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van Bronkhorst, Warren

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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Warren van Bronkhorst (1967-1991)
Professor of Violin
Conductor, University Orchestra

September 13, 2017

By Doris Meyer

Transcription by Mia Watts, University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Subjects: Teaching responsibilities at the Conservatory of Music, Academic programs available at Conservatory, Recruiting interested/talented students, and the Conservatory's role in the community.

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

Meyer: Hello, Warren.

van Bronkhorst: Hello

Meyer: Thanks a million for joining me so that we can add a little bit to the oral history that the university has started under its archives program and Warren van Bronkhorst is with me. I'm Doris Meyer. I'm the interviewer and I'm interviewing Warren who was the member of the conservatory from '67-'91 and we knew each other, not closely then, and we're sitting in my apartment, Doris' apartment at O'Connor Woods and Warren and his wife Carol also live here and in fact, it was the two of them that probably convinced me to come over and take a look here. The date of our interview is September 13 and we are ready to go. It's a pleasure for me to do this interview and so Warren and I will start. Okay Warren?

van Bronkhorst: Fine.

Meyer: Good. The first question that always is asked is about how you arrived at the University, how that came about, and sort of the details of the people that helped you at the beginning there. Just sort of ramble on as you remember those early days.

van Bronkhorst: Well I came here from Southern Illinois University in Illinois. Although I liked my job there very much it was a terrible place to live, you couldn't pick a worse climate. It was either snowing or boiling hot. Very changeable. All the moist air from the south collided with the cold air from the north. I liked my job there but we just couldn't stand living there. I had friends who had been to COP, in fact when I was getting my master's degree at Eastman, my roommate had just graduated from the Conservatory, his name was Robert Seagrave. So I knew a little bit about it, and I was also from Sacramento so had heard of COP. When I heard that the job was open, I decided to apply for it. I flew here to be interviewed and auditioned and was offered the job. We were happy to get back to California from Illinois. Of course, I knew quite a bit about the Conservatory having lived in California. I went to San Jose State which in a way was a rival of COP in those days. I really was happy to be able to locate here.

Meyer: What the position was available. What was that position that was available?

van Bronkhorst: Well it was Violin Professor and Conductor of the University orchestra.

Meyer: Right from the beginning?

van Bronkhorst: Mhm. Yes.

Meyer: Did that seem like something that you felt like you could do both jobs?

van Bronkhorst: That's really what I was doing in Illinois. I was professor of violin and conductor of the symphony. Actually I was involved with conducting opera there as well. I conducted two operas with Marjorie Lawrence as Director.

Meyer: So that move, other than the weather, was it tough? Or not so tough.

van Bronkhorst: No, no it wasn't. Worked out very nicely.

Meyer: And so did you and Carol, you know, did you come out [bagging?] baggage?

van Bronkhorst: Oh yes, we drove out. We had at that time 2 young sons, one 7 and one 2. It was quite something moving across the country because we had moved from California when we went to Illinois, I had taught at Chico State for 6 years before we went to Illinois.

Meyer: Oh yeah. And coming from San Jose State, you knew the situation.

van Bronkhorst: Mhm.

Meyer: Uh-huh. Did you have a house, where did you move to?

van Bronkhorst: I came out here that summer to conduct at Pacific music camp so we were here for a week. While I was conducting during the day time, Carol was out looking at houses. So we did find a house while we were here during that summer.

Meyer: Did you participate in the music camp?

van Bronkhorst: Yes. And even after I got here, I participated for many years. The camp changed over the years. At first Pacific Music Camp was the only one in the area eventually there were more of them. The camp has changed through the years. It was a bigger deal then. There were 4 weeks of senior orchestra with a different conductor for each week and the conductor was usually from somewhere else except for the regular conducting faculty here.

Meyer: Yeah, those music camps, they've been wonderful, haven't they? I think that's a contribution the Conservatory has made over years. It's still going strong?

van Bronkhorst: It's still going on, yeah. I don't know how strong, but it's still going on.

Meyer: Were the conservatory professors expected to help with that or not necessarily?

van Bronkhorst: Not necessarily, no, but if they wanted to, they would.

