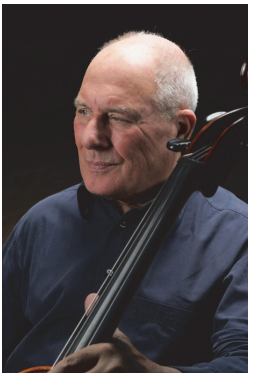
The Seventh Cellist



Rudolf Weinsheimer, born in 1931 in Wiesbaden, received his artistic education during World War II at the School of Fine Arts in Frankfurt (Main) and, starting in 1948, at the Folkwang School in Essen-Werden. By 1954, he had already become a solo cellist at the Northwest-German Philharmonic Orchestra before he became a member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in 1956, a position he held for 40 years. In 1972 he founded the soon to be renowned Ensemble "The 12 Cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra", which he led from 1978-1984.

Of particular interest to him has always been to establish and expand the relationship with Waseda University of Tokyo. It was with great enthusiasm that he prepared and organised 15 Waseda Orchestra Tours in Europe and the United States. In 1986 he became Honorary President of the Tokyo Orchestra.

This close relationship has lasted even after his official retirement in 1996, since when he has organised unique cello concerts of more than 1000 cellists in Japan. In 2005, the biggest ever World Cello Congress was held in Kobe with the participation of world-famous solo cellists. Today, Rudolf Weinsheimer lives in Berlin-Zehlendorf, together with his wife, Friedel.

Monika Born is a freelance writer and lives in Berlin. She was born in 1948 near Lake Constance, where her family finally settled after escaping from East Prussia. She grew up in Ravensburg. Having finished her studies in German and English literature and linguistics at the Free University of Berlin she taught at the Berlin-Kolleg for many years. As a lecturer in Creative Writing she put special emphasis on producing short films and theatre projects with her students. She has written poems and short stories for literary magazines. In her novel "Ich geh mit dir auf den Federball", published in 2018, she draws an emotionally complex portrait of a family during the years after the war and a moving description of young women just shortly before the women's movement started in the 1970s and 1980s.

Rudolf Weinsheimer
Monika Borth

The Seventh Cellist

Life and work of the Cellist and Founder of the Ensemble of the
12 Cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

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Prologue

Jeden Augenblick des Lebens,
er falle aus welcher Hand des Schicksals er wolle, uns zu,
den günstigen sowie den ungünstigen,
zum bestmöglichen zu machen,
darin besteht die Kunst des Lebens
und das eigentliche Vorrecht eines
vernünftigen Wesens.

(Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, 1742-1799, German writer and scientist)

These famous lines about the art of living, about "living each moment in life" have guided me all through my life. The idea of dealing with both life's "favourable" as well as "unfavourable" moments and forming them both to one's advantage – as Lichtenberg points out - is our privilege as rational human beings.

Every day I look at these lines at the wall in front of my desk, I feel stranded by the waves of life, often distanced from the outside world, and I am challenged to cope with my innermost thoughts and feelings. During my active life as a musician, my instrument and I were a medium which distributed music to others, often inspiring enthusiasm at many places in this world, together with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and, of course, with the 12 Cellists!

Now, when contemplating the walls in my study, I see photographs of enlightening encounters I had in those many years: one of them shows a conversation with Herbert von Karajan, and the second one displays Yehudi Menuhin during a formative encounter. What I see in our faces is a sort of inner glow resulting from the concert experience we had just shared. I also notice big concert halls in front of me, they lead me from Berlin to Tokyo and New York, among many other places. And finally, I feel again what I have once been: a cellist in a world-renowned orchestra!

No, I don't want to be someone who reminisces about past deeds and glory, just to escape some gloomy winter moments. I want to live in the present, but I need to relive and rethink the past, in order to find out who I am today. And I feel that I am grateful for people who ask me about it.

Friends and companions have encouraged me to put my thoughts into writing, while enjoying many of my often-amusing anecdotes. But eventually

my intention is to show internal references of my professional and personal life, with and for music.

