby provides a glimpse of the successful evening.

We are still marveling over the splendid performance you turned out last night at the Gloria Swanson FROM SILENT TO SOUND show at the Beacon Theatre in New York. The score you composed and arranged for *Queen Kelly* is superb, and I am so glad to know that it was taped for future use. . . .

Gloria Swanson's charming appearance and personality at the microphone certainly captured the audience. Their sincere and prolonged applause brought genuine tears to her eyes—we were seated in the third row, and could plainly see her genuine emotion. . . .

It is gratifying to know that the house was sold out, and this experience should certainly be significant to exhibitors who are having a hard time selling enough seats to keep such magnificent show places out of the red.⁶⁰



Figure 2.7. Marquee for the 1967 showing of *Queen Kelly*.



Figure 2.8. Capacity crowd for the Beacon Theatre Showing of *Queen Kelly*.

Swanson, thrilled by the performance, wrote Erwin the following letter:

Dear Mr. Erwin,

I have heard nothing but the most fulsome praises for your performance Monday night. It was a tour de force on all grounds. I look forward to hearing the tape one quiet evening when things are not as hectic as they were the other night.

Meanwhile I want you to know how much I appreciate the labor and love that went into bringing *QUEEN KELLY* to life—the way it was meant to be seen.

Best wishes for your well-being and happiness.

Sincerely,

Gloria Swanson⁶¹

The success of the 8 May 1967 performance at the Beacon Theatre prompted the New York Theatre Organ Society to commission Erwin for another film score. Thus in 1968 he composed the music to one of his most frequently performed



Figure 2.9. Gloria Swanson at the Beacon Theatre, 8 May 1967.

film presentations, Rudolph Valentino's *The Eagle*. It premiered 1 May 1968 in North Tonawanda, New York, at the Riviera Theatre⁶² and received additional performances at the Beacon Theatre⁶³ and the Academy of Music on 14th Street in New York City beginning on 28 October 1968.⁶⁴ Allen Hughes, reporter for the *New York Times*, reviewed the latter performance.

Waves of magnificent sound rolled through the Academy of Music Theater on 14th Street last night. . . . Lee Erwin . . . was the performer, and he was great. Mr. Erwin composed the score he played for *The Eagle*, which is a 70-minute film. It employs leitmotifs and includes appropriate sound effects. The nationwide theatre organ revival is resulting in the establishment of a concert circuit which includes Rochester, Detroit, San Francisco, and Dunedin in Florida. . . . If all goes well, the sound of the theatre organs may again be heard regularly throughout the land.⁶⁵

While playing a full week's run of *The Eagle* at the Virginia Theatre in Alexandria in October 1969, Erwin made an appearance on the "Ed Walker–Willard Scott Show," an NBC program in Washington, D.C. When Walker posed the question "Out of all the things you have done, what has been your real ambition?" Erwin replied: "Come to think of it, I'm finally doing the one thing which I always wanted to do more than anything else—playing a theatre organ in a theatre. Radio and television shows were wonderful; they kept organists going for a good many years, but how wonderful it is to be playing in front of a real live audience!"⁶⁶

Though Erwin approached film composing as a serious artistic venture, nostalgia was a prominent facet of the silent film renaissance, as is evident in the 1969 film presentation and concert entitled "The Colleen Moore Show." This event, with music composed by Erwin, was similar in many ways to the 1967 *Queen Kelly* performance. Moore made a personal appearance (similar to the Gloria Swanson appearance) and her 1926 film *Irene* was shown. This production at the Redford Theatre in Detroit was sponsored by the Motor City Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts. In addition to the film and music, the general atmosphere of the era was created with Roaring Twenties fashions and a vintage car motorcade.⁶⁷

From the 1970s until 2000, Erwin toured the world as an ambassador of the theater organ and silent films. The numbers of concerts and venues he played are staggering. According to a list Erwin compiled, by 1977 he had performed in 404 different venues, including concert halls, theaters, and churches in the United States, Canada, Australia, England, France, Switzerland, Greenland, and the Virgin Islands.⁶⁸ His concert tours, which Erwin continued into his nineties, include literally thousands of performances.⁶⁹

Noteworthy performances include Erwin's appearance at the 1970 American Guild of Organists convention in Buffalo, New York; the "Golden 20s Gala in Honor of George Eastman, and the 50th Anniversary of the Eastman Theatre and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra" in Rochester, New York, on 13 January 1973; and the Art Deco Symposium at Radio City Music Hall in New York City in 1975.⁷⁰



Figure 2.10. Lee Erwin with an unknown American Theatre Organ Society member, actress Colleen Moore, and Ben Hall.

Two major tours for Erwin were the “Silent Clowns” tour and another under the auspices of the Library of Congress’s National Film Registry Board. The Silent Clowns tour of 1979 visited ten cities, during which time Erwin played for 441 performances of films featuring Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, and Buster Keaton. The National Film Registry Board sponsored Erwin in concert throughout the United States in 1986, accompanying such films as *The Beloved Rogue* starring John Barrymore and Lon Chaney’s *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Not only did Erwin’s career keep him busy composing music for television and movies, but it soon brought him into the limelight himself. The *CBS Morning Show* interviewed and filmed his performance at the Alabama Theatre in 1985. Vermont Public Television also produced a 1987 documentary about Erwin. That same year, Erwin found himself on the silver screen in the Woody Allen movie *Radio Days*. In this nostalgic film set in the 1940s, Erwin convincingly portrays a roller rink organist.⁷¹

Given Erwin’s involvement with such a historical musical tradition, it is noteworthy that he also composed avant-garde electronic music during the 1960s and 1970s. Erwin frequently performed one of these works, “Abstract Duration 22:22,” in recital.⁷² Subtitled “A Happening for Electronic Tape and Organ,” it combines taped electronic sounds—splices of Marcel Dupré, César



Figure 2.11. Lee Erwin in concert.

Franck, and Bach—with sections of improvised music. This piece demonstrates his awareness of current trends in musical composition. In addition to writing experimental compositions, Erwin served on the faculty of Hunter College (later renamed Lehman College) in New York as a professor of electronic music.

In the 1980s, as the videocassette recorder became omnipresent in American homes, dozens of silent films were released in VHS format. Rather than having



Figure 2.12. Erwin and Weiler.

the films appear without music, many companies hired musicians such as Gaylord Carter and Lee Erwin to provide scores for the video recordings. Thus, several of Erwin's scores have been preserved on VHS and DVD.

Two interesting projects occupied much of Erwin's later years. In 1991, Erwin completed a film score for *A Man without a World*, a film by performance artist/film director Eleanor Antin. In many of her works, Antin takes on various personae, who in turn create or are the subject of the work. In *A Man without a World*, Antin assumes the persona of Yevgeny Antinov, a fictional Russian Jewish silent film director from the 1920s. To guarantee the authentic style of this silent work, Antin chose Lee Erwin to compose the score.⁷³ The other major project, which occupied Erwin from 1990 until 1997, was his musical *The Count of Monte Cristo*. With a book by Gayle Stahlhuth and lyrics by Rim Rich, this musical was premiered at the Church of the Holy Trinity in New York City on 28 January 1997 by the Triangle Theatre Company.

Among Erwin's greatest contributions to the preservation of silent film accompaniment was his work with younger musicians interested in the theater organ. Organist and silent film composer Jeff Weiler said that he was not just a pupil of Erwin's but a "disciple."⁷⁴ He elaborated:

Everyone has certain experiences that strongly define their lives. One of the strongest life-defining experiences came for me at age 16, when I first heard Lee perform his score for the Valentino classic, *The Eagle*, at the Capitol Theatre in Davenport, Iowa. I was held spellbound by the suave and sophisticated music, and by how it subtly carried and advanced the screen drama. No one missed spoken dialogue at all. The performance made me completely fascinated in composing silent film music, and presenting the theatre organ to fulfill its original purpose. It was later a great privilege for me to study with Lee in New York. His attitudes towards the arts and his lessons and observations on life continue to have a profound influence on me.⁷⁵

Other organists and composers who have cited Erwin as an influence include Ben Model, silent film accompanist at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City; silent film composer and theater organist Dennis James; and organist David Messineo. According to Messineo, a New York-area organist and teacher, Erwin taught him a great deal about improvisation, and he considered Erwin to be the “Leo Sowerby of the theater organ.”⁷⁶

In the winter of 2000, Lee Erwin fell and broke his hip. During the next months, he was lovingly cared for by his partner Donald Schwing.⁷⁷ Unable to leave their Greenwich Village apartment, Erwin’s health slowly deteriorated. He died on September 21, 2000.



Figure 2.13. Erwin at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Notes

1. Records from the Erwin family Bible. Lee Orville Erwin and Mary Estella Shaver were married 18 September 1907 in Huntsville at the residence of the bride's parents.

2. Sara Erwin Hix, personal interview with author, Huntsville, Alabama, 13 November 2002.

3. Joseph (Joe) Erwin, Tryon, North Carolina, letter to author, 11 January 2003.

4. According to Sara Erwin Hix, this church was West Huntsville United Methodist Church.

5. Lloyd E. Klos, "Portrait of Lee Erwin: Theatre Organist," *Theatre Organ* 12, no. 3 (June 1970): 8.

6. Joe Erwin, letter to author, 12 January 2003.

7. Several letters from Lee Erwin to his mother between July and November 1930 mention receiving letters from Pettus. Another, dated 2 February 1931, says: "Ask Miss Bessie if she has stopped writing letters to her friends. I wrote her way before Xmas and have not heard from her in a very long time."

8. William P. Hix Jr., personal interview with author, 21 October 2002.

9. Donna Fisher-Jackson, "Lee Erwin," *Friends of the Zeiterion Theatre Newsletter* 8, no. 1 (Summer 1991): 1–2. Erwin started by "banging around" on the organ, then progressed to playing in church services.

10. Klos, "Portrait of Lee Erwin," 11.

11. Erwin graduated from the Mills Taylor School, a private high school in Huntsville.

12. Joe Erwin, letter to author, 11 January 2003. Lee won a statewide piano competition held in Birmingham and was awarded a scholarship to study at the Cincinnati Conservatory.

13. "Nunc Dimittis: Parvin Titus," *Diapason*, May 1973, 9.

14. Jerry Stein, "Albee Lives in Makeover for Ballroom," 17 February 1998, accessed 20 January 2003, <http://www.cincypost.com/living/1998/albee021798.html>.

15. Gaylord Carter, *The Million Dollar Life of Gaylord Carter*, ed. Nancy Grimley Carleton (Oakland, CA: Paramount Theater of the Arts, 1995), 36.

16. Klos, "Portrait of Lee Erwin," 9.

17. *Ibid.*, 8–9. "Books of cue music" or "cue sheets" include a breakdown of the film's plot, with musical suggestions for each scene. Examples include *Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists*, published in 1924 by Erno Rapée, and Edith Lang and George West's *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures*, published in 1920. Cue sheets were published and circulated with the films.

18. After the theater was resurrected and restored in the 1980s by Cecil Whitmire, Erwin graced the console of the Wurlitzer (nicknamed "Big Bertha") in concerts and film productions nearly every year. I first saw Erwin perform at the Alabama in April 1992, where he was featured in a Holy Week presentation of the Cecil B. DeMille classic *King of Kings*.

19. Bert Hollowell, telegram to Lee Erwin, 26 February 1929.

20. *Birmingham* (Alabama) *News*, 9 February 1930.

21. Klos, "Portrait of Lee Erwin," 9.
22. Gillian B. Anderson, "Presentation of Silent Films; or, Music as Anaesthesia," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 5, no. 2 (1987): 293.
23. John W. Landon, *Behold the Mighty Wurlitzer* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 9. The sing-along was an audience favorite during the early days of film. Dick Huemer and Max Fleischer introduced the first "bouncing ball" sing-along cartoon film at the Circle Theatre at Columbus Circle in New York City in 1924. The organist led the audience in singing a popular song, while a film projected the words onto the screen.
24. Klos, "Portrait of Lee Erwin," 15.
25. Erwin graduated from Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in 1936.
26. They later relocated to 291 Southern Avenue in Cincinnati.
27. John Ranck, phone interview with author, 2 February 2003.
28. Ibid.
29. Joe Erwin, letter to author, 12 January 2003.
30. Mary Cassata and Thomas Skill, *Life in Daytime Television: Tuning in Daytime Serial Drama* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1983), 108.
31. Ibid., 102.
32. Ibid., 106.
33. Allan Hughes, "Pipe Organ Reresounds at Movies," *New York Times*, 28 November 1980, C22.
34. John Price, "History of WLW, Cincinnati," 1979, available at <http://jeff560.tripod.com/wlw>.
35. Dick Perry, *Not Just a Sound: The Story of WLW* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1971), 3.
36. Jerrell Kautz, "The Moon River Organ from WLW," <http://theatreorgans.com/ohio/wlw>. A four-manual, thirty-two-rank Wurlitzer believed to be the *Moon River* organ is currently purported to be located at the Shady Nook Restaurant on U.S. Highway 27 in Millville, Ohio.
37. Price, "History of WLW, Cincinnati."
38. Perry, *Not Just a Sound*, 3.
39. Ibid., 38.
40. Ibid., 43.
41. Kautz, "The Moon River Organ from WLW." For unknown reasons, Waller was fired from WLW by Crosley. One legend cites his excessive drinking, while another states that Crosley felt the jazz music Waller played was disrespectful to the organ that was dedicated to the memory of his mother.
42. John Ranck, phone interview with author, 2 February 2003.
43. Mary Shaver Erwin, Huntsville, Alabama, to Lee Orville Erwin Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio, 31 May 1938.
44. John Ranck, phone interview with author, 2 February 2003.
45. Sharon Seitz, "Organists Play the Sound of Silents," *Asbury Park (NJ) Press Sunday*, 21 April 1996, E1.
46. Arthur J. Singer, *Arthur Godfrey: The Adventures of an American Broadcaster* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000), 69.
47. Ibid.

48. Robert Slater, *This Is CBS: A Chronicle of 60 Years* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 148.

49. Jeff Weiler, "Lee Erwin: A Tribute," *Theatre Organ* (January–February 2001), 13. The same sort of camaraderie that is seen between modern television host David Letterman and his music director Paul Shaffer seems to have existed between Erwin and Godfrey.

50. Fisher-Jackson, "Lee Erwin."

51. Klos, "Portrait of Lee Erwin," 10.

52. Jane Kampf was a wealthy jewelry store owner from Cincinnati.

53. Weiler, "Lee Erwin," 13. Erwin served on the Board of Directors and as vice president of ATOS. He was twice the winner of the ATOS Organist of the Year Award and was selected for the society's Theatre Organist Hall of Fame.

54. ATOS, "Our Mission," <http://www.atos.org/Pages/about.html>, accessed 2 January 2003.

55. Bill Morrison, "Silent-Film Organist Goes Full Circle," *Raleigh* (NC) *News and Observer*, 7 October 1976, 2.

56. Carter, *The Million Dollar Life of Gaylord Carter*, 185.

57. Gloria Swanson, *Swanson on Swanson* (New York: Random House, 1980), 368–75.

58. Allen W. Rossiter to the American Theatre Organ Enthusiasts, New York Theatre Organ Society, date unknown.

59. Raley Benet, "The Cinema," *Villager* [Greenwich Village, NY], 27 April 1967, 12.

60. E. J. Quinby, Summit, NJ, to Lee Erwin, New York City, 9 May 1967.

61. Swanson to Erwin, 11 May 1967. In addition to this event at the Beacon Theatre in 1967, Erwin and Swanson toured various theaters across the country during 1975 with the same films and general format.

62. "Noted Organist to Perform at NT's Riviera Theatre," *North Tonawanda* (NY) *Record-Advertiser*, 25 April 1968, 4.

63. Ibid.

64. Allen Hughes, "Organist Evokes Silent-Film Days," *New York Times*, 29 October 1968, L52.

65. Ibid.

66. Quoted in Klos, "Portrait of Lee Erwin," 11.

67. A "Colleen Moore Show" poster describing these events was found among Lee Erwin's collection of concert programs.

68. Lee Erwin, "A List of Theatres, Concert Halls, Churches, Recording Studios, Radio Stations, and Television Studios Where Lee Erwin Has Performed," personal document found among Erwin's personal belongings and programs.

69. In 1979 alone, Erwin performed for 441 film screenings in the "Silent Clowns" tour.

70. Morrison, "Silent-Film Organist Goes Full Circle." Erwin is quoted as saying: "The last theatre organ to be built was put into Radio City Music Hall in the 1930s after sound had come in. It wasn't used for its original purpose until last year when I played the first and only movie to be shown at Radio City."

71. "Lee Erwin," *IMDb*, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0260011>.

72. Evelyn Spearman, "Lee Erwin Brings New Sounds Here," *Huntsville Times*, 1967 (exact date unknown). Spearman says of the piece: "It is like nothing you have ever heard before, a first for Alabama listeners, and an interesting, exciting and different musical experience. . . . The sounds on the tape were produced by various electronic means and included all sorts of weird sounds, bells, clackers, some sounded like the music for the 'Twilight Zone.' . . . Being no music critic, I can honestly say that it was a 'happening' and very stimulating."

73. This film is available on VHS and DVD on Milestone Films. See <http://www.milestonefilms.com/movie.php/manwith>.

74. Jeff Weiler, phone interview with author, 24 February 2001.

75. Jeff Weiler, email to author, 10 January 2003.

76. "Lee Erwin, Theater Organist and Composer, Dies at 92," *NewMusicBox*, <http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/Lee-Erwin-Theater-Organist-and-Composer-Dies-at-92>. Sowerby (1895–1968) was a Pulitzer prize–winning composer and church/concert organist.

77. Schwing, an organ builder, was Erwin's partner from the mid-1970s until Erwin's death.

CHAPTER 3

The Letters of Lee Orville Erwin to Mary Shaver Erwin

JUNE 1930 TO MAY 1931

Sunday Afternoon
June 8, 1930

Dear Mother:

This is our second day out and everything is really quite swell. As Dad¹ will probably tell you, when we pulled out of port Friday nite² the weather was a bit bad but about noon yesterday it cleared off and has been excellent since. Ask Dad if he stayed on the pier after he left the boat the other night. I looked for him as we were pulling out but never did see him. Mr. Titus³ and myself stayed up Friday nite until we were well out and on our way; it was perhaps 2:00 before we went to bed, but when I did hit the bed I was asleep and slept so soundly that I did not awake until way after breakfast time the next morning. Right after lunch yesterday I went back down to take a nap and did not awake until 5:30 in the afternoon. I suppose I was just making up for the sleep I lost on that awful sleeper going up. It was the dirtiest train I have ever been on, and I can't say that I enjoyed the trip to N.Y. as much on that account. It would have been most awful if Daddy had not been along. As for me, I had a most pleasant stay in New York. I should have liked to have had more time in New York but of course that was impossible. I shall not attempt to tell you all about what we did in New York, because by the time you receive this Daddy will have told you all about it.

The ship is truly Dutch! Of course all the crew speak Dutch and about half the passengers are German. Even so, everyone is quite pleasant and I am enjoying myself immensely. Ask Daddy if he remembers the girls that sat across from us in the observation car coming up on the train. They are passengers on the boat. The food is excellent and is quite plentiful. We have three big meals every day and then at 10:30 there's a light lunch. The same at 4:30 in the afternoon and at 10:30 at night sandwiches. So far the weather has been so calm that no one could possibly

get sick. I am sure that with all the food and the salt air, and all the time we have to just lounge around I shall pick up 10 or 15 lbs. It is a regular rest cure. I am sure that no medicine could do quite as much good as this. I am certainly glad that we decided that I should not take those pills the other night. Mr. Titus and myself have deck chairs right on the very rear of the boat. We get all of the afternoon sun which is quite swell, especially late in the afternoon. Right after lunch it is pretty hot, almost too much. Tell Dad that the 4th space in our cabin was not taken. It is really quite a good deal better with just the three of us in there.

All day today the sea has been very calm, almost without a ripple. Just a little while ago a breeze started tho that gives it a little motion and just a few whitecaps on it. There is very little or no motion to the ship. Unless you'd get out and see the water going by you wouldn't know you were going. It is a quite a revelation to me to see the color of the sea. I have heard of course how blue the sea was, but to see it as it is, is more exciting and last nite when the moon came up!—Well is just can't be expressed in words. I don't know of anything quite so swell. The boat takes a lot more time going over than I thought it did, but I shall not mind at all. The longer the better. If everything goes well we are supposed to dock at Boulogne⁴ a week from tomorrow I think. I may possibly be able to mail this at Plymouth tho. We first hit Europe there. I don't

[The remaining pages of this letter are missing.]



Thursday morning
June 12, 1930

Dear Mother,

We are getting well along now and should be sighting land in a few more days. Since sometime yesterday morning the sea starting losing some of its calmness, but not rough enough to do much damage. The weather stays quite clear but there is some sort of a disturbance off the coast of Ireland that is tearing up the sea. The motion has not affected either myself or Mr. Titus, but last night for dinner only about 1/3 of the passengers made a visit to the dining room. Altho it did not effect my appetite in the least I did not try to eat quite as much as I have been accustomed to doing.

By this time of course everybody pretty well knows everybody else on board and we are all having a swell time. I will enclose one of the bulletins showing some of the things that are going on each day.

Tuesday, I think it was, a lady came up to me asking I was not Orville E. and much to my surprise it was a girl who used to teach up at Huntsville College. Miss Ivey—she used to be my French teacher. She came up on the train the

other night with Daddy and myself and altho I knew I had seen her somewhere I could not place her. She was one of the girls that sat across from us in the observation car. There are 4 other girls with her and we have all been sorta going about together making it most pleasant.

Until we arrive in Paris and spend a few days looking around I will of course not know my permanent address. I will want to hear from you before then of course tho, so use this as a temporary address:

c/o Travelers Bank
18 Rue de la Paix
Paris, France

I have a number of other letters that I want to write today, so I'll bring this one to a close for the present.

Love,
Orville



Saturday
June 14, 1930

Dear Mother,

Our boat docks at Plymouth, England tomorrow afternoon at 2:00, so I want to get just this last note off to you so I can mail it then. We cross the channel tomorrow nite and get in to Boulogne early Monday morning. We get a special train out of Boulogne for Paris immediately on arrival and should be in Paris by noon. We save some time by having our baggage examined on the train to Paris so there will be no waiting. I suppose it will take us all afternoon Monday locating a place that will suit both we and our pocketbooks to stay. I should think that by the middle of the week we should be pretty well settled tho and have some idea about exactly what we are going to do.

The trip has been, all the way over, very nice except that by now I am getting uneasy to get settled. We have had no really bad weather and neither Mr. Titus or myself have been the least bit ill. Last night (and it happened to be Friday 13th) it clouded up and looked pretty bad ahead, but nothing came of it but a little wind and a light rain. It was bad enough that we could not get out on deck tho.

I of course received Daddy's radiogram Sunday that he sent from New York. I was mighty glad to get some word from him. It was quite a thrill to be receiving a radiogram. We of course keep up with what's going on everywhere by the radio news we get in our paper published every day. It is of course rather brief but we get all the important things.

I have misplaced my vest to my light blue suit. If I can't find it somewhere on board before we land I am inclined to believe that I left it somewhere else. Most likely in the Servidoor at the Penn Hotel in New York. Did Daddy happen to discover is there before he left? If you all have got it I would like to have it sent on over sometime in the near future.

Did Daddy stay in New York over Sunday or did he go up to Troy?