Meyer: Yeah that--

van Bronkhorst: I know Eric Hammer still...

Meyer: It's what?

van Bronkhorst: Eric Hammer, who is the University Band director now, takes part in it in the summer.

Meyer: Wow. At first, both of those jobs, the applied music, explain a little bit about how that works and then a little bit about the other responsibility, the directorship responsibility. How was that dovetailed there?

van Bronkhorst: Actually, even more than that. My applied music would not be a full load. I mean, there weren't that many violin students, that usually isn't the case. But I also had to teach beginning string instrument classes for Music Ed students, and I also taught some music literature classes: symphonic literature classes and chamber music and contemporary music. I also started a music pedagogy class which I developed on sabbatical and which I continued to teach. Conducting the orchestra was just a matter of selecting programs and rehearsing and giving programs, usually 2 or 3 during the year. But that was also quite a responsibility and involved a great deal of rehearsal time. For Applied music, professors give individual lessons to students. And the students have requirements such as junior recital and senior recitals. So

that's another responsibility to prepare them for that. I taught violin and part of the time I also taught viola. But usually we would have an adjunct professor who would teach viola.

Meyer: Were there many students who were wanting to become teachers at that time? The Pedagogy class and so forth?

van Bronkhorst: More students were going into Music Ed than into applied music. Applied music meant you were going to probably go on to graduate school and try to be either a professional performer or a teacher, a college teacher. We had both and I've had students who have gone on to become very successful. Robert Lehmann, who graduated the year I retired, is now teaching at the University of Maine. He conducts the orchestra and teaches violin there. But he was applied music.

Meyer: Right. So other instruments also had teachers in applied music and there were a number of those. And I can see that job and career possibilities as a performer is difficult. So having a back up of a teaching credential would be helpful.

van Bronkhorst: For a teaching credential the major would be music ed, as that's what you need to teach in public school. If you wanted to be an applied major, you probably wouldn't get a teaching credential, you'd probably go on for a master's degree or more. In my career I got both of them. When I went to San Jose State all there was was Music ed. as they didn't have applied music at the time so I did get a teaching credential. When I taught at Chico State they had a summer music program and the teachers had to have a credential to teach, so that's the only time I ever had any use for my credential. I went from San Jose to Eastman and earned a masters in performance in music. From there I went to my first teaching job at the University of Hawaii where I taught full time and was also Concertmaster for the Honolulu Symphony.

Meyer: How long were you there?

van Bronkhorst: 3 years.

Meyer: Right. And then you went back east?

van Bronkhorst: When I went there I thought I'd stay one year, but then it was such a good deal. It was the best job I could ever had so I thought it was time to quit. And in those days if you were going to be in college teaching, you were going to need a doctorate. I had auditioned for the Rochester Philharmonic because I had originally planned to take 2 years to do my masters degree, but they caught me in the office in the middle of the year and said there was a job opening in Hawaii at the university and that they would like to recommend me for it. I decided to take that job so had to quickly finish my masters degree in one year. When I auditioned for the Rochester Philharmonic (which was a professional orchestra at that time) I had been accepted but I hadn't yet signed a contract. So after I'd been in Hawaii for 3 years I decided to go back to Eastman, because there was a violin teacher I had there that was so wonderful, and I was also able to play in the Rochester Philharmonic while I started on my doctorate. This teacher, Andre de Ribaupierre, was dying of cancer which I didn't know, or I wouldn't have gone back there, I would have gone back to New York city and studied with somebody else. He only lived until the end of the fall semester. But it all worked out really well.

Meyer: Oh that's good. Well, that's interesting to hear about your background and your arrival at the university. There's one little question here. At the time, who was the conservatory dean or which of the people there helped to sort of get started, do you recall?

van Bronkhorst: Well the dean was Preston Stedman and I became very friendly with Mary Bowling and Ed Shadbolt of the piano faculty who'd been here a long time and they were very helpful. I guess I did things pretty much on my own, but Stedman was there to help me whenever I needed it.