My reflections on life and music will include a lot of gratitude, as well as very special moments a musician lives through, apart from practicing for and playing in concerts. They will show how "the favourable" corresponds with "the unfavourable" and perhaps will reveal a certain pattern in the end. Some may ask: How does it feel to hold your beloved cello in your arm for hours on end, drawing the bow over the strings with your right hand, while your left hand creates the line of the melody, with your head slightly bent to better absorb the sound, and with your eyes closed - self-critical and touched at the same time?

And finally: How does a person deal with life – past and present – who used to experience those moments of happiness when sound and soul were in complete harmony, culminating in something close to what might be called a revelation?

Perhaps the reader may also sense how difficult it is, after a life of such deep involvement and emotion, to, all of a sudden, lose one's hearing, a predicament I have now had to live with for quite some years.

The notes, which follow, may be a way of not losing myself on a dark winter's day.

Berlin, January 2019

A Wartime Childhood

To tell a life takes a lifetime – if you have tried hard enough to be truthful and fair to your memory. I have therefore tried to layout some sort of line, along which to proceed to include the essential points and markers, which were to determine my path and direction in life. In my early years these were both the element of music, as well as the strong relationship with my father, who had seen my talent and fostered it.

I was born on a July morning in 1931 in Wiesbaden. My mother singing and my father playing the viola, left an imprint even before my birth. And, looking at the horoscope, the stars must also have been "favourable" at my birth, leaving me with qualities typical of "Cancer", including emotional awareness and artistic talents. However, I would not then know the importance music would assume during my adolescent years, nor the level of protection and comfort, which it would provide me later on.

I was born the second of five children. Marie-Theres was the eldest, and after me there were three more siblings: Klaus, Irmgard and Peter. My father was the viola soloist at the National Theatre of Wiesbaden and directed several men's choirs in the Rheingau region. My mother was a kindergarten teacher who had given up work after her marriage, as was common in those days. She loved singing and had a wonderful voice! While doing her housework, she was often carried away by her singing, which added a new dimension to the room. For example, she sang the Ave-Maria with a passion that touched me deeply. With Händel's solemn *Largo* however, her work at our kitchen stove was no longer important! Sometimes we children stood right behind her, copying her singing practices, open-mouthed and mimicking her gestures. It seems to me today that our mother's singing was her way of distancing herself from us children, which, of course, we must have found confusing. This is how I see it today.

My father often accompanied my mother on the piano. Overall, music was very important for my parents' marriage. All of their children, except for Irmgard, played an instrument. Marie-Theres, the eldest, learned to play the piano. But now it is my turn.

Margarete Weinsheimer, 1930

One day, when I was eight years old, I was playing "Klicker" with my friends in front of the house. This is a game where you roll marbles on the ground, and when a special one touches a glass ball, the marble belongs to you. Suddenly I saw my father coming along the street, carrying an object covered in a case under his arm. I became curious a bit suspicious, and indeed, shortly afterwards he called me from the first floor window, "Rudolf! Come upstairs immediately!" When I entered the room my father pointed to the string instrument before him, explaining, "This is a half-sized cello. Try it out!" Even though it was smaller than a normal cello, made especially for children, the sheer size of the instrument somewhat intimidated me. Also, I had no idea how to start playing it. I was puzzled!

"Sit down", my father said, putting the cello in front of me right between my knees and across my shoulder. I took the bow and stroked it across the strings a few times, which seems to have convinced him, "You make a beautiful tone, and you will be a cellist!"

From then on he spent one hour a day teaching me the instrument. He showed me how to hold the bow, how to find one's focal point by keeping your arm in the right position and how to move the bow with your whole arm across the strings, while at the same time putting the fingers of your other hand on the strings. He watched me patiently and gave me advice when I got too tense.

Gradually, I discovered how to elicit melodious, well-sounding tones from the instrument. In my father's eyes, I had now advanced into the community of musicians. There is a saying that to be recognized for one's talents is bliss, and in looking back, I am grateful to my father for having seen my talent early on and for supporting me accordingly. Alas, during those days of early childhood, I quite often missed going outside and playing Klicker with my friends.