I don't know of much else that I can write while on the ship but I'll send you another letter sometime next week after we are settled. I think I enclosed my temporary address in another letter but in case I didn't it is:

c/o Travelers Bank
18 Rue de la Paix
Paris, France

Let me know from you as soon as you can write, because even as it is, I supposed it will be almost 4 weeks before I can receive any answer to this, and by that time I will be quite hungry for some news of home. I imagine it will take just about 10 days or two weeks for a letter to go one way.

If I think of anything else to add before I have to mail this in the morning I'll add it later. If not I'll write you from Paris.

Love to everybody,
Orville



Hotel Royer-Collard
14 Rue Royer-Collard
Paris
[date unknown]

Dear Mother,

At last we have arrived in Paris. This is our second day and we have just about gotten settled. I intended writing yesterday, but we were so busy hunting for a place to stay that by night I was simply worn completely out; having been up since 4:30 in the morning anyway.

We arrived at Boulogne about on time yesterday morning but were delayed in getting off the boat on account of a terribly heavy fog. We were called by the steward at 4:30 and had breakfast at 5:00, but then it was almost seven by the time the fog lifted enough that we could tell what we were doing. After the Passport inspection that took place on the ship we were carried by a small boat to the train. The train was almost 2 hours late in leaving Boulogne so we did not get into Paris until almost exactly 12 o'clock. Our hand baggage was inspected

on the train, but it wasn't much of an inspection. The man merely came thru and asked if we had anything in our baggage that wasn't allowed. He did not so much as even look at the baggage, much less look in it. On arriving in Paris we immediately took a taxi out to a place that Mr. Titus had the address of, but we found that we could not stay there permanently on account of a number of things. The rooms were too expensive in the first place, they would allow no piano, and just everything in general was wrong. We registered there and stayed for one night tho, mainly [so] we would have a place to park our baggage and look for another place. We then started out and walked up and down, rode the street cars, buses, subway and everything all afternoon without finding a thing that was to our liking. (The steamship company has supplied us with a book containing all information as to places to stay, eat etc.). After a fruitless search all day we dragged ourselves back to the hotel and had supper and then went out again. (It isn't dark until 10 o'clock). Mr. Titus suggest[ed] that we try as a last resort a place that he and Mrs. Titus had stayed and after looking over the rooms we decided they would be just the thing. We moved here this morning and then went to the station to have our baggage sent out. They were not quite so lenient with the baggage inspection at the station. They looked things over pretty well and generally messed up the things in the trunk, but no damage done. I of course had no tax to pay on anything. After getting the trunks out of the room and going around to see a few people the day was over. No arrangements have been made, as yet, as to lessons or anything, but perhaps we can get settled enough in the next few days to get something definitely done. It is quite big, arriving in an entirely strange country than going to a place like Cincinnati, or the like. Mr. Titus can hold his own in a conversation with one of those Frenchmen, but as I have been here only 36 hours I have some difficulty in making myself understood and a lot more in trying to understand someone else. I would have had a lot of trouble if I had been entirely alone, but then it would have been a lot of fun if I had.

Tomorrow I have to visit the American Counsel [Consul] and register and then I have to go to the police department and get a card of identity and I don't [know] what all. It's a lot of trouble and takes a lot of time, but then it's got to be done.

I must get myself to bed now so as to be up bright and early in the morning to starting going the different places. I shall wait until a little later to write you what I find here and how I like the place and all. I'll write probably Friday or Saturday. Did you get my cable? My address is:

c/o Hotel Royer-Collard
14 Rue Royer-Collard
Paris, France

Love to all,
Orville



[The beginning of this letter, from sometime in June 1930, is missing.]

As yet I have not definitely decided on any of my teachers. We have been looking around quite a lot and expect to look some more so that there will be no wrong steps taken. I have of course started practicing and working with the help of Mr. Titus I am doing 4 or 5 hours every day (Sunday excepted) now, and expect to do a lot more later on. We have a piano with a pedal clavier attached in the room (a pedal board just like an organ that has its own separate strings etc.) It's possible to do just about as much on this [as] practicing on an organ, but of course it is still a piano, and can be played just as a piano. At present we are doing practice on an organ at one of the organ factories, but I don't think we will continue for long as it costs too much for organ rent.

We have a very nice room in the place here with private bath and everything: a bath is really a luxury in Paris. It is not really a hotel at all, but everything here is called a hotel. We are paying 450 francs equivalent to about \$18.00. It's a little too much to be paying for a place to stay but as soon as Mr. Titus leaves I will find something a bit cheaper. I should still like to be in this neighborhood tho' because I like it very much. Our meals we pay about 10¢ for breakfast and from 45¢ to 60¢ for the other two meals. The food is really quite excellent most everywhere. The French have the name for being about the world's best cooks. To get water with your meals you have to order a bottle of mineral water, but we have found a little place quite close by that brings in all the water one wants.

Even though I've been here almost a week now I have not been able to form any definite opinions as to how I like Paris. Every day, so far, we've been going from early morning till—well one might say early morning again. None of the concerts or operas or anything start until 9:00 o'clock [and] it's well 12:00 before they are over. We've been to the opera once and to one piano recital. Now that we have sort of a schedule arranged we won't be so on the go tho'. Until one gets used to the different modes of transportation (and they had changed quite a bit since Mr. Titus last visit here) it takes quite a while to get where you're going. New York has nothing on Paris at all for congestion and anyone that can get around Paris is a marvel. The streets are all in a jumble and never go very many blocks at a time without turning around and twisting a million different ways, and every time they turn they call it by a different name. You have to always carry a map. (and then get lost!) Once you know where you want to go tho; the quickest way is by the subway which they call the metro. Now that we are settled most all of our duties keep us right in this section of town tho and we walk. In this past week I'll bet I've walked 250 miles more or less. It's all a lot of fun tho and as soon as I get to where I can understand one of these Frenchmen I'll be all O.K. I can do much better already than I could a week ago, but I've a long ways to go yet.

What has been going on over there? I would really be most glad to be receiving some word about tomorrow, but I suppose it will be a week or more before I do. Probably not until tomorrow or the next day will you be getting my first letters written on the boat. From now on you will be getting a letter no less than once a week though I'm sure. If I only had the time to sit down and write I could write every day as there is so much to write about. I suppose the newness will finally wear off tho, and seeing all these places will be just an everyday occurrence. I would give anything if you and Daddy could make this trip over here when I'm getting ready to come back. It would certainly be nice for me to have you here a short while, and I am sure you would enjoy it. Even tho it's a long drawn out trip it is certainly swell, and worth all the trouble. What about my automobile? I am certainly in hopes that you can sell it in some way or other. Even tho I should like to have it on my return, the money it will bring will mean a lot more and do more good here. I don't think I shall even want another automobile tho. They cost entirely too much for the good that comes out of them. I should like to have the money I spent on that one back again. I bet it's easily a thousand dollars!

As to the expenses over here, things have increased considerably in the past year, but even so it's nothing like what things over there cost. Outside of the few hundred Francs I have in change in my pocket, (a Franc is about 4¢.) I have about \$350.00 in checks I have not touched. My room rent, piano rent, etc. is paid already for a month. Of course the meals I pay for as I get them.

Now I have figured rather generously and all my living expenses, (piano rent, organ rent, room rent, meals and a few incidentals) come to just about \$75.00 a month. As soon as Mr. Titus leaves I think I can cut down on a few things, but even so I think that's rather reasonable.

[The remaining pages of this letter are missing.]



Hotel Royer-Collard
14 Rue Royer-Collard
Paris
Sunday nite
June 22, 1930

Dear Mother,

Altho this is Sunday it has in no way been a quiet Sunday for me. Mr. Titus and myself have been to no less than 3 church services and spent all afternoon roaming all over the whole western side of Paris. We were up about 8:30 this morning and went over to the Catholic Church (St. Germaine des Pres)⁵ to hear the 9:15 mass. [André] Marchal is the organist at the church and will probably

be the person that I decide to study organ with. The church is quite magnificent and the music is wonderful. The church has two organs in it. A small one up in the front that plays for the choir and then the large one in the very back up on a little balcony right up in the roof.⁶ The effect of the two organs, the one in the back answering all the things the choir does is marvelous. The organ by the way is over 200 years old and is just the same now as it was, with the exception of a few additions that Marchal has had put in.

At 11:00 we went over to the American Cathedral, an Episcopal church, and heard their service. This church is the one that all the Americans (tourists and resident of Paris) go to, and of course the services are in English. After the service (we of course met the organist, the rector, etc.)⁷ we took a subway out to the woods of Boulogne (just on the edge of Paris). It is a most beautiful place and of course it has been preserved just as it has been for years. After rambling around for some time we discovered that we did not know where we were and were sadly in need of food. After on a while longer we ran upon a place that we later discovered, much to our sorrow, was a very high class, high priced eating house. When the dinner was over we found that we had each [eaten] 48 francs (almost \$2.00 in American money) apiece. Both Mr. Titus and myself have placed ourselves on a budget of between 30 and 35 francs for food,⁸ each day, so we will have to go rather light the rest of the week to make up for our special meal this noon. We spent the rest of the afternoon in the woods (Theresa Lake, and an island and all sorts of amusements on one side). We walked back to the American church for the 5:30 service in the afternoon. After a very light supper we came straight home and I must say that I'm a bit weary from all the festivities of the day.

Mr. Titus has a friend down in Southern France, who at one time was connected with the Conservatory in Cinti [Cincinnati], having to leave there on account of his health. (Mac Stevens, one of my roommates in Cinti studied with him the year before I went to Cinti). Mr. Verre [Verd]⁹ is now one of the outstanding musical figures in France and Mr. Titus was going to visit him before going home, so when we found out about how things would be here in Paris during August and September, we decided that I should [go] along down there and stay there during that time. I am to study piano with Mr. Verre also harmony, solfege and French. There is a former pupil of Marchal's down there that Marchal thinks it might be excellent to have a lesson now and then with during my time there. Marchal will give me plenty to keep me busy during my time there tho! Such terrific lessons as I'm having now, but for my part he can't [give] me too much to do. We have had the mails hot with letters back and forth with Mr. Verre and now it's all decided. We considered everything from every angle before finally deciding, but I think it's the best thing to do as there's certainly nothing to be lost and much gained in every way, and I shall be saving some money by doing so.

Living there will [cost] next to nothing and lessons very little if anything at all. Railroad fare is about \$8.00 3rd class and that's the way we will go. Everybody leaves Paris during August and September and with Mr. Titus sailing for America just at that time I should have been rather miserable here. The town (Magagnosc) is almost on the Mediterranean and the climate I think is very much like Florida. Even tho I hate to break in on my work here I am looking forward to the change very much. As I don't know yet what my address there will be perhaps you better send all mail from now on to the Travelers bank and it will be sent on to me from there. I am not sure exactly when we leave but it will be sometime around the 1st of August.

I am having three hours of French every week now with a Madame Lepage and I'm beginning to do better with my French. Even tho Madame Lepage is a French lady she speaks excellent English and without the slightest trace of an accent. Marchal is a friend of hers and it was thru him that I got with her. I have lessons Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons from 4 to 5. By the time I return to Paris the last of the September I shall probably be well up in French because while I'm there I'm going to be with Mr. Verre every day and Mr. Titus says he is a demon for making people around him work, and down there, there will be no Americans to talk to and Mr. Verre won't talk English with me.

I received your letter the other day enclosing the birthday card which I was of course most happy to receive and this week I've had about 8 other letters; just beginning to hear from my boat letters and cards. I shall hardly realize that it's my birthday on Tuesday I suppose, but all day tomorrow and the next day (which is Tuesday) is "Bastille Day" which is the French equivalent of the 4th of July. I don't know exactly what it is they are to celebrate but for the past few days they have been preplanning for it in big fashion. Everything everywhere is closed. The cars, subways, busses stop running and they all parade the streets from morning till night, I'm told. At night, on every corner, there's a band and they all dance right in the street. I am looking forward to seeing all of the "goings on," but suppose we will practice most of the day to keep out of the crowds. The package you mention in the letter has not arrived but I suppose it will within a day or so. Not until Wed. tho probably as no mail will be delivered either tomorrow or Tuesday I suppose. The vest I will be glad to get because I've needed it to keep warm!! Even tho from all the reports I receive from over there as to how hot the weather is, over here it is quite pleasant, in fact the past 4 or 5 days it has been even a little more than chilly. I've had to wear my sweater under my coat. I don't know what the Parisians say to weather around 98. They have complained about it being hot when I found it pleasantly warm. You say I must let you know how much I weigh. Even tho I weighed once I didn't know anymore after weighing than before. The scales are by kilograms. Hooray for Joe appearing in public with his piano playing.¹⁰

Tomorrow marks the beginning of our 5th week in Paris but it doesn't seem like anything like that long except I could have hardly made as much progress with the organ in less time. Marchal is simply too marvelous for words. My lesson yesterday lasted over an hour and a half. He gives me things to learn between lessons that I must know all the notes to and at the lesson we do nothing but put the finishing touches on it; in other words I just get an interpretation of it.

Must finish up now. You will of course hear from me a couple times before I leave for Magagnosc and later on I'll tell you more about it. Let me be sure to hear from you once a week and I'd like to have longer letters.

With love to everybody,
Orville



[The beginning of the following letter is missing.]

Whatever my lessons are will be added to that, but teachers are not expensive. I shall not be connected with the conservatory at all but get everything privately. And I think I shall get everything from two teachers and they are the very best. Just what I do I'll write you. Of course what progress I make will be entirely up to me, but you can be sure that I'm working plenty!

Mr. Titus being here to get me started off on the right foot is worth more than you can possibly imagine. Between the two of us we will keep this piano going all day long and half the night I expect. We have it arranged so that while he is practicing on the piano here in the room I'm either at the organ factory or working at theory and vice versa, so we get a lot done.

My!! This is a letter such as I don't write very often. But I had so much to say; and still could go on, but it's time to go to bed.

I shall be looking forward to a letter from you, and I'll write again before the week's over. Hope you are all quite well and that everything [is] going along as it should.

Love to everybody,
Orville

P.S. I am enclosing a blank check that I have signed so that you can get what I left in the Bham [Birmingham] bank out for me. There is no hurry for it at all, but just thought I'd send it along.



14 Rue Royer-Collard
Paris V, France
Sunday Afternoon
July 6, 1930

Dear Mother,

Altho I have probably just as much to write I will not write such a long letter today on account of being slightly pressed for time. Altho Mr. Titus and I have been to church twice today we are going back down town tonite to hear some music.

The weather for the past few days has been a little warmer, but it still remains quite pleasant. I am sure it is far from being anything like you all are having over there. I especially thought how hot is usually was there on the 4th of July. We spent a very quiet fourth, working the same as any other day and in fact I would have quite forgotten about there being such a thing as the 4th if I hadn't noticed it in the American paper that's published here in Paris. The New York Herald has a Paris publication in English so we can quite keep up with you all over there if we want to.

Your letter and also the ones you forwarded arrived the other day and naturally I was very glad to hear as much as that all in one day from that side of the water.

You said that you were expecting a letter from me when you wrote June 23, But I suppose it was almost a week later before anything arrived. Our letters written on the boat and mailed at Plymouth could not be on their way until June 17th or 18th I think. We could have gained some time by mailing directly from here after we arrived as most of the fast boats leave from France. Then too postage from England is only 2 cents while letters from France are 6 cents from this side.

Glad you all had a chance to go down to Montevallo.¹¹ I think it is very nice there and I'm sure that Thelma¹² will like it very much after she gets used to the place. Glad also that you all stopped by Bham and saw the folks and had a chance to meet Jesse.¹³ Of course Daddy met him in Cinci before. Both Mr. Titus and I were quite amused to hear of Jesse's experience of getting locked out. That's just like him tho. He would have remained outside all night rather than disturb anybody. I am glad to hear that he is doing so well in Bham. I only hope that everything turns out as he expects it will. I am a little "leery" of the Bham

Conservatory of Music. They are kinda tough people to get along with but Jesse will get along if anybody can.

We have not done much all week but practice hard every day. During July and August the music season is a bit off here in Paris, but of course there's always plenty of museums and things of that sort to visit. We have stuck pretty well at home tho until today. My teacher gave me such a fearful lot to do on the organ that I've had plenty to do. I like Mr. Marchal very well indeed. He is one of the most inspiring men imaginable.

The latter part of this month Mr. Titus is going over into Germany for a few days to one of the music festivals in Munich. Every summer these festivals take place and it's probably the greatest musical treat in the world. I should like very much to go along, but I'm afraid that it would make too great a dent in my pocket-book to make the trip.

It's about time to be getting out and getting a bite of supper so I'll finish up. Both Mr. Titus and I are very well indeed and my appetite is still something fierce. The French cooking is marvelous and we have discovered a little place right close here that is everything anyone could want in that way of an eating place.

Give my regards to everyone around and about.

And with love to all of you,

Orville

P.S. My mail, so far, has been very scarce but I suppose I shall be hearing from quite a few people this coming week. I wrote a number of letters on the boat that I should be hearing from. When you start receiving my letters you will be about three behind so I'll expecting them all.

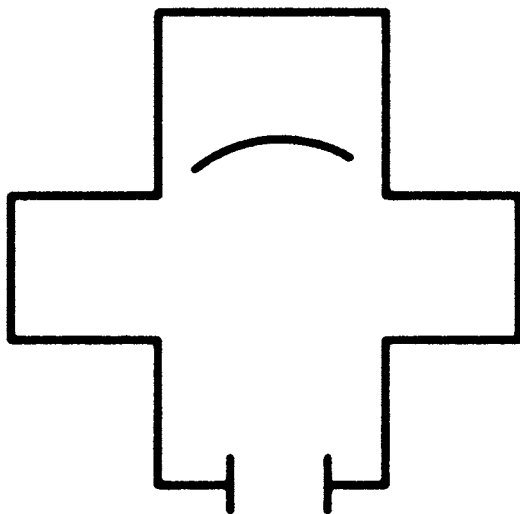


Sunday

July 13, 1930

Dear Mother,

Have just gotten home after a bite of supper, having been out all day. The first thing this morning we went to hear Marchal play and then we went to a new church. A Russian Cathedral and it was the most interesting service I have attended since arriving in Paris. The service started at 10:15 and lasted until 12:30, the congregation standing the whole time! The church is most peculiarly built sort of this shape:



There are no seats at all, and there is no organ. There is a marvelous Russian choir and they sing the entire service, without accompaniment of any sort, and they sing almost continuously, there being no such thing that would correspond with a sermon. The choir is not seen at all, but about 10 priests go thru some sort of a ceremony all the way thru. I couldn't possibly explain all about it, but it was most interesting! All afternoon I spent with the chaplain of the English church here. I am beginning to meet quite a number of people around and about now, and feel much more at home than I have up to this time. My reason for being at the English Church¹⁴ this afternoon was that my name had been given to the Reverend there, as a possible person to play their organ during August in the absence of the regular organist, but I could not take it upon myself to do the work as I will explain later. Mr. Whipp, the organist at the American church who has done very much toward making Mr. Titus and I feel at home here, had been notified that the English Church would need an organist, so he immediately got in touch with me and told them of me. The church is very small and would pay about \$200 a Sunday and the use of the organ thru the week. At first I was going to accept the work, but things have come up that will make it impossible for me to do so. Nevertheless the Pastor wrote me a note and asked me to come out to tea this afternoon which I did, and also stayed for the 6 o'clock service. We became quite friends and I am to have the use of the organ at any time anyway, and he is going to get me located with a French family later on. I met a number of people of the congregation and shall have a number of friends among them that I can probably use to an advantage sometime later on.

Now the reason for my being unable to take the organ. Marchal leaves town the first of August to be gone almost two months. My theory teacher will be away also during that time.



Paris
Sunday Afternoon
July 27, 1930

Dear Mother:

This has been rather a quiet Sunday for me, compared with the others. I have been right here at home most all day practicing! I have my last lesson with Marchal next week, (until after his vacation) and he has given me such a tremendous lot to do that I've had to practice very hard. I am going to have a whole bunch of new things to get started on while I'm down at Magagnosc, too! Marchal's formal pupil that I'm going to work with while I'm there, has just let us know that he has been able to find an organ for me to practice on there, so, so much won't have to be done at the piano. It is awfully hard to get very much time on an organ, because the ones in the churches can't be used at all except a very short time each week by the organist. Some weeks there is so much going on in the churches that they can't use them at all. Marchal had Mr. Titus and myself over to his church one day this week, but we were not allowed much time. We were stopped long before we were ready to quit. As soon as I get back to Paris from Magagnosc tho', I think I am going to be able to have some practice time on an organ in a private home at a friend of Marchal's, just for learning things, a piano fitted with pedal board such as we have in the room here, is almost as satisfactory tho'. Yesterday Marchal had us to his house in the morning to play a whole bunch of new music for us; some things that have just been written in the past year. Some of the things I liked, and some of them I didn't, but a piece composed by one of Marchal's pupils (Oliver Messiaen)¹⁵ was extremely good. It's very different from anything I have ever heard and it's also very difficult. At noon Mr. Titus and myself took Mr. and Mrs. Marchal out to lunch. Mr. Titus was anxious to do some little thing for them before he left. You can't imagine what a thrill it is to be with people like that. Mr. Titus says he has never known anybody quite so interesting, musically, as Mr. and Mrs. Marchal, and of course neither have I.

This next week will be quite an exciting one I suppose. Mr. Titus leaves for Germany Wednesday. It will be a rush for him to get away because he has a million and one things he wants to do before leaving. He has finished all the lessons (he has been studying both with Dupre¹⁶ and Marchal) but he has lots of music that he is trying to locate (publications that are hard to get) and books to buy, and presents to

buy for his family, and museums etc he wants to see yet. He has gone to the Louvre this afternoon. (I didn't go tho' because I had so much to do here).

Then the following Tuesday (Aug. 5th) at 9:40 p.m. I take a train and meet Mr. Titus in Magagnosc the next day. He will be there about a week and then sail back the 16th on the "Volendam." I shall stay on down there until the last of Sept. I am beginning to look forward to the trip very much. I expect it will be some experience as I think I wrote you, I'm going 3rd class and I will be sitting up all night to save "Wagon-lit" (translated wagon beds) fare. You know, I think by the time I return to America I will have learned how to save a little money perhaps. There's much to be learned from the French. They are not the least bit stingy, but they certainly know where every half penny goes. For instance: Bread here has just gone up about 10 centimes a loaf (almost 1/3 of a cent) and everybody raised such a row about it that the government is going to have to import enough wheat to bring it back down to normal.

Your letter this week came very early in the week. Tuesday I think. Naturally, I look forward to receiving it all the time and also I look forward to writing you every week and telling you as much of the new as I can. I am terribly sorry that I did not receive Daddy's letter written in New York. You might have sent it back to me to where you knew I'd get it! It isn't too late yet. I am having nothing at all at the Conservatory here. It's much better to have private teachers and then you get more personal attention. It's rather difficult for an American to get in at the Conservatory too. All the Americans in the summer time go to Fontainebleau. (A short ways away from Paris) I think Paul Speake is there now. Mr. Titus and myself are going out there tomorrow to hear a concert and I am going to see if I can locate him.

I was glad to hear that Grandma was feeling better by your last letter. I was also glad to hear that it had cooled off a bit there. Fortunately it has warmed up a little here!! I hear from Aunt Sara and have also heard from Jesse a time or two, but they don't send me much detailed information as to what's going on in Bham. I have been anxious to know what they are going to do for a preacher at the 1st Methodist etc. I had a short letter from Miss Bessie¹⁷ today (we have mail deliveries on Sunday) from Red Borling St. The package you sent containing her present and my vest has not arrived as yet. It seems to me that it should be here by now. It's had over three weeks. If it isn't here by next week I'll let you know and you can find out something from the post office there. I have written Miss Bessie once but was sorta waiting to receive the package before I wrote her again.

