

Intermezzo

Dfm
chicago federation of musicians
local 10-208 afm

Membership Meeting:
Tuesday, October 11th, 2011
@1:00 pm

Special Meeting:
Monday, October 17th, 2011
@7:00 pm

October 2011
Vol. 71 No. 9



Chicago Theater of the Air See Pages 14-15



From the President



GARY MATTS

It Will Come Back to You

Pay it forward. Give to get. Or, as Lennon and McCartney wrote, “The love you take is equal to the love you make.” This is not a new concept. It is a variation of the golden rule which is found at the heart of many of the world’s religions. Recently I recognized an example of this precept proving itself yet again.

In the labor community, workers and their unions, are to a great extent dependant on other unions and their members for support during times of strikes, demonstrations and lockouts. The CFM, as a member of the Chicago Federation of Labor and Illinois AFL-CIO, is an active member of labor’s support network. For years we and members of many other unions have played music and marched alongside the striking Congress Hotel workers. Recently we have done the same for UNITE-HERE members who have gone on strike against the Hyatt corporation. It was a national news item when on a particularly hot day this past summer, at Chicago’s Park Hyatt, heat lamps were turned on the striking union members.

At the most recent ICSOM annual conference held in Detroit in support of the brave Detroit Symphony musicians who endured a protracted strike, ICSOM leaders declared their support for hotel workers. Though many annual ICSOM meetings had in years past been held at Hyatt properties across the United States, ICSOM announced that it would hold no future conferences at Hyatt properties until the company negotiates an agreement with its workers.

We have also supported IATSE, NABET and SEIU workers to name a few, providing music and marchers

at Chicago area demonstrations. When we marched at the Chicago Theatre and at the Royal George Theater, members of Actors’ Equity, SAG, AFTRA and many others were there to lend their support.

You may know, the world renowned Philadelphia Orchestra is now in bankruptcy proceedings. It is believed this maneuver was undertaken by the orchestra management as a way to evade financial obligations to the musicians pensions. There is great concern that if Philadelphia Orchestra management is successful many other orchestra managements will follow.

Now here is the way, our helping others, has come back to us. When the AFM became aware of the filing, the labor community was notified of the situation, and the AFM appealed to the AFL-CIO for assistance. According to one source, when the delegates to the AFL-CIO considered the request, there were numerous statements from many unions that musicians were there for them, playing on their picket lines and marching alongside their members. Because we were there for them, they urged the AFL-CIO to be there for the musicians. Because of the actions of AFM Local members across the country we received a substantial grant to aid the legal defense in the Philadelphia bankruptcy proceeding.

So the next time there is an opportunity to help our brother and sister unions, with your assistance we will be there. No doubt, it will come back to us in ways we cannot yet imagine.

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Terryl Jares

Paramount Theatre Update

The Paramount Theatre in Aurora has mounted the first of four musicals this season. Under the leadership of nationally acclaimed artistic director Jim Corti, *My Fair Lady* ran for three weeks in September using a 21 piece orchestra conducted by Shawn Stengel. November brings *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*; in January you can catch *A Chorus Line* and the season wraps up in March with *Hair*. The Paramount Theatre is celebrating its 80th Anniversary. It is a gorgeous hall designed by architects C.W and George L. Rapp in the art deco style of the 1930's.

Follow Up on Hearing Study

In December of 2010 we ran an ad for musicians to participate in a hearing study at Northwestern University. I was recently contacted by one of the researchers, Alexandra Parbery-Clark with information on their preliminary results.

"Research is showing that lifelong musical training appears to confer advantages in at least two important functions known to decline with age -- memory and the ability to hear speech in noise," says Nina Kraus the director of the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory at Northwestern University's School of Communication.

In their study, Alexandra Parbery-Clark and Nina Kraus found that musicians performed much better on auditory memory tests had a greater ability to hear in noisy environments.

Difficulty hearing speech in noise is among the most common complaints of older adults, but age-related hearing loss partially accounts for this problem that can lead to social isolation and depression. As Nina Kraus points out "sound is the stock in trade of the musician in much the same way that a painter of portraits is keenly attuned to the visual attributes of the paint that will convey his or her subject. If the materials that you work with are sound, then it is reasonable to suppose that all of your faculties involved with taking it in, holding it in memory and relating physically to it should be sharpened." It appears therefore that musical experience bolsters the elements that combat age-related communication problems.

The study was published in the online edition of the *PLoS One* Journal which can be viewed and downloaded for free on www.plosone.org

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0018082>

They are looking for more musicians to participate in further research. Look on page 21 for more information on how you might get involved.

