



Louis Moyse: Marlboro's great flutist

By Jim Lowe

Until now, Louis Moyse (1912-2007) is the greatest flutist you've never heard; there are almost no recordings of him still in release. And unless you are a classical musician or a disciple of the flute, Louis Moyse is the greatest musician that you've never heard about. Yet Moyse, a flutist, pianist and composer, was a founder of Vermont's world-renowned Marlboro Music Festival. He performed and collaborated with some of the greatest musicians of the 20th century. This seven CD musical collection released by Lyricord (Multicultural Media Inc.) contains many examples of those musicians who played with him.

Louis Moyse and his famous father Marcel Moyse were the only true representatives of the "Moyse school" of flute playing, revered during the first half of the 20th century. The Moyses used their varying tone to express the purpose of the music, growing intense with more vibrato in passionate moments, with much more subtle means to express intimacy and tenderness. The Moyse school spawned the likes of flutists Aurele Nicolet, Ornulf Gulbrandsen, Paula Robison, Carol Wincenc, James Galway, and Karen Kevra.



Although Louis Moyse focused mainly on teaching after World War II, he performed regularly with the likes of pianists Claude Frank, Peter and Rudolf Serkin, cellists David Soyer and Henri Honegger, oboist Alfred Genovese and soprano Benita Valente, just to name a few.

Despite a concert career that spanned more than six decades, Louis Moyse made few commercial recordings. Before World War II, he was heard on numerous 78rpm discs with the Moyse Trio, and in J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, with his father, with the Busch Chamber Players 1935-36 recordings of the Brandenburgs and Suites (still available). His only LPs available after the war were from a Marlboro recording of his conducting a Dvorak Serenade in 1957 for Columbia Records, and a 1973 flute recital on a Japanese label.

Fortunately, though Mr. Moyse performed only sporadically outside the Marlboro area after moving to the US and Vermont, he left recordings of live concerts at Marlboro, the New England Bach Festival, the Brattleboro (Vt.) Music Center and other locations from the 1950s to the '80s when he stopped performing in public. Lyrichord (Multicultural Media Inc.) has now made these available in this remastered series.

Louis Moyse arranged hundreds of sheet music editions for flute, and his successful teaching methods were legendary. Most editions of his sheet music were published by the internationally known company G. Schirmer where he was longtime head of the flute department. His work was printed by several other publishers as well and his arrangements and editions are still commonly used today.



Louis Moyse with his library of manuscripts

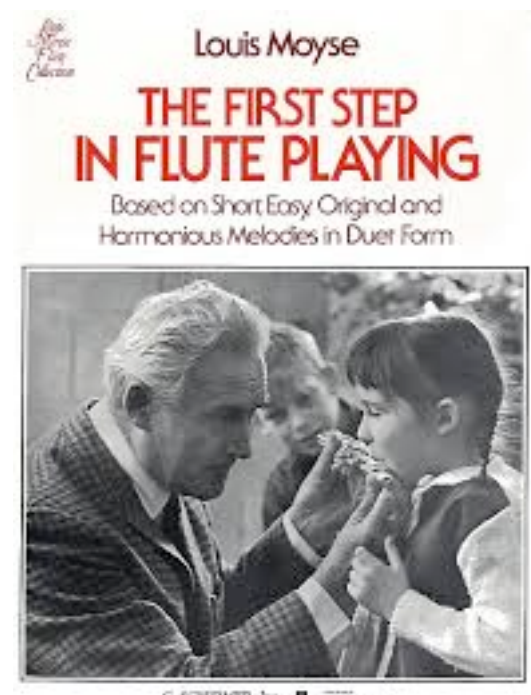
Moyse's Musicianship

Louis Moyse was born on Aug. 14, 1912, in Schrevengem, The Netherlands, where his father was on tour, but grew up in Paris. He attended only two years of public

school, but was taught in their Montmartre home by his mother Celine, a former dancer. Moyse started on piano, taught by one of his father's colleagues.