I am glad to hear that you all are trying to budget scheme at home. I find that it works very well except once in a while something comes up to upset the plans. I am afraid I'm going to have to invest in some glasses before I leave Paris. So much practicing and studying is beginning to tell. I should say the girls should walk to town and save gas! You should see both Mr. Titus and myself walk here! (And subway fare is less than 3 cents)

Think I had better cut my letter off right here for this time as I have a little more practicing I'd like to do yet before supper time. I shall be looking forward to your letter this week and I will write you once or twice more, of course, before I leave for Magagnosc.

Love to all,
Orville

If you have a map and want to see where Magagnosc is, it's right at the bottom of France near Cannes and Grasse. It's a very small little place but you may be able to find it. Also not far from Marseilles.



Paris
Thursday
July 31, 1930

Dear Mother,

The postman has been very good to me today—4 letters! I was glad to have a little communication of some kind tho because yesterday Mr. Titus left for Munich and already I find myself becoming a bit lonesome. Having no one to even carry on a decent conversation with it's rather bad. And then of course having to give up such good company as Mr. Titus is doubly bad. I couldn't begin to say how much I have enjoyed his companionship this summer; we've gotten along quite splendidly together, and I don't see how I could have hardly managed without all the help he has been to me in getting settled with Marchal, arranging things for me at different places and all. It's too bad that he won't be here all winter, but then it's best that I be more on my own hook I suppose, now that I am able to get along. I shall of course see Mr. Titus again next week in Magagnosc, but then the 16th of Aug he will be gone for good. While I am at Magagnosc I shall have Mr. Titus' friend Mr. Verd (spelled VERD pronounced VERRE) as sort of a companion and someone to speak English with. I am awfully glad that things worked out so that I shall be going down there. I am very much looking forward to making the trip. The French country side is simply indescribable. I have had a glimpse of it a time or two going to Versailles, Fontainebleau, etc., but to see so much of it especially way down south will be quite swell. In our French conversation in my French lesson yesterday Madame Lepage was telling me that there is much more difference between this part of France and Southern France than the North and South in America! Paris, you see, is almost on the Northern Coast while Magagnosc is on the Mediterranean. Mrs. May (in Cinti) lived on the Mediterranean for years and she was always

saying how beautiful it was, so I can't wait to see it. I leave Paris next Tuesday nite at 9:20 and arrive at Magagnosc the next afternoon at 2:00. Quite a long journey but it only costs \$7.50.

Nevertheless I am at the same time very much thrilled with Paris; it's some city! I have gotten to where I know the town very well and have very little or no trouble at all getting from one place to another. There is of course just worlds of the town that I have not seen and probably never will for that matter. One thing about it is that it's clean!! There is no smoke such as the city of Bham is afflicted with and the only dirt that one can accumulate is what comes from the streets and that isn't much because almost every street in town is washed every day.

Everything is beginning to be a little more quiet around and about now. About half the shops just closed their doors during August I am told and will remain closed until the people get back from their summer holidays. Everybody that is able, leaves Paris during that time, but of course a city of 2 or 3 million people there isn't much noticeable change. When I went to inquire about my ticket to Magagnosc I tried to buy a round trip ticket but they don't have them that are good for more than 30 days. The man looked at me and said I must be a millionaire to be away for 2 months! They have all certain customs that everybody follows and they can't understand why anyone should do anything else. A person must have a vacation not exceeding 30 days and if he does he's considered one of the "Elite." I could write pages on some of their peculiarities, but it would take too long and then it might not be such interesting reading.

I wish we might share some of our cold weather here with you. It seems that you are getting all one kind and we are getting the other. We have had a few pleasant days but on the whole it's been way too chilly and it's rained half the time this week.

In your letter which came today I was surprised to hear that Dr. Moore was still in Bham. I thought he had been gone for some time. I had a letter from Jesse this week and he didn't seem to know who their next preacher would be. I expect they will locate somebody that can fill the place and be just as well liked as Dr. Moore, altho it may take some time. Jesse writes me that he likes the work at the church very well indeed and that they have been mighty nice to him. He is beginning to become acquainted there in Bham now and is making a lot of good friends.

Sorry to hear that you have had no luck as yet in selling the automobile. Perhaps someone will take a shot at it later on tho, let's hope so anyway. If you haven't mailed the money that was in the bank at Bham yet, be sure that you send it as an American Express money order. There is no trouble at all getting anything cashed with Am. Express on it where sometimes anything else is rather difficult. The American Express Co. has a big business here that takes up practically a whole building. It is sort of a landmark for Americans in Paris as they

furnish any service needed. Just now Paris is completely flooded with Americans. They have been coming over by the thousands but I suppose the first bunch is beginning to sail back about now. Miss Ivey and her friends sailed last week. The idea that the ordinary tourist gets of Paris must be altogether different from what Paris really is. They just touch some of the high spots being guided around and the prices have to pay! I may have written you this last week, but the Travel Bureaus charge 75 francs (\$3.00) for a trip to Versailles where we spent 7 and a half francs (30 cents) and 100 frs. to Fontainebleau where we paid 20 for railroad fare.

I must tell you all about our trip to Fontainebleau! We went over Monday of this week for the idea of hearing a concert at the American Conservatory by a friend of Mr. Titus. We arrived so early that we had time to visit The Palace before the concert. The Palace is where the kings of France lived for 600 years—among them Napoleon I. It is the most tremendous thing imaginable and is gorgeously furnished having been preserved exactly as it was when it was last in use. The tapestries in one of the bedrooms are valued at something like \$75,000. It's quite impossible to explain about it; it's necessary to see it to realize just what it is. At Fontainebleau there is also one of the most extensive forests in France. We did not have time to visit it but it is said to be about 65 miles in circumference and covers 45,000 acres. A person could never see all the points of interest in and around Paris and as I said I don't see how the tourists, who just have a few days to stay here before going somewhere else, ever see anything. Later on this week, Saturday perhaps, I want to run over to Chartres which is known as the Cathedral city. It contains one of the finest cathedrals in France—dating back to 1100. It has some of the finest stained glass to be seen, I think, and the church is said to have 1,800 statues in it. I don't remember whether it was at Chartres that Joan of Arc was burned to death or not. By the time I return to America I will be well versed on the history of France tho. Madame Lepage, my French teacher, is having me read the history of France in French and then also in our conversations we discuss history and I don't know what all. She is one of the most charming ladies imaginable and has been very nice to me. She has traveled extensively having spent many years in America and of course all over Europe and Great Britain. She speaks 5 or 6 languages and I must admit better English than I do. I am of course continuing my lesson with her right up until the day I leave next week, but I have had my last lesson with Marchal for the summer. He has given me plenty of organ work to do, but says that he is most interested that I do more with harmony, solfege, etc. for the rest of the summer than organ. He has written this former pupil of his in Magagnosc exactly what he want him to have me do.

[same letter but continued on Friday night]

I started this letter yesterday, but as I did not exactly bring it to a close then I'll write on some more now. Since I was writing yesterday I have been quite occupied with getting my things straightened out, packing my trunk, etc. As we just had our rent on this room paid until the 1st of August I am moving into a smaller room here in the hotel for the next few days to save a little something on rent. I am not going to take my big trunk down to Magagnosc. I am packing what I won't need in it and am going to store it with the American Express Co. until I return. I find that I have room enough in my bag and the little music trunk to take everything that I will need. I am leaving most all my good clothes here as I won't have much use for anything down there, it being nothing but a very small village.

Our piano is gone now, so the only practice I will get for the next few days will be on the organ. Madame Lepage has offered me the use of her piano, but I shall be so occupied with other things that I don't expect I'll have much time to take advantage of her offer. I have just returned from her house having had supper on the way home. My lesson today was 2 hours and 40 minutes long! Some of that time was taken up by us having tea before the lesson but most of it was real studying. I am very much pleased with the progress I am making in French and so is she.

Since yesterday it has turned summer again here! Today has been most delightful and the weather man says the bad weather is over and that from now on Paris will have excellent weather. I hope a change has taken place over there. I mean of course for it to have gotten cooler and not warmer.

As I said in the letter yesterday I had planned to go to Chartres tomorrow. There is a train about 1 o'clock that I am going to try to take if I can get a bunch of things done. That must be done, by getting up early. I think I'll wait and finish this letter tomorrow now, so I can tell you about what I see at Chartres.

[Going to Chartres, Saturday afternoon]

The remainder of this letter will be a sample of my writing in a third class carriage on a French railroad train. I just barely did get this train, altho I was up bright and early this morning in order to get a number of things accomplished. In the first place I walked down town as I thought I would have lots of time, but it always takes about twice as long to walk as it should as there are always dozens of shops along the way that are so interesting looking that one surely has to stop and look in.

The trip to Chartres is going to be quite an experience. People are flocking out of Paris by the thousands this being their big month and as this is Saturday afternoon of course traveling is heavier than usual. This train is filled right up to the brim; I don't see how there could be possibly room for one more and of course there is a wide assortment of all the different types of people in Paris. In

this special carriage there is one big French family; the mother and father, aunts and uncles, and about 9 children. They are jabbering away to beat the band, all talking at once, and incidentally eating lunch out of a huge basket that they brought along. Chartres is 88 kilometers from Paris (60 some odd miles) but the train is supposed to make the trip in slightly over an hour. These European trains really cover ground.

When I was in the bank this morning there was a letter from Miss Bessie and also one from Aunt Sara and Aunt Julia¹⁸ in Bham. I was naturally very glad to get them both and enjoying reading them very much. Between Aunt Sara and Aunt Julia I heard all about what's going on in Bham.

We are now nearing the station so I'll have to stop. There hasn't been much time to write as there is so much to take notice of inside and outside the train.

[Returning from Chartres]

I have just boarded the train back to Paris and it is now a little after 10:00 o'clock. I'll tell you I've had some day, and one not to be forgotten soon!

Immediately on arriving in Chartres I went to a book store and purchased me a guide book and then went over to the Cathedral—and I must say that the Cathedral far surpassed any ideas I had formed of it. It is simply too wonderful for words. I wouldn't know how to put in writing my impressions of it. It isn't the largest thing there is but I think it is the most perfect edifice in architectural design in the world. Maybe not. It is pure gothic architecture and altho it is the work of generations of people, one made the original plans and worked the whole thing out. His name is not known tho'. From the photos I am enclosing you can get a faint idea as to the outside looks of it, but no photographer in the world would do the inside justice. The light admitted into the church by the windows is a diffusion of a thousand different colors. They all blend to make the whole interior take on an indescribable effect, and the coloring changes as the sun changes. Artists come from everywhere to sit in the church and copy the windows. You can see them outside the church with their canvases and painting material. The whole outside is simply covered with statues of all sorts depicting the different Biblical scenes. Some of them have been disfigured by the weather as they date back centuries and centuries, but the effect is there.

I took in as much as I could but the church is closed about 6 o'clock so there's just worlds of it I didn't get to see, one of the main things being a chapel built some underground beneath the church. And the windows I didn't get to study at all hardly. The big windows are so high up and far away when you're on the floor that it is rather hard to get much of the details without opera glasses or something of the sort. The next time I have a chance to be there I'll know how to prepare for it and I'll get an early morning train so as to have as much time as possible to see everything. Seeing these things is as much a part of my education

over here as having organ lessons! I'd give anything if you might have all been with me today and seen it with me.

Well I think I've written enough for this time. It's rather hard writing on this train anyway. Fortunately I have almost the whole train to myself going back. There's very few people traveling towards Paris tonite, but my, how they're flocking out of it. By Tuesday the biggest part of them will be gone tho' so I won't have such a bad trip to Magagnosc. I don't suppose I'll have time to write you again before I go, but of course I'll let you hear from me as soon as I arrive. Hope you are all well.

Love to everybody,
Orville



Tuesday Nite
August 5th, 1930
On Paris-Lyon-Marseille R.R.

Dear Mother,

It is now a wee bit past 10:00; I have just boarded the train for Magagnosc and we are now speeding merrily down thru the middle of France. The trip is going to be much nicer than I expected as far as the train is concerned. The thru trains, such as this one is are much smoother and nicer than the ones I've been on so far just in and around Paris. I'm in a compartment with six other people and fortunately I seem to have been lucky enough to have some rather nice traveling companions; the compartment isn't reeking with garlic or any other similar odor, such as usually goes with the French. This having to sit up all night may get a bit monotonous, but I'm not dreading it in the least. Anyway by morning I'll know how it is!

Since I wrote you last, coming back from Chartres I've nearly run my legs off around Paris doing a million different things at the last minute yesterday and found that I would not be allowed to leave Paris unless I had my Card of Identity properly Visaed. I had to be stamped out of Paris and as soon as I arrive in Magagnosc I'll have to have the card stamped there. Believe me the Police certainly keep track of you. Mr. Titus did not have to go thru all that "rigumarole" as he will not be in France more than two months all in all. I got all the formalities fixed up tho, after being sent to no less than three different places so now I can feel free to leave and come back as I like.

Well I think I will have to end up for tonight as the rest of the passengers in here seem to be anxious to get the lights turned out. As for me I'm not yet ready to try to go to sleep, but I won't raise any objections.

[Wednesday morning]

I am quite a number of miles south of where I was when I left off writing last night; five or six hundred miles I should say, and even now it's very easy to tell the difference in the weather. It has turned quite warm and I imagine by the time we hit the extreme southern end of France it will be extra warm; but for a while anyway, it will be a relief from what we've been going thru in Paris. Since last night the countryside has changed considerably. On every side there are huge mountains, but the train seems to stay clear of them somehow or other. Some parts of France boast of mountains almost equal to those of Switzerland. I've been looking out for one with snow on top. So far there hasn't been one but they're here somewhere. Here in the valley is the most beautifully cultivated land imaginable. They seem to grow everything and every once in a while we pass thru a fruit farm (or whatever you would call it). On both sides as far as you can see are fruit trees and they're set out in a perfectly straight line anyway you look at them. All along both sides of any roadway of course is a line of trees, but even in the woods they all seem to be laid out in a geometric pattern of some sort. The French people certainly take pains with everything they do, no matter what it is. And their railroad system is far in advance to that of the U.S.A.

[Thursday night]

Tis now Thursday nite . . . As soon as the train hit the Mediterranean yesterday I was too taken up with everything to write any more and since I've been here there has been so much to see and do that I didn't get to finish the letter up last night as I wanted to.

My train arrived in Cannes yesterday afternoon and Mr. Titus had already gotten in from Munich (coming from the opposite direction) on an earlier train. I stepped from my train right onto the little local train that brought us from Cannes to Grasse. At Grasse we had to take a bus over to Magagnosc as it's such a small place that there is no railroad. Grasse is only about 10 minutes by bus tho' and there is a direct bus to Cannes that takes only 40 or 50 min. So you see we are not so very far from civilization (because Cannes is very civilized being one of the most distinctive resorts on the Mediterranean) but we are far enough up in the mountains to be away from things.

Magagnosc is one of the nicest places imaginable (only 300 or 400 inhabitants). We are living at a place called "Le Moulin." It's sort of a resort where a few French families live and where a few others just come for the summer. Mr. Verd closes his house during the summer and comes here to live. He has a room right next to ours. And from our window we get the most excellent view of the Mediterranean imaginable. We are way up in the mountains, high above the sea, and there are lots of things between us and the sea, but we get about the

same view of it as Mrs. Johnson's¹⁹ gets of Hville [Huntsville] from her house. Only instead of us being on top of the mountain as she is, there is miles and miles of mountain back of us. This whole mountain range is the very beginning of the Alps. We went for a ride this afternoon and from the top of one of the mountains here we could see way over into Italy where real Alps are. I am simply carried away by it all. You know how much I like the mountains anyway, but to think of having things in such a setting as they are here is just too much. To think of living in such surroundings as this, and let me tell you what it's going to cost—the equivalent of \$1.00 a day for room and three meals a day! For \$30.00 there my room and board is paid for a whole month. It's almost unbelievable but it's the truth. I shall have to pay quite a little to go to Cannes for my lessons etc, but it will be much cheaper than if I had remained in Paris and then to get to see all this!

I am going to cut this letter short for the simple reason that it would take pages and pages to write you everything and I'm anxious to get this much off to you to let you know I arrived etc.

It's now Thursday, but in my regular letter to you Sunday I'll write you about everything. There's only one mail going out every day and that's very early in the morning so in order to get this off and away I'll finish up now so as to mail it tonite.

I hope you are all quite well and not suffering from the heat too much. Here it is warm, but at the same time there is always a cool breeze as we are so high up. All in all it's just too perfect. I am having the time of my life.

Love to everybody,
Orville



Sunday Nite
August 10, 1930
Magagnosc A.M.²⁰

Dear Mother:

I shall start a letter to you tonite although I have no idea that I will get to finish it as I have a French lesson in store for me yet tonite. Before we arrived here Mr. Verd had me a French teacher all picked out and my lessons are free. There is a young gentleman, a medical student who speaks very good English, that is helping me along. He gives me French lessons and I help him with English. There is not much I can do for him but talk English with him, but he is of course a lot of help to me and day by day my French becomes a little better.

Fortunately Madame Lepage worked so hard with me the last few days I was in Paris that I am able to take whatever may come along now, very rapidly. Mr. Verd also is helping me each day with French. He is helping me to cultivate a large vocabulary and I am going about it in the same way that he says he learned English. He has me read aloud to him from a French book; first in French and then in English, and all the words that I can't translate I look them up in my dictionary and make a list of them. Then I study the list and every morning he makes me go over the list with him. The list gets longer every day of course, but the continual going over it will leave an impression sooner or later that will remain, and after so long a time I will have a large bunch of words in my head. Of course everybody else in the place here is anxious to help me along and I converse with them in all my spare time.

The place I am staying is called the "Moulin." It is sort of a small hotel which in the winter time, takes in about 20 people, not more than that I should say. When I arrived last week there were quite a number of people here from the surrounding cities, that has come to the mountains to spend their vacation but now the only ones left are Mr. Titus, Mr. Verd and myself and about 5 other people. I think I told you the other day something of where Magagnosc is situated etc. Le Moulin is the last building of any sort looking down the mountain. The town, what little there is, is all back of us. We have nothing in front of us but a few other ranges of mountains between us and the sea. There are a number of small places built in and around. A number of spots are down the mountain side, but they are so hidden that we can't make them out very well. In a valley right at the foot of the mountain is the city of Cannes, but it also is so well hidden that we see only a few scattered houses. Cannes is one of the most elegant cities on the Mediterranean. (along with Monte-Carlo and Nice). I think I wrote you last week that I will have to go to Cannes for my organ lessons and organ practice. Also my harmony and solfege man in Cannes, a Mr. Steigler.²¹ I will go down three times a week, Mon, Wed, and Fri; Monday and Friday besides practicing organ I will have harmony and solfege lessons and on Wednesdays I will have organ lessons. All that along with what I am doing here with Mr. Verd will keep me busy a plenty. There is a piano in the hotel here that I have at my disposal but it is not so good so Mr. Verd has me use the one in his house. He has a house here, higher up the mountain back (or above) Magagnosc, but he does not live in it during the summer. He stays here at "Le Moulin." His place being higher up, naturally the view is even more beautiful than the one from here. His house which he planned all himself is in a perfect setting and although it is only about 4 yrs old now, the garden (flower garden) is the most picturesque thing imaginable. The whole thing is planned in such a way that the flowers, or some kind of flowers are blooming all thru the year. The winters are so mild that very few of the shrubs and trees lose their green leaves at all. The olive trees which

simply cover the place never change all year. Imagine working and practicing in such surroundings as that! Everything here at "Le Moulin" is just so nice too! It is of course done on a much larger scale. Directly in front looking down the mountain is a large well kept sort of a court; orange trees, olive trees, huge tall cypress trees etc, etc, and then in front of that, taking in a great amount of territory down the mountain side is the vegetable garden, fruit orchard, vineyard, etc. All in all it's just about the grandest place imaginable. I wouldn't take anything for having come here and I shall hate very much to leave when the time comes. This whole part of France is very much like the South in America. As I wrote Aunt Sara the place has all the advantages of Florida and none of the disadvantages. Right here is of course very much "country" and in some ways reminds me a little of Uncle Arthur's.²² All, excellent fresh vegetables and fruits and the food is marvelous. It seems that I am on a long vacation in the mountains and at the same time I can do all the working and studying that I like.

[Break]

Since I started this letter quite a lot of time has passed. It is now Tuesday morning. Yesterday (Monday) I went to Cannes for my first lesson with Mr. Steigler and we have made quite a good start. Mr. Titus went along to help me along for the first time and after all my work was done we remained in Cannes for the rest of the day. The lady at the hotel had fixed us a picnic lunch and we had lunch on a small steamer that we took to go out to some islands, on which there is a monastery which we went all thru, and lots of other interesting things. The islands are just a short distance out from the mainland and a marvelous view can be had of Cannes and the towering mountains behind it from islands. The mountains here are the very beginning of the Alps.

Also while we were in Cannes yesterday we went swimming in the sea. It was my first experience in salt water and I liked it a lot. The sand beach is also something that I have never had the pleasure of coming directly in contact with before and was quite an experience. Well, so much for our "outing" to Cannes.

Mr. Titus leaves this week, Thursday, for home. While he is here Mr. Verd says he is being a little lenient with me but when he leaves I have to really get to work. Mr. Verd had planned a trip for us through the country, up in the mountains, which we made last week one day. We visited all sorts of peculiar places and funny looking little towns. A lot of the towns up in the mountains are very, very old being first constructed by the Romans and they still are surrounded by old Roman fortifications and walls. As a rule they seem to be built right on the edge, on top of a tall mountain, so that in the old days they could better protect themselves, having only one side that the enemy could possibly attack from. One of the cities that we especially visited is very little changed from what it always has been. The streets are crooked and running in every sort of direction. Some

of the unimportant streets are so narrow that an automobile could not possibly get along on it. On the mountains they grow flowers which are used to make perfume. Perfume making is the greatest industry for this part of the country. I will send you a flower from the top of the alpes.

On another day Mr. Verd had planned for us a regular excursion from here which is made by bus. We went to Nice, Monte Carlo, Menton, and all the cities along the Mediterranean. We went right up to the Italian border, which is a short ways out of Menton, but did not go over into Italy as we could not cross the border without having our passport along. This trip was most interesting, but in quite a different way than the other one we made up thru the country in the mountains. All in all I've seen so much and so many different things since I've left Paris a week ago tonight that I'm right now in sort of a daze. But the sight seeing is all over now tho except for what excursions I expect to make on foot around.



Sunday Morning
August 17, 1930
At the Moulin

Dear Mother:

I have just finished breakfast and it is hardly yet 8 o'clock, but I shall take time to write you all before I begin the day's work. I thought I was doing lots of work in Paris, but here I find myself even more occupied. Mr. Verd sees to it that I don't have a single idle moment. The other day he said, "Well now, Sunday is a holiday for you; of course you will study all morning and most of the afternoon and have a French lesson at night, but the rest of the day is your own to do as you like with it!" The "rest of the day" I will take a walk similar to the one last Sunday, but one not quite so long. All my work here certainly seems to be agreeing with me tho—I've never felt better. I suppose it's a mixture of the mountain air and regular hours that's doing the good work. As soon as I can get to a pair of scales I want to weigh and see how much I have gained. I'm sure it's something like 10 lbs! I have never seen so much food and I've never tasted any, any better. I will enclose a postal card of the Moulin so you can get an idea what the place looks like. In the card my room is hidden by a tree, but you can see where it is.