Cover illustration provided by
Chris Nolan Creative.



Who, Where, When...



By Ruth Marion Tobias



JOYOUS NEWS A WELCOME CHANGE

The two-week European tour of **RICCARDO MUTI** and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra brought home news of uninhibited, joyful appreciation of our city's magnificent treasure—a welcome respite to the dire calamities befalling our nation and the world, seemingly on a daily basis. Bless all the participants for this gift to our spirits.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

ADOLPH “BUD” HERSETH has reached his 90th year. Station WMFT devoted a 2-hour tribute in his honor and to celebrate his 53 years with CSO, playing not only excerpts from his long reign leading the magnificent brass section, but also snippets of interviews with him. How enjoyable to listen to that glorious trumpet and hear his voice with gentle stories of a life on the orchestral stage. Congratulations, Bud.

THE WOW OF HOWARD

The program of August 18 in this summer's Millennium Park free series, “Made in Chicago: World Class Jazz” was rebroadcast on Station WFMT-FM in its entirety August 26.



Howard Levy

It was **HOWARD LEVY's** night. The “acknowledged master of the diatonic harmonica”, superb pianist, composer and recording artist, shared the stage with long-time friends: bandmates of Chévere de Chicago; Trio Globo comprised of Levy with cellist/vocalist **EUGENE FRIESEN**, and percussionist/vocalist **GLEN VELEZ**; guitarist **CHRIS SIEBOLD** also a composer/songwriter, arranger, singer and multi-instrumentalist who plays mandolin, mandocello, mountain and hammered dulcimers, banjo and percussion. Levy's affable, relaxed hosting of the program was surpassed only by his pianism and harmonica triumphs and the premier performance of his remarkable composition *Recuerdos de Nueva Yorque*. Chévere cut loose with this twenty-five minute, four-part suite of jazz rhythms: Latin, Afro-Cuban, salsa, merengue and more, with percussionists **ALEJO POVEDA**, **RUBEN ALVAREZ**, **JOE RENDON**; bassist **ERIC HOCHBERG**; guitarist **ERNIE DENO**; keyboards **CHRIS CAMERON**; saxophones/flute



Chévere

STEVE EISEN; trumpet **MARK OHLSEN** along with guest

artists trumpeter **VICTOR GARCIA**, co-arranger of “*Recuerdos*”; **TOM GARLING**, trombone and reedist **ROCKY YERA**. Applause, applause! You bet! And they gave a full-blown, expansive encore to boot.

THE FLUTE WORLD COMES TO EVANSTON

The Chicago Flute Club announces its 2011 Flute Festival. The three-day event, November 11-13 will be held at the Hilton Orrington Hotel in downtown Evanston (1710 N. Orrington Ave.) Renowned guests appearing will include **JAMES WALKER**, studio musician and soloist based in Los Angeles who will headline the opening concert with his impressive jazz ensemble Free Flight. Walker is the former principal flutist of the L.A. Philharmonic, who left the orchestra to pursue a career in jazz and studio work and collaboration with such luminaries as **JOHN WILLIAMS**, **PAUL McCARTNEY** and other stellar artists in both classical and pop music. Also, **MICHAEL PARLOFF**, recently retired principal flutist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra will present a masterclass on opera



Mathieu Dufour

repertoire and a special guest performance will be given by **MATHIEU DUFOUR**, principal flutist

of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. For information contact go to chicagofluteclub.org.

WOODS' CHALLENGE

Trombonist **WILLIE WOODS** decided to challenge himself "to arrange and record some traditional gospel songs with a jazz approach but keeping the spiritual integrity of the songs." He has done just that with a new CD *Feelin' the Spirit*. Samples are included on his impressive website: wwoodsproductions.com. A click on the title in the left pane activates examples of the included songs.



Willie Woods

On Labor Day, Willie played in the orchestra for the "one of a kind" Soul Train 40th Anniversary concert put together by

TOM TOM WASHINGTON for Millennium Park. Washington was the original arranger for "Soul Train".

OPERA ANEW

Cellist and viola da gamba player **CRAIG TROMPETER** has initiated a new (ad)venture: bringing to life a local company to offer "authentic" renewals of "neglected, as well as familiar operas of the 17th and 18th centuries." With foresight and vigor enough to fundraise, establish a board of directors and gather like-minded colleagues, Craig incorporated the not-for-profit Haymarket Opera Company. Chicago Tribune's classical music critic **JOHN von RHEIN** wrote, "Haymarket Opera made its debut with performances of *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, a rarely heard chamber opera from **GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL**'s Italian period." With **JERI-LOU ZIKE** as concertmaster, the company's September opening performances played at Mayne Stage

in Rogers Park. With no let-up in the quest for funds, the troupe will continue its 2011-2012 season in February with two performances of the French Baroque master **MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER**'s "La Descente d'Orphee aux Enfers" ("Orpheus' Descent into the Underworld").