Soon afterwards, my father looked for an experienced cello teacher who could seriously teach and coach me. It was Miss Härtel, an elderly lady living in Rheinstrasse, about 15 minutes from our house, whose cello playing finally convinced him. This is when I started to learn about scales, finger exercises and practice, and intonation.

Her apartment was huge, but when I sat there and played, there was only the cello and I, and the strict eyes of my teacher. Some time later we began practicing Goltermann's Cello Concerto in G-major, a well-known and popular concerto for students.

One day, as I was heading to my lesson, my cello on my back, some soldiers – it was the year 1939 - were standing on the pavement, smiling and asking me, "Where on earth are you coming from with this giant guitar?" Never short for an answer, I replied self-confidently, "I am coming from a concert tour!" This was supposed to be funny, but, in hindsight, I tend to think that perhaps even then I had an intuition about where my path would eventually lead me.

At that time, war had already started. Often, my father took my sister and me to visit hospitals, in order to play for wounded soldiers; I remember playing Beethoven's *Gassenhauer Trio* and also the Goltermann Concerto. This was the first time I experienced a sense of stage fright, even though our audience were far from being critical. I told my sister, "In case I get lost somewhere, please continue with your part, I'll find my way back in!" When this did happen once,

though, I did not find my way back in so quickly. Theres played on and on, until my father pushed her aside and took over the accompaniment on the piano. I felt very sorry for her, because she cried bitterly. However, she never blamed or reprimanded me for it!

Like all other boys, I had to join the "Hitlerjugend", Hitler's Young Boys' Group. The cello, however, provided an excuse from the usual drills like exercising and parading. I was joined by two young violinists and a viola player, all of similar age, and we performed as a string quartet before high-ranking party members visiting town. We played Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* and smaller pieces by Schubert. Afterwards we were 'promoted' and received a lace, and later on a star to be put on our boys' uniforms, which made me proud at the time. Today, of course, it reminds me of a very cynical and deadly context: For us boys, the star meant a badge of honour, for others it was to be a symbol of death.

On the annual "Day of House Music", in which a selection of children attending Music Schools were allowed to perform, I was playing the Goltermann Concerto, together with my sister on the piano, and we were awarded First Prize. That was in 1941, when I was ten years old.

In the same year, I attended Gutenbergschule, a secondary school in Wiesbaden, where I played cello in the school orchestra and – on special occasions – performed as a soloist in our Assembly Hall.

At that time the bombing of big cities had already started. Almost every night, the sirens were wailing, and my mother took us five children, and we ran to the nearest cellar. My father stayed in bed, he did not seem to be afraid. One night, upon our return from the cellar, we saw a house split in two – the front wall was no longer there, opening up a view into all the apartments: we could still see furniture in living- and bedrooms. With each new siren, we were frightened and afraid that our house had also been hit.

But we were children at that time and were looking for adventure in the chaos. After these bombing nights, we did not have to go to school the next morning, an opportunity for my friends and me to roam the streets and collect splinters from grenades, which we would exchange with other schoolmates. The bigger a find was, the more precious it was.

While writing down these notes, I realize how I tend to look at these events from a naive child's perspective, rather than focusing on the brutality of these happenings. Of, course, I feared for my father who had remained in the apartment. Was it really fearlessness or did he want to lead by example and help us calm down? I believe, after such an experience, a residue of fear will

stay on in children. When, from one moment to the next, your familiar, trusted world can be entirely destroyed, what else is there to do than to enjoy playing with splinters of grenades!

The Weinsheimers in Wiesbaden, 1942

During the war, we were lucky to be in Wiesbaden, because unlike Mainz, on the other side of the river Rhine, Wiesbaden suffered only minor hits. While almost the entire inner city of Mainz had been bombarded, two thirds of Wiesbaden remained undestroyed. Today it is assumed that Wiesbaden was spared from bigger bombardment, because the U.S. Military had wanted to set up their quarters in the city. Whether this is true or not is not clear. However, it is a fact that, by the end of the war, the city had become the Headquarters of the Senior Command of the U.S. Air Force.

