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Oral History Number: 253-001

Interviewee: Edwin Rosenkranz

Interviewers: Dan Rispen, Gloria Sobropena, Karen Eddy, Mike (last name unknown)

Date of Interview: November 9, 1990

Project: Missoula Musicians Oral History Project

Gloria Sobropena: Today is Friday, November 9. It's 1 p.m. and we are interviewing Professor Ed Rosenkranz. The interviewers today are myself, Gloria Sobropena...

Karen Eddy: Karen Eddy.

Dan Rispen: Dan Rispen.

Mike [unintelligible]: Mike [unintelligible].

GS: The first question we would like to ask you is could you tell us about your life as a musician from early childhood until now?

Edwin Rosenkranz: Well, my first experience with music was taking piano lessons, and even before that, listening to my sister take piano lessons. My mother tells me that when she would take piano lessons, I would sit down at the piano after she practiced her music, and try to imitate what she learned in piano lessons. So, that's how I got started. I was fortunate to live in an area where I could get to a very good teacher. And I got...I studied at what's called [unintelligible] school, which involved a lesson during the week, and then on Saturday mornings we would get together and have classes then in such things as [unintelligible]. So, that was a really excellent experience [unintelligible].

Then in high school I studied the bassoon, and I had a cousin who was a professional musician, so he knew a good teacher in New York who turned out to be the dean of American Bassoon Teachers at the time. So I started studying with him when I was in high school, and he was, at the time, was the third bassoonist in the New York Philharmonic, Simon Kovar. I studied with him until I went to college at Syracuse University.

Syracuse didn't have a bassoon teacher at the time, but I did take lessons when I was in the New York City area, home for vacations and whatnot, I would take some lessons. Then between my junior and senior year in college, I went to a place called Tanglewood in Massachusetts, which is the summer home of the Boston Symphony. I went there when I was 18 years old, and then I went again when I was 19 years old. I saw a notice on the bulletin board one day that they needed a bassoon player at Tulsa Philharmonic. And so there was somebody to contact at Tanglewood, and I got in touch with this person. He was the timpanist in the orchestra, he was also a student at Tanglewood that time. This was getting close to the end of summer and I had

planned to go back to Syracuse, but we made some quick phone calls and adjustments and I ended up in Tulsa for my senior year in college and I played first bassoon in the Tulsa Symphony.

After that, I had unfortunately signed up to be in a Reserve band when I was at Syracuse University—in the Army Reserve band—and this was in the year that reservists were being called up all over the country for active duty during the Korean War. I got called up for active duty, and I was sent up to Camp [unintelligible], Wisconsin, on an [unintelligible] from Tulsa. A logistical command [unintelligible] from Tulsa, Oklahoma. At that time, this army post had two bands, but the makeup of an army band at that time did not include a bassoonist. So I was a clerk typist for most of the time in the army. But towards the end of that session, they changed the makeup of an army band, and I did get to transfer into the 330th Army Band. So I finished out my stint in the army by playing in this army band, and I became the drum major of that band, kind of by default, because the drum major was sent to school, to music school in Washington. So I became the drum major of that band. Then when they released me, I went back to graduate school in Tulsa and played another season with the Tulsa Philharmonic and got a master's degree there.

After that, I became a music teacher in a small town in Wyoming, Lingle, Wyoming, and I taught there for two years. Then I met the dean of the School of Music from University of Colorado and applied for a position as double reed instructor there, and they did hire me as a part-time faculty member. That would be in 1954. I stayed at the University of Colorado for two years, teaching part-time and doing a little graduate work. Then I got a full-time job at a state college in Colorado, in Durango in southwest Colorado. The school was Fort Lewis College, and at the time it was a two-year school, a junior college. After I worked there for several years, it became a four-year college, and I stayed there for 12 years. Then applied for a position at University of Montana that became open, in order to get back into more performing. In Durango, I didn't have an orchestra to play in playing, although I did play in some regional orchestra down in Farmington, New Mexico, at the time. But one of the appeals of coming to Missoula was the fact that there was a symphony here and an opportunity to play chamber music. So I accepted a position here in 1968, and I've been first bassoonist in Missoula Symphony and a member of the Montana Woodwind Quintet ever since. And that about sums up my musical experience.