Meyer: Yeah that was good. So looking back on those years, those were good years?

van Bronkhorst: Mhm. Yes, very much so.

Meyer: Yeah those were the years. There's a series of questions that talk a little bit about the curriculum and we've touched on that briefly but there was, in the conservatory, there were a number of programs like something about music therapy and the teaching. Can you describe a little bit more about sort of the various programs again that are available?

van Bronkhorst: Okay, there's applied music, which is emphasis on one instrument. And there's music education, which is for those who are going to into public school teaching in elementary, junior high or high school. There's music therapy which was, at one time, the only program west of the Mississippi. Another program that started later after I was here was music business, which was the administrative side of music. Let's see, is there anything else?

Meyer: What is the average student, is there auditions for a student to come to the university? Could you speak to that a bit?

van Bronkhorst: Yes, students normally audition. Usually they come here to audition. I was involved in that, in fact, I was involved in recruiting too because especially for strings, there's a limited number of fairly good string students coming out of high schools. Very often we had a group like a trio or quartet of faculty members who would travel as far as Washington state and as far south as San Diego, and we would give programs, public programs for schools and we would meet students that way. That's how we interested students to come to Pacific.

Meyer: So to come and be accepted at the university, I would have to audition?

van Bronkhorst: Mhm

Meyer: And yet I'd still have to pay my tuition and everything?

van Bronkhorst: Well that was always a concern. We didn't have any music scholarships when I came to Pacific. We had to obtain scholarships through the financial aid office and it was based on need. Usually when you find a good string player they have been taking private lessons practically all their lives and they aren't usually in great need, not enough to get a scholarship. So we had to find other ways. I was concertmaster of the Stockton symphony, and I worked out a deal with the symphony. They always needed good string players, so if we found a good string player who we could get to come here, they would help pay their tuition.

Meyer: Where?

van Bronkhorst: Stockton Symphony. They were good enough to play in the Stockton Symphony, they would help to pay their tuition.

Meyer: They would also be a member of the symphony?

van Bronkhorst: Mhm. They would play in the symphony but they would get partial tuition that way at UOP. So we had several students who did that. That was a big help. Eventually UOP offered some half scholarships for students that were given not based on need, but on the student's ability.

Meyer: Do you know if that arrangement is still the same.

van Bronkhorst: No. Not with the symphony.

Meyer: No?

van Bronkhorst: It was a long time ago. But because UOP did eventually have music scholarships, that happened when I was still here.

Meyer: Yeah that's interesting that...

van Bronkhorst: For instance, I had a very wonderful young student from Oakland or Berkeley who auditioned and we wanted her as she played viola beautifully and was a bright student. Her father wanted her to go to his alma mater in Washington state and they were offering more than we could offer her. So I went to the symphony and they made up the difference which enabled her to come to UOP.

Meyer: You know, this is really important, what we're talking about now because, it's like athletes, we need those. So back to the need and the merit awards would, the academic, other than music performance abilities, were the academic needs involved? It must have been, and the academic ability of the student. So can you explain that just a little bit more again? It's complicated.

van Bronkhorst: Yeah, well I assume they had to be. I don't think you'd get a scholarship or even be admitted. I remember one student who we wanted on string bass but he couldn't get in because he had bad grades.

Meyer: Yes.

van Bronkhorst: I remember one student who was of Spanish background who was a very good violist who studied with a friend of mine in Sacramento and she recommended for him to come here. He got a full ride based on need, because he was one of 5 brothers and sisters, the first one to go college, and they had great need. He graduated and has done well.

Meyer: Gee, that's interesting. Anything else about the curriculum that comes to mind or do you think we've kinda covered that?

van Bronkhorst: Yeah , I think we've covered it.

Meyer: Okay.

van Bronkhorst: I should mention that I also taught conducting but not the whole time I was here. I taught it for some years and so did the choral director and maybe the band director, but we did have a conducting course.

Meyer: Was that required?

van Bronkhorst: Mhm. Yeah.

Meyer: For all majors?

van Bronkhorst: Right.