I was 12 years old when my mother told me one day, "Rudolf, I have read in a magazine that there is a special school for very gifted pupils in Frankfurt, and I have immediately registered you there."

Frankfurt? Hardly where I wanted to go! I wanted to stay in Wiesbaden with my family and my friends. But luckily, my mother had already decided.

Thus, when the time came, I packed my cello and went to Frankfurt to audition. Of course, I had prepared the Goltermann Concerto and played it, but not as well as I would have liked. However, my performance must have been good enough and led to my acceptance under the auspices of Professor Kurt Thomas. This happened in 1943, with my new school – The Musisches Gymnasium in Frankfurt – being one of the elite schools of the Third Reich.

On 1 January 1944, I was supposed to move there as a boarder. Shortly before, the school had been bombed and was almost completely destroyed, luckily during holiday time when all the pupils were back at home. When I read about it in the paper, I told my mother cheerfully, "Mum, the school was hit and destroyed. No need for me to go there!"

However, what I did not know then was that the entire Musisches Gymnasium was relocated to Odenwald, where it became part of the Military Education Camp in Reichelsheim. Two months later, my mother took me there. I will never forget the sight of those barracks! Everything was surrounded by a wired fence, including the entrance gate. Not even my mother was allowed inside. She had to leave me, briefly saying, "Good bye, Rudolf", and handing me my cello. I just stood there and watched her leave.

Now I was on my own, but I experienced closeness and joy in music, and a feeling of proximity when playing with other musicians. We were challenged quite often and had to give our best with our heads red from work and exhaustion, but we were happy. Sometimes, of course, we were also frustrated, and this is when we went back to practicing.

I met many talented young musicians there who would become famous after the war. For example, Paul Kuhn, the famous Jazz pianist, was a pupil there, just like Horst Stein, who later on would become a famous conductor, but also, later on my colleagues from my Berlin Orchestra, Dieter Gerhardt and Horst Rosenberger. I remember, Paul Kuhn was also assigned to wake up all the pupils at 7 a.m., which he did to everybody's pleasure by playing some Jazz, which had officially been forbidden. The building was huge, and on the floor outside our dormitory there was a piano. Luckily, none of the teachers ever stopped Paul playing to us.

Looking back at those times, I mostly remember all those orchestra rehearsals, and particularly the *Air* from Bach's Orchestra Suite Nr. 3: its melody floating up into the air, becoming one with the waves of other voices, back and forth! Sadness and longing were evoked, as well as something entirely comforting. One could lose oneself in this music, similar to beautiful renderings of landscapes, which carry the viewer on and on to far-away places. At

the same time, the bass and cello provided gravity, forming a solid, basic foundation, on which the other voices could build their harmonies. Later on, I read that Bach, at the age of ten and having lost both parents, had moved to live with his brother, and was soon put into boarding school. Was it not music that – throughout his life – had given him a purpose in life and some comfort?

In sharp contrast to such forms of deep experience, there were the daily rituals of school life. In the morning we had to be ready for the daily parade, with the appeal "Musisches Gymnasium **Ready**!!! Eyes to the left!" echoed across the schoolyard. Then the flag was hoisted, with Professor Thomas and all the teachers standing in line, watching.

Today, this correlation between musical education and military practices strikes me as grotesque, but we, the pupils, seemed to have accepted it like a game.

Soon afterwards, when the school was relocated to the Abbey of Maria Hilf in Untermarchtal, near Ehingen in Württemberg, I felt very lucky. The school was headed by nuns from the religious Order of the Vincentians, also known as Sisters of Mercy, who in those times wore those big white, starched bonnets that looked like gigantic paper airplanes. Saint Vincent is the Patron Saint of the Banished, Orphans and Refugees – and the Sisters really lived accordingly. They cared for us in a loving manner and were always friendly to us. One of them had to peel potatoes the whole day, so we called her "Our dear Sister Potato".

I was delighted when my younger brother Klaus came to Untermarchtal for a few months. He had an early interest in playing the Oboe, which had been reason enough to send him there for his own safety. Nevertheless, he did not stick to music, but later became a Police Man in Eltville, Rheinvalley. He was only eight years at the time and therefore still under my guardianship.