KE: I'm just curious why you picked the bassoon.

ER: Well, I didn't really pick the bassoon. I made reference to a cousin of mine who was a professional musician, and he's still living and still teaches, by the way, in Brooklyn, New York. This cousin of mine was a violist who was principle viola in the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra. This was back in the days when each radio network had a symphony orchestra. When the orchestras were dissolved from the major networks, he started playing Broadway shows. But he knew a lot of the musicians in the New York area. I remember meeting him one day in a restaurant in New York City—my mother was there and he was there. Probably just the three of us had lunch, and we were talking about another instrument. I was

getting bored with piano. You know, piano you do by yourself and it's not a group thing. So I was looking for another outlet in music, and so I said, "Well, what do you think would be a good instrument?" I said, "I want to play the timpani. Be a drummer."

He said, "No, no, no, no. You know, we're the most short now of is bassoon players. If you take up the bassoon, you'll probably always be in demand some place." So it was the influence of my cousin, who was a professional violist, that got me onto the bassoon. Also along with it, he knew a teacher that would be a good teacher for me to start with. So it was a combination of the two things. At that time, there was a shortage of bassoon players, plus the fact that he knew a good teacher and knew that I could take lessons with this person. So that's how I got started.

M?: So then before you actually chose the bassoon, you had already decided on a career in music?

ER: No, not then. No, I had no career goals at the time.

GS: When did that decision to become a musician occur? Or did it just kind of happen?

ER: Probably when I when I transferred from pre-dentistry into music while I was in college.

All: [laugh]

GS: Pre-dentistry. That's great.

KE: Are you from around the New York City area?

ER: Right, I was raised in Mount Vernon, New York.

KE: So one other thing that I'm curious about is why you decided to go out West instead of stay on the East Coast. To me, it would seem like there are more opportunities on the East Coast for chamber music or something.

ER: Well, it's a chain of events that started with this notice on the bulletin board at Tanglewood that I told you about that got me to Tulsa. While I was at Tulsa, I was registered with a couple of teachers agencies, and I did take enough education courses to become certified as a teacher, a public school teacher. The superintendent from this little school in Wyoming just saw my file. I didn't apply for the job to start with. He was just looking for a music teacher and went to a teachers' agency and just went through files, and he saw my file and he called me up. Said, "Are you interested?" I didn't have a job yet at the time, or one I was interested in, and so I took a drive up to Wyoming and looked it over, and that's how I got to the West. I've always worked in the West—Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana, those the three states I've worked in. But that's how I got here originally.

GS: Could you tell us a little bit more about the group that you're playing in now?

ER: The Montana Woodwind Quintet, that group?

GS: Yes.

ER: Well, one of the reasons I wanted to come here was because of the opportunity to play chamber music. It's very enjoyable to play chamber music in small groups, and I had played quintets a lot in college and in graduate school, played in quintets. In some pretty, some quite good groups at Syracuse University and at Tulsa University. And...what was the question?

GS: How did you get involved and tell us a little bit more about the group here that you're playing in.

ER: A woodwind quintet consists of flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, and bassoon. A lot of composers have written music for that group. In the early '70s, the University of Montana had a full faculty...decided to have a full faculty quintet. They hired people for each instrument, a specialist on each instrument. That's when the group really started. When I first came here in '68, we didn't have a horn teacher at the time, so we had a graduate student playing horn only play...only work on quartet [unintelligible]. Then we did get a horn position here, which lasted for several years, and, oh, eight or ten years ago, we did lose that horn position. It was cut back to the half, and then it was cut. After that we had graduate teaching assistants on the horn for a few years. Then, this year, we again have a part-time faculty position on horn. So, we do have a full faculty woodwind quintet now.

GS: So you've been with the group ever since it started in 1970?

ER: Right. Well, really we started when I first came in '68. The dean at that time was a flute player, and he played flute in the [unintelligible]. He's not here anymore, but Bill Manning, he's the clarinetist there, and myself, have been involved in it for all those years. Twenty-three years.