To save time, that Mr. Verd says I need to put on harmony and solfège, he has suggested that I cut down on my letters to everybody but you all. He does not say to write less, but to make all the letters very short and to the point, and whenever possible just write a postal card. It is quite the truth that writing long letters to everybody takes a world of time, so most of my friends that I have been

keeping in touch with will from now on receive letters written as a person would word a telegram or else be satisfied with a postal card.

Your letters have been very much delayed since I arrived in Magagnosc, but of course they do finally reach here. The last one I received was written Aug. 6th. A little later on we will have to allow more than two weeks for a letter I expect, because after the tourist rush season is over many of the boats are taken off the transatlantic service for the winter. The "Volendam" which should land Mr. Titus in N.Y. sometime today makes only one more trip for the summer. Sometime in November it starts on a "round the world" cruise.

I must say that your last letter was in rather a pessimistic vein, but then I'm sure things will be in much better shape when fall sets in. I had a letter from Aunt Sara yesterday and she seemed to think that Aunt Julia would be willing to loan me what I wanted. Anyway I suppose I will know for sure when I hear from you next time. If not I still have one more way of getting some money and if that doesn't work out I suppose there is nothing can be done about it. Daddy will remember the New York Life Insurance Co's building we visited in New York. (and also the president office; the president being on a prolonged vacation when we were there.) Well the president who is Mr. T A Buckner is personal friend of Mr. Verd's. Mr. Verd lived with them a number of years when he was in New York. It seems that Mr. Buckner has a personal fund of his that he uses exclusively to help students who need financial aid. Mr. Verd says he has gotten money in that way for a number of pupils of his in the past and that now if the money isn't all loaned out at the present he is sure that Mr. Buckner will be glad to turn loose the amount I want. Anyway he wrote Mr. Buckner the other day to see if there would be a chance, so if Aunt Julia cannot float a loan perhaps it can be gotten in that way. I am not definitely expecting things to work out from any quarter tho' so if they don't I won't be so terribly disappointed. As to finding anything to do in Paris on my return, it is very doubtful.

According to a French law, a musician at the present time, is not supposed to come into the country and obtain work. It's difficult to work around that, but it can be done. Anyway just at the present I can only hope that things will work out.

By this time Daddy has of course made his trip to New York and is back home again. I hope that he was able to do lots of good up there and obtain many orders, so as to keep the wheels turning. I suppose things will all return to normalcy when fall comes and some of the heat subsidies.

You have not said anything lately about whether the automobile has had any prospective buyers. I suppose not! If not of course that's that, but I suggest that it would be better to just keep it than let it go for a little of nothing.

Have had lots of mail this week. More than ever before! Two letters from [Birmingham radio station] WAPI (Mr. Campbell and Mr. Hardner). They related

all the goings on at the station and incidentally said that I should just send a cable over if I was homesick and wanted a job. I can't say that I'm homesick because I'm well settled here now (in fact I will feel like I'm going to a very familiar place when I return to Paris) but I may have to hold them to their word at WAPI when the present funds run out.

By the way if I haven't told you already—The only good way to send money over is American Express money order, and of course by Registered Mail—because Mr. Verd tells me that many letters are lost in France.

Among my other many letters from this week was a four page typewritten letter from Mr Allen! It seems that he has been on the go all summer and has not had a chance to write me before this. This letter certainly made up for all lost time tho. It contained all the news imaginable and believe me it was a corker!

All my friends have been so good about writing me that I feel that there's very little that goes on over there that I don't know about.

My! So many birthdays all at once! If I'm not entirely too late may I wish you all a happy birthday! (That you've had already).

The singing in the choir in Paris that I mentioned would be at the American church so of course I wouldn't have to sing in French.

The weather here remains marvelous, while we are reading in the papers where they are having storms all over the rest of Europe. Here it is seldom bad when it's awful everywhere else, because we are shielded by having all the mountains back of us. I am making the most of the good weather working outside on the terrace except when I have to be at the piano. I'm wearing almost no clothes at all. Only a shirt—a pair of pants and sandals without even stockings!

Well I think that's about all I can write for this time. Must put myself to working harmony now. Harmony over here is really harmony where in the United States they merely touch the surface. So it is with anything in a musical way. America is nowhere near as far advanced in music as France, and it will probably be some years before it is.

Well—tell everybody hello for me around and about and with lots of love to you all.

Orville



Sunday
August 31, 1930

Dear Mother,

The postman has been extra good to me this week. I have had two letters from you—the second one arriving yesterday along with one from Miss Bessie and one from Bham.

There's very little that I have to write this time about myself and my doings as I am not doing a thing outside of eating three times a day and study-

ing in between. Mr. Verd is being simply too good to me for words and I am learning much under his guidance. He believes in a person having plenty of work to do and any one that stays around him has to work or else. He has helped me plan my courses of study and if I can ever finish it I can then begin to get some insight into what music really is. My musical education has been sadly neglected, but no more than any other American I suppose. Over there a person merely gets a "smattering" of what it's all about whereas over here they plunge into it head first and even tho it takes twice the time to do it that it does in America when a person finishes he really is a musician with a sound understanding of things. What I have ahead of me is about 4 or 5 years if I expect to come out on top. That of course seems like a long time and of course right now I can't see just how the end is going to be reached, but it is well worth keeping in mind and well worth working for. There are very few Americans that even stick it out to the finish. Americans as a rule like to take so called short cuts and do things in a hurry—but if the complete thing is done as it should be, and done thoroughly, then a person has something that he can rely on to be respected and looked up to in later days. As I say, I certainly don't see the end in sight for me just now, but I am making plans to do it somehow, sometime. The only certain thing just now is that I will have to get all I possibly can this time and when the present money runs out, return to America, pay off my debts and then make enough to return over here and set in to studying again.

Naturally I was mighty glad to hear from you that Aunt Julia is willing to loan me the \$500.00. If she had not I would of course have had to be making plans to leave here very soon. To do that would have been quite a pity because the few months that I have been here have only been preparing me to take in all that I shall be able to do from now on. With that \$500.00, and what I have left of what I brought with me, will keep me here I hope until sometime in February of next year. Mr. Verd and myself have made out a plan making the money go as far as it will, but of course there are certain limits that anything can be stretched to. I have taken into consideration tho some few things that I know I will have to buy such as a heavy overcoat, some heavy underwear, rubber shoes, etc. Paris is not really as cold as Cinti but it rains all during the winter making it very unpleasant and seemingly colder than it is. I might ask you all to send the heavy underwear, but I'm afraid it would cost more that way in the long run, because the duty I would have to pay when it reached here would be pretty stiff. I had to pay duty on my vest that you sent and also on the pajamas. If you can inquire something about how much the duty would be (it has to be paid here) you might send me about three suits not too heavy anyway. No! on second thought perhaps I'd better get it here as clothes are not so very expensive.

If Daddy was in New York on the 25th that was the day that Mr. Titus was to have landed. If Daddy inquired around about the boats perhaps he

found that the Volendam was to be in port that day and perhaps he saw Mr. Titus—yes? I certainly hope that such a thing might have taken place because Mr. Titus could have given a lot of information about how well situated I am here and told just how I was getting along. Well anyway I shall know as soon as I've had a few more letters from you. Hope Daddy's trip to New York was most successful in every way and that business conditions will generally be better with the coming of fall.

Guess you all feel better that the weather has turned a little cooler there. All week here everybody has been complaining how hot it has been, but as for me it has not been too warm. I was wishing for some summer time in Paris and I'm really getting it here.

You asked about whether Madame Lepage was young or old—Aunt Sara also asked the same thing her last letter. She is quite old, between 55 and 60 I should say.

I was sorry to hear from you about Frances' experience of getting too much sun. I have been swimming here a few times in the sea but for some reason the sun does not seem to have such a burning effect as over there.

Well I suppose I've written about all I can for this time. As I said I'm doing nothing but work these days so there's very little to write about. I want to take a little time off tonight and write Aunt Julia telling her how much I appreciate the loan and all. It's a mighty good feeling to know that there are people who have confidence enough in you to help you in such a way. I shall of course make the most of it in every way possible.

Love to all,
Orville

P.S. I didn't exactly tell you the full extent of my plans for the future. As I said the money will be giving out shortly after the 1st of the year so at that time I will return to America and go to work wherever I can make the most money. I will very soon get in touch with WAPI and also a new big theatre in Cinti, but I can probably do better in Bham as I have sort of a little reputation already worked up there. I have it all planned that I shall have an income, somehow, not less than \$300.00 a month. Then by guarding my money (something which I have learned to do) within 15 or 16 months I should be able to pay off all the money I have borrowed and have enough ahead to come back over here the fall of 1932 and stay for two years. By repeating that same thing again I should have pretty well started on my way towards a musical education. Ah well—we shall see how well my plans can be carried out.



Sunday Nite
Sept. 7, 1930

Dear Dad:

Of course all my letters are written to you the same as mother but I send this one to you especially, answering your letter written in N.Y. which arrived a few days ago. I can't say how glad I was to receive some word from you from the big city; it naturally brings to mind our day there together June 6th. That does not seem so terribly long ago, but according to the calendar has been something over 3 months! Time certainly does fly. The day for me to be returning to the "land of liberty" will be here before you know it.

I can't say how glad I am that you had a chance to see Mr. Titus even if it was for only a few short minutes. It was quite a coincidence that you should happen [to be] in N.Y. just the day for the "Volendam" to get into port. It's good that you were able to talk with Mr. Titus and get some idea from him as to how well situated I am and how well I'm getting along. I feel that things could not have worked out for me in a better way than they have; as to getting with good teachers, getting off right and all. Of course I owe much to Mr. Titus—if he had not been along things might not have turned out so well, and then of course it has meant much to me being able to be right with him all summer.

A letter from Bham arrived this week containing the American Express money order and everything was in good shape. I immediately signed the note and returned it to Aunt Julia along with a letter to her telling her how much I appreciated the loan. If she had not been able to let me have the money I suppose there would have been nothing to do but be coming home very soon. That would have been quite a pity, because from now on I shall be better prepared to understand what's taught me and all than that I have up to this time. With this extra money I shall be able to prolong my stay for some time. I cannot say just exactly how long, but as soon as I return to Paris I can figure pretty closely just how long it will last. When the end of this amount is reached I of course will be returning home and you know what the remainder of my plans will be from my letter last week. I have written WAPI to see if they would have anything decent to offer me. It will of course be some time before I have time to hear from there, but I think everything will work out o.k. in the end—At least I hope so. And I hope nothing will prevent me from carrying out my plans to return over here a couple of years from now and finish up my studies.

I am glad to hear that conditions look as if they will be better with the coming of fall. I hope that business will pick right up now and continue in the

upward trend from now on. I suppose that the heat will have a general bad effect on everything for some time to come tho! I don't see why it doesn't send the price of cotton up tho!

Well I'm going to have to stop writing for tonight as I am quite tired. I have made a long walk in the mountains this afternoon, over a route similar to the one I wrote you all about a few weeks ago. The country down here is most beautiful and this afternoon seemed a little more so than usual. I stuck around pretty close all week as all of my time is taken up with studies and practicing but on Sunday afternoons I get out and jaunt about the countryside a bit.

[Monday morning]

Well I have had a good night sleep now and feel more like writing. The mountain air here makes one sleep like a log, and I was naturally extra tired last night from walking so much yesterday afternoon.

Outside of my Sunday walks there's nothing else exciting that I do all week, so there's very little for me to write now-a-days. I go to Cannes three times a week for my organ and harmony lessons and the rest of the days I stay right here studying. I am trying to get as far advanced into harmony as possible while I'm here so I can put most of my time on the organ when I return to Paris and Marchal.

Since I started writing this morning the postman has brought me a letter from mother written while you were in N.Y. I am glad to hear that your weather has cooled off considerably. I suppose you are not sorry in the least.

It's perfectly satisfactory with me that you need the money left in the Bham bank to pay the insurance with. Now that Aunt Julia's \$500.00 has arrived I of course do not need the few dollars that were left in Bham.

Well I must stop writing now and get started on my day's work. Next time I hope to have something more interesting to say, but I suppose most of my letters will be rather like this until I start back for Paris. I have not exactly set my day for going to Paris yet but it will somewhere near the 1st of Oct.

Hope your trip to New York was pleasant in every way and that things will be going along fine from now on.

With lots of love to everybody,
Orville



Sunday
Sept. 14, 1930

Dear Mother,

It is Sunday morning and for some unknown reason I happen to be up earlier than usual so I will start a letter to you while I am waiting for my breakfast

to be brought in—Breakfast is served right in one's own room, and even in bed if you like. As a matter of fact it isn't really breakfast, but merely something to tide you over till noon time when you get a real meal. The so-called breakfast consists of bread and butter and some hot milk or coffee. The noon meal which they really call breakfast is more than enough to make up for both our breakfast and lunch tho. It's quite peculiar all the different customs that one meets up with in different countries—This is one custom that is found all over Europe tho I think except for England. It was most difficult for me to get used to this one thing as I have always enjoyed eating especially in the morning, but I don't mind at all now.

I have had no letter from you as yet this week but I rather expect something will come in this morning's mail. I think there have been very few boats coming in this direction this week for some reason or other—but there was something in Thursday I think so if you had a letter on that boat I should get it this morning.

Things with me have been going along about as usual with nothing especially exciting taking place—just merely studying, practicing, and having lessons from day to day. Mr. Verd moved back up to his house this week, as his mother came back from her visit in Marseille. The only difference his leaving the “Moulin” has with me is that I have to have my meals without any company, which is not quite so pleasant—but all the rest of my time I have been in the habit of spending up at his house anyway, so now I have someone around all the while up there. His mother is very nice. I like her very much. She is the spryest thing imaginable traveling all over the country alone, goes to Paris and dodges thru traffic as well as anyone, but she is up in her seventies. The young Frenchman whom I have been studying French with has left Magagnosc, returning to his home in Nice, so Madame Verd is going to help me with my French. She also speaks English, almost as well as Mr. Verd. There are very few people here, the ones that have had a thorough education, that don't speak a number of different languages.

Well it is now Sunday afternoon. Since I started to write this morning I have been up to Mr. Verd's studying and practicing. At noon when I came down to dinner I found that your letter had arrived as I had expected it would. I am glad to hear that Daddy has gotten back home o.k. and that his trip to N.Y. was profitable. I hope that things will continue to go along smoothly and that conditions generally will be better very soon. I enjoyed looking over the article clipped from the N.Y. paper. It seems to me that “we” musicians have had enough trouble with theatre owners over the “talkies” and everything that we would be agreeing to most anything now. But some people just naturally are crazy and hard headed.

I was sorry to hear that Hville had had such a bad time. There must have been some excitement! Did not Mr. Culps have a store along in there somewhere?

I of course wrote you last week that the check of Aunt Julia's arrived quite o.k. I shall not have any need to cash it until I get back to Paris so I'll leave it

just as it is and deposit it in the Bank at Paris as soon as I arrive. I shall be leaving here three weeks from tomorrow I think. That will be Monday October 6th. I noticed that your letter this week was addressed right to Magagnosc. I suggest that as soon as you receive this letter that you start sending mail to the Bank in Paris again so that there will be no chance of a letter having to come all the way down here and then be forwarded to me in Paris. The bank will always have my address and will send mail on to me no matter where I happen to be. As yet I do not know where I will live when I get back to Paris. The English pastor has a place in mind for me but Mr. Verd seems to think that I can find just as good a place for less money somewhere else. We are now in correspondence with a number of people and places in Paris so before long I should know just about where I will be living. It is difficult to find a place that will be near Marchal, Madame Lepage, Mlle. Grandjany (my harmony teacher to be), the organ practice place and everything all at the same time. If I can possibly do so I want to be in the same neighborhood as the Royer-Collard. That section of Paris near the Luxembourg I like best of all. I shall feel more at home if I can be near there. But we shall see.

For the first time since I've been here in Magagnosc we've had bad weather. It rained off and on for about two days this last week and it cooled the atmosphere off considerably. The sun has been out all day today tho' so it's warming up again. The climate here being rather tropical it seldom rains except during what they call the rainy season and then it rains continuously for about a month. Fortunately I won't be here to get any of that, but a winter in Paris is usually not so very agreeable. The worst part of the winter there comes in Feb and March tho so I may not get any of that.

I don't know of much else that I can write about this week. I am leading too quiet a life here to have much of anything to write about. It certainly is agreeing with me tho because I'm getting as fat as a pig. I have never had a chance to weigh myself but from the way my clothes are tightening up I must have gained pounds and pounds. My belt has been let out to its last notch!

I shall wait and take this letter to Cannes with me as I go tomorrow to mail it; it goes more quickly from there than here. Maybe I shall think of something else I can add by tomorrow. But for today anyway I'll stop. Hope you are all well. Glad that grandmother is feeling better.

Love to all, Orville

[Monday afternoon]

I am now on the way to Cannes for my regular Monday harmony lesson and organ practice. I can think of nothing else I might add that would be of interest so I'll seal the letter up so I can post it as soon as we arrive in Cannes.

The weather seems to have taken a bad turn since yesterday. Altho it has not been raining in Magagnosc it has been cloudy all day and we could see a thunderstorm taking place down in the valley towards the sea. I don't think it will last very long tho; at least I hope the rainy season is not starting in now. I should not particularly care to be going around in the rain during the rest of my stay here.

Orville



Sunday Afternoon
September 21
Magagnosc Hotel

Dear Mother:

I have just gotten back home from my regular Sunday afternoon walk and now while I'm waiting for the supper bell to ring I will begin the letter to you. My walk this afternoon I made all alone, as the young Frenchman who has been here all summer has returned to his home in Nice and no one else here that I know cares to walk quite so far as I like to go. It isn't quite as pleasant going all alone, but this afternoon I picked out an entirely new territory to go to, and it was very very nice. There's no use telling you where I went I don't suppose, as you wouldn't know any more after I told you than before. I will have to wait until I get home with maps and pictures and then I can tell you more about things. Unfortunately, I have not a camera and nobody in Magagnosc that I know has a camera!! I am thinking seriously of spending a dollar or so tho to get one so that I can have some pictures to bring home. Perhaps I can find a little box camera that will be cheap. The weather today has been simply great although we are having something that I have never before witnessed. Once every so often thru-out the year the wind starts blowing here and keeps up for three days without stopping. They call it a "mistral." I suppose it is the same word in English. It's sort of like our March weather only it's a little stiffer breeze. This particular "Mistral" is coming from the north, back up in the mountains, so it's nice and cool, but they also have one coming from the south sometimes, from Africa that brings plenty of heat. The wind sends all the clouds scattering making the weather very clear. The sea today is extremely distinct—you can make out the slightest little details on the coast. Ah well, there's the supper bell so I'll run and eat and come back and finish this letter tonite.

After eating such a big meal I don't know whether I am capable of writing or not but I'll try. The meals here are simply too good to be true. The quantity is really too much for a person to eat and the quality is the finest imaginable. It is really one place in a thousand! How on earth the lady serves the meals she

does and gives you a room and everything for \$1.00 a day is a mystery to me. Of course the place is rather small and she and her daughter do practically all the work (and she does the cooking) but even at that, to merely eat one meal as she serves would \$1.00 most anywhere else. I must make the most of it while I'm here tho, because I'm sure that there is no possible chance to having anything like this when I get back to Paris, at any price.

Your letter written September 9 (the day after schools started) reached me today. All of your letters lately seem to be getting here on Sunday. I suppose it's rather a relief now that the schools have started—although I know it's a job to get things started off, buying books and everything.

The questions you ask in your letter today about how I am going to take care of the check I received from Aunt Julia I think I answered last week. I shall not bother it at all until I get back to Paris. I think I also wrote you last week that I will be leaving here for Paris on the 6th of October. (Two weeks from tomorrow).

Sorry to hear that the automobile is not as yet sold, but I quite agree that there's no use letting it go unless you can get a fairly decent price for it.

Had a letter from Aunt Sara yesterday giving me all the news of Bham. They had all thought that the Alabama [Theatre] was to be having music again the 1st of September but when she wrote her letter Sept. 8th there was yet nothing doing and I'll bet there won't be for some time to come yet. Aunt Sara said that according to Jesse the new preacher at 1st Church was quite o.k. and that he thought everybody liked him real well.

No I haven't gotten my glasses as yet. I thought I would get them before I left Paris, but my eyes seem to be doing pretty well for a time so I have just let it drift along, but I think I had better get it done now right away—even tho it will cost quite a little bit to do so. I have inquired and there is a place in Cannes that is quite good so I will visit it sometime this week and see what I can do about getting fixed up.

Mr. Verd had a long letter from Mr. Titus today telling all the news of Cinti and the Conservatory. Mr. Titus also enclosed in the letter a long article clipped from the Cinti paper giving something of the activities of the Conservatory. There was quite a long column about Mr. Titus and his trip over here and there was also a similar article about me. Nothing like a little publicity!

Well I can't think of single other thing to be writing about tonight, so I guess I might as well end up. I had wanted to write the folks in Newport a letter tonight but it is now drawing on towards 9 o'clock so I expect it's too late to start. Hope you are all well and that everything is going along o.k.

Love to all,
Orville



Sunday
Sept. 28, 1930

Dear Mother:

I have just gotten in from my regular Sunday afternoon hike; I did not go very far today though, as the weather has not been any too good. It looks as if it might start in and rain right now, but I hope that it will not, because this is my last week here and I'd like to finish up my stay here with good weather—there will be enough bad weather in Paris. I leave here a week from tomorrow so I suppose by this time next Sunday I will be in the midst of packing etc. I have to go to Cannes to catch my train as Magagnosc is not on the main line. I take a train leaving Cannes at 3:30 Monday afternoon and arrive in Paris Tuesday morning (Oct 7th) at about 9:30. There will be no time lost by making [the] trip—Mr. Verd has decided that I shall have a lesson with him Monday morning and then as I will be in Cannes anyway I am going to have a harmony lesson just before I take the train—I rather think that that's making every minute count. The lady here at the "Moulin" is going to fix me up a lunch to eat on the train so that I will have no extra expense of buying food on the way. So you see I am all fixed up! As yet I do not exactly know where I will stay when I return to Paris—unless things turn out as I expect them to I will take a room at the "Royer-Collard" for one night until I find what I want. Anyway we shall see.

Your letters written Sept 14th arrived yesterday—a day earlier than usual. I am so sorry to hear that you all are still in the throes of the hot weather. Aren't you all ever going to cool off? Here fall has set in and it is some cooler—especially here in the mountains. As soon as the sun sets at night (the sun sets by about 5:00 and it is dark by 7:00 now) it gets quite chilly. Next week all of Europe goes back to their regular time, having had day light saving time all summer, so it will be dark an hour sooner than it is now and of course the days are getting shorter every day. Unfortunately very few of the trees lose their leaves in the fall and winter, here, so the country-side is not a blaze of color as it is in America, but I suppose in Paris they have regular fall weather with enough frost to turn the leaves. I am anxious to see what the Luxembourg Gardens will look like.

I am glad to hear that some orders are coming in for the mill.²³ I hope everything over there is on the upward trend now, although according to a letter I had from Aunt Sara yesterday things in Bham are not so good. I understand they have stopped work on the new courthouse on account of no funds. Glad to hear that Thelma is going out to the mill and being of some use there. Hope she likes it.