Meyer: Yeah I don't think people really don't understand about the curriculum for a conducting class. Could you speak to that just a little bit what might be included in a course like that?

van Bronkhorst: Well, in the class you would have many performance majors so you could get a pretty good size group together in the class to play while the students took turns at conducting. And sometimes they would also get an opportunity to conduct the regular orchestra but of course you couldn't do that for every student. When I was in Illinois, I taught graduate conducting one quarter out of each year, and I would usually ask 3 students and they would have already had some conducting and maybe teaching experience, but each one would get a chance to conduct the University orchestra during that time. I know that Eric Hammer, who teaches the band now, usually has a student conductor, a graduate student, conduct at each of his concerts as he teaches graduate conducting. I don't know whether he also teaches regular conducting class, maybe he does. I hope he does because he's by far the best band director they've ever had, he's a superb conductor.

Meyer: Wow. This is really interesting. Do you feel like we're covering things okay?

van Bronkhorst: Yeah!

Meyer: Be sure, if I don't ask something related to something, be sure you bring it up.

van Bronkhorst: Okay.

Meyer: There's a question, oh no, the question about the community. Yes, the question is you know the town gown(?) thing in the thing about the university in the community and you know, I was related to sports, so sports are connected. But certainly music and the arts, can you tell me a little bit about how important you felt that was and whether it was any difficulties there or just a little bit about that connection.

van Bronkhorst: Well I think the university faculty has always had a connection with Stockton symphony, as usually there were several faculty members who were actually playing in the orchestra.

Meyer: Speak up.

van Bronkhorst: I played for 19 years. Bill Dominik, who taught clarinet at UOP was also the clarinetist for many years in the symphony and the other string faculty, cellist Ira Lehn was also in the Stockton symphony.

Meyer: Uh-huh.

van Bronkhorst: So there's always a connection between the Stockton symphony and the university which is good.

Meyer: Do you think people in the community of Stockton, do they take advantage, do you think, of the opportunities that are here or should we be marketing them more or? How do you feel about that?

van Bronkhorst: Well I think many community people do seem to come to the University concerts: choral, orchestra, band. I think it's pretty well supported.

Meyer: It's wonderful. To have these students that worked [] right here. Some of the most talented young people that we could ever imagine and as a chorister and an orchestra, what a thrill. Speaking of band, did you know anything about why they no longer have a band at the University, a marching band? They did at one time. Do you know anything about that?

van Bronkhorst: That's a good question, I hadn't thought about that. Seemed to me that when I first came here there was a marching band. A university marching band, they still have them at big universities and for the pro football games...

Meyer: Uh-huh

van Bronkhorst:...but of course we don't have football anymore. That's gone out the door. We still have a small pep band that plays at basketball games.

Meyer: Yes.

van Bronkhorst: But I don't know if that's part of the conservatory or if it consists of students from the entire campus.

Meyer: Right. What's the difference, there still is the university band...

van Bronkhorst: There's a university concert band and a university wind ensemble which is a smaller group of a higher level and it's by audition. The university band is larger and it has many students who are not music majors, so that is the difference. The wind ensemble is a more highly skilled group. That's something that started around 1950 it started at Eastman in fact, with a director named Frederick Fennell, for whom I often played. He started this smaller symphonic type group which he called the wind ensemble.

Meyer: When you think of other universities, would you think that our conservatory is set up as most of them are and it's prestige, how does it rate do you think and can you speak to that a bit?

van Bronkhorst: Well I'm not sure I'm up to date on that now, but I thought it was very good when I was teaching here. I liked the emphasis on performance. It varies on the size of the university and the size of the department. The department where I taught at Southern Illinois University was a larger department than UOP. It was in what had been a depressed area perhaps due to the strip coal mining but the university was booming when I was there. When I arrived there were 10,000 students. 5 years later when I moved to Pacific there were 22,000 students, more than double in 5 years. Big buildings were going up all over campus. So we had many opportunities. We had a resident string quartet which performed all over the Midwest and East and we also used to play for a national organization called Young Audiences. We

would go out to play at 3 different high schools in a day. It also helped us because we got publicity for the University. SIU was somewhat different from UOP. We had a larger faculty and I think the emphasis on performance was even greater than there.