GS: Practice time. How much do you—

ER: Well, we practice twice a week for about an hour-and-a-half each time. We have a two-hour block of time reserved for it on Tuesday and Thursday. And it's a democratic organization. There's no designated leader. Everyone has quite a bit of respect for the others in the group, and we're very kind to each other. Yet, we try to accomplish what needs to be done. In other words, the approach we use is we don't say, "You're out of tune," or, "You're not playing in time." We try to be more positive about it and suggest that we check the pitch on the tuner, or put on a metronome, and rehearse a part. So we get along very well, and it's a wonderful group to play with. And we play Tuesday night, so you should all come.

GS: Oh, great. What time and where?

ER: Eight o'clock in the Music Recital Hall.

DR: So who chooses the music? How do you decide who's going to...or what you're going to play?

ER: Well, there again, it's a group decision. We have a new horn player in the group, and we started the year off by reading a lot of music and eliminating certain things and keeping other things for tours possibly. Some pieces we rejected as not being worth working on. And it's a group decision. But we try to rotate the major quintets, you know, so that, you know, every five to ten years at least, we play major pieces of that literature. A few of those.

GS: So could you tell us a little bit more about the cultural context? Who else you play for, and where do you play besides here at the university?

KE: And how often you have performances?

ER: Well, we play each quarter at the university in faculty chamber music recitals. And we've already performed for the Music Educators Union. That was in connection with the Montana Education Association. The Music Educators met in Missoula this year, and we played for a luncheon there. We have a tour planned for November 19, I believe, we're going to be leaving on the 18th after the symphony concert, and staying overnight in Kalispell, and playing at Kalispell High School, Flathead Valley High School on the 19th, and Whitefish, and I think either Ronan or Polson on the way back. And we did do tours. We probably will take a more extensive tour later on. In fact, the chairman wants us to go to Spokane for three days in the spring. So mainly when we're out on the road, we mainly play for high school students.

KE: What kind of funding do you get? Is that from the university?

ER: For the tour? Yes, I think so. Some of it might be from excellence fund. I'm not sure about the funding. You'll have to ask the chairman about that.

GS: What's the goal of your tours? I mean, is it just to expose, like you talked about going to high schools is to expose them—

ER: It's mostly—

GS: —to this music.

ER: No, it's not to expose them to the music. It's to make contact with prospective students. We're not playing for the general public usually, at the high schools. We're not playing for the

general high school students. We're playing mostly for the students that are already involved in musical groups.

KE: So it's kind of like a recruiting effort?

ER: Yes.

GS: When you go to Spokane, is that what you're going to be doing, too, or is this in a different context, or...

ER: I think so. Now, occasionally when we we're out on tour, we do play an evening concert, one that's open to the public. So it isn't always just playing for high school students.

KE: I have another question about your music. With the group, I've been in a couple situations myself, working in a, I think it was a quartet, where it was kind of mediated by a teacher, admittedly. He wanted us to play a Rossini quartet, and it ended up being his clarinet solo to our um-pa-pas, and I'm wondering if you ever do any of that kind of boring music for the rest of the people and one soloist, and if you do, what is the group's attitude about it?

ER: Well, you know, different instruments have different roles, and in a quintet everyone has a lot to do. In a quintet. I know the Rossini quartet you're referring to, and as a bassoon player, I am used to not always playing the melody. We do a lot of accompany work and filling in, and horn players the same thing. If a piece is well-written, or if it's an arrangement, if it's well arranged, everyone has something interesting to do. If it's a poor piece that leaves the musicians wanting for lack of an interesting part, that's something we teach in orchestration class, is to make all the parts interesting. [laughs] So your experience might be that, I don't know, what instrument did you play?

KE: French horn.