Together we walked in the fields and harvested apples, which we then hung across a string to dry.

My three other siblings, Marie-Theres, Irmgard and Peter had at that time been sent to a convent school in Wetzlar, which also protected them from the nightly bombings of Wiesbaden.

Every morning, Klaus and I were sent to the local Baker to pick up some 20 to 30 loaves of bread for the school. Each time we passed by a huge cupboard on one of the floors, we were tempted to put one loaf inside "for protection". Needless to say, later during the day, we passed by again to claim our "treasure". Still today, I remember this wonderful scent of freshly baked bread!

All in all, I soon enjoyed being at this nice place, also because I had had an intense relationship with the Catholic Church from early childhood on. Already at the age of six, I had served as an altar boy in the Church of St. Elisabeth in Wiesbaden. In particular, I liked joining my mother for May Prayers (Ma-iandacht) and singing with her wholeheartedly, "Maria zu lieben ist allzeit mein Sinn, in Freuden und Leiden ihr Diener ich bin. Du bist ja die Mutter, dein Kind will ich sein", a song in which the Holy Mary is praised and adored as a mother, promising love forever. Occasionally, I noticed my mother smiling quietly at me from the side.

One day, during May Prayers, it was my job to carry and swing the big incense burner. My grandmother was present, which rarely happened, as she lived in Cologne. She was sitting on one of the front pews, and I wanted to impress her. Therefore, I swung the incense very vigorously, clearly a bit too much, because all of a sudden, I became unconscious in front of the Altar, and in front of all the people. That was to become a central moment in my life, which I would never forget! During my entire career, I was always afraid that I would suddenly fall off my orchestra chair, unconscious. I will come to that later.

At the Abbey, I was sharing a room with three other boys. It was a really adventurous time! Everything was somehow improvised. For example, we did not even have our own toilets and had to go into the woods, where a special wooden beam had been installed. However, for the smaller ones among us, it was quite difficult to keep their balance, and, of course, no one wanted to fall into the trench.

I fondly think of those times, with war seemingly far away. There were no air raid alarms like in the big cities, and we had enough to eat. Also, there were daily orchestra- and choir rehearsals. We played and sang all of Bach's Motets and Chorales, as well as his wonderful Cantatas.

All rehearsals were conducted by Professor Kurt Thomas, who later on was appointed to the St. Thomas Choir in Leipzig.

I gradually immersed myself in music, practicing diligently. During breaks, I often went to the nearby river Danube. I had been quite a good swimmer and, after all these rehearsals, it just felt good to stretch one's arms and glide through the water, over to the other side of the river. To dive under and dip into another element – what a sensation! Sometimes I would also just sit by the river, thinking of my parents, but also worrying what might happen to me if they were harmed, as we still were at war.

Eventually, this war, of which we had not taken much notice, due to the idyllic valley in which we lived, was about to come to an end. One day, shortly before the end, some German soldiers returning from the front lines handed us a bazooka, together with very brief instructions on how to use it. They told us to defend a small bridge from the approaching French tanks. We, as child soldiers, were supposed to be Hitler's last troops, carrying a monstrous weapon! Luckily, there were no tanks coming our way.

However, only a few days later, at night, all of a sudden, French soldiers were standing in our bedroom, armed with machine guns. We held up our arms and they searched everything for weapons and uniforms. Many teachers and assistants, some of them Nazis, were arrested and taken away. The nuns, however, were allowed to stay and continued to care for us.

A few days ago, I was having a nightmare. I was supposed to clean out an attic somewhere, when suddenly 200 French soldiers appeared, all carrying machine guns. I cried out loudly, "We are living in peace now!", after which they threw away their guns, and we all embraced each other. A nightmare ending well for me, just like the one more than 75 years ago!

The Abbey included a farm with more than 200 cattle, which now had to be looked after, as well. I immediately volunteered to work, together with some other boys. We all enjoyed this communal work, also because we were rewarded with nice meals, fresh milk and free board – a huge privilege during what would soon become times of hunger and distress.