Condolences go to **BRUNO BARTOLETTI** and family on the passing of **ROSANNA BARTOLETTI**, 84, his wife for 58 years. A faithful and constant companion who traveled her husband's operatic touring schedule, Mrs. Bartoletti was last in Chicago in 2006 when Bruno, as artistic director emeritus of Lyric Opera, returned to conduct **VERDI**'s *Il Trovatore*.

INSIGHTS

When New Orleans saxophonist **DONALD HARRISON, JR.** opened **JOE SEGAL**'s 56th annual "August is **CHARLIE PARKER** Month" at Jazz Showcase his quintet comprised of Chicago stars in their own right included guitarist **HENRY JOHNSON**, pianist **WILLIE PICKENS**, bassist **LARRY GRAY** and drummer **ROBERT SHY**—an array of greats for a great annual event which has out-distanced most other jazz venues. Charlie Parker would have been proud....accolades abound for other musicians for other reasons: **BUDDY GUY** was feted for his 75th birthday with almost more adoring fans than his Legends Club could hold. Not even a torrential rain could dampen the ardor in which the man's talent and longevity are held.

Opening his first South Loop club in 1989, he moved to his current space in 2010. Recognizing the bluesman's "immense talent and wide influence" and contributions to the area's entertainment district, an honorary street sign, "Buddy Guy Way" marks the front of the club, another honor added to a shelf full of Grammys and induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2005....and then there was this year's Jazz Fest, pretty much defined by **ORBERT DAVIS** and his Jazz Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble from the **PETRILLO** Band Shell despite power outages that dimmed most of the stage lights. "Somehow they didn't miss a phrase" glowed the critics.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Hyde Park Jazz Society hosted **GEOF BRADFIELD** and his quintet which included bassist **LORIN COHEN**....**FRANK WINKLER**'s Symphonic Pops Orchestra of Chicago made its 23rd Annual Appearance at Prairie Arts Center, a free outdoor concert in Schaumburg....The City Lights Orchestra, featuring 35 performers under the baton of **RICH DANIELS** played the annual Concert in the Park, that's Evergreen Park.... while **PETER POLZAK**'s Trio with **BILL HARRISON** (bass) and **SARAH ALLEN** (drums) backed vocalist **BRUCE HENRY**'s program in the garden at Unity Church of Chicago for more "end-of-summer" musical delights.

EVER WONDER.....

Why "Buick" doesn't rhyme with "quick"? Or why we ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Or how can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same? And why your house will burn up as it burns down? I dunno.



LIFE MEMBER PARTY

Members of the Union for 50, 60, 70 and 75 years will be honored.

Date: Friday, October 21st, 2011

Time: 12:00 Noon

Place: Union Headquarters

656 W. Randolph St., Suite 2W
Chicago, IL



Featuring the music of
Jimmy's Bavarians



Please RSVP by
October 7th, 2011
Call 312-782-0063, ext. 136

Any photos or memorabilia
you care to bring with you
will add to the festivities!



New and Returning Members



By Leo Murphy

We welcome these members to Local 10-208, the Chicago Federation of Musicians. They perform in many musical groups around Chicago including our orchestras, operas, bands, chamber groups, casual groups and soloists. If you meet them on a job, introduce yourself and get to know them.

Sara Sitzer Acct# 56673 (Cello) is originally from St. Louis, MO and a former member of Local 166, Madison WI. Her Bachelor of Music degree is from Boston University College of Fine Arts, and her Masters of Music is from the University of Wisconsin School of Music at Madison. She currently performs with the Elgin Symphony Orchestra and the Seraphic Fire and Firebird Chamber Orchestra. She has performed with the New World Symphony, the Wintergreen Festival Orchestra, the Madison Symphony Orchestra, the Madison Opera Orchestra and the Madison Ballet Orchestra. She is a past winner of the Boston University Concerto Competition. She has received fellowships to the New World Symphony, the Tanglewood Music Festival and the Aspen Music Festival. She is an experienced private instructor and has started the Geshar Music Festival of Emerging Artists in Saint Louis, MO.