ER: Horn. Well, you know the horn and bassoon in the quintet often have to play supporting roles while the flute, oboe, and clarinet are playing melodies. So you have to—in order to enjoy playing that kind of a role—you have to accept that and enjoy that part of it. Because without the horn in the Rossini quartet, it sounds terrible. I mean, you have to have the [unintelligible] there. That's how I feel about the bassoon part. I don't feel upset or bored if I'm just playing an accompany. Usually if it's mostly accompaniment, there's some places where you get the melody. And even if it's just the accompaniment, that's very important too.

KE: When you're picking repertoire, do you ever try to kind of balance it out so that maybe if there's a piece where one person tends to have more of the melody, that you kind of let everyone get a chance and different kinds of music.

ER: Absolutely. You know, the pieces that I opt for are pieces that I enjoy playing and where I have an important part sometimes, an important role. But as I said, most of the music that we play, everyone has a challenging part and lots to do. When I do have an accompaniment, I enjoy that too.

M?: What's your opinion on what makes a good musician good? And...

ER: Well, you have to...you have to have something to say and a way to express it, and if you're playing with other people, you to be able to fit in with what they're planning and have a good ear. Have to play in tune with other people, and even yourself, unless you're playing a fixed instrument like the piano. You have to have a certain amount of sensitivity, artistic sensitivity. [pauses] That's a very, you know, that's kind of a doctorate-level...doctorate oral exam question. You practicing to be a professor?

All: [laugh]

ER: [unintelligible]

M?: What types of music do you listen to when you're not practicing?

ER: Whatever's on KUFM. I turn on KUFM. Whatever's on, I listen to it.

KE: How often do you practice for your own personal...whatever needs to be done. I'm partly asking that because I've run into people, professionals, who tell me that you have to spend your entire life in the practice room and then I meet other people who say that that doesn't do you a whole lot of good. And I'm kind of wondering what your view of that is.

ER: I think as you're growing up with your instrument, maybe your teens and in your 20s, you do have to put in quite a bit of time. Then when you reach a certain level you need to keep up with your instrument. But in our situation here where we're hired to teach classes and whatnot, we don't have time to practice a lot. I try to practice a little every day, just to keep my lip in shape. And the fact, we have symphony rehearsals on Thursday night and quintet on Tuesday and Thursday, and I usually practice at least one day on the weekend in addition to playing on my instrument every day, just to keep up. For example, this weekend with a performance on Tuesday night, I'll probably practice both days this weekend. But as far as practicing all day, no. A maximum practice session for me is about 45 minutes long.

GS: How does that compare to when you were, like you were talking about in your early teens or late teens, when you're really learning the instrument?

ER: Well, at most...oh, I used to practice, maybe...and it would be not one continuous session. You can't really do that on a bassoon. Your epiglottis doesn't close right when you play for an hour and a half. And your lip gets tired, and you start cutting the inside of your mouth on your

teeth from having the lip over the teeth here. So probably the most I ever practiced would be three hours a day within two or three different sessions.

GS: That's quite a lot of time. Did you ever feel like it wasn't enough time to practice? I mean, it wasn't enough to get everything done, and yet, you physically couldn't take it? Or were you able to get everything done in that amount of time?

ER: Well, I never set my goals too high I guess. I never felt I didn't have enough time to practice what I wanted to practice.

GS: Do you have other...or, I know you do, but what are your other interests besides music? You know, what do you really enjoy other than just music?

ER: Well, you mean recreational-type activities?

GS: Yes.

ER: Don't get me started on this.

All: [laugh].

GS: Go for it.

ER: Well, for 12 years I worked at a camp out on Orcas Island, and was in charge of a sailing program where we sailed these lightnings, 19-foot lightnings, and did overnight trips in these boats—two of us travelling together. That's a picture of the boat. A lightning sail boat. So I do sail, used to sail quite a bit. Almost every day for several summers.

GS: Where were you at when you did that? In Oregon?

ER: Orcas Island.

GS: Orcas—

ER: Off the coast of Washington. It's off of Bellingham.

GS: Oh, okay.

ER: That group of islands. I did that for 12 summers, and I stopped two summer ago. It's the end of my career out there. But I'm very active in tennis now, in the tennis scene in Montana. I played in five tennis tournaments last summer.