One day, when I found a well-functioning military bicycle in the woods, I knew that this was the chance to finally find my way home to my family in faraway Wiesbaden. Naturally, I was worried about my parents and siblings. How had they survived these last months during the war? Was our home still standing? I quickly took the bike and hid it. Later on, I secretly packed my rucksack and began my journey under cover of darkness.

The Württemberg region stood under French occupation, while Wiesbaden was under American protection. There were street blockades and checkpoints everywhere. I managed to find a way around the street blockades, but there was a long trip ahead of me, and my food ration was soon gone. I soon knocked at the door of a farm near Urach, where I was greeted by a friendly, chubby woman wearing her apron.

When she saw me she simply said, "Well, come on in!" I was placed at the kitchen table and watched her bake pancakes with ham at the open fire, using some lard. What a delicious scent! This was by far the best pancake I ever ate

in my whole life. I was given some salad with it and also some Cider! It is with deep gratitude that I still think of this wonderful country woman.

Upon leaving later on, I noticed a flat tyre on my bike, which obviously needed repair. I cut open the tube and filled it with straw, which allowed me to ride slowly on to the next village where I received a new tube. At night, I crossed the border to the American Zone near Geislingen, where I began to feel more secure.

From there onwards, the Autobahn would lead to Darmstadt, before reaching Mainz and Wiesbaden. It reminded me of a wide, empty ribbon cutting through the landscape. One would see a few military vehicles and lorries, some ox-wagons and horse carriages. Thus, I continued riding my bike nearer and nearer towards home. I met other boys who also came from far-away places, heading homewards. All around us, we noticed the extent of the destruction, and I became more and more frightened. Day by day, the concern about my parents and siblings grew. Then, finally, I saw Wiesbaden turning up in the far distance, I started to see houses, which had been destroyed, and I fervently hoped to see my family home intact. Eventually, as I arrived at the corner of Dreiweidenstraße, I saw our house – untouched! My heart was beating wildly, I could hardly believe my eyes but when I rang the bell, there was no answer at the door. I saw an open window and managed to get inside, when I heard my mother coming through the door. "Hello, who are you?", I asked, my voice disguised, so as to imitate that of an American. My mother was shocked and tried to run away, but when I ran after her we fell into each other's arms, overjoyed and grateful.

My mother told me that my father had been arrested shortly before the war had ended and that she had not heard of him since. He had been too old to actively serve in the German Army, but was part of the paramilitary organisation called "Volkssturm".

And what was even worse: my father was also a member of the NSDAP, the National People's Party. He had worked at the National Theatre in Wiesbaden and therefore, being a civil servant, had to join the Party. For example, there was a photograph showing him with the Party Head (Gauleiter) of Hessen, which had been published in the Party Paper "Völkischer Beobachter". It turned out, my father had solicited by far the highest number of subscriptions for the paper, a fact which later on fell into the hands of the Allied Forces. For them it was clear that my father must have been a fervent party member and deserved to be arrested.

Family Home in Wiesbaden

A few weeks later, the doorbell rang. I heard my mother opening it and crying loudly, "Oh my God!" When I arrived at the door, I saw my father standing there, small and weak looking, his clothes torn to pieces, unshaven, and with rags around his feet instead of shoes. However, we were overjoyed with the reunion, as we had not heard from him, nor did we know whether he was still alive or not.

Later on, he told us that he had been incarcerated in Le Mans, in Southern France, where he had founded a choir. It was music, which had apparently helped also him to overcome these dismal times.

He had also found his Christian belief again, with the help of a Catholic priest who happened to be in the same tent as he and who was to become a close friend of my father. There he had started to get up at five every morning to attend Holy Mass, before doing his construction work. The time in prison had clearly changed him. He was deeply shocked when he later heard about the cruelty and the gruesome crimes the Nazis had committed, but, having been a Party member, he lost his position at the National Theatre and from then on had to work in construction.