I am glad to hear that you think well of my plans to return to France at some later date and finish up my work. I still have in mind exactly the same plans that I wrote you about some time ago. Mr. Verd and myself have looked at things from every angle and discussed matters a great deal and I think that if I can carry out exactly what I wrote to you about, it will be the best thing. Mr. Verd had a letter this last week from Mr. Buckner (The pres. of N.Y. Life ins. Co.) and he said that he would be glad to let me have any amount of money that I wanted, but I think it's best not to take advantage of his offer because as it is, I am \$1,000.00 in the hole and of course the more I borrow the longer it will take to pay it back and the longer it would be before I could get back over here. As it is, if I return to America soon after the first of the year by working as I plan to do, by the fall of 1932 I should have paid back all the money I owe and have \$1,500.00 or \$2,000.00 saved. With that amount I could return to Paris without having to worry about finances and borrowing that I could stay for a year or so and then when that money gives out I could take advantage of Mr. Buckner's offer and borrow enough money to remain until I finish up. Anyways that's what Mr. Verd has written to Mr. Buckner. It was mighty good to know that I could have had help if I had wanted it tho; even tho I will not take advantage of it right now. So as it is, when the present funds run out, I think it will be best to return home. By that time I will have gotten a thorough foundation as to what my work is, and while I'm back in America I can of course carry on the same work alone enough not to lose any ground and then when I do return to Paris I will be all set to make some real progress! Anyway we shall see.

As I wrote you once before I have written WAPI, but as yet have had no reply. I rather think that they will have some profitable offer. I have also written Mr. Titus my plans and have written the musicians union in Cinti in regards to locating something.

I wrote Miss Bessie last week. The composition has been neglected as I've had no spare time but when I get back to Paris I'll try to finish it up at once. Is Joe studying piano this year?

Well I don't know of much else that I can write this time; I think I've given you all the news there is. This will be the last letter I will write from here. I will write you on my way to Paris a week from tomorrow. Anyway a letter that I would mail in Paris on Tuesday would make better time than mailing one here Sunday or Monday and then I can give you all the details of the trip!

Hope everything continues to go along in good shape there and that you are all well.

With love to all,
Orville



Tuesday Morning
Oct. 7, 1930

Dear Mother:

I shall begin this letter to you on the train, but probably will have to finish it later. After much hurrying and running around I left Cannes yesterday afternoon as per schedule; it is now Tuesday morning and we are only a little more than an hour out of Paris. The trip up has been quite nice and has seemed much shorter than when I was going the other way for some reason or other. I suppose it always seems shorter when you are retracing your steps—and then too the train has not been so crowded as when I went down and my traveling companions have all been rather nice.

Everything in Magagnosc has been so swell and everybody there has been so good to me that I really hated a terrible lot to leave, but then, now that I'm drawing near to Paris again you can imagine that I'm quite pepped up over all I have to look forward to. Mr. Verd has been a wonderful help to me in every way possible; in fact no one could have possibly done any more for me than he has. He has given me a number of letters to friends of his in Paris that I am to look up and of course that will all help me out and make things a little more pleasant. Fortunately I have been able to get a room in the very place that we have hoped all along would be the place. The lady, a Madame Simon, was unable to let me know until right up to the first of the month whether the room would be vacant or not, but she found that she could hold it for me, so I will of course take my bags and go directly to her place on arriving in Paris. It will be much nicer than if I had been unable to locate a place and had had to go room hunting—because I know what that is. Mr. Titus and myself had a taste of it. The English Pastor's places were all a little higher priced than Mr. Verd thought I should pay. At Madame Simon's I will be paying \$14.00 a month for room and breakfast and the other meals that I want to have there will be about 35 cents each. (She is expecting me for lunch today.) The fact that I will not [have to] take all my meals there, that is—paying a flat sum for both room and board is a great convenience and probably something that is not to be found in many places.

There will be times when my lessons or practice would not allow me to return home at meal times so of course if I had already paid for it there and then had to eat elsewhere it would be double expense, but as it is I only pay by the meal. I will of course take most of my meals there because it is some cheaper than restaurants and certainly the food will be better.

The weather has changed considerably since I boarded the train yesterday. It was downright hot when I left Magagnosc, but since we are now quite a number of miles north of there, it is rather chilly. Regular fall weather—with a “nip” to it.

Well we are drawing in towards Paris now so I suppose I had better begin getting ready to get off. Writing on this train is not the easiest thing in the world anyway. I only hope that what I have written so far makes some sort of sense and that you will not have too much trouble trying to read it. As soon as I get out to my place of abode I will finish it up.

It is now late Tuesday afternoon and I have just gotten back out to my room after running around and trying to get as many of my affairs arranged as possible. Immediately on arriving in Paris this morning I came right out here and found Madame Simon waiting for me. She is very very nice and I am sure that everything here is going to be the very thing for me. She has quite a small but very nice and cozy little place here. She has only two rooms that she rents. I have the one but as yet I have not seen the occupant of the other one. Anyway there will be only the three of us on the place. Fortunately my room does not face right on the street so it has none of the street noises that one has a hard time getting away from here in Paris. My room is in the back looking onto sort of a little court so it will be the very place for practicing without disturbance. Fortunately also I am on the sunny side so I will get what sun that Paris has to offer this winter. The meals here are going to be very good if the one I had this noon is a fair example. Having only three people to cook for naturally it will be better than if there was a whole house full of folks.

The few short hours I have been here today I have accomplished lots; in fact I am almost already settled. My bags are all unpacked, I have been to the bank and cashed my check and placed it in a checking account, I have been down and made arrangements for my trunk to be sent out, I've gotten in touch with Marchal (I am going to his house tonight to talk with him and thoroughly work everything out); and tomorrow morning Madame Simon is going with me to the piano place to see that they don't put anything over on me. I have gotten in touch with Madame Lepage making arrangements to again start the French lessons—so all in all I think I have done pretty well and within a day or so I should be well down to work and all settled. Madame Simon has just come in and told me to write you that you have no need to worry about me, that she will have me well in hand and see that everything goes as it should—and she will too. I really think I'm pretty lucky to get located in such a swell place.

I am simply thrilled to death over the Paris that I find here now. It is absolutely nothing like the summer Paris—there is altogether a different air to the place. Everything has taken on life that it doesn't have in the summertime. It is impossible to describe how good it is to be back here where you feel that you are right in touch with all and everything that goes on in the musical world. On

Saturday and Sunday there are at least 10 symphony concerts to choose from (as many as in the whole United States I suppose) and each week sees the announcement of another concert starting or something. The main feature to all this tho is that it is possible to get seats to almost any of these concerts for 10 cents or 15 cents for the cheapest seats. I can hardly believe it but according to the announcements it is quite so. There is one great disadvantage in having so many concerts tho—you don't know which one to choose.

On going in the bank this afternoon I found your letter waiting for me. (I had written the bank to hold all mail for a few days before I left.) There was also one from Aunt Sara and one from Mr. Titus giving me all the Conservatory news. I had written Mr. Titus that I expected I would have to be coming home soon after the first of the year; he was of course much disturbed over hearing such news, but he is also glad to know that I expect to return [to Paris] sometime and take up where I will leave off. So far I have had no word from WAPI, but I suppose something will be coming within a day or so. Of course if I do return to WAPI I will naturally want to spend some few days at home before going on to Bham. Also I want very much to go by Cincinnati on my way south if possible. Mr. Titus is most anxious that I stop by and see him and relate all of my "doings." Of course all of that can't be decided on now at all, but things will work out when the time comes I suppose.

Well I must stop for by the time I have my supper and get cleaned up a bit it will be time to start out for Marchal's house. What other news there is to write I will have to wait until next time to write. Hope everything there is going along well and that are all o.k.

Love to all,
Orville



Sunday Night
October 12, 1930

Dear Mother:

Well—I have just about finished my first Sunday in Paris since my return here last week. It has been quite a day for hearing music. I was up quite early and over to St. Germaine des Pres to hear Marchal play the 9:15 mass and also one at 11:00. Then after rushing home for lunch I set out to hear some symphony concerts. I heard one at 2:30 and the other one at 5:30. I think that's about enough for one person to hear in one day! It is now about 9:00 and I have been home about an hour practicing but I thought I had better quit and send you a line or so because I knew if I put it off until tomorrow I would not get it done. I have

all my arrangements for the winter made and by this time things are running on a smooth schedule. I had my first lesson with Marchal yesterday and also I've had my first lesson with Madame Lepage. And tomorrow morning I have my first harmony and solfege lesson with Mlle. Grandjany.

So many things have been happening this week that I can't remember if I wrote to you how well situated I was as to a place to stay, or not. I could not be any better off anywhere I am sure. Madame Simon is too good for words, being even better than Mrs. May was in Cinti, if such a thing is possible. She takes an interest in everything that I do and helps me along in every way possible. My room is quite comfortable and the meals are excellent and most abundant. Since I have found such an excellent place I think there is no danger of me losing the lbs. I gained in Magagnosc. By the way I weighed myself just before I left down there and the scales said 63 ½ kilograms. As nearly as I can figure (with what little arithmetic I know) that's just about 140 lbs! That is a lot more than I have ever weighed before—and the only thing I'm afraid of, as you say, is that I am liable to outgrow my clothes. But I think that I shall not take on any more weight because here in Paris I am always walking—it is not only cheaper than riding but it is also quicker in some instances.

Your letter written Sept. 29 arrived today and of course I was extremely glad to hear from you as usual. The excitement you all had—about Mr. Ross being shot—I knew about almost as soon as you did. I read it in one of the Paris papers while I was still in Magagnosc. It was quite a thrill to see the “old time town” break newsprint in a Parisian newspaper. I am sorry that such a thing as that had to happen for Hville to get some publicity abroad tho'. This business of lynching negroes the French can not see at all. Over here the negroes are treated just exactly like anybody else. They are not barred from any place. Fortunately there are only a few here tho—and then too they are not at all the same type as the negroes in America. Some of them of course are not really negroes at all—but people from India, etc. But if a negro is intellectual and has something to show for himself he is admitted into any society whatever in France. Well so much for that.

I had a letter yesterday from Mrs. Wright yesterday giving me all the Bham musical news. Altho things in Bham are not any too good she says she has plenty to do. She told me that Mr. Campbell was in Washington trying to put over the project of WAPI getting a better wave length and more power, so I suppose I won't hear from him until he returns to Bham. According to Mrs. Wright things ought to work out for me to return there o.k. I must say that it will certainly be hard to leave Paris and to break in on my work. (whenever that time comes). Now that I am back here and am so well fixed and everything it will be doubly hard.

I have been doing some close figuring and since my “lodgings” are a little cheaper than I expected I may be able to hold out a bit longer than I thought, but then, in my figuring I have not allowed at all for incidental things such as

music, music paper, stamps, toilet articles, laundry, etc. Here's what things are figured at a very minimum.

Room and breakfast:	\$14.00
Lunch and supper:	22.00
Organ lessons:	32.00
French:	4.00
Harmony:	5.00
Piano rent:	5.00
Car fare:	3.00
Concerts:	4.00
<u>Organ rent:</u>	<u>12.80</u>
	\$101.80

All in all I think \$110.00 a month should cover everything. Since I had just slightly over \$500.00 the 1st of Oct. you can draw your own conclusions.

Of course on top of that I'm going to have to spend something on buying winter clothes. I do not think tho that it will be necessary to buy an overcoat. I shall try to get along as you suggested. Then too I have not yet purchased my glasses. I decided to wait until I returned to Paris instead of getting them in Cannes so if anything should be wrong I would have no trouble exchanging them. Well—so much for that. Financial matters is a bad subject to get started on.

I am afraid that this letter has not been so very interesting but I think I had better stop now and get to bed as my harmony lesson tomorrow is at 9 o'clock and I have to go all the way across town to get there. By the way—my French is beginning to be quite good now. I don't know a single American here in Paris so of course I have to speak French all the time. Mr. Whipp, the organist of American Church will be returning to Paris from America sometime soon tho and then I will know at least one person—but it is better that I speak French and be with French people as much as possible. Hope you are all well.

Love to all,
Orville

Note my address on envelope.



Monday
Oct. 20, 1930

Dear Mother,

I let yesterday slip by without getting this letter written, as per schedule, but I didn't have a single spare moment all day long. I went as usual to the early

service at St. Germaine des Pres and then at 11:00 went over to the American Church. The organist, Mr. Whipp, has just returned from his vacation in America. It is quite fortunate that I picked yesterday as the Sunday to pay him a visit because the person who has been playing his early morning service for him is leaving Paris, so the post has been offered me. We of course did not go into details yesterday, but I am going Wednesday to make the arrangements with them. I do not know what it will pay (not much I think because there is very little work to do) but I am hoping that I may have the use of the organ for practice. (at the present time the big organ is being entirely rebuilt, but there is a very good little American built organ temporarily installed until the big one is finished—the big organ when finished will be one of the finest in probably all of Europe.) I will be able to write you all the details next week. (I am enclosing a bulletin of yesterday's service.) Maybe if enough things happen I will not have to be rushing back to America the 1st of the year after all—but of course there's no use counting your chickens before they hatch!

I think that's about all the startling news there is just at present. By this time of course everything is going along quite well under a regular schedule. Since most of the important concerts and things took place in the afternoon I have been able to keep my hours arranged just about as in Magagnosc. Anyway I have breakfast at 7:00 each morning whether my hours for going to bed are exactly the same or not. One can get a lot done by getting started early in the mornings. Last Thursday nite Marchal had all his pupils to his home so I had a good chance to become well acquainted. I am the only American pupil he has. Marchal had also invited a young composer—Oliver Messiaen—there that night and he played for us a new collection of piano compositions that he has just finished. All in all it was a most enjoyable evening and one that I shall long remember.

Your letters since I have been back to Paris have of course been arriving sooner. They now come in on Fri or Sat. I can imagine that fall is beginning to set in there, now. It is of course quite “fall-ish” here too. I should like to have my share of the pecans off the trees in the back yard. I don't think there are any here—although there are walnuts and many many chestnuts.



Monday
Oct. 27, 1930

Dear Mother:

I suppose will have to change my day of writing you, from Sunday to Monday—because on Sunday almost every minute of my time is taken up with one thing or another.

Yesterday I started the day off by playing my first time at the American church—and everything went along in fine shape. I met Mr. Whipp at the church last Wednesday as I had planned and we made our arrangements. I am to receive the large sum of 35 francs a service (about \$1.50). This is of course practically nothing—but I had not expected much more than that, because there is very little work to do. It will be good experience tho because I will be able to become well acquainted with the Episcopal service and of course that is the only church that an organist can have really much of a chance in. I of course have the liberty of attending all of Mr. Whipp's rehearsals and also I am with him at the organ during the big service—that too will be an invaluable experience as I will learn much about choir direction etc. which an organist must know. In fact that's almost as important as playing the organ. All in all it will mean much doing the work there, and Mr. Whipp tells me that it would have wonderful possibilities of working into something quite nice if I could only remain here long enough. Unfortunately I will not be able to use the organ to practice on as I had expected. The little organ that is temporarily installed until the big one is finished is so temporarily installed that it won't stand much use. In fact it does all sorts of tricks during the service as it is. One has to be almost a magician to make it go correctly. The big organ is coming along fine—unless some unforeseen complications set in it should be finished within 5 or 6 weeks. Well so much for the American Church.

All my other work is coming along quite as well as could be expected. Fortunately the worst part of the harmony is over (the first hundred years are the hardest) and it is most interesting now that the beginning and preliminary things are passed. It takes a little over two years to complete the course as a rule, but I believe that I shall be well along toward being half way there by the time I have to set sail for U.S.A. The organ is of course also coming along quite o.k. since I've been back here under Marchal.

And I think I wrote you that the French was making rapid strides forward. I of course have to speak nothing but French except when I'm at the American church. (even there one hears almost as much French as English.)

Your letter this week came in way ahead of time. It arrived on Wednesday I think it was.

The fact that I owe Willis Music Co \$13.00 is quite news to me. I shall soon have been away from Cinti 2 years and this is the first that I've heard of it. I have no way of knowing if I owe it or not. All of my cancelled checks are in Bham. It seems to me that there has always [been] some trouble with them about some little bill for a few dollars. They are almost as careless with their accounts as I have been in the past with my financial matters. Perhaps Aunt Sara could look thru my cancelled checks. If it has not been paid could you take care of it for the present?

I had a little time this past week to work a little on the composition that is to be done for Miss Bessie. If I can make as much progress in the next week or so I can soon finish I think. I can't promise a thing tho.

Yesterday I heard a most interesting concert. A young girl 9 years old—Ginette Neveu²⁴—played with one of the symphony orchestras. She has been taking Paris by storm. She really played in an extraordinary manner and one of the most difficult things written for the violin. There is absolutely no end to the things that one can hear and see in Paris—and I have a million and one things that I want to see before I have to leave. I don't know when I'm going to have time to do it all.

I have not as of yet heard from WAPI. I suppose Mr. Campbell is still in Washington. Surely I shall have some word from him by this time next week tho—if not I think I'll send him another letter. There is of course a good chance that my first letter never reached him. The French mail dept. is not too efficient.

Just about had time to hear from the Union in Cinti concerning conditions at the present. I must pretty soon get something rather lined up because when you come to think of it, it won't be too terribly long before I will have to be leaving here. Unless you think there is some chance of locating a few extra dollars somewhere I think I had better plan to leave here by the time my bank account gets between \$80 and \$100 because, as you say, even though I have my ticket back on the boat, I [need to] have railroad fare from Paris to Boulogne—and N.Y. to Hville and trunk hauling, excess baggage etc. that will take quite a little. (Would it cost any more to have a ticket thru Cinti from N.Y. than straight down on the Southern?)

Well I must end up. I have just about time enough to run for the subway and get to Madame Lepage's for a French lesson. Hope you are all quite well and that everything is going along ok.

Paris was quite a wild place on Saturday—welcoming home Costes and Bellonte.²⁵ I didn't take any part in the celebration but I had to wade thru the crowds getting to a concert in the afternoon.

I did not buy a camera so I have no picture of Magagnosc except "printed postal cards." Mr. Verd suggested that I not waste money on a camera so I took his advice—but maybe I can borrow one here and take a few pictures of things that I would like to have.

I've gotten my glasses and fortunately they were not so terribly expensive—all in all a little more than \$8.00.

My but Hville is getting the headlines these days! I don't understand all about the affair of Thomas Ross. What connection did the negro have with the affair and why should he have been the one in the first place? I must say that it must have been a shock to Hville!

You say that you don't hear from Bham, and Aunt Sara complains that she doesn't hear from you. I'd suggest that you both do a little letter writing!

The composition for Miss Bessie has of course not had time to progress any since I've been back here and I must say that I can't see when there will be time! By the time I finish what work I have to do there's no time left for anything else. And then too—I've had just enough harmony etc. to see when my composing is all wrong so I've pretty well given up all ideas of doing anything of that sort until I've had more experience and will know what I'm doing. I shall attempt some sort of a something tho the very first chance I have.

Well I think I've written about all there is to write this time. By next Sunday I hope to have lots of news to tell you about the church and all.

I am glad to hear that a number of orders are coming in for the mill. I hope they continue to do so—and that everything else there is going along in fine shape.

Love to all,
Orville



Monday
Nov 3, 1930

Dear Mother:

My how time flies! I can hardly believe that I have been back in Paris almost a month, but since this is the first of the month and I started paying bills this morning I finally realize it! So far I have managed to stay pretty well within my budget but of course the worst is yet to come when I have to start buying things. So far there has been no need to invest in having underwear or things of the sort. The weather, altho it has been very rainy and wet has been rather warm. As yet there have been no fires, but then I'm told that the French people refuse to build fires until 1st of November—cold or not. Even when fires are started there's very little fire. The houses are a great deal less warm than in America—which according to the French is much better. Marchal was telling me the other day that when he was in America last winter he simply roasted in every place he stayed. Besides just not caring for much heat, coal and other fuel here is so high that they can't use much.

Yesterday I played my second Sunday at the American Church and things of course went along more smoothly than the 1st Sunday. I think that doing that work there is going to be invaluable to me in that I'm becoming acquainted with the Episcopal service thoroughly. The organist Mr. Whipp has been exceedingly nice to me and has offered to help me in any way possible. He has taken it upon

himself to appoint himself my "Paris guardian." I feel as if I could go to him for advice or help on anything that might come up. I think I have been very lucky to come in contact with two such men as he and Mr. Verd. Marchal is of course excellent in every way too. All in all I am sure all things could not have possibly planned out any better for me in any way.

Last night the Students Club which is under the direction of the American Church held their first reception of the year. The Club rooms are not in the Church but in a building on the bank of the river not so very far from my house here. All English speaking students in Paris are given the privilege of becoming members so I am of course taking advantage of it. The reception last night was most pleasant and I had a chance to become acquainted a bit with other American students. I ran upon a boy—Ralph Briggs—whom I knew in Cinti. He is a piano student—has only been here 3 weeks. We of course had quite a chat about Cinti and he having left there only a few weeks ago was able to tell me all about what is taking place there this year and all. Outside of the regular Sunday night "get-togethers" the club is open all week for all who want to go there. There are reading rooms, quite a nice library and everything in general that can be of assistance to students.

Your letter along with Aunt Sara's enclosed arrived Sat. I notice that you say my letter which usually arrives on Fri was not there even on Tues. From now on I expect there a lot of irregularity of mail. This particular letter altho I am writing it on Monday cannot possibly leave here until Wednesday as there is no boat carrying mail that leaves until then. (all boats do not carry mail, for France or from France).

I am glad to hear that you all have made a little trip to Bham and that Aunt Sara came back with you. I am still waiting for some word from Mr. Campbell. This past week tho I wrote a letter to the Manager of the Alabama [Theatre] telling him I was returning to America soon and that I should like to take the Ala job. (I don't care so much for the job but the pay is not bad). At the same time I wrote the Bham Union a letter asking what their present attitude was towards letting an organist go for work. (I shall be glad to see the day when I can do as I please and not have to bother with the Union). I hear that Joe Stoves²⁶ went to work recently in Atlanta but that the Union would not let him continue there. I should think that surely by this time the Bham Union could see that holding an organist out of the Alabama is not going to help matters in the least.

I suppose my Dodge is still for sale as you have said nothing about it lately. If it is still unsold when I return guess I can take it to Bham with me, altho I hope I shall not have much need for an automobile. Here I still do as much walking as the rainy weatherman would permit. I haven't been able to decide if my desire to walk is to obtain exercise or save money.

Well I guess that's about all there is to write this time. This being Monday afternoon I must soon be getting out and over to Madame Lepage for my French lesson. My lessons with her are almost as long as before I left for Magagnosc. I never have less than 2 hours although I only am supposed to have one hour. I am reading some of the modern French plays with her in addition to the work in grammar. I also do quite a lot of reading in French alone. I am even getting to where I can think very well in French having no longer to translate things from English or into English to get the correct meaning.

Well unless I deliberately stop I'll be writing on and on. Hope you all are well and that everything is beginning to become a little better in a financial way—all over the country. If you could see some of the French newspapers you would think that nobody in America had 5 cents to his name.

Love to all,
Orville



Monday
Nov. 10, 1930

Dear Mother:

Well tomorrow is Armistice Day and of course Paris is preparing itself for a big celebration. I don't know what all will be taking place but I am not expecting to enter into any of the celebrating—whatever it may be. There is a big service in one of the churches tho that I would like to attend, but unfortunately I have a lesson scheduled right at that time. Following on the heels of Armistice Day is Thanksgiving and of course that means quite a time for all the Americans in Paris. The American Students Club has a big dinner for all students and also Madame Lepage has invited me for Thanksgiving so all in all I don't think I will go hungry on that day. Not that I do on any other day either. The food at my house here has remained to be just as excellent and plentiful as ever. Some of the French dishes are still quite foreign to me, but there has been nothing so far that I haven't liked. Fortunately I have not had occasion to partake of the favorite dish—snails! And I don't think I care to altho I am told that the way they are prepared is excellent.

Yesterday I spent quite a little time going thru one of the museums. There is no end to the museums that one may visit in Paris. People that have always lived here have not seen all there is to see I am sure, so I expect I shall have a number of places that I will not be able to see this time.