GS: Wow! How'd you do? [laughs]

ER: Not very well in singles. In men's doubles, my partner and I won a trophy up in Whitefish, the Whitefish tournament.

KE: There is something that I've been wondering about, is—

All: [laugh]

KE: —the picture behind your desk, the one who kind of looks like the old picture of a group of bassoonists that are sitting around in their underwear. I'm wondering what the context of that is. [laughs]

ER: Well, you know, we had a visit...we had a famous bassoon player visit here in about 1979 or '80. It was William Waterhouse, he's the fellow who has written the Encyclopedia Britannica articles on bassoon. He's a scholar and played in the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London. When he came here, he had a bunch of these little posters that he was giving off to people every place he stopped. I went and studied with him in London in 1981. He's a great guy. But anyhow, strolling around the neighborhood one day, walking past that music store that sold old instruments—used instruments from hundreds of years ago—I saw this poster in the window so I got it there.

KE: That's all you know about it? [laughs]

ER: Yes. Well, it looked like a wrestling [wrestling] team, and they gave each player...they stuck a bassoon in there with a photographer.

All: [laugh]

ER: [unintelligible].

M?: Would it—

ER: The developing room put that together. I don't think it was posed that way. I think it was done in a developing room in a photography shop. Don't you?

KE: I don't know.

GS: It kind of looks that way.

ER: Pasted and cut it.

GS: Yes, now that you say that I think you're right.

ER: That's what I think.

GS: Yeah, I think you're right.

ER: But it's a great little poster. I also fly fish a lot. I tie my own flies. And oh yeah, I'm a ski bum. I forgot that.

GS: Snow skiing?

ER: Snow skiing, yes. Never water skiing.

KE: So is all that stuff over there on your shelving, is that all for the bassoon, or is that for fly fishing too?

ER: No, the fly tying stuff is in my garage. That all has to do with reed making and instrument maintenance. See, bassoon players don't buy a reed in the store—in a music store. They buy cane at some stage of development, and [pauses] this is a piece of cane.

KE: It's almost like a piece out of a bamboo—

ER: Yes, it isn't really bamboo. It's a plant which grows in France. You can buy cane from reed shops in different forms. You see, this one, the bark is still on it and it isn't shaped. You see, just think of this as being a tube. You know, like we say, like a bamboo circular. They can cut three of these strips off of a round tube, right. A person can do that if he has a certain machine that...well, you can cut that off. Which I don't have. This is the same thing only it's cut into a shape like that. Then these are not only cut into a shape, but they're also shaved down. So it's a matter of folding the reed. You notice there's a humidifier behind you. We steam this wood so it's very soft and bend it into a shape that looks like these reeds.

GS: [unintelligible] a double reed.

ER: When you bend it over, it's closed off on the end. Then you have to cut the tip off. And you learn, you know, you learn how to put on these wires, and wrap this knot which will [unintelligible].

GS: Interesting.

ER: So we're working on these reeds all the time. When the weather changes, the reeds change, and you have to have several reeds handy for different situations.

KE: So is it called a double reed because there the two sides bent over, or—

ER: Because there's two. And the [unintelligible] reed is just one blade, so you can blow through these—these are called double reeds. But that's what all this stuff is all these wires and whatnot and tools. It's kind of fun to make them once you get into it. Also, by making the reeds, you learn how to adjust the reeds if they're not working just right. So that's what all that is.

GS: Dorothy was telling us that you're going to be leaving the University of Montana in the near future.

ER: Well, I'm retiring in December, next month. [laughs]

GS: That's it, you're retiring. Are you—

ER: But I'm going to still teach part-time, and play in the quintet here.

GS: You are? So you're not leaving the area, so to speak?

ER: No.

GS: Just retiring.

ER: Too many good things in the air here.

KE: How many students do you have here? As far as bassoon students, or is it mostly teaching classes in theory or something?

ER: Most of my load is teaching classes. I've been teaching theory and aural perception and orchestration all the time I've been here I've been teaching. Well, I picked up orchestration about 10 or 12 years ago. And the bassoon population has never been more than about four students.

KE: Do you also take on some of the other double reeds like oboe?