Turbulent Years

I spent this post-war summer with my mother in Wiesbaden. People in all big cities suffered from hunger and the organisation of food dominated their everyday life. It was called "foraging". Black Markets spread everywhere, because the shops were empty. At all corners of our town there were small places where goods were swapped and bargains made. Somehow, I succeeded again and again to supply us with food, mostly in the little villages in the nearby Rheingau Valley. I rode my bike to Mainz-Finthen and Gonsenheim to swap some household goods for food. In times of high inflation, however, the most stable currency was cigarettes. It seems trading has always been one of my character traits: already at the age of four, I wanted to sell my small children's bed to an antique shop in Wiesbaden, a plan prevented by my mother at the very last moment. Later, at the age of seven, I gained the reputation of 'King of Bones' in our school: all children were supposed to collect paper, cigarette paper and animal bones for the military. The bones I got at the Butcher's.

My father, though working hard in construction, did not contribute much to the family income. One day, on my way to Mainz-Finthen, I passed by a small Circus named "Bügler", which had set up their tent directly next to the Rhine. There was a sign at the gate reading, "We urgently need a musician – violinist or piano player". I immediately thought of my father and quickly cycled back home to tell him. We both returned to "Bügler" right away, where my father was hired on the spot. At least he was saved from the construction site and would no longer need to ruin his musician's hands with hard labour. However, his new work was not exactly easy. Next to his nightly performances, he had a lot of other chores on his hands, for example to set up and take down the Circus tent upon arrival or leaving a town. During the winter, wearing a Circus uniform, he had to lead the animals through town. One day, a camel broke loose and escaped, which caused quite some turmoil, and my father was fined 10,00 German Marks, a lot of money at the time! Also, he told us, he once was asked to play *Zigeunerweisen* by Pablo de Sarasate on his violin – inside the lions' cage! I was glad he had not been eaten up by one of the lions!

His new work required him to move out from home and live in a Circus wagon to be shared with three others, sleeping on bunk beds. During his first night there, he asked the man sleeping on the cot under his what he had been doing during the past years. When he learned that he shared the room with an executioner, needless to say, my father had a sleepless night. The very next morning, he started looking for another place to sleep. All in all, my father

liked his new job surprisingly well. Also, in his free time, he taught the youngsters there German, English and Mathematics.

When they set up their tent in Hamburg, he saw the big American Circus "Williams" was in town, too, and asked if they needed a musician. Afterwards he travelled with them through the country and earned more money than before. For my mother, however, it was not easy, because her husband was never at home, which meant that she had to deal with the difficult post-war situation all by herself. Meanwhile, my grandparents were also living with us in our flat in Wiesbaden, and everyone needed to be fed! My sister Marie-Theres, being the eldest, was responsible for the younger siblings and all household chores, while our mother went out to organise our survival. At times, she was surely overwhelmed by all these tasks, as can be seen in the diaries she kept during that time. What gave her comfort and refuge was the Catholic Church. Sometimes, I found her exceedingly pious, but today I understand her much better. While I was able actively to play out my newly awakened ambitions and to return to my education, her role had become that of a servant. Only later did she find her way back into music.

Meanwhile, countless numbers of people carrying goods to swap, swept into nearby villages in order to bring home food supplies. The living conditions for farmers in the countryside were better than those of city dwellers, as they were mostly self-sufficient. Therefore, having good connections to those farmers was worth a fortune!

And soon enough, it turned out to be a blessing when, in September of 1945, my mother sent me to Ehingen, near the familiar Abbey of Untermarchtal, to continue my education at boarding school.

Even though I was familiar with the neighbourhood, I did not feel comfortable being so far away from my family. At the age of 14, I was on my own again.

My family rented a room for me in the flat of a nice elderly lady. I had to make breakfast, and for lunch I went to the local inn called 'Zum Schwert'; my laundry was outsourced. During the week, I studied Latin, Greek, French and English at school. My cello came to good use when performing for the Catholic Youth Group and during Church concerts. During school breaks, I initiated deals with my schoolmates, whose parents were mostly farmers. They owned cattle, poultry, fields with vegetables and trees full of fruit. Thus, my career on the black market had started and was soon to become my biggest hobby!