Meyer: Well I always thought that the conservatory is one of the hallmarks of Pacific.

van Bronkhorst: Oh yes, there's a famous story. COP was having its heyday in football when Eddie LaBaron was here and that's when I was at San Jose State. There's supposed to be a joke about 2 people sitting in the stands at University of California when COP was playing their team and winning. One person said to the other about the team, "And to think they are all music majors!" Back then COP was known for the Conservatory.

Meyer: That's right.

van Bronkhorst: It was the conservatory.

Meyer: I think when I first applied to become a teacher here, I didn't know about the university other than what I'd heard so many good things about the conservatory. And I think in those older days, the conservatory was probably the reason that most people knew about the University of the Pacific. Hmm. I think we're doing okay here. There's a question on the list that asks about your memories of some of your special teacher friends, some of your special student friends and colleagues. Looking back can you think about some special memories that you have about either students or colleagues that still are in your mind?

van Bronkhorst: There are a number of students who keep in touch. I was telling you about the man who teaches in Maine. Another person is Pat Glunt from Sacramento who studied privately with me before she came to UOP. She's been a supervisor of the city music program in New York City and now has been hired to teach master classes for the New York Philharmonic. She was here this year and visited me as did Robert Lehmann. Several of my students went on to study at Eastman. The girl I told you about who received a scholarship from the symphony left Pacific when I retired and went to Eastman to finish her degree there. Robert Lehmann went there also for his master's degree before going on for his doctorate at Boston University. I had another student who was a sophomore when I came to Pacific who went to Eastman for her master's and has taught at the college level.

Meyer: Do you think that the caliber of the students kept you on your toes or in fact challenged you or did you wish that they were more demanding or anything about that? Did you feel challenged by them?

van Bronkhorst: Yes I always felt challenged by applied music students, not only here but elsewhere I taught. Definitely. It's always a challenge to get them to find their own style, you don't want them to end up playing like you do, you have to leave room for their inspiration too. And that's where I feel that you do have to challenge them.

Meyer: How about colleagues? Did you feel like over at the Conservatory you were working as a team, or did you feel like you were isolated by instrument? How about the [] aspect of colleagues?

van Bronkhorst: I think mostly it was very good. When I first came, we had a specialist on each string instrument, and we got along fine. But also within the whole department itself, I thought the Conservatory was a very congenial mix.

Meyer: How many deans, Steadman, you said, when you first came. Then what happened?

van Bronkhorst: Well, life got difficult for him. When he left we had a temporary dean, Ira Lehn, for 2 years. He didn't really want the job permanently. Carl Nosse was hired and was Dean for quite a while but was transferred to some kind of administrative post in the President's office when DaRosa became President. Following Nosse was an incompetent dean for a few years, who was not into opportunity at all and caused a lot of problems for everybody. He didn't last very long. Then there were several part time deans, and temporary deans until Giulio Ongaro was hired. Everybody loved him. He was here for about 5 or 6 years. Then unfortunately he left and went to southern California where he is now Dean of Fine Arts at Chapman University. Now the Conservatory has a new dean, Peter Witte, whom I've met and find very personable.

Meyer: Oh yes. Uh-huh.

van Bronkhorst: But we were all sad to see Ongaro go. Even though I was never on his faculty, I got to know him very well. He was really terrific.

Meyer: I think when you had your birthday party here at O'Connor Woods, there were a number of your students that appeared. Can you tell me about how, what's there, why were they so eager to be part of that event?

van Bronkhorst: I think several of them had kept in touch with me. It's really nice to hear from your former students and see them. Yeah there are a number of them. One was Anita Felix, the daughter of Wolfgang Fetsch who was on the faculty with me. She studied violin with me too. Also present was Betsy Strader.

Meyer: That was a special event.

van Bronkhorst: It was. I was very surprised. I had no idea all those people were coming.