ER: No. We have a separate oboe teacher who also teaches saxophone. So he does all the oboe teaching. I did teach oboe and bassoon both, when I was at the University of Colorado.

M?: When you first began learning the bassoon, did you start out right away making reeds? Did your instructor do that, or did you make reeds [unintelligible].

ER: My first bassoon teacher didn't make his own reeds, and so he sent me to somebody who did, to take reed lessons. So I learned how to make reeds when I was in high school.

M?: So most bassoon players do make their own reeds then?

ER: I don't know if most of them do. A majority of them do. The fellow I studied with in London doesn't make his own reeds, but he had a good source of reeds. As I said, the first teacher I studied with in New York didn't make his own reeds either. But I think the majority of bassoon players do.

KE: Do you think it's kind of scandalous almost for someone to be a musician and not make their own reeds? Because that's kind of the opinion I've heard from double reed players, is that if you don't make your own, then you can't be that good of a musician.

ER: No, I don't think that's true at all. Because having known a couple of top-notch professionals that don't bother making reeds, I think that's a fallacy. I think you can fly fish without tying your own flies. But tying flies is enjoyable, so I do it. And reed making, it's very expensive. They're nine dollars apiece now if you buy them.

KE: So people who don't make their own reeds probably don't do it because they don't want to mess with it?

ER: Either that, or they don't feel they have the technique or the patience. Takes some patience. And then a little bit of skill with a knife, you know. So...

KE: Well, a lot of the double reed teachers I've been around feel that they want their students to at least learn what's involved in making their own reeds, even if they don't pursue it. Do you think that's a good idea?

ER: Yes. And last year we had reed class once a week. The two students that were taking lessons would come in, and they each had their...some tools, a few tools, and bought some cane, and we worked here and listened to music every Friday afternoon for a couple quarters last year. So, yeah, I think it's very important for them to learn how to make reeds.

KE: Is it kind of to give them a background on how to use their reeds when they're playing, or if something goes wrong with the reed, what to do with it? Is it that sort of a thing?

ER: Right. Just by learning how to make the reeds, then if you run into problems, you can adjust your reeds for the changes in climate, changes in altitude. Also, the reed changes by getting older every day by you playing on it. There's a chemical reaction in your saliva on the cane, so it changes all the time. But by learning how to make reeds, you are more able to adjust your reeds each day.

GS: How do you adjust them? I mean, I looked at the ones that you had there. Looked like they were wound really tight. That's not how you—

ER: Well, the easy way to adjust...you see there's a pair of pliers right behind you there.

GS: Oh, yes.

ER: A pair of needle-nose pliers. By squeezing those wires, I do it when the cane is wet so it doesn't crack, but by squeezing the wires different ways, you can adjust the opening. You know, that opening. That has a lot to do with it. And the throat of the reed, you can make it flatter or rounder, see, in the throat part. Also, another way we adjust them is, the reeds seem to get heavier as they break in more and more, and so you scrape a little bit, every few days perhaps, until they feel like they're stiffening up. You scrape a little cane off with a knife or a file. Those are some of the things we do with reeds to adjust them.

KE: Is it hard to find supplies for making reeds?

ER: No, we get...there are quite a few, not in Missoula, but we can get them through the mail. You can get anything you want through the mail.

DR: What sorts of maintenance does a bassoon [unintelligible].

ER: Well, maintenance, that's a very appropriate question, because yesterday when we rehearsed, some of my keys weren't opening up the way they were supposed to. So I had to go onto a maintenance schedule yesterday for an hour. What happened, I have metal...there are metal rings that were put underneath these pads. You see that metal ring under there? Here's one that's open. See there's a metal ring under that. The bassoon was not made with that metal ring under there. That was put on by a fellow travelling through here a few years ago. The metal ring causes corrosion in the pad, especially this one right here, and so the pad sticks. So when you roll off of that, that pad, that wouldn't come up. It's like a delayed reaction off there. Yesterday I was getting a delayed reaction from that key and from this one, these two. So I took those off and cleaned the ring with alcohol, and then cleaned the pads with alcohol, and then dusted them with this stuff. I don't even know what it's called. It's a pad lube, it says. Something I borrowed from the clarinet teacher.