"I was not especially gifted to be a pianist," Louis Moyse once said. "The only real gift in my life was to be a musician. I worked hard because, digitally speaking, I am not gifted. I can play because I worked hard."

At 13, he was accepted into the Paris Conservatory as a piano student. At about that time, he took an interest in flute--at which he proved very talented--and he began studying both instruments seriously. Nevertheless, the Conservatory compelled him to choose between the two, and he chose flute and won his first First Prize at age 17.



Young Louis Moyse found plenty of work in the orchestras and theaters of Paris. But, unlike his colleagues, he could switch to piano when needed. One time, when Duke Ellington was playing in the theater where Louis was working, he was invited to join in on piano.

"It was really a good time," Louis said. "I love the jazz of that time. I like every kind of music--when it's good."

As pianist, Mr. Moyse appeared in recital with the great German violinist Adolf Busch and French singer-composer Reynaldo Hahn, and performed alongside jazz great Duke Ellington. He was both pianist and flutist with his father, and first wife, violinist-violist Blanche Honegger Moyse, in the award-winning Moyse Trio, one of Europe's most admired chamber ensembles before World War II.

The Moyse Trio became successful, touring and recording. Composers who wrote music for the ensemble included Arthur Honegger, Jacques Ibert, Florent Schmitt and Bohuslav Martinu. Louis Moyse credited Martinu with inspiring him to

become a composer. "He mixes the folklore of his native country with a modern harmony way of dealing with music and sound," Louis said.



The Moyse Trio

It was also at about that time that Busch invited the Moyse Trio to join him in London to record Bach's Brandenburgs and Suites. That began a collaboration between the Moyses and Busch and his protégé, pianist Rudolf Serkin that would culminate in establishing the Marlboro Music Festival.

In 1938 when Marcel Moyse was playing with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood, conductor Serge Koussevitzky invited Louis to become the orchestra's permanent second flutist. But that was not to be. In 1939, three days before Louis and Blanche Moyse's departure to the United States, Germany invaded Poland and the borders were closed.

Musical Odyssey

After a stint in the short-lived French army, Louis and his family were forced to scramble for a living in Marcel's childhood hometown of St. Amour. At the end of the war, the Moyses, like most French people, were destitute. With the help of the guitarist Andres Segovia, they were invited to head the music department at a new university in Argentina.

By the time the Moyses arrived in South America, however, President Juan Peron had ended plans for the university, leaving them struggling to make a living in an unfamiliar country. Fortunately, their colleagues Busch and Serkin, with summer homes in Guilford, Vt., made arrangements for them to become the music department at fledgling Marlboro College.

The Moyses moved to Brattleboro, Vt. in 1949, and began their tenure at Marlboro College. The following summer, the Moyses, Busch, Serkin and cellist Hermann Busch invited young professionals to come study with them on the Marlboro College campus. The following summer, Marlboro School of Music and its festival for advanced musicianship - officially began, and soon became what it

is today, a musical oasis. The Marlboro Music School and Festival continues to rent the college campus each summer.



Louis working with pianist Alison Cerutti

Blanche and Louis Moyse also created the Brattleboro Music Center, inviting their Marlboro friends to perform with them during the regular season. In 1969, they founded what was to become the New England Bach Festival, mixing instrumental and choral music of J.S. Bach.

In 1974 Louis divorced Blanche and resigned from Marlboro College and the Brattleboro Music Center to take his career in another direction. He married Janet White Allen that same year, and they left for Canada where Louis became guest Professor of flute at the University of Toronto. After two years there, Louis was appointed guest Professor of Flute at Boston University.

His wife, Janet, then became his manager and organized master classes and concerts throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. They spent their last decade together in Montpelier, Vermont where Louis continued to compose, teach private lessons, give master classes and concerts, and coached visiting chamber ensembles.

He died July 30, 2007, at 94, only days after completing a 10-day seminar for professional flutists.

Jim Lowe is long-time music critic and arts editor of two Vermont daily newspapers, *The Barre-Montpelier Times Argus* and *The Rutland Herald*.