Meyer: Other than your connection with the Conservatory, most professors are involved in committee work. You mentioned about academic council. Tell me about some of the things you were connected with outside of the department. Perhaps in your experience with academic council work or any other committees.

van Bronkhorst: Yeah, of course, I was involved with committees in the conservatory too. We had a committee for promotions. And one time I was involved in the first faculty evaluation committee, which I had also done at Chico State when I taught there. So I'd been involved in that before. One year I was on the university wide promotions committee. I don't remember if I replaced somebody who was on leave or what, but...

Meyer: What was that last one?

van Bronkhorst: University promotions committee.

Meyer: Oh yes. Uh-huh.

van Bronkhorst: Which appalled me! I was really upset about that committee because when we met, it looked as if the only purpose of the committee was to not promote people, as if they were looking for reasons to not promote, which I didn't like at all. I was only on that committee for 1 year. While a member of the academic council, I was involved in interviewing presidential candidates after Dr. Burns retired. That was when we hired McCaffrey.

Meyer: Did you like working on these committees?

van Bronkhorst: The academic council was interesting, yeah, because of the issues of high importance we addressed. I don't remember them that much anymore, but I remember that one was about choosing a president. I was on another important committee having to do with athletics. I was 1 of 3 faculty members. There were 3 students and about 6 administrators and several alumni and it was a question about football because they were losing money over the football program. They didn't count the free tuition that the athletes were receiving as a loss. They kept saying that they were filling empty seats, which was not true. Anyway, all of 3 of the faculty members voted against the football program and what they were proposing and the students got tired of coming after 1 year and didn't show up anymore. But they were also against it. We lost out just because of the fact that we were outnumbered, but eventually they did drop football when DaRosa came. They were losing \$700,000 or \$1 million dollars just on football.

Meyer: The closure of football I think happened in '95. And so for a number of years, they were talking about the financial burden and it always was a bone of contention, I think. And gosh.

van Bronkhorst: Well the people around, the alumni who remember the times during the 50's and 60's when they had such good football teams and they got people to come to the stadium were disappointed. The last time they had a crowd of any size was, I think, a game against one of the big universities. They had, I think, 15,000 people. That stadium seats 40,000.

Meyer: Yeah. Every time the university...

van Bronkhorst: They were claiming that it was bringing prestige to the university and bringing students but I said I had just come from the Midwest and I wouldn't see UOP playing any universities there. When they played they always lost by a lopsided margin. I said that doesn't do our image any good. But they said made money by doing that, by being cannon fodder for other universities.

Meyer: Hmm. Do you recall the any controversial issues that either bugged you or do you recall that there were not many or what is your thinking when you think back on that topic? Remember any that bothered you, anything along that line?

van Bronkhorst: Well going back to the business of tuition and scholarships. When I was first here, for those first 2 years, we couldn't have any merit scholarships, everything had to be based on need. Other schools had these scholarships to give in order to attract students. Administration just didn't understand that we were in competition with other schools for good students in performance and that's just the way it was.

Meyer: Was anything clarified about that?

van Bronkhorst: Well as I said, eventually, we got some half-time scholarships. I don't remember when that started based on merit, not on need. So that was a big improvement.

Meyer: Oh yes. Because you would want to recruit the best choice.

van Bronkhorst: Right. And then if you have good students that attracts more.

Meyer: Good creates good, or so they say. That's right. When you look back in your own experiences in, let's see, '67 to '91, are there any special things that you yourself contributed, caused any significant achievements. Anything where you're really proud when you think back at it? Pleased that you did it? Were involved with it?

van Bronkhorst: Well I feel I did make a difference in recruiting and getting some good students here.

Meyer: In what way?

van Bronkhorst: Well the fact that I worked to get the scholarships through the symphony and to see the students be successful.

Meyer: You're such a wonderful performer. Don't you feel that your role as a role model or as a performer should be something that was significant in the eyes of the students, for instance?

van Bronkhorst: I think so.

Meyer: You do?

van Bronkhorst: Yes. Yeah I think that's true.