DR: And that keeps it from sticking?

ER: Then also I lubricated all the joints. When it was added, I thought, well, I'll go ahead and oil up. So I put a drop of oil in each place there's a moving part. See, there's a rod that goes through there, so right there and there, right there and there. I went through the whole instrument and lubricated it all. I lubricated these rollers. I did all of that yesterday. Another thing that I occasionally do is oil the bore of the wooden parts of the horn. This is wooden. This part is lined, so you wouldn't oil on it. But this part, see, is all wood through there. So I run a swab with boar oil on there. So that's...

We have to maintain constantly, especially in the winter. I don't know why these keys were binding so much last night. They sure were. It might be because of the cooler weather. When winter comes, you know, the wood tends to shrink, I think, a little bit, and it makes things bind

up. See what happens, if these posts get a little bit closer together, if the wood shrinks, then it makes the...[unintelligible] pivot on these posts. If they get closer together by virtue of the woods shrinking, then it jams that rod, so that it won't operate properly. Another thing we do when winter comes on is, these are these are called dampens, and there's a sponge inside, and you wet these and stick them in the case of the instrument. I haven't done it yet this year. Should be getting around to that.

KE: So those are something you would put in the boards, like after every time you play or overnight?

ER: Just keep them in there all the time. Or you can put orange peels in the case.

GS: And that's just to keep moisture in there?

ER: Yes, right.

KE: What kind of wood do they use for the bassoon?

ER: It's maple.

KE: All of it?

ER: Yes. This just the finish that makes it black. You know, most bassoons are a more natural finish. But the wood is maple, and it just has a black finish on it.

DR: Is that true for all bassoons, they're always made out of maple?

ER: No, there's plastic bassoons, too. Polypropylene.

KE: Are they any good?

ER: Not too bad. Fox makes a fairly good polypropylene bassoon. Fox is the American company that makes bassoons. Most of the professional players play on Heckels or [unintelligible], which are made in Germany. This is a Heckel. And I ordered it with the black finish because my teacher played on a black bassoon. It looks nice with the oboe and clarinet, which are naturally dark instruments. If I ordered one now, I'd probably get it in a more natural finish with stain, a little reddish stain on it. [unintelligible].

GS: How long have you had this bassoon?

ER: About 12 or 13 years I think.

KE: About how much do bassoons generally cost?

ER: Right now?

KE: Yeah.

ER: Well, the cheapest student model you can buy is about 2,700 dollars. I don't know what a Heckel bassoon runs now, but I've seen them advertised for up to close to 20,000 dollars. Used ones.

KE: Have you done any work on contrabassoons or any of the relatives in that general direction?

ER: Well, I've played the contrabassoon, but not since I've been in Missoula. I played it in an orchestra, and it was at Tanglewood as a student I played contrabassoon sometimes. I played it occasionally in Tulsa. And I do have a contrabassoon here.

GS: What's the difference? I'm—

ER: It's bigger. It goes an octave lower. It's a monstrous thing.

M?: I see you have three cases here. Is there a reason?

ER: Well, these are different bassoons. Sometimes something is easier to play on another instrument, or sometimes I might have mine at home and I want to play on another instrument. There's one concert we played last year where it was just...the music for some reason or other was some high passages it was easier to play on one of these other instruments. So I just keep them handy. One of these was donated by a former student. The school loans several instruments which they use in woodwinds class. I have a class right now where there are two students playing bassoon. For prospective teachers and all that, have to teach all the instruments.

DR: Is that it?

GS: Any other questions, anyone?

KE: I think that's about it for now, yeah.

GS: Thank you very much for your time. This has been very interesting.

ER: Been fun.

GS: Well, we might be getting back a hold of you once we try to get our little presentation together. We now have to present like a 20-minute presentation to the class. So if we need

clarification we will probably get a hold of you again, and see if there's a time we can meet with you one more time. If that's okay with you.

ER: You bet.

GS: All right. Thank you, again.

[End of Interview]