Am sure you all enjoyed Aunt Sara's visit—and I imagine she enjoyed it more than the last time she was up there with me, having driven all the way in the sun.

I have just had a long letter from Mr. Allen in Bham giving me all the information in regards to all the churches etc. From the way he writes all the churches there are in very bad shape financially, so I don't know whether I may expect a church job of some sort there or not. If I by any chance go back to work at the Alabama I wouldn't much want a Church anyway because a person must have a little rest. In your last letter you didn't seem so pepped up over me returning to Bham to work. I of course don't doubt in the least that there hasn't been a bit of booze etc floating around down there, but I am sure it isn't half as bad as Aunt Sara has been led to think. But as far as that goes I should like to know of some place where it doesn't flow as freely as water. I am sure that America is a great deal worse than the whole of France. As for Jesse—he has entirely too much sense to go very far in that line.

As I have said before tho'—I am none too anxious to return to Bham, but I know of nothing else. Owing to the Union I could not work anywhere else—that is of course except Cinti, as I am already a member there. I expect to have something settled very soon tho' now. And also before very long I must be paying a visit to the Steamship Co's office to have my reservations made for the voyage home. The time is going by entirely too swiftly and entirely too soon will the 1st of February be here.

I have just had a letter from Miss Bessie. I must say that I don't know when the composition can be completed. I should like to finish it at once but it takes an awfully long time to write anything decently and I really don't feel as if I can take the time necessary from my studies and the chance to see and hear as much as possible while I am here. All I can say is that I will do it whenever I can. After all I must see and hear all possible while I'm here now because who knows for sure whether I will ever get back over here or not?

My work at the American Church continues to be most pleasant. It is an awfully nice place just to be around. It's hard to imagine anything any more beautiful—of course its beauty is entirely different from what one finds in the old Catholic churches here but even so in its own way it surpasses anything I know of. All in all I'm beginning to think that Paris is the greatest place in the world. Surely nothing in America even in a small way can compare with it.

Well as usual this is the day for my French lesson so I think I'd better be preparing myself to get to Madame Lepage—in the rain! It has not missed a day raining in some time. The state of some of the rivers in France is becoming rather alarming. The Seine is quite above a normal height, but would of course have to do a lot of rising yet before it could much damage in Paris. Paris weather certainly is funny. All summer and it is quite warm. Too much so.

Well I must be rushing. Hope you are all well etc.

Love to all,
Orville

Did I tell you that I'd had a very nice letter from Mrs. Wilson? I don't know when I will get to answer it tho. Give her my regards when you may see her.



Nov 17, 1930

Dear Mother:

Well another week has slipped by with things going along about as usual. We are still waiting for winter to come here in Paris. Fortunately the terrible rainy weather seems to have stopped for the present and we have been having some excellent Fall weather. Armistice Day was quite excellent and of course the good weather helped make all the celebrations really big events. It was such a swell day that I took the afternoon off and went out to see some of the sights. And at night I went with Madame Simon to the ceremony that took place at the Arc of Triumph etc. It was quite an imposing sight the whole Arc being lighted by huge flood lights. They do some very interesting things here quite often, in the way of lighting up buildings, monuments, etc. I suppose you all will have a chance to see some of the pictures taken on that day in the newsreels or something of the sort. You can imagine what a huge thrill it must be to be right here on the spot where everything is taking place. I become more and more in love with Paris each day if such a thing is possible. Of course the fact that I'm making many friends around and about helps make everything more interesting.

I certainly don't like the thoughts of leaving here so soon and according to some news I have just received I can remain for quite a while longer if I wish. Just had a letter from Aunt Sara saying that she had a few more hundred dollars that she would like for me to have to finish out my year. I must say that I am quite at a loss as to whether to take advantage of her good offer or not. There are of course many ways of looking at it. . . . Naturally the longer I remain here this time the longer it would take before I could return—and then—once I leave I don't know whether I can even get back or not. But I'm rather inclined to think that now I'm here so I'd better stay as long as possible and get as much as possible done. I must also take into consideration that I have already made arrangements to go to work in Bham but of course nothing definitely settled as yet. I think I might arrange things to return—say in April or May instead of Feb. I wrote Aunt Sara that I would have to sort of do a little re-planning before I could write her whether I thought I should stay or not. I have of course plenty of funds to run until easily some time in Feb so there is more time as yet to decide in.

Do you not think it's better to stay the year out? I shall immediately get in touch with things in Bham and if I find I can have what work I want there just the same in May as Feb I will stay on here until that time. I will of course let you know as soon as I know!

I can imagine that all the churches there are way behind in the matter of finances this year. I hear that the 1st Church in Bham is in quite a hole. It seems as if the whole world is in quite a hole at the present time—excepting France. The French people have a lot more sense than the outside world would imagine. It is certainly remarkable the way France has gotten on her feet again as soon after the war. America would do well to have a lot of qualities that French have.

I think it would be quite unwise to attempt to send anything over at Xmas time in the way of presents. The tariff that would have to be paid would almost equal the original price of the article. I too can hardly realize that Xmas is almost here. I have never seen time pass as quickly as these past few months have slipped by.

Have been hearing some awfully interesting concerts and operas lately. I should like to write you in detail about each one but of course that's impossible. I take in just as much as possible without interfering with my other work but of course seeing and hearing things is an education within itself.

Well as usual I must be in a rush to get to my French lesson so will have to finish up for this time. Within a very short while I hope to be able to write you that all my plans are settled to stay until spring!

Hope you are all well, that everything is going along in fine shape.

Love to all,
Orville

Hope you will pardon the beautiful way that my stationery does not match. I am using up odds and end before buying any more.



Monday
Nov 23, 1930

Dear Mother:

I have just returned home from my French lesson which I had this afternoon and while I am waiting for supper thought I would start this letter. Things have been going along almost as usual this past week—nothing out of the ordinary has happened. But of course this week we have the excitement of Thanksgiving. I have two invitations for that day and am accepting both of them. In the afternoon Madame Lepage is having a couple of her American pupils to her house for a sort of little feast and at night the Students Club is having a dinner in one of the most “classy” Paris restaurants. We shall have everything from turkey to pumpkin pie and pie is certainly a treat here. As a rule there is never any pie in France, the French have no such thing, but somebody has made the club a present of the scarce article. After the dinner there will be dancing (if anybody is

able to dance after eating so much) and I am to furnish the music—for which I will receive the huge sum of 50 francs. (\$2.00) \$2.00 is \$2.00 tho, and over here one can make it go quite a way.

The Students Club is quite a gathering place for all the students and I have met quite a number of very interesting people there. Very often, after having studied and labored all day I drop in there in the evenings to read or just sit around and talk. After hearing nothing but French day in and day out it is quite good to have a chat with someone in English. Right at the present time there are only a very few music students over here (that I have seen). But the place is filled with painters and writers. There is an exhibition on at the club now of some of the paintings of some of the students and some are quite good indeed. All in all its quite a swell atmosphere—as is the whole of Paris of course.

Have of course not had time to hear anything from Bham concerning my remaining here, but I have just about made up my mind to stay on anyway, no matter what. I wrote Mr. Verd asking his advice about what he would think under the circumstances and he seems to think that if I can stay on that I'd better do it. After all there's very little chance of losing anything by staying on, because I am sure the things can be arranged in Bham, but there is of course much to be gained. I shall not write Aunt Sara my definite decision for a few weeks yet, tho, as I don't want to jump into something and make a decision without knowing what I am doing.

Tell Grandma that I certainly do wish I might have some of her cookies for Thanksgiving (or any other time) but I think Paris is a little too far away for anything of that sort to make the journey.

Am glad to hear that orders are coming in so thick and fast that things are keeping busy at the mill. I should think from what I can gather from the newspapers here, that everything over there is coming along better now, altho I suppose the situation is still rather serious in some part of the country.

The weather here is certainly quite curious. Here it is well along towards the 1st of Dec and as yet it has not been cold—but we still have lots of rain. It has rained so much that the Seine is beginning to take on rather a dangerous look. All shipping is practically at a standstill as the boats can't get under the many bridges which connect the two sides of Paris. If it keeps on rising I think it will start doing some real damage in the lower parts of the city. Fortunately we are far enough away and up high enough that there is no danger of it reaching us here. For the next few months we won't see very much of the sun. It is not light until after six in the morning and it [gets] dark again shortly after 4 o'clock in the afternoon. (Some difference from when we arrived in the spring and it was light until almost 10 at night.) The few hours that the sun does show itself it remains quite low—practically rising and setting in the south.

Well the supper has been finished and as I want to do a little work yet tonight I suppose I'd better end this up and take it to the corner and mail it. If you happen to be writing Aunt Sara soon you might let her know that I have practically decided to take advantage of her excellent offer so that she may be putting things in shape to fix up the money order.

Love to all,
Orville



Dec 1st 1930

Dear Mother:

Well here it is the 1st of Dec. Before you know it the year be gone entirely. I can't imagine where the days get to. I have never seen time pass so quickly. Some of the stores are beginning already to take on the aspect of Xmas. Of course the French celebrate Xmas Holidays as we do but more is made of New Years day than Xmas, I am told. It shall of course be quite fun celebrating Xmas here, but hardly as much as it would be at home. I'm afraid it's a little bit too much of a journey to drop over and spend Xmas day in Hville!

I had quite a nice Thanksgiving Day. As I wrote you last week, I went to Madame Lepage's in the afternoon. Instead of having my regular lesson she had fixed up quite a few little things in American style and we had sort of an afternoon brunch. It was of course most enjoyable. From her house I went straight to the banquet given by for the American students—and there we had certainly a merry time. There were 120 present, including one of the former senators from New York who made us quite a speech. We ate until we couldn't eat any more and then there was dancing until 12 o'clock which I played for. The Students Club, as I think I wrote you, is under the direction of the American Cathedral. There is a separate Chapel on this side of the river right in the center of the students section and the minister of the chapel directs and sees to the running of the club. He is rather a young fellow and is very nice indeed and is greatly liked by all the fellows. (Of course the women students are allowed the use of the club too, but only in the afternoons.) He of course was present and presided over the banquet the other night. You have no idea what a tremendous organization the American Cathedral is and they give the Students Club any amount of support, financially, that they want. I think all the director has to do when he wants anything is to write a letter to some member of the congregation of the Cathedral saying he would like a little donation and a check is immediately forthcoming. They haven't much else to do but dish out money, because the Americans who have their permanent residence in Paris of course have all sorts of money and only live here because it's a nice place to be in, and have nothing else to do.

I suppose by the time this reaches you, you all will be in the midst of preparing for Xmas. Joe is probably getting all excited over looking forward to Santa Claus, or doesn't he have much faith in Santa Claus anymore? Tell Joe that I'm sorry that I can't see to it that something from the Paris Santa Claus can't be sent over. I read that Parcel Post rulings in the paper the other day and the duty one has to pay runs as high as 125% on a great many articles. This tariff business is certainly a nuisance! It seems to me that one will soon be so restricted by these foolish laws that there won't be any freedom at all. After hearing the senator's speech at the banquet the other night I can easily account for some of the foolish things that get put over.

I am sorry to say that the composition for Miss Bessie has not progressed at all lately and from the looks of things there's not much hope of having any spare time soon. Have not made any more definite plans as yet to stay on here until June (or after if possible!) but of course I will want to do so unless something quite out of the ordinary comes up.

Had a letter from Mr. Titus the other day and he says things in Cinti are just about as usual, although he has all he can do this year. He says his son is now walking, talking and raising all sorts of mischief around the house. I have written him twice since I've been back and he says he certainly gets homesick to be back over here hearing about all the good things I am seeing and hearing.

Well I must stop and get to work on some harmony exercises. As it is I have a hard time getting enough done in that line from one Monday to another. My harmony teacher is quite fine, but she doesn't have a fair idea of how much work one can do in one week.

Hope everything is going along quite as it should and that you are all well.

Love to all,
Orville



Tuesday
Dec. 9, 1930

Dear Mother:

Yesterday was my regular day for writing you, but I put it off a day, as your letter only arrived tonight, being almost a week behind time. American mail has been mighty scarce with everybody for the past week, but a whole flock of ships are due in within the next few days which will bring the first of the Xmas mail I suppose. That reminds me that I must purchase a few postal cards and get them off right away if I expect them to reach their destination by Xmas. The "Leviathan" and the "Bremen" sailing the 17th are the last boats promising to deliver passengers and mail in N.Y. before Xmas.

Along with your letter tonight came one from Aunt Sara and Mr. Campbell of WAPI. Mr. Campbell says that things at WAPI are going along in fine shape and that he hopes there may be a chance to add me to the staff when I return. Aunt Sara writes that she has talked to the Manager of the Ala[bama Theater] and that according to him nothing is to be doing there, for the present at least. If something should turn up he says he will send me a hurried message tho'. For the present things don't seem to be in too much of a good way tho, so I have definitely decided to stay on until spring if Aunt Sara can make the necessary arrangements. She writes that she is expecting to go to [Georgia] sometime during the holidays. Not knowing exactly when, she has asked me not to write her in Bham for fear that she might not be there when the letter arrived. So you can write her the news, as you will of course know where she is, and when. If I am going to stay on I of course want some funds to reach here 'ere the present supply is exhausted, but there is as yet lots of time. The bank account is holding out miraculously well—at least I think so. There is \$300.00 still in the bank and I have paid most everything up—until the 1st of the year. So with the coming of the 1st of the year there will be just a little short of the \$300.00 still left untouched. If Aunt Sara's check arrives anytime towards the end of Feb or 1st of March there will of course be plenty of time. Well so much for that!

Was most surprised to hear that you have had snow already! The mercury here dropped suddenly for a few days last week sending a few chills to Paris, but it has again turned warmer since then. So it will be all winter I am told. It gets cold and then starts in and rains and turns warm again. So far I've had no fire in the fireplace in my room, but think I will soon, just on general principle if nothing else. The Seine is getting back down to its regular size having done quite a bit of damage on the outskirts of Paris.

I should have liked to have been there for Thanksgiving—hearing all about what you were to have to eat, etc; but of course I fared pretty well here, as I have already written you. I expect to spend Xmas in just about the same way as I did Thanksgiving. Speaking of eating—I am going to have a dish of snails sometime. From all I can hear it really is a delicious dish—the snails of course being nothing like the ones in America. Did I write you that I had eaten horse meat? It is really quite good!

Next Sunday Madame Simon has invited a number of my friends to come here for tea. She is also inviting some of her friends that I do not as yet know. She has been awfully nice, doing everything possible to make me feel at home, and of course I do. I dare say there are very few land ladies who would take the trouble to invite their “roomer's” friends to their houses.

You ask about “Booze” in Paris. Well I dare say things are infinitely better here than anywhere in the United States. There is no such thing as prohibition, and the French have a big time discussing the “wets and dries” in America.

America would do well if the liquor question there was exactly as it is here, but of course I suppose that if prohibition was done away with over there now, that the United States would just about drown itself! It's a very rare thing to see anybody down here intoxicated—it being considered quite vulgar to indulge to any great extent. Of course wine is served with all meals, but that is quite different. As for me I much prefer water tho, because to have a decent wine it is necessary to pay an extremely high price.

I think I wrote you about knowing Mr. Farnum²⁷ when he was over here this summer. Well Marchal told me today that he had just received new of his death, which of course was quite a shock. Mr. Titus had written me that Farnum had been ill, but I had no idea it was anything serious.

Well I suppose by the time this letter reaches you that Xmas will be but a few days off so I'll send MERRY XMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL right now. I'm expecting to take a few days off during the holidays and spend time seeing as much of the Louvre as possible. I hope you all have a big time, which of course I know you will have.

Love to all,
Orville



Paris
Dec. 15th, 1930

Dear Mother:

As you see I am not only taking advantage of The American Club, but also the stationery. I stopped in here tonight to finish up writing a few Xmas cards to write you etc. I must go back to the station tonight to mail all of this as the "Leviathan" boat train leaves at 8 o'clock in the morning. The "Bremen" sails the day after but I think the "Leviathan" has a better chance of reaching N.Y. in time for cards to reach Ala in time for Xmas. We had all sorts of boats in one day last week and I received at least 10 letters I am sure! Yours was of course among the lot as was one from Daddy written in N.Y. which I was most happy to receive.

Nothing of great importance has taken place since my last letter to you. Madame Simon had her "tea party" yesterday afternoon. I had two friends over and she had invited 3 or 4 of her friends as we spent a most enjoyable afternoon. (I of course had a good chance to show off my knowledge of French. I can understand practically everything, but as yet I can't speak quite as fluently as I would like.)

Did I write you that I was playing the piano for the weekly dances given by The American Club? In addition to being a lot of fun I have the opportunity to make 50 frs. (\$2.00). which along with the 35 frs each Sunday at the Church

gives me quite a nice little sum. Enough to take care of practically all the incidental expenses that come up.

Am of course awfully glad to hear from Daddy that he secured Penny's order for the next season, and that the year that has just passed will not be such a bad one as might be expected in spite of the rather shaky conditions of the country. The depression is certainly having its effect on Americans in Paris—so much that a great many of the students are having to go home (If they can be lucky enough to have money enough for a passage home.)

Hope you will let Joe take music after Xmas and incidentally make him practice!

As I wrote you last week I have definitely decided to remain here until next summer and if possible, of course, longer!

Have just had a letter from Aunt Sara, but there seems to be no special news from Bham these days. Jesse has just played a recital at the 6th Ave Church and according to a newspaper notice it was indeed a grand success—which of course I knew it would be. Have also just had a letter from Mr. Titus. I had of course written him that I expected to have to return to America the 1st of the year. He was so anxious that I remain on until at least next summer that he had hunted around and was trying to find someone in Cinti that would let me have the necessary money. In fact he had found someone. Fortunately I can now write him that I am staying on and that I will not need his most appreciated assistance. When I do return I of course hope that you really can come to N.Y.

A friend from Bham—Ernest Buchi,²⁸ an organist—is coming over in Jan[uary] to study. He is to go on to Germany, (Leipzig) but am expecting him to spend a few days in Paris as he comes thru. It will be good to see someone from home.

Am expecting to spend a most pleasant Xmas here, but of course it could hardly be like home. If I figure correctly this should reach you all exact[ly] by Xmas day. So the most Merry Xmas and Happy New Year to you all!!! The Club is just before getting ready to close so I must stop and take this along to the station.

With lots of love to all,
Orville

Had been expecting to run over to London during the holidays for a few days as I discovered that one could go over and back for \$7.00 but since then I have found out that it is necessary to have my passport visaed to enter England and that cost \$10.00—so the trip is naturally off, unless I can discover some way to get the \$10.00 visa.



Monday

[January 5, 1931]²⁹

Dearest Mother:

Well finally all the holidays are completely over and everything is getting back into regular schedule now. Altho I tried to keep most of my work going right thru the holidays it was hardly possible to do so as something always seemed to come up, but I don't think so very much was lost; and then one must have a little breathing spell. Marchal returns from his vacation today and I have a lesson tomorrow. He has been down on the Mediterranean Coast playing concerts around Nice, Monte-Carlo and Cannes. He naturally was quite near Magagnosc and hope he had a chance to stop over and see Mr. Verd as he planned to do.

All Paris is in quite a different mood just now than it has been since I've been here. I suppose you have read in the papers of the death of [General] Joffre.³⁰ The funeral is to be on Wednesday I think, and of course will be one of the biggest and most impressive things imaginable. Naturally the whole city will take part in the ceremonies and I want to join in myself and see as much as possible, although I'm afraid the crowds will be so dense that no one can have a chance of even getting near the procession. And it will certainly be impossible to get into Notre-Dame where the last ceremonies are to be performed. Altho the church holds 25,000 people!

I had the pleasure of using the new organ at the American Cathedral yesterday for the first time; I had of course played it before but not for a regular service. It is as yet only about half finished, but what there is is certainly marvelous. The organ was supposed to be completely finished by Xmas but these organ builders over here are just as slow as in America when it comes to finishing on time. I certainly consider myself lucky to be connected there; of course [I] enjoy my work very much, and they are such nice people to work with.

I have just received a letter from Aunt Sara enclosing her check for \$200.00. I had no idea it was going to arrive so soon, but of course it doesn't make any difference—better early than late. Aunt Sara wrote that she was going to Ga. with some of the "Hville gang" right after Xmas so that was the reason for sending the money right at that time—altho she had not as yet definitely heard from me. I hardly know how to write her so that I may definitely thank her for the "loan" as she didn't want me to write about it to Bham. Can you get in touch with her and tell her how much I appreciate it? Also maybe I can send her a letter while she is in Ga. that is to say, before she leaves there, as I think she will be there all thru this month.

We have been having some real “springy” weather for the past two days. There’s been sun all day long today. Something that Paris sees only a very few times during the winter. It’s too good to last tho’. I expect we will have lots more bad weather before spring really comes.

As you see I am at the Students Club. Have just finished my regular Monday French lesson and dropped in here on my way home. It’s nice to be able to run in and spend a little time with some of the other students.

Xmas cards are still coming in—a few came addressed to the church—sent by people who evidently saw the little notice in the Bham paper a short while back.

I notice in your last letter that you ask about the girls over here. American students and otherwise. The French girls, in my opinion, hardly live up to the reputation of being so charming etc. as one hears in America. Perhaps I just haven’t seen the right ones. There are a number of American girls over here studying but no one that I have taken a particular fancy to. They all congregate around the students club in the afternoons but I don’t have enough time to spare to get so very well acquainted.

Well I must be getting along home in a very short while, so I suppose I’d better bring this to a close for this time. I suppose all the schools there are starting again today after the holidays. Guess it is rather a relief to have a little peace around the house again.

Give my regards to everyone around and about.

Love to all,
Orville



Thursday
Jan. 13, 1931

Dearest Mother:

Being temporarily out of stationery at home I had to drop in here this afternoon especially to write you. I am just now on my way to have my lesson with Marchal so I may not time to finish just now, but there is no boat until Thursday anyway. Tonight I am going to Russian Opera with a friend whom I have met here at the club. A young fellow over here studying the cello—through him I have also met three other people studying with his teacher—two Russians and an American girl. We were all together playing the other night. Three cellos and piano—a rather peculiar combination, but a most interesting one. Thru his Russian friends we got tickets at reduced prices at the Russian Opera.

I notice that you were complaining about no mail arriving from me around Xmas time. I too had no mail from you for days until last Saturday and then two letters arrived on the same day. On the same day there were nine other letters, making eleven in all! I had to spend a half a day reading it all.

Am glad to hear that you all had such a good Xmas. I think I've already told you most all there is to tell about my Xmas. I know the trip to Ga. was most pleasant. I suppose Uncle Arthur and Aunt Lila are glad to have Aunt Sara up there now that Frances has gone back to school. Joe must surely have had a big time with football, fireworks, and all. Tell him I'm sorry that I couldn't come over this year and help him fire off his fireworks.

It seems that fires on Xmas morning are quite the thing in Hville. I of course remember the other one quite well, but this one must have been much worse. Does that make Hville minus the "talkies" for the time being? I received a letter from Mr. Allen along with your two the other day and he also enclosed a long clipping from the Bham Post about the Hville fire—according to the "Boss" business seems to be picking up a little especially in his line—at present they are all working on a proposition for an organ in Vanderbilt University [and] also in Joe Stoves' father's new church. If they get both organs that will be a good piece of business, and I think they will get it as they have Joe behind them. He has been completely converted to the Kimball organ.

I had thought about Lillie and Bud a number of times and wanted to at least send them a card, but I do not know the address. Wish you would call them up sometime and remember me to them.