**273 E. Chicago St.
Elgin, IL 60120
617-216-4646
sarasitz@gmail.com
www.sarasitzer.com**

Sean O'Leary Acct# 56203 (Drums) is a returning member.
**1839 W. Fulton St., Apt. 2
Chicago, IL 60612
312-608-1126/630-684-6675
oleary.sean.frederic@gmail.com**

Gretchen Sherrell Acct# 55770 (Violin) is a returning member.
**7418 Brookside Dr.
Hanover Park, IL 60133
630-483-6879/847-858-4225
trent@tsherrell.com**

WELCOME!

MEMBERSHIP FEEDBACK

All letters submitted must be signed and e-mailed to tjares@cfm10208.org or mailed to The Chicago Federation of Musicians, 656 W. Randolph St., #2W, Chicago, IL 60661. The Board of Directors reserves the right to determine whether material submitted shall be published, and the right to edit as needed for clarity, length, libelous statements or personal attacks. Opinions are those of the individual writer and not necessarily those of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Federation of Musicians.

AFM LOCAL 10-208 MEMBER NORMAN SCHOER TURNS 100!



AFM Chicago Local 10-208 member Norman Schoer celebrated his 100th Birthday on July 24th, 2011. He has been a member for 61 years, since 1950. He joined The American Federation of Musicians New York Local 802 in 1939, retiring in 2008. Schoer was a member of the viola section of The Grant Park Symphony for 27 years, working in both

the old band shell at the South end of Grant Park and the Petrillo Band Shell, and of Chicago's Lyric Opera for 25 years, retiring at the age of 84.

Although Norman played with many world class performers, one of his fondest memories was when he played with Van Cliburn on his celebrated return visit to Grant Park with attendance exceeding 300,000! Through the years, while in Chicago, Schoer also played for the Ben Arden Orchestra in the Empire Room at the Palmer House, playing for many famous groups like The Letterman. He also played with the Orchestra of Illinois and for

many ballets at the Auditorium Theatre. He was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on July 24, 1911 and moved with his family when he was a young boy to Duluth, Minnesota, where he grew up.



He always had a love of music. He started playing the violin when he was in the 5th grade and played the violin until he was a junior in high school, when he started playing the viola. The reason he started playing the viola is that there were no other students who played the viola and they needed one in the school orchestra, so he was asked to play the viola. He did and then continued throughout his career. At the age of 17, and a junior in High School, he was the youngest member of Joe Priley's Little Symphony Orchestra in Duluth. Schoer went to Juilliard School of Music and then Columbia Teachers College. When he graduated he got a job as a faculty member at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington in the Music Department. After that he played on Broadway in the original production of *Oklahoma!* Norman Schoer lives in the Chicago Area and has enjoyed many years of playing quartets at the homes of fellow musicians, and still enjoys listening to music, going to the Chicago Symphony and reading. The Grant Park Music Festival recently honored him with an introduction at the start of one of evenings concerts to celebrate his time with the symphony and his special 100th birthday. He received a standing ovation!



Bruce Pomahac
Director of Music

15 September 2011

Mr. Norman Schoer
2825 West 99th Place
Evergreen Park, IL 60805

Dear Mr. Schoer,

It is with great happiness that I reach out to you to introduce myself and to send you best regards from the Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization in New York City. Bob Bauchens was in touch with me yesterday and told me that you played in the original orchestra of *OKLAHOMA!*, which opened at the St. James Theatre in New York on March 31st, 1943.

As the Director of Music here at R&H I am currently involved in restoring Robert Russell Bennett's original orchestrations for this score. Working with the manuscripts creates a kind of a bond for me with all of those who came before and contributed to this wonderful music. I knew Jay Blackton (who was the conductor) and I am still in touch with both Joan Roberts (who played Laurie) and Celeste Holm (who played Ado Annie). But it is a special treat for me to be able to write to you today.

I know you have had an illustrious career in the symphonic and operatic worlds of music, and I don't even know if *OKLAHOMA!* even comes up on your radar. But it is still played around the world every day of the year. And I don't think it is ever performed any better than it was by you and by the orchestra that first played and recorded it for the original production. To make that point I am including with this letter a copy of the CD of the original Broadway cast recording. I hope you enjoy it. And from now on, whenever I listen to it I will do so knowing that you are there doing your part to make the music beautiful and eternal.

Thank you for the wonderful contribution you have made to our world.

Yours,

Bruce Pomahac

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IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP MEETING

As a result of an uncertain economy, advances in technology and musical trends, it has become increasingly difficult for many members to secure employment. We have seen a significant decline in work, as evidenced by a decline in the number of contracts being filed on freelance engagements.

