



When Old Acquaintance

I have mentioned many times in these stories about listening to the radio while working. Perhaps if there were other people working in the same room with me, they would be driven crazy by my listening choices, but as there is never anybody else here, I have total freedom to listen to whatever I want (and at whatever *volume* I want!)

Many years back, my choice would have been limited to local radio stations - pretty thin pickings there - but these days of course I have a fabulous 'banquet' to select from, with programming from all over the planet accessible to me through the internet. Sometimes I listen to 'mainstream' stations, and sometimes to more quirky 'offbeat' things. It was while searching for something 'interesting' to listen to about a year ago that I stumbled across a podcast (a type of internet radio program) published by one of the symphony orchestras over in Canada, and have been following it ever since.

Readers who know of my personal background in classical music will probably assume that I am listening to this because it ties in with that history, but there is also another reason. When I first learned about this podcast, and saw the name of the man hosting it, I was transported back decades in time - he was one of my old musical 'buddies' from more than forty years ago!

I had been principal flute in the city youth orchestra back then, and a group of us from the orchestra, not being satisfied with the once-a-week rehearsals, had formed a chamber group, a woodwind quintet. I am not ashamed to say that we were actually very good, playing professional repertoire at a pretty high level. We gave concerts wherever we could, and considered ourselves to be real 'up-and-coming' musicians.

During the years that our quintet was active, we were very good friends, but as is common (perhaps inevitable) with a young group like this, we eventually went our own ways as we made different education and career choices. Unlike me, who 'dropped out' of classical music to follow other interests, this man not only stayed in music, but did very well for himself and became one of the top performers in his field (classical bassoon). So each episode of his podcast offers me a 'window' onto a world that I could easily be inhabiting myself now - *if* I had made some slightly different decisions all those years ago.

He discusses such things as how orchestra members deal with conductors, what kind of health issues they face, and how they go about their daily work routine, and because the podcast is a kind of promotional tool for his orchestra, he also talks a lot about much of the music that they are playing in their current concerts. The programs are all hugely interesting for me to listen to, even though I am now completely on the 'outside' looking in, instead of being part of the action, as I was in the old days.

I think I should write to Chris, let him know that I am listening, and see if we might establish a correspondence. It sometimes happens when you meet up with friends from long ago that you end up having not much to say to each other, but I suspect that in this case, we might have a bit of an extra incentive to keep in touch. A podcast needs plenty of listeners to be successful, so I'll simply tell him that I'll agree to keep listening to *his* podcasts, if he'll listen to *mine*!

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