The Russian Opera last night was marvelous (I am writing the next morning, not having time to finish yesterday). The Russians are most interesting people and of course no one can do their operas as they can themselves. They have a style and a way of doing things entirely different from everyone else. I am going again next Tuesday night and will [hear] Chaliapin sing.³¹ We were quite lucky to get seats, because when he sings the whole theatre is usually sold out weeks in advance.

Had a letter from Ernest Buchi saying he was arriving in Paris on Jan. 30th. He is of course quite excited over getting ready [to] leave and all. I wish I might just be commencing such a trip myself. He will be in Paris a couple of days and then goes on to Leipzig. He plans to be over here 3 years. In that time he should be able to learn something. I wish I might also have some time in Leipzig—at least a year. Perhaps I may be able to someday. I want to start learning German very soon—altho Madame Lepage thinks I should take up Italian first. I shall not be satisfied tho until I know French, German, Italian, and Spanish—then Russian. (That's about 10 years work!) Some people know 10 or 15 languages.

I must stop. I want to send Ernest Buchi a note hoping it will reach him on the boat he sails on from New York. I have several instructions to give him, such

as how to reach me here if I fail to meet his boat train as it arrives in Paris, etc. Hope you are all doing well and that Daddy's trip to Chicago and New York was a great success. Why not Paris next?

Love to all,
Orville



Monday
Jan 19, 1931

Dearest Mother:

As you see, since my last letter to you I have indulged in buying some new stationery. I'm afraid it is rather inclined to be blue, but nevertheless I think it is quite "swell."

Your letter of Jan. 6th arrived last Saturday according to schedule. The mails seem to have gotten back to normal again—now that all the rush of the holidays is finally over. For the next few months tho, there are less boats sailing than any time during the year. I suppose travel this time of the year is exceedingly light. The Holland America line has only one sailing a month until Spring.

Yesterday afternoon I had a most unexpected and pleasant surprise. I had been earlier in the afternoon to a concert with a friend and about 6:00 returned home to study a bit. I had not been working long when the door-bell rang and Madame Simon came in and informed me that there was an American who wanted to see me. You can imagine my surprise when I found out it was someone from Hville! Milton Terry—I suppose you know him. It seems that he has been over here two years working for the U.S. Government. Doing reconstruction work or something of the sort in the former battle field districts—over towards the German border. He gets into Paris for a few days every few weeks. He had just received a letter from his sister (Ruth Terry) saying that I was here (I saw her in Bham just before I came over). She had sent him a clipping from the Bham paper saying that I was playing at the American Cathedral so he went by there and got my address. We had an excellent chat and of course we talked much about the latest news we had heard from Hville. He had to leave Paris last night to get back to the "Valley of the Meuse" so I didn't have but a short while with him, but when he comes over again I hope to see more of him. (He saw Elizabeth Pride here last Spring.)

I am glad to hear that Joe is again taking up his music. I would suggest making him practice whether he wants to or not! If I remember correctly I was often compelled to practice when I didn't exactly feel like doing so.

I don't know whether I can answer Mary Leone's question about geography or not. France instead of being divided into states like the United States, is divided into what is called departments—which after all is about the same thing. Paris

takes up almost entirely one department as does Washington in the U.S. It is called the "Department of the Seine." There are 40 some odd departments in all I think.

Tomorrow night I am going again to the Russian Opera as I did last week—this week to hear "Boris"³² sung by Chaliapin. From all the reports I am to have the thrill of a lifetime—everyone says it is the most marvelous thing to be seen in Paris at the present time.

Yesterday one of the piano teachers for the Cinti Cons.³³ played here. Daniel Ericourt.³⁴ I wanted to hear him, but there was another concert at the same hour that I just couldn't miss. The real concert and theater season is just beginning. From now until late in the spring there will be more good things to see and hear than anyone could possibly take in.

I was most sorry to hear of the death of Ernest Strickland. I of course knew him quite well. He was the youngest of the two brothers was he not?

I have a friend here who has a rather excellent way of writing home. I should like to adopt his plan myself but it would be a little too expensive, I'm afraid. He buys these 4¢ correspondence cards and sends one to his mother each day. She saves all the cards, putting them in a binder—then when he gets back home he has a daily record of what he has been doing over here which serves as a diary. At the same time his mother enjoys hearing from him and knowing just what he is doing all the time. It seems to me an excellent scheme, but in the end it must cost an awful lot.

Well I must be bringing this to a close and getting to bed. I must be up bright and early in the morning to get in a lot of practicing before my lesson with Marchal in the afternoon. Hope everything there is going well with you all.

Love to all,
Orville

I'm afraid I shall have to pick some other day to write you than Monday. Since the 1st of the year it turns out to be my biggest day. I have a harmony lesson in the morning at 8:45 and am going almost without stopping until I finish my organ practice at the organ factory at 8:30 at night. Organ practice time is so scarce that I have to do some of it at night, as always on Mondays the more difficult it is the more work you do when you practice because you realize that you only have such a short time to do so much work.



Monday
Jan 26, 1931

Dearest Mother,

Your letter and Daddy's written in New York both arrived on the same day. I wish Dad might be going to N.Y. every week so that I could receive a letter from him each week in addition to yours. Was glad to hear that the trip up was

pleasant in spite of the snow. I rather think that it would be better to have a "cloud of snow" sweeping around the train than the "cloud of dust" that we encountered on our way up last spring. We have had practically no snow and very little cold weather here in Paris all winter. I did see a little snow on Xmas day in Chartres tho! Lately we have been having rather spring weather, but at the same time there is hardly a day that passes but what it rains.

From the looks of the clippings from the N.Y. paper the weather when Dad was there was far from being "spring like." I have been showing the clippings to Madame Simon and it is beyond her to imagine weather as cold as that. I am naturally very glad to hear that the trips to N.Y. was proving to be profitable. I hope business will pick up right along now and that everything will get back on its feet. I have just received a letter from one of the men at the Alabama Theatre, and according to him things are showing signs of coming back to normal very soon. Steel mills opening up etc. Incidentally things are also going to open up again at the theatre. That I wouldn't be too sure of tho.

I am naturally pleased to hear you practically have my car sold. If I can get \$200.00 out of it I am quite satisfied, altho I suppose it is really worth more than that. I have just discovered that I have license receipt here with me. I don't know whether you need it or not, but I am sending it along.

By the way what ever happened about that Willis Music Co. bill?

And speaking of bills—Since the first of the year I naturally owe a few dollars at the Cinti Musicians union and also in Bham. It might be a good idea to have that paid up for the 1st six months of this year as I hardly think it would wait until I return. I shall write the union in both places to send a statement to you and then you can send them a check to cover it drawing from the "Automobile money." The one in Cinti should not be more than \$4.00 for 6 months, and in Bham \$7.50 or \$8.00 unless it is approximately that it isn't right.

As far as I know I suppose I will be planning to return to the states right around the 1st of May, according to just how the sailings are at the time of the year with the Holland-America line. I see very little hopes of trying to prolong my stay here any longer than that, this time. That's only 3 short months away so I suppose I had better soon be trying to see what I can round up in the way of work over there. I certainly hope that things can work out so that I can be met in N.Y. by both you and Dad!!

You are quite right in not sending the sweat shirt or sweater. I really wouldn't have much use for them now, except perhaps coming back on the boat, but then I have lots of other things I can be wearing.

Someone has made me a present of a subscription to one of the American organ monthly [magazines] (Mr. Allen I suppose). The first copies arrived a few days ago and I have been having a good time reading all the U.S. organ world "doings." This week on Thursday as I have written you Ernest Buchi arrives in Paris. From him I shall hear all the local news of Bham etc.

I have not been doing anything out of the ordinary this week except taking in a number of excellent concerts and yesterday I visited the Louvre seeing a lot of interesting things. There is only thing wrong with the Louvre and that is that it is so filled with priceless things that no one can possibly appreciate or comprehend the greatness of them. I am taking the Louvre quite gradually—even though everything is intensely interesting it is the most tiring thing in the world to walk the floors of a museum.

Well I must finish up and get to Madame Lepage's for my regular Monday French lesson. Tonight I am going to the home of one of the Marchal's pupils. She has just completed having an organ put in her home and is having a bunch of French friends over to try it out.

Hope you are well.

Love to all,
Orville



Monday
February 2, 1931

Dearest Mother:

I have just put Ernest Buchi on his train for Leipzig. He left Paris at noon today and is supposed to reach Leipzig at 9:00 tomorrow morning. He arrived in Paris last Thursday afternoon and since that time we have certainly been on the go. I have never done so much "sight seeing" in two or three days in all my life. We visited all the churches, cathedrals, monuments, museums, etc. that one could possibly visit in such a short time. Yesterday in addition to a whole lot of church services we went to the top of the Eiffel Tower, the top of the Arc of Triumph, visited Napoleon's Tomb, went to the Louvre and I don't know what all. I am glad to have taken a little time off to see things tho. There are so many interesting things to be seen, that a person living in Paris all the time does not trouble himself to see, unless something comes along to drag him out of his beaten trail.

It was good to see Ernest and to learn all the news and gossip that was taking place in Bham. According to him everything is beginning to move along now, and [he said] that everybody is doing about as well as could be expected. He saw Joe Stoves in New York the day he was there. Joe seems to still be having trouble with the unions and at the present time is not working at all—but pay goes along just the same! Ernest is planning to study with the same teacher that Joe had in Leipzig.

Marchal played an excellent program at a concert on Saturday night. We had tickets for it so we went, and enjoyed it very much indeed. I was glad that

Ernest was here right at that time so that he might hear Marchal in a real program. The whole audience was most enthusiastic over his playing.

I have just had a letter from Mr. Verd and he enclosed a program that he had just played in Cannes. It was the first playing in public he had done since he left Cincinnati 5 years ago. It's a pity he does not have a chance to play more than that, because he certainly plays beautifully; but I don't suppose he will ever do much playing any more. Altho he is perfectly well now, he is afraid to leave Magagnosc, to come back from Paris or anywhere else, for fear of losing all the progress he has made in the last few years. I think I wrote that when he left Cinti and first returned to France the doctors all held little hopes of his ever recovering. Everyone is glad to hear tho now that he is well enough to do a little playing again.

Once again mail has been very scarce for some time back—and there is no mail due until Thursday of this week when the Europa arrives. I suppose I will have two letters from you at that time.

A bunch of us were discussing languages the other day and an American friend of mine was saying that at one time he had completely forgotten English. He had been in Berlin and for 4 years was with nothing but German people and spoke nothing but German during that time. Coming back to Paris and being with an American again he found that he practically had to learn English all over again. He could of course understand everything, but trying to talk it was an entirely different thing. I can readily see how such a thing could happen. Even the short time I've been here and altho I am with Americans quite a bit I find myself unable to find the English pronunciation to many words; words that are spelled the same in both English and French but with different pronunciation.

I am going to start taking up German right away. I have a class (a new one that I am starting with Mlle. Boulanger)³⁵ where we all sing the cantatas and church music of Bach in German—so I must learn to pronounce German whether I understand it or not.

Not having a letter from you this week that I could answer, I find that I can't think of anything else to write about just now. I guess I've written enough already, as it is, tho.

Hope you all are well.

Love to all,
Orville

Ask Miss Bessie if she has stopped writing letters to her friends. I wrote her way before Xmas and have not heard from her in a very long time.



Tuesday
February 10, 1931

Dearest Mother:

Not having had a letter from you last week I have no less than two this week to answer. Right now is the very worst time of the year for mail. There are hardly any boats at all.

Since my last letter to you there has been nothing out of the ordinary taking place so I have very little to write about the time. Last Sunday was the formal dedication of the new organ. There was a big special music service which was quite excellent. As usually happens with new organs tho', lots of things went wrong during the service such as notes sticking and other disagreeable things but on the whole everything went rather smoothly. The organ quite comes up to everybody's expectations, it is really a marvelous instrument. There is still a lot of "tinkering" to be done on it before everything is in good working order, but practically everything was going Sunday. There was a long article in the American paper about the service and organ that I meant to send you but the paper has been destroyed.

I was quite tickled to have the little photo of Joe that you enclosed in your last letter. According to the picture he has certainly done a lot of growing up in this past year. I intend to have a few small ones like that made very soon. I will of course send one over so that Joe can see how I look (since he has almost forgotten). When Ernest Buchi was here we took a few snapshots. He took the films off to Germany with him tho. I hope they will turn out good even tho we had no sun the day we took the picture.

I shall know whether they were good or bad tho today. Yesterday I had a telegram from Ernest saying he would arrive in Paris from Leipzig tonight—which is quite a puzzle to me. I can't imagine what he is doing coming back to Paris and he didn't explain himself at all in the telegram. When he left here last week he had every intention of being in Leipzig at least a year. I can't imagine whether he has been suddenly called back home or whether he did not find things in Leipzig agreeable and is coming back to Paris to study, or what. Anyway I shall know when he arrives tonight.

I had a letter from Aunt Sara written in Ga. She did not mention in her letter that she had sprained her ankle or anything of the sort. Said she expected to be in Bham the 1st of Feb. There was no special news except that Uncle Arthur didn't make 15¢ on his cotton this year. As Aunt Sara expressed it he laid down \$2.00 and picked up \$1.00—which isn't so good.

I enjoyed looking at the comparison [of] “Bham’s tallest” with the New Empire State Bldg. in New York. I shall enjoy seeing it “in the flesh” before very long now tho. I do certainly hope that nothing can prevent you all from coming up to N.Y. to meet Volendam when she docks. I suppose it will be the Volendam again and I think it leaves here sometime the 1st week in May. That gives me only about 2½ more months here. It will be good to be back on that side of the “Pond” again tho.

I suppose that by this time Aunt Julia and Mary Dean are in Hville or at least preparing to be there. Am sure you all will have a good time together.

Next week is “Mardi Gras” and that of course means much celebrating for the French. Is not “Mardi Gras” in New Orleans at the same time? New Orleans is still quite French I suppose.

Well I must stop and take this letter directly to the station. Unless it goes today there is not another boat for 10 days carrying the mail. Hope you all are well.

Love to all,
Orville



Monday
February 16, 1931

Dearest Mother:

Another Monday rolls around. I have completely lost all track of time. It is impossible to imagine it is past the middle of Feb., but so it is. I shall rather be glad to see winter completely behind us tho as the weather here is most disagreeable and promises to remain so until Spring is really here. We had one rather nice day last week with a bit of sunshine, but on the whole nothing much but rain.

Ernest Buchi arrived in Paris Tuesday of last week and Friday sailed for America! He said that he found things in Leipzig very nice in every way. But I am inclined to believe that he must not have been too well pleased. At the conservatory there they advised him that if he could only remain in Europe one year that it would hardly be worth his trouble, so he decided to return to America to work until he could make enough money to keep him over here three years. Personally I can't see that he did the right thing, but I suppose he knows his own business better than I do. Surely one year is better than nothing at all. Then too he had a chance to stay the extra years if business in America picked up at all. His uncle was going to finance a year and also his father if they could possibly do so. I believe he would have stayed on if he had remained in Paris, but being in Leipzig all alone I am inclined to think

that he was terribly homesick which assisted him in making his decision to return to America, altho he says not. Anyway it was a shame that he made the trip all for nothing.

The pictures we made turned out very well in spite of the fact that there was practically no sun. I will enclose one or two in this letter. I am sending the negatives back to Ernst so see that the pictures do not get destroyed. I have naturally given him all sorts of messages to everyone around Bham. I, of course, asked him especially to go by and see Aunt Sara and Aunt Julia so I guess you will hear from them how well off I am here in Paris how fat I am, that I have grown a moustache etc. The moustache was only to see if I could grow one. I certainly don't like it well enough that I want to keep it. I am sorry to say that it does not show up very well in the snapshots. I must have a couple of small photos made tho' so that you can see just how well it does look!!!

I am glad that you called Mrs. Terry. Milton said that he was going to write her about our seeing each other. I have not seen him since that day. He does not get up to Paris so very often, but I expect him next Sunday perhaps.

Daddy seems to still be on the go as far as traveling is concerned. Florence! Chicago!! I really don't see why not Paris! I hope the trip to Chicago has been very worthwhile.

I suppose Aunt Julia and Mary Dean arrive in Hville tomorrow (17th). Tomorrow is "Mardi Gras" in Paris. I don't know what, or how it can be a great deal of "merry making" with this awful weather. But then we ought to be glad it's no worse that it is. London is simply awful I hear. With the commencing of Lent I suppose I will have a few extra services and things to attend to at the church.

You say that you have purchased some new living room furniture. Which is the living room? It's not the parlor is it?

By the way did Daddy visit WENR studios in Chicago? Is that not the "voice of service station"?

I have been doing quite a bit of letter writing the past few days to see if I couldn't get something lined up in Bham. Ernst seemed to think that I would easily get the Alabama organ, but we shall see.

Well I must be stopping as it is about supper time, and tonight I am going out to a concert. Hope everything is moving along well.

Love to all,
Orville

How long can we remain in New York when I arrive? I should like to remain there for a number of days and see things a bit. Since I wrote this letter the postman has just brought me a letter from Dad written in Chicago.



Monday night
Feb. 23, 1931

Dearest Mother,

It is now the hour of 11 P.M. I have just returned home after a regular Monday of hard work. I stopped in the Student Club a short while tonight after finishing up my practicing, to talk and “gab” with some of the fellows. After a hard day’s work (and Monday always seems to be the hardest) it is rather nice to sit around and rest awhile and speak English.

Yesterday was Washington’s birthday and the occasion was celebrated by all the Americans. I was lucky enough to receive an invitation to an afternoon musical given by one of the most select families in Paris. They gave an enormous reception for the occasion of Washington’s birthday and invited about an equal number of Americans and French people. I met a great many most charming people and enjoyed myself thoroughly in every way. The place was nothing short of a mansion, in the very best section of Paris overlooking the Seine. The reception cut me out of hearing a concert that I had wanted to hear, but it was worth it.

Along with your letter last week came one from Aunt Sara. There was no special news except that she was anxious to know if she should plan to send me another check to finish out my time. I immediately answered her letter as she seemed most anxious to know at once. I should of course not have to borrow the last bit she was going to let me have now that my automobile has been sold. There is no special hurry about you sending the money. My present funds are holding out quite well, but of course I shall need it some time in April. You say I did not enclose the tax receipt for my automobile. If not I don’t know where it is. Anyway I shall look about and see if it is still here and if so I will enclose it in this letter. I forgot to write the Union telling them to send you a statement concerning my dues. I have written them tho’ now so you shall probably hear from them soon.

Tell Sara that I enjoyed reading over her letter very much. I should like to answer it but I just don’t know where I can get a chance to do so. I have so many letters that I must write and get off very soon!

We have been having nice weather for the past two days (even tho it rained all afternoon today). Just to see the sun a little bit and have a touch of spring is enough to pep one up a great deal tho.

I was quite surprised to hear that Alvin Hollingsworth was a proud father. I do not know his wife do I? Anyway you must give him my congratulations.

Lent has started and I have already begun doing a bit of extra playing at church. Lent is of course the greatest season in the church year for music. The choir gives a big Cantata on Good Friday night!

With the coming of Easter everyone takes a two weeks vacation. All the schools close, and everybody leaves Paris. If I can't do any work during that time (and my finances look as if they will be in good shape) I want to make a tour around and see some of the high spots of Europe, such as Munich, Heidelberg, Venice, Florence, Rome, and also spend a few days in Magagnosc on my way back to Paris. I think it would be a marvelous thing and if I can get all those places in on what they call a "circular ticket" the railroad fare will be practically nothing. Anyway that is 6 weeks off as yet, so I shouldn't be planning so far in advance. But it is a lot of fun to map out such a trip even if I can't make it.

Well it is now almost midnight so I suppose I had better stop and get some sleep. I must do an awful lot of practicing before my lesson with Marchal tomorrow.

I hope you are all well and that everything is going along smoothly.

Love to all,
Orville



Monday
March 10, 1931

Dearest Mother:

I don't think I have done so much work in any other one week since I've been here than I did last week. I had no end of harmony piled upon me that I had to do and then put in as much extra time at the organ as possible. I think I wrote you last week that I am having to play at Marchal's on the 15th of this month. I have been going to his house every day to practice on his organ in addition to the other regular practice time. I have been doing some work on his organ right along all winter (as there is just not enough time free on other organs) so I am pretty well acquainted with his instrument.

I had a letter from Ernest Buchi written shortly after he had arrived back in Bham from his wild-goose chase over here. He has been around calling on everybody and telling them of his trip and giving each one a message from me. He tells me that the orchestra at WAPI has gone under as well as have a number of their other offerings—namely Henry and Percy, Mildred White Wallace and what not. I think WAPI has sort of been in a hole since the city of Bham removed their funds.

The lady who is broadcasting the organ of the Alabama Theatre over WKBC is a Mrs. Orr. She is the lady that Joe Stoves fired at the Temple just before I went there. She plays very badly and I hear that the manager of the Alabama threatens to deny WKBC the use of the organ unless the station puts someone better in there to play it. Ernst writes me that the Alabama is putting everything back to work the 1st of June. Even if everything doesn't go back I hope they will want to use the organ. I suppose I will hear something from them shortly as you know I wrote them some little time ago.

I have been rather expecting a letter from Mr. Titus advising me as to whether there would be anything doing in Cinti or not. Suppose he has been too busy to write tho' with his lecture music, and then he has been doing a lot of recital work around and about in Texas, Detroit, etc.

I suppose Bham is the best bet for me tho if I want to make some money quickly. Had a letter from the Bham union saying that they understand that the Alabama is planning to give me the organ when I return. There is no longer any hitch as far as the union is concerned. Things will work out in some way tho.

Am glad you liked the snapshots I sent over. Since the pictures were taken I have lost my mustache. Decided it was too much trouble. I am satisfied to know that I could grow one even tho it wasn't so very beautiful. Regarding where the pictures were taken—yes they were taken in someone's boudoir but quite a safe one, Madame Simon's.

Am glad to hear that Sara is doing so well with her music. Is Joe getting in two hours of practice a day?

Charlie Chaplin is in Paris today. He arrived a few days ago and the Parisians have all been breaking their necks to see him. I think his new picture "City Lights" is going to have a Paris showing very soon. There are quite a number of American talking pictures about town but I've only taken time to see one or two when Ernst was here. The French pictures are so terrible that no one wants to see them. In the first place the recording is so bad that it is very difficult to understand.

Did I write that I wanted to take my boat from Rotterdam instead of waiting until it comes over to Boulogne. Am pretty sure that my ticket is good for doing that. The only difference would be a few dollars extra railroad fare from here to Rotterdam. Any way I am going to see if they will allow me to do so and if so I can get an idea of Belgium and Holland.

Am glad to hear that Daddy's business is picking up and that things look so much brighter than they did for this occasion.

I must admit that my letter writing to Dad has been very scarce but then of course every letter is to him too. Thanks for forwarding Billy Wilson's letter. Was the first time I had heard from. So was naturally glad to [hear] about what he has been doing this year.

Love to all,
Orville



Tuesday night
March 17, 1931

Dearest Mother:

As you see I am writing from the club tonight, not that I haven't any stationery at home, but I just happen to be here and don't want to go home as I must go down to the station and get this in the post-office there tonight or it won't go off for a whole week.

I have had my first breathing spree in weeks, yesterday and today, having done my playing at Marchal's Sunday. It went really quite well. Marchal was quite pleased. I certainly had to work hard to get my number worked up. Almost at the last minute he changed pieces on me, and the thing I really played was much more different than the first one. About 8 other of his pupils played and everybody did very well indeed. I suppose that will be the only recital he will have this year, or at least the only one that I will be in.