We strive to create an environment of participation for our membership so that our members are not deprived of the pension contributions and benefits they deserve.

In an attempt to see how our union can better serve its members, and encourage increased participation through the filing of contracts and payment of pension contributions, we invite and encourage all CFM members to attend an open forum for conversation and debate, which will be held on October 17th at 7:00 PM at the Union Hall:

THE STATE OF OUR PROFESSION What we can do for each other.

Our profession is unique in that each of us has the ability to work as a side musician or as a leader. Therefore, all of us face challenges in finding, maintaining and creating employment opportunities.

We would like to hear from you, the working members, both leaders and side musicians to find out what we can do for each other. We invite you to attend to let us know how you believe the union can better serve you and address what we see as a lack of union participation.

THIS IS ABOUT JOBS, PRESERVING OUR PROFESSION AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE CFM.

Help us review what we are doing NOW and determine what we may do in the FUTURE to ensure that the union can be relevant and of value to you in meeting the challenges you face today and the challenges you may face tomorrow.

JOIN US!

Monday, October 17th, 2011

7:00 PM

CFM Union Hall

656 W. Randolph, #2W in Chicago

RESERVE YOUR SEAT NOW!

Call 312-782-0063 ext. 136



Obituaries

Cleo Elaine Napier 1912-2011

Cleo Elaine Napier, 98, went to be with our Lord on Sunday, July 31, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. She was born in Ruppertown, Tennessee, on August 2, 1912, the youngest child of Pate Christopher and Lula Mae Allen Napier. She moved to Danville with her family when she was three months old. She attended Danville schools. Miss Cleo, as she was called by most people, started her professional life as a jazz musician on the South Side of Chicago, where she had her own band, "Cleo and Her Trio", consisting of trumpeter Johnny Long and guitarist Charlie Norris. She studied music at the Chicago Conservatory of Music and took up playing the organ at the music store, "Lyon and Healy", as the Hammond organ made its debut. Miss Cleo worked all over Chicago and in Wisconsin as a pianist. The big hotels in the Loop would close down at midnight, and then the musicians would come out to the South Side and jam all night long. She jammed with the likes of Gene Krupa, Count Basie, and Ella Fitzgerald.

She had a regular gig playing at the 308 Club and at Squires, which Duke Ellington frequented. When he came into the club, she would give over the piano to Ellington. She played for Billie Holiday and knew Nat King Cole before he became famous, because she worked in the same club as his sister. Miss Cleo's talent is mentioned by Johnnie Board in Dempsey Travis' book, "An Autobiography of Black Jazz." A



copy of the book is in the Library of Congress. Miss Cleo returned to Danville in the early 1960's to help care for her ailing mother. She began playing jazz in Danville's nightclubs and supper clubs, such as the Hour Glass, Holiday Inn and the Club Lamplighter. Once in a while, Bobby Short would sit in. She also worked at Carson Pirie Scott and Head Start. Miss Cleo was a lifetime member of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church. She was the Minister of Music for over 35 years. At one time she directed the Youth Choir and had two generations of children. Miss Cleo played and directed the Men's Chorus with over 20 members for many years, which was stated by Stephen Morris and Robert Norwood. During church services, Miss Cleo played the piano as Stephen Morris played the bass fiddle and Bobby Lillard played the drums. She had her trio during church services. Miss Cleo played for the Chapelaires Choir at Allen Chapel until last year when she became ill. She also played the organ for Leek and Sons Funeral Home for many years. Miss Cleo taught music at her home. It was important to her that her students knew the basics, which was learning their notes in order to read music. Music was her passion and her life. God gave her a talent and she used it to the fullest. She will always be remembered as an "unforgettable" musician. She was a life member of the Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208, and a member of Local 90; American Federation of Musicians. She was also a member of the Bertha Searcy Women's Missionary Society and a Torchlighter for being a member for over 25 years; and an honorary member of the Senior Women's Auxilliary of the Laura Lee Fellowship House. Miss Cleo was the last survivor of her immediate family.

Obituaries

May they rest in peace

Last	First	Instrument	Died	Born	Elected
Abrams	Sandra	Oboe	08/06/11	08/09/37	09/13/90
Garcia	Manuel P.	Bass Violin	09/07/11	12/16/26	09/11/52
Trendler	Robert S.	Piano	07/18/11	05/11/12	12/07/34

Robert Trendler

1912-2011

The maestro who brought music to 'Bozo's Circus'

Chicago baby boomers have lost another symbol of their youth to that big top in the sky. Bob Trendler, the cheerful bandleader of Bