

MORIIHIKO

I think from my personal experience, growing up and then leaving my family, to coming to the unknown, to a new country when I was in ninth grade, without really knowing English. I think from all of my experiences, one thing, if there is one thing, I would say never play safe, never play safe, take chances. That's true in music making and in everything else in life for me. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

NAKAHARA:

There's no guarantee. There are risks worth taking. And I think the worst thing we can do later is to look back, and what if? You know, ask what if? Too bad that we didn't try for such and such.

Let's see, I grew up in rural part of southwestern Japan. A town of maybe six 6,000 people or so. I grew up with my mother and her parents, so my grandparents. And I was the only child growing up.

There's a saying in Japan, that basically says the nail that sticks out will be hammered down. If you're different from everybody else, then you're going to be targeted in some way. Maybe I was a little bit, no different, maybe I was a little bit different, because I was the only child growing up.

And then when I went to junior high, it was the first time in my life I was bullied. When I was in junior high. So I was bullied, and that's got me thinking. And I was talking with my grandmother, with whom I was very close. And she passed away a couple years ago.

But she said, oh-- and she loved to travel around the world. And so she said, oh, you shouldn't stay in Japan. You should go somewhere else. Go to go to America or somewhere. Study in America. Go explore the world. If you don't do it now, when are you going to do it?

So I actually did a home stay with this family in Michigan. But it's one of those things just one thing led to another, and I just and I'm going to undergrad, graduate school there. I've been working. I've been working in this conducting business in the US, now.

I always say that really the greatest asset of Columbia, South Carolina is its people. I've met so many intriguing and inspiring people from all walks of life here in Columbia. It keeps me going, because I love to find out about other things outside of music.

There's a maybe higher level of interest in the arts, arts as a whole, whether it's symphonic

music or visual arts or theatre or visual arts. I think there's maybe curiosity and thirst for learning and expanding horizons. I feel that to be sort of part of the DNA of Columbia, South Carolina.

A conductor's life, musician's life in general, I think it's a little bit interesting in that, as a conductor, you have your back so the audience. So the sight you see at a concert in the music making performance portion of a performance, is still the same as a rehearsal, except maybe everybody's dressed up. I might have my back to the audience, but I can still sense it. I can still sense this energy that's coming from the audience. And that's really hard to describe and really hard to articulate it.

Really what's great, especially in a performance, is I'm sort of caught right in the middle of it. In front of me are all these great musicians of the orchestra. And know they're all working their butts off. And I'm caught right in the middle of their sound as the sound travels out to the audience. And I'm right in-- caught right in the middle it. This sound producing, music making action, and everybody's sharing through their listening and through watching and listening as everybody witness all these other great repertoire of symphonic music come to life, really.

I know it sounds like a cliché, but that's really like the best seat in the house, is the conductor's podium. If I could-- I'm not I'm not much of a hugger, but if I could go around to the entire orchestra and shake every single person's hand at the end of the concert, I would love to do that, because that's what I want to do. That's all I want to do.

[APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]