My days in Paris are getting on towards the end. I suddenly realized yesterday that I have only about 6 more weeks here. I believe the Volendam sails on the 2nd of May and that is the boat that I want to make, if possible. That really gives me only about a month more here in Paris because I will be in Magagnosc for almost two weeks. That I am looking forward to very much. Of course I am also looking forward to coming home, but am sure that after I arrive and have seen everybody and all that I will be homesick for Paris, but you know I do plan to get back here sometime!

Barbara Ross and her mother (I think I have written you about them) are also going south to see Mr. Verd during the Easter vacation. And then they are sailing for New York directly from Cannes without coming back to Paris. They were expecting to remain in France until sometime during the summer, but something had come up taking Mrs. Ross back to N.Y. at once. They have a big country place about an hour and a half from N.Y. and I have been invited to come along there and spend a week end with them when I come thru N.Y. but I don't suppose I shall be able to do so. You know I can hardly realize that I am really making plans to come along back home.

Again this last week I have not received a letter from you and there are no boats due for several days, yet. Beginning with the 1st of the month tho' most of the boats are put back [in] Transatlantic service so mail will be more regular.

Madame Simon had some friends over last night who are sailing back to their home this week. One of the French colonies out near Australia (The new Caladonia). They have been here in Paris all winter. It takes no less than two months! to arrive where they are going, rather a long and bore some trip I should think. They are quite nice and speak perfect French in spite of the fact that this is the first time they have ever been in France.

I can think of nothing more just at present that I might write this time so I suppose I might as well stop and rush about over to the station with this. Everybody around here in the club is hurrying to finish up letters for the boat tomorrow.

Hoping to hear from you toward the end of the week, and no less than two letters. Hope that everyone is well and that everything is going along as it should.

Love to all,
Orville



Tuesday
March 24, 1931

Dearest Mother:

I have two letters of yours to answer today so I hope I can make this letter more interesting than the one last week. I never seem to be able to write very well unless I have something to “sorta” guide one by.

Nothing very exciting has happened here since I wrote you last except that spring seems to be trying to show itself. After all of our snow storms and what not of a few weeks ago, it has cleared up and we have been having some of the nicest weather I have yet seen in Paris. After a winter such as we have had it is certainly welcome. Spring here doesn’t break forth and show itself over night; it rather creeps up on you the little by little—each day a bit warmer than the preceding one. I suppose that by the first of April it will really be here.

I find that I do not have to play at church on Easter Sunday. There is only one big service at 11:00, so am rather planning to leave Paris a week from today for Magagnosc. I do not plan to make the trip all in one jump as I did last summer, but will stop over in a few places where there are interesting things to see, Marseilles, Nimes, Arles, Avignon, etc. The way the railroads run things here, you can get off at any point you like, stay as long as you like, without making any arrangements whatsoever, so long as you arrive at your final destination before the time limit on your ticket expires.

What you write about St. John’s Cathedral in N.Y. is naturally very interesting, but I am sure that it is highly improbable that an arrangement could be made with them. In the first place I would not feel at all as if I could carry on with the work. In such a place as that they would naturally want an older head, someone who had had more experience. It is awfully nice that Daddy and Mr. Vaudermuheel should think of me in connection with that, but am pretty sure that it would be almost impossible. There are probably dozens of assistants who are there for just such an occasion.³⁶

I also had a letter last week from Mrs. Wright. She is still doing lots of radio work and of course still has her church. Everyone at the church from preacher to janitor has had their salary cut 30%, so she says. She only has one service a week tho now which evens things up a bit. At the Church of the Advent there has been a 15% cut and also the same thing at the 1st M.E., altho I do not think Jesse was out any. Mrs. Wright says that she and Jesse are giving the Bham scandal mongers a lot to talk about these days, going to concerts together dining together and what not!

Here I am writing all this news about Bham when I suppose you have heard it all already from Aunt Julia and Mary Dean when they were there. I am sure you enjoyed their visit very much even tho you all were on the go most of the time. I don't see why they could not have remained there longer. There was surely nothing so very pressing in Bham to drag them back there.

There was a picture in yesterday paper of the new organ at the Cathedral. If I can find it I will send it along in this letter. It's a fairly decent picture of the organ but Mr. Whipp looks very sad in the photo. Mr. Whipp plays his first really big recital on the organ this coming Thursday.

Yesterday I made my second visit to these American friends of Mr. Verd whom I think I wrote you about. We played piano duets all afternoon and then I remained there for dinner in the evening. They are awfully nice. I enjoyed being with them ever so much.

Must stop as I see it is time to be getting along to Madame Lepage's for my regular Monday French lesson.

Lots of love to everybody,
Orville



Tuesday night
March 31, 1931

Dearest Mother:

As you see I am out of Paris. My Easter vacation started last night at 9:40 when I took a train coming south. You can also see that I did not go straight to Magagnosc. I arrived here (Avignon) this morning about 9 o'clock and have spent the whole day seeing the town which is one of the most interesting ones in this part of France. It is what was once an old Roman fortification. The complete city is still completely surrounded by a high wall which the Romans built. The whole place is simply covered with historical spots and so far has not been spoiled by too many American tourists. I will enclose a postal card showing the walls. Tomorrow I am taking a trip thru the country to Arles, another historic

old place where there is an old Roman amphitheatre and many other interesting things. I shall come back here tomorrow night and early the next morning take a train for Marseilles. I shall spend the day and night there and then go on to Magagnosc Friday. As you can well imagine I am enjoying myself thoroughly and looking forward to the rest of my trip, but tonight I am certainly quite all in—am going straight to bed as soon as I finish up this letter.

The Holland America line has no sailing on May 2nd as I thought they had. I went by their office yesterday before leaving Paris and made a reservation on the “Statendam” sailing on May 9th from Rotterdam. The “Statendam” is their “top notch” boat and is about 2 times as big as the Volendam. It also makes the trip in less time than the Volendam. I don’t know just when it will dock in New York but will find out and let you know as soon as I get back to Paris. I have practically decided to sail from Rotterdam—the difference in price being only about 75¢.

Am glad you all had a chance to see Miss Ivey when you were in Florence. I wonder if she will be coming back over here this summer.

I have received my Union cards from both the Bham and Cinti unions. Thanks for taking care of it for me.

I’m getting so sleepy that I’m afraid [I] won’t be able to finish this up and write all I should like to. Think I will stop and mail it just as it is and then write you again when I reach Magagnosc Friday.

Hope you are all well and getting ready to enjoy a pleasant Easter. One thing that is making my trip so nice is that the weather is marvelous. Only hope it will hold out.

Love to all,
Orville



April 1931

Dearest Mother:

As you see I have at least arrived again down on the Mediterranean. Had expected to be in Marseilles Thursday coming on to Magagnosc Friday, but the weather turned suddenly bad so I arrived in Magagnosc in Thursday. I am now in Villefranche, a town which is really the port of Nice. I came over by bus from Magagnosc this morning to see some friends off on a boat sailing today. They are going over to Corsica to spend the holidays. I have been having an excellent trip except for running into a bit of rain, but it promises to clear up now and I hope it will remain so for the rest of my stay down here.

Was naturally very glad to see Mr. Verd again and to get some of the good “grub” at the “Moulin.”

Being down here is certainly different from Paris. Everything here is fully in bloom, ripe oranges on the trees and everything green. I don't suppose there could possibly be a better time of the year to be here.

After I see my friends off here this afternoon am taking a bus back to Magagnosc where I shall see Barbara Ross and her mother. They will be coming up from Cannes as Barbara has a lesson with Mr. Verd.

This morning have been over to Monte Carlo to have another look at the place with my friends here who had never seen it. It is much more impressive now than in the dead of summertime when I was there before with Mr. Titus.

Am expecting a lot of mail from U.S.A. when I get back home tonight. I should have waited to get your letter before writing, but we are here at this hotel now waiting for lunch time so I thought I would take advantage of the spare time to drop you a note. Have written all I can think of at the present time so will stop and write you again from Magagnosc later.

Hope you are all well.

Easter greetings,
Orville



Wednesday
April 8, 1931

Dearest Mother,

I found your letter of March 20th here in Magagnosc (having been forwarded by Madame Simon) when I returned the other afternoon; the same day that I wrote you from Villefranche.

This is about my regular day for writing tho, so I will scribble off a few lines in spite of the fact that I wrote you twice last week.

My vacation down here has been exceptionally pleasant altho the weather on the whole has not been as nice as it might be. It has only rained one day, but since we are so high up in the mountains clouds have been hanging about our heads—clouds up here when we could see the nice sunshine down below in the valley and over the sea. It has all passed now tho; today has been a marvelous day without a trace of anything in the sky. Up above us tho on the very tops of the mountains snow is still lingering. It stays there all winter and on into the spring. For me that was quite a sight, but down here is of course only a touch of what it is when you really get back up into the alps.

I have been down to Cannes a number of times to see Barbara and her mother and then they have been up here. Barbara [is] having lessons with Mr. Verd. You can imagine that we all had quite a jolly time together. I went to

Cannes this morning to see them off on their train for Paris. They are sailing on Saturday for America, almost exactly a month before I go.

Tomorrow Mr. Verd and his mother and I are taking an automobile trip back up in the country—almost exactly the same trip that Mr. Titus and myself took last summer. I suppose I wrote you about it at the time. Then on Friday Mr. Verd is having some friends of his to his house whom he is especially anxious for me to meet and of course I am just as anxious to meet them. The main person is Mr. Jean Rivier,³⁷ one of the foremost French composers of the present day. I had a note to him from Mr. Verd that I was to have presented in Paris when I returned last fall, but I hated to bother him at the time as I knew he was very busy, so I just kept putting it off until I finally never did call. But now I shall have a chance to meet him and under much better conditions than if I had just dropped in on him in Paris.

I do hope that Daddy has not made the trip to N.Y. that you spoke of in your last letter if it will in any way interfere with you all coming up in May. I have been looking forward greatly to seeing both of you on the docks when my ship arrives, so I hope nothing will prevent you from being there. I am sure things will work out all o.k. tho, they usually do.

My income tax block certainly was no trouble for anyone to figure out this year.

Have just had a letter from Aunt Sara containing lots of startling news. I suppose she has written you all about the same thing by now. I was quite sorry to hear that anything as disagreeable as that had taken place.

Am terribly sorry to hear that Dr. Wilson is so ill. I do hope that he is so much better by now. I don't know where I shall have much chance to answer Billy's letter received a few weeks ago, but I wish you might call Mrs. Wilson and give them all my very best.

I wish that I might be there and help fly kites also. Tell Joe not to break up all the kites and to have lots of wind around when I return so that I can have some fun too.

I will be leaving here late Friday afternoon for Paris. So as not to have to spend a night on the train. I shall go as far as Marseilles Friday, spend the night there, then leave Marseilles early Saturday A.M. arriving Paris Saturday night at 8:30. Breaking the trip like that will be much more interesting and certainly more comfortable than doing it all in one jump. I must be there of course for church Sunday morning.

Well I've written about all there is to write for this time. My next letter will be from Paris I suppose.

Hope you are all well and also hope to hear definitely that you will be in N.Y. when I arrive.

Love to all,
Orville



Friday
April 17, 1931

Dearest Mother:

I am a bit late in writing you this week; you can imagine tho just about how busy I have been since I arrived back in Paris last Saturday night. There has certainly been little time to do any letter writing. I have naturally started all my work again and am doing all I possibly can to get as much done as possible these last few weeks.

My trip back to Paris was quite pleasant in spite of the fact that the train was crowded to the limit, everybody rushing back to Paris at the last minute after the Easter vacations were over. Luckily I boarded the train at Marseille, where it was made up, or I should have had to stand up most of the way. I left Magagnosc Friday afternoon, going to Marseille where I spent the night, resuming my trip Sat. morning. My train left Marseille at 8:00 in the morning, but I was up quite early so as to have a little time to see a bit of the town, have a last look at the Mediterranean, etc, before leaving. Have resumed my work at the church and also my playing at the Students and Artists Club.

There was a letter from you waiting for me when I arrived back home Sat. night and since then another one has appeared so I have two to answer all at once. Was glad to hear from both you and Aunt Sara that you all had driven down to Bham. Am sorry tho that what prompted the trip was that Daddy was not feeling so well. Hope that after Doctor Scott got thru with him he is quite himself again.

I would naturally have liked to be along on that trip, but then perhaps the next one you make I can be along.

It is good to hear that business is picking up and that the mill is running along at full speed these days. Now if the music business will only pick up a bit, all will be o.k.! Am happy to know that Dr. Wilson is improving right along. I took advantage of my time on the train to scratch off a note to Billy (and scratch it really seems to be according to your opinion of my writing in your last letter). I suppose my writing has degenerated a bit since I've been over here partly from trying to write in such a hurry and partly from trying to copy the French manner of making letters.

The accident insurance you spoke of should be renewed I should think. They assured me before leaving Bham that it was good in Europe as well as in the United States.

If you have not sent the money from my automobile by the time you receive this, there is of course no need of sending it over as I don't think it would arrive in time (some of your letters lately have taken 3 weeks to get here). I don't think tho that I shall have any need of the money before I leave—but I still have quite

a bit in reserve, quite enough to wind up all my affairs I think. But if I find that I do need a bit extra I can wire you to cable me \$50 or so, in that case I suppose you will have received my wire before this letter reaches you—if I wire. I was talking over finances with Mr. Verd when I was down there and he insisted on me letting him know if I found that I would run short, but I rather hate to ask him to do anything of that sort. The finances will arrange themselves in some way tho.

I wrote you of course that I was sailing on the 9th of May (instead of the 2nd). I have not yet been able to find out when that could put me in N.Y. but I think it should be about the 17th. Will let you know exactly, when I can. Am still hoping of course that you will be along with Daddy in N.Y.

When is music week? If it is late in May I can be there for Miss Bessie's recital can I not?

Paris is always having something to be excited over. At the present time it happens to be the arrival of the King and Queen of Spain. (Or at least what used to be the King and Queen of Spain!)

There's also much else in the way of current news that might be interesting, but I think I had better end this up now and prepare to be on my way for my regular Friday afternoon harmony lesson.

Love to all,
Orville



Thursday
April 23, 1931

Dearest Mother:

Your letter of April 10th arrived this morning and evidently it will be about the best one I will receive before sailing, altho another one or so could reach me before I go, since I am not sailing until the 9th. I have not been able, as yet, to find out just what day the Statendam should dock in New York, although according to the schedule given in the newspapers, it should be in N.Y. on May 16th, but of course that cannot be too accurate as the weather has so much to do with them being on schedule. But then you can know fairly well that it will be in either the 16th or 17th. I don't suppose there is any need for me to cable you or anything of the sort when I leave. You can know that I will be on the Statendam whenever it docks. And if Daddy is in N.Y. on the 16th, I hope to be there the same day.

I don't know as yet whether I will have to cable you for money or not. Have not had time to figure out just what it will take to get me out of town with

everything settled up, what music I want, bought, etc., but I shall try to figure everything up in a day or so and see how it compares with my bank balance. If I find that there is not enough money here, you will have heard from me before this letter reaches you.

[Friday morning]

I did not have time to finish this last night at the club, so you will have to excuse me changing to pencil.

I have been down town this morning and to the railway station seeing a friend off who sails today for America. Exactly two weeks from today I shall be taking myself off.

I have also been to the Steamship Co.'s office this morning to make my final arrangements, get my baggage checks, etc. My baggage is going on to Boulogne ahead of me and will be put on the boat there, so I will have no luggage to worry about going on to Holland. They assured me at the Holland-American office this morning that the "Statendam" would dock on the 16th. It is due late in the afternoon.

I don't know what else there is to write about. So far this letter seems to be nothing but sailing dates, traveling plans, etc. I have so little time tho to be writing that I won't try to add any more. What news I know I will have and tell you when I see you.

Love to all,
Orville

This letter is part of a jumbled up mess but I hope you can make some sense out of it.



Friday
May 1st, 1931

Dearest Mother:

This is going to be practically no letter at all, but I thought that I would drop you just one more little note before I left Paris. I just had a notice today from The American Exp. Co. saying that they had a check for me so I will go down tomorrow and get it. I'm sorry I had to ask you to go to all the trouble of wiring the money but I was afraid I might run a bit short unless I did.

Your last letter arrived today. I don't have it here at the club now, but I don't think there was anything in it that I should particularly answer in this letter. I shall in all probability arrive about the time this letter does.

I am winding up all my affairs here in Paris now. This week has been rather a busy one as you can imagine it would be. I have been invited out for lunch and dinner almost every day all week by different friends which is not only pleasant, but it saves spending money for meals. I have as yet a lot of music to purchase, trunks to pack and what not, but I hope to be all finished so I can get away as I plan Tuesday morning. Am looking forward to a most pleasant trip up thru Belgium and Holland.

Was quite sorry to hear that Dr. Wilson had been worse. There is nothing else to write that I know of; you know when I land and all, so until I see you.

Love to all,
Orville

Notes

1. Lee Orville Erwin Sr.
2. Erwin uses abbreviations, shortened words, and informal spellings throughout his letters. The most frequent are *nite* (night), *altho* (although), *tho* (though), *Hville* (Huntsville), *Bham* (Birmingham), and *Cinti* (Cincinnati). These—along with occasional misspellings—are generally left intact to preserve the feel of these intimate letters.
3. Parvin Titus (1897–1973) was one of Lee Erwin’s mentors and professors from Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. He arranged Erwin’s trip to France.
4. Boulogne-sur-Mer is a port city in northern France.
5. The Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés dates back to the sixth century. André Marchal served as organist in this church for many years.
6. The first organ in Saint-Germain-des-Prés was built in the early seventeenth century. The organ was rebuilt and renovated numerous times, including in 1923 when it was restored by the Gutschenritter firm. For more information on the history of this organ, see Gail Lynn Walton, “The Life and Organ Works of Augustin Barié (1883–1915),” DMA thesis, University of Rochester, 1986, available at <http://hdl.handle.net/1802/12270>.
7. The organist at American Cathedral in Paris was Lawrence Whipp (1889–1945).
8. Two dollars in 1930 equates to about \$26 in 2011. Erwin’s and Titus’s daily budget was around \$1.25, which would equal a little over \$16 today.
9. Jean Verd, a French pianist, had served on faculty of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.
10. Joseph (Joe) Erwin (b. 1923), Lee’s youngest brother, was fifteen years his junior. Joe also pursued musical studies at Cincinnati Conservatory and Juilliard.
11. Montevallo, Alabama, is home to the University of Montevallo, which in 1930 was Alabama State College for Women.
12. Thelma May Erwin Castator (1911–1988) was Lee’s oldest sister.
13. Jesse Walker was an organist and fellow student from Cincinnati.
14. American Cathedral in Paris.

15. Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) was one of the twentieth century's greatest composers and organists. The pieces Messiaen played were probably the *Huit préludes* for piano, which were composed in 1929.

16. French organist and composer Marcel Dupré (1886–1971) taught at the Paris Conservatoire from 1926 until 1954. From 1947 to 1954, he was the director of the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau.

17. Bessie Pettus was the family piano teacher for all the Erwin children.

18. Sarah Walton Erwin (1879–1953) and Julia Evelina Erwin Finney (1874–1949) were Leander Orville Erwin Sr.'s sisters.

19. Mrs. Johnson was a former next-door neighbor of the Erwin family. She and her husband owned a summer home on top of Montesano Mountain outside of Huntsville.

20. Magagnosc is located in the Alpes-Maritime *département*.

21. Roger Stiegler (1899–1979) was an organist, as well as a solfège and harmony teacher. He taught at the Stanislas Institute in Cannes and served as organist at Notre-Dame des Pins and Notre-Dame d'Espérance.

22. Joseph Arthur Erwin (1872–1951) was Leander Orville Erwin Sr.'s oldest brother.

23. The Erwin Manufacturing Company in Huntsville, Alabama.

24. Ginette Neveu (1919–1949) was a famous French violinist. She studied at the Paris Conservatoire and won the Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition at age 15. She died in an airplane crash at age 30.

25. Dieudonné Costes (1892–1973) and Maurice Bellonte (1896–1983) were noted airmen. The two set an early long-distance record when they flew from Paris to China in 1929. In 1930, they successfully completed a flight from Paris to New York.

26. Joseph Stoves was the organist at Loew's Temple Theatre in Birmingham, Alabama, in the 1920s.

27. Lynwood Farnum (1885–1930) was an important organist active in the United States and Europe.

28. American organist and composer Ernest Buchi was a friend of Erwin's.

29. Erwin incorrectly dated this letter December 5, 1930, rather than January 5, 1931.

30. Joseph Jacques Césaire Joffre (1852–1931) was an important French general who played a significant role in World War I.

31. Fyodor Ivanovich Chaliapin (1873–1938) was a famous Russian bass. Boris Godunov was one of his most heralded roles.

32. Modest Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*.

33. Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

34. Daniel Ericourt (1903–1998) was an American pianist and pedagogue of French birth who studied at the Paris Conservatoire. He was a significant interpreter of the works of Claude Debussy.

35. Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979) was the famed composition teacher of many of the twentieth century's greatest musicians. For more information, see chapter 1.

36. While the young Lee Erwin found it improbable to serve as the organist for Cathedral of St. John the Divine at this young age, he did become one of the organists for the cathedral in the 1980s.

37. French composer Jean Rivier (1896–1987) served on the faculty of the Paris Conservatoire for many years.

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About the Author

Originally from Ozark, Alabama, **Michael Hix** holds a bachelor's degree in music theory from Furman University in South Carolina, dual master's degrees in voice and historical musicology from Florida State University, and a doctorate of music in voice performance also from Florida State. In 2007, Dr. Hix participated in the National Association of Teachers of Singing's Intern Program, where he worked under the tutelage of Dr. Stephen King, currently the Lynette S. Autrey Professor of Voice and chair of vocal studies at the Shepherd School of Music, Rice University.

Dr. Hix's performance career highlights include a solo and chamber performances at Tanglewood Music Center and a solo appearance with the Boston Pops for the "Bernstein on Broadway" concert in 2006. This performance, conducted by Keith Lockhart, included selections from *West Side Story*, *Candide*, *Wonderful Town*, and *On the Town*. During his fellowship at Tanglewood (the Boston Symphony's Institute for Advanced Musical Study), Hix performed works by Mozart, Dessau, and Copland. He also had the privilege of performing Milton Babbitt's *Two Sonnets* on a concert celebrating the composer's ninetieth birthday.

Hix has appeared on stage in concert with Ohio Light Opera, Opera Birmingham, Ashlawn-Highland Opera, Greenville Light Opera Works, Opera del Sol, Florida State Opera, Furman University Opera, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, Tallahassee Symphony, Tupelo Symphony, Cobb Symphony, Montgomery Symphony, Southeastern Symphony Orchestra, Tallahassee Bach Parley, Highland Park Chorale, Okaloosa Chamber Singers, and Florida State New Music Ensemble.

As a musicologist, Hix is the winner of a Simonton Literary Prize and a student presentation award from the American Musicological Society. His research has been published in the *Journal of Singing*, *Choral Journal*, and *American Theater Organ Society Journal*. He has contributed to the following Salem Press reference

works: *Great Lives of African Americans*, *Great Lives from History: Latinos*, *The '40s in America*, and *Musicians and Composers of the 20th Century*. Hix also contributed numerous entries to the *New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 2nd edition. In 2011, Hix presented lecture recitals featuring the Lieder of Hanns Eisler and Paul Dessau for the College Music Society National Conference and the American Musicological Society National Conference. Research for these lecture recitals, which was carried out at the Archive of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, was sponsored by a Troy University Faculty summer research grant.

Dr. Hix is an assistant professor of voice and the coordinator of choral/vocal studies at Troy University in Alabama, where he teaches voice, opera workshop, and music history.