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News Update

by Anita Betman

More than half of the full-time students enrolled in the College-Conservatory of Music's Division of Performance Studies dream of one day playing with a major symphony orchestra. That figure obviously includes women as well as men.

As a student at CCM, Betty Glover too had that dream. But in the 1940s, she shared it with few women. Finding a dress among the orderly rows of tuxedoed musicians on a stage was rare in those days. Reality, though, did not diminish

her dream, nor her success. When she first joined the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and for about eight years thereafter, she and harpist Anna Bukay were the only women in the ensemble. And when she retired from CSO last year, she still held the distinction of having been the only woman bass trombonist in any major symphony orchestra for thirty-two years. That kind of success pioneered the way for women musicians. "The major orchestras were slow to admit women into their ranks," she

recalls, "but World War II proved that women could do the job." She was one of those proving the point. A new graduate of CCM, Glover was hired as principal first trombone with the Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra on D-Day, June 6, 1944. At the time, fewer than a dozen women were in the orchestra—two or three woodwinds, another horn, a harp, and several strings. Later, she joined the Columbus (Ohio) Philharmonic Orchestra and in 1952 came to the CSO, where she doubled in brass on bass trombone

and tenor tuba. That same year, Glover, CCM '44, MM '48, joined the faculty at U.C. She is an Adjunct Professor of brass instruments and conductor of the CCM Brass Choir, founded in the 1940s by Ernest Glover. Betty's late husband, she succeeded him as its conductor upon his death in 1968. While Ernest was starting a brass choir, Betty was beginning a career. One of the "Fringe benefits" of war, she says, was the break it gave

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women to play brass instruments in major orchestras, as the number of available male musicians dwindled. When the men reclaimed their jobs, however, women began disappearing from orchestral chairs again. It took several years for the trend to change.

Still, throughout Glover's orchestral experience, her male colleagues have always been "very nice and gentlemanly." She never felt called upon to prove anything because she was a woman.

"Gender is not the important thing," she says. "It's personality and sharing common interests.

Above all, as a musician in a group, you have to play your part. You either produce or you don't. Of course, as students, women may

have to work harder to show they can perform on the instrument and handle it well."

As for being a trombonist, "It's widespread practice that European trombonists with major symphonies are men. Even in this country, the trombone is usually male oriented. Men may be more attracted to that instrument, but there is no physical reason why women trombonists can't be as adept as men. As with any instrument, it is aptitude, not gender, that influences the choice."

At CCM this academic year, thirteen students specialize in trombone. Two are women: junior Colleen MacDonald and graduate student Julie Stevenson.

MacDonald credits her teacher for enabling her to progress and succeed at CCM. She began studying privately with Glover after graduation from high school. Six months later, she auditioned at CCM and was accepted. Today she performs in the CCM Concert Orchestra and the CCM Brass Choir. In addition, she holds the Ernest N. Glover Award, given each year to a junior in trombone who fulfills the award's various academic and musical stipulations.

"When I first began studying with Mrs. Glover, I was a mess," MacDonald says. "I had no technique; my tone was very thin and spread out; my embouchure was all wrong. Without her help, I could never have made it to where I am today.

"Now my dream is to make it into a major orchestra and teach privately at a college. I want to be as successful as my teacher has been in her career—as a teacher and a performer."

Being fully accepted and recognized as a trombonist by male students still takes patience for a woman today, adds MacDonald, even in Glover's shadow at CCM. "I was always considered a female, never a fellow player," she says.

Stevenson feels a different type of pressure at U.C. Yes, people often expect her to be a flutist instead of a trombonist because of her slight build, but Stevenson says her real challenge is coping with the difference between CCM and Miami

University, where she did her undergraduate work.

"There's more intensity at CCM, because there are more performance majors here," she explains. "At Miami, there were more music ed majors, and it was more relaxed because they weren't competing so much. Here, you're almost forced to try harder as a performer and expect more of yourself."

Stevenson is principal trombone and the only woman trombonist in the Cincinnati Philharmonia Orchestra. She studies at CCM with Tony Chipurn but also admires Betty Glover, who was present at a couple of her auditions. "She's definitely good at what she does, and people know that," Stevenson says.

Among the first to agree would be Gerard Aloisio, CCM '85, a CCM Brass Choir trombonist who has served as an "extra" with the CSO. He is continuing his studies toward the master's degree in trombone at CCM with Betty Glover, whom he calls his "adviser, teacher, and good friend."

Aloisio has studied with Glover for more than ten years—since seventh grade. Before that he took trombone lessons from one of her former pupils, Mike Keener, CCM '71, through CCM's Preparatory Department. Today, as a free-lance performer and the recipient of a full-tuition University Graduate Scholarship, Aloisio likes to recall his earliest days as Glover's pupil: "She knew me when I played

simple tunes, out-of-tune, with a sound 'like a couple of stray Airedales,' as she would often say to me. Although I'm sure I could study elsewhere with other excellent teachers, there is no one anywhere for whom I have more admiration and respect, both musically and personally. Her approach to her music, whether playing or conducting, is so full of feeling and expression that one can't help but be influenced by it.

"Fortunately, my hard work is beginning to pay off, and I am thankful that she has stayed on my tail all of these years. By (continuing at) CCM, I will be able to keep working toward the perfection that she demands."

Now that Betty Glover has retired from her CSO duties, she looks forward to devoting even more of her time and energy to her students and to her work as a nationally know clinician and brass choir conductor.

At CCM, besides teaching students individually, Glover rehearses the twenty-five member Brass Choir twice weekly and conducts it in several concerts during the academic year, on campus and in the community. To inquire, call the CCM Concert Line at (513) 475-4163.