Meyer: Without being embarrassed, is there anything else that you think either in your teaching style or any attributes that you think had an impression that was important on the students or in their eyes that you stood out?

van Bronkhorst: Well I think that my position as concert master in the symphony would be something that they would look up to. I feel that was also a contribution to the community, being concert master. It was at times difficult because I was already at a full time job which became more and more demanding. When I first came, after the first year, I dropped out of the symphony because I just couldn't handle both jobs. It was too much. The symphony was only meeting once a week but it went to twice a week the next year. They were meeting on Wednesday and Thursday nights and we always had Tuesday night concerts at the University and a Monday night rehearsal of the college orchestra. So I was practically out every night. I dropped out of the Symphony for a number of years and went back later.

Meyer: How long was the directorship of the orchestra? Did that span your entire time?

van Bronkhorst: Well it was interesting. When I was hired, Stedman said that he wanted to hire a big name conductor for the orchestra and how might I feel about it. Well, conducting was a secondary interest to me, it wasn't my primary. He wondered how I would feel if a couple years down the road he hired somebody else to do the orchestra. I said that would be fine with me. He had that in the back of his mind but it never happened. When he left, I brought up that subject again, that he had this kind of agreement with me. And so, George Buckbee took over the orchestra for a few years but he was mostly interested in opera and it didn't work out too

well. It was decided to hire somebody else. There were auditions but they made a terrible mistake in hiring a person who just wasn't up to the task. He was here for 6 or 7 years but didn't get tenure. And so I ended up with the orchestra again for my last 4 or 5 years. These kind of situations can be tough.

Meyer: Being the conductor and being an applied instrument teacher seem to me to be kind of two different jobs. Demanding two different kinds of persons in a sense. Were those separate kind of things in your own mind or not?

van Bronkhorst: Yeah sort of. Conducting has several aspects to it depending on the kind of orchestra it is. Of course if it's a professional orchestra, it's one thing, and if it's an amateur orchestra it's another. And if it's a university orchestra it's yet another. Because you have many responsibilities other than just conducting. For instance, Peter Jaffe is an all around good conductor. He's not only good at the technique of conducting but his skills in public relations are excellent. That's another aspect of the job. Some people are good in one and not as good in another and so forth. So conducting is sort of a complicated job really. And some conductors are better at some aspects of it than at others. And some are not good at some parts of it and it shows up. Our previous Stockton Symphony conductor Kyoung Soo Won was an excellent technical conductor, but he had no idea about public relations. His whole attitude about many things turned people off during his 25 years here.

Meyer: Did you have as a conductor, did you have that extra responsibility of marketing or public relations?

van Bronkhorst: Well it's not so much when you're university conductor, but when you're conducting public orchestra like Stockton Symphony or even higher up, it's different.

Meyer: Was that a 50/50 of your job description?

van Bronkhorst: I don't think so, I think conducting was less than half the job. We received a certain number of units for each class that we taught. It varied how they described it. That's one thing about administration, they can pull all kinds of tricks that way. One of the reasons I retired when I did was because I was getting overloaded every semester. They always said just one more semester but it didn't happen.

Meyer: Oh boy. You know, private citizen that you are now, when you read about the University of the Pacific, even while you, let's back up, even while you were there, did you notice they call it an evolution or a progress or did you see the continuum? How did you feel that the university was moving? Did it look like it was going to be on the brink every once in a while?

van Bronkhorst: No it didn't seem that. Seemed to me it was always doing alright. For instance, in the conservatory, the new area called music management was doing really well.

Meyer: Oh yes.

van Bronkhorst: The other areas were doing okay too. Applied music and music education and music therapy. I think they all continued to do well. Of course they had some new building facilities. Oh yeah, I was still on the faculty when they built the new rehearsal halls. That was just before I retired. As I understand it, they had plans for more buildings that Ongaro was spearheading. I don't know what's going to happen now. I just came back from a trip to Iowa

where they had a big problem a few years ago with their music school. A flood ruined the buildings so now they have a brand new music building and it's gorgeous. Big, big place. But we don't have that sort of thing here. However the facilities are better now than when I first came. Many classes were being taught in quonset huts which finally disappeared, fortunately.

Meyer: Where did you teach your applied music violin classes?

van Bronkhorst: Well applied music was in my studio on the second floor.

Meyer: In the conservatory?

van Bronkhorst: Yeah. And several classes were taught over on the other side of campus in the quonset huts but they're not anymore. One thing that I did which I thought was a good idea was to change where the orchestra was rehearsing. You couldn't tell how it was going to sound when you gave the concert in the auditorium.. Everything was loud in the quonset hut. So after I was there less than a year, I wanted to move the rehearsals to the conservatory stage. Charles Schilling didn't like that because he wouldn't be able to use the organ anytime he wanted for teaching his students. But I was given permission to make the change. We only had enough stands for 1 set for band and for orchestra. But all the music students in the orchestra agreed to bring a stand if we held rehearsals on the Conservatory stage. So we did, we moved it to the conservatory stage, which was a big improvement because then we were rehearsing where we were going to perform. You could tell how it was going to sound. But it was terrible in the quonsets. Not only that, it was dreadfully hot most of the time, it was just not a good place. But I still taught beginning string instruments over there and other classes as conducting until they got the new buildings, which were a big help.

Meyer: Well looking back now, you know, reading the paper about things that are going on at the university and so forth, how do you feel about the university now, do you feel like it's moving ahead? Are you proud of the fact that you taught there?

van Bronkhorst: Yeah I'm proud of the fact that I taught at the Conservatory. There are some memorable highlights such as when Howard Hanson came to campus to conduct the University orchestra in the West Coast premiere of his 7th Symphony. The recording of that concert was broadcast on National Public Radio.

Meyer: Looking back on your career, are you proud of it?

van Bronkhorst: Oh yes, yes.

Meyer: Feel good about it?

van Bronkhorst: Very happy about what I was able to do and all the opportunities I had. Because I like to perform and I like to teach. I played one season in Rochester Philharmonic which is a professional orchestra under Erich Leinsdorf and knew I wouldn't want to make that my career.

Meyer: Say that again?

van Bronkhorst: Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in New York. Of course, Leinsdorf was a famous conductor and became the conductor of the Boston symphony before he retired. I saw what it was like to be in an orchestra. I was sitting on the 3rd stand on the 1st violins. It's one

thing to be concertmaster but its another to be a member of a section. As a member of the section in the symphony, you have to fit in. You have to play exactly as everybody else, whereas when you're concertmaster, you have some control. You decide on the bowings and the other musicians pretty much have to follow you, not just the conductor. I did that for one season while I was taking about a half a load on my doctorate. I couldn't take several of the classes because they met when the symphony rehearsed, in the mornings. I played for one season and decided that I didn't want to spend my life in an orchestra in the sections. So I quit and the following year I went full time on my doctorate. I was glad I made the decision when I did because I ended up doing both, performing and teaching.

Meyer: I loved it at the university. I think it was a great place.

van Bronkhorst: Yes I did too.

Meyer: Can you think of anything else that you'd like to say as we bring our interview to a closure? Anything you wished I had asked you?

van Bronkhorst: No I don't think so. I enjoyed my years at the university and we've kept in touch with the members of the conservatory faculty. There are only 2 professors still teaching who were there when I was, but even the newer professors have been very friendly to us. It's really been wonderful to have that ongoing contact with the Conservatory.

Meyer: Well, I'm pleased to have had this opportunity, Warren. I think I learned more about the conservatory right now than I ever did. And all those years, I think that there were, lets see, Elizabeth Spells also did an oral history a long time ago and she was a voice person and Stan Beckler and he was in composing.

van Bronkhorst: Right, he was in the music composition and theory department.

Meyer: And so your contributions have been great because no one's spoken at all about applied music. No one's spoken at all about the conducting.

van Bronkhorst: I think that Elizabeth Spells would have talked about applied music, because that was her area as well.

Meyer: Well maybe she did but I hardly remember. Yeah. Well, gee, I think we did a good job. If you can't think of anything else, I thank you very much.

van Bronkhorst: Oh well, thank you. It was wonderful.

Meyer: I guess that's it. Okay?

van Bronkhorst: Okay. Thank you.

END OF RECORDING