

## Sharing the World's Great Music

Bringing the analytical mind of an engineer to an exploration of the arts, Reidar Bjorhovde knows how to appreciate music.

**IF ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS,** then it's safe to say that Reidar Bjorhovde really does love music. Every weekend for nine years Bjorhovde rolled out of bed at 3:30 in the morning to arrive at the studios of Tucson's KUAT-FM by 5:00 a.m., where he hosted an early morning radio broadcast of classical music from 1998 until 2007.

His radio career actually started a few years earlier at WQED-FM in Pittsburgh, where Bjorhovde was serving as the head of the civil engineering department at the University of Pittsburgh. "I hosted a one-hour program for WQED. The staff was very complimentary and said I should think of doing this more, so I did a second one."

Where did this deep interest in music come from? In his native Norway, the entire Bjorhovde family was musically involved. All of Bjorhovde's three sisters were musical, and so was he. "For a number of years I played first trumpet in a symphony orchestra," he said. "We were amateurs, but we were actually pretty good."

Although he put away his trumpet when he came to the U.S. in 1968 to study at Lehigh University, Bjorhovde's love of music flourished. Meanwhile, after receiving his doctorate, he joined AISC and began literally rubbing shoulders with the legends of this industry. Initially he was an AISC regional engineer in Boston, coincidentally the home of one of this country's great orchestras, reporting to Bob Disque. A promotion brought him to AISC headquarters, which at the time was in New York, where he worked for Bill Milek.

"Ted Higgins was retired but still came into the office two or three times a week," Bjorhovde said. "There was an extra desk in my office and I said, 'Ted, why don't you use the desk here so you have a place where you can rest your weary head sometimes?' And he laughed."

While in New York he acquired a copy of the Köchel catalog, a massive book which is a chronological listing of all the works of his favorite composer, Wolfgang Amade Mozart. "I'm actually one of the few people I know who actually has a copy of the Köchel listing," Bjorhovde said.

He returned to academia to teach first at the University of Alberta (Canada), then the University of Arizona. In the late 1980s he moved to Pittsburgh, home of another great symphony orchestra. "Then in 1998 I changed careers," Bjorhovde said, "and set up my own consulting firm in Tucson, Arizona."

Shortly after his arrival a friend suggested Bjorhovde apply for a part-time opening as a producer/announcer at the local public radio station. He did, and was one of 15 applicants.

"They hired two of us," Bjorhovde said. "The other guy had a much more impressive musical background than I, but both of us were hired. I think one of my advantages was that I speak seven different languages. I could handle a lot of pronunciations."

"I read a great deal," he said. "I study a great deal of history, and have a collection of books about Mozart, including quite a number of first editions. I have a book supplier in London that I deal with on a regular basis to find out if anything interesting of historical import has come out. I have a great collection of books and study music a great deal—theory and performance and all that kind of stuff. So I'm an engineer, but I have certain strong interests in addition."

Finding an outlet in classical music radio was one of those fortunate things that happens in life, Bjorhovde observed. "My musical interests are very broad, from the early rococo to 20th century music, from solo performance to orchestral music and concertos. I like very much 20th century choral music, and of course opera. So much beautiful music to listen to, and to simply learn about. I am constantly amazed at how many people say, 'how do you know that?' Well, I just have a good memory."

But as much as he enjoyed his radio days, "after nine years of early hours at the radio station, my wife was happy to get me back," he said.

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◀ Reidar Bjorhovde, radio show host (left photo, 1991) and structural engineer. Learn more about his engineering career and accomplishments at [www.aisc.org/podcasts](http://www.aisc.org/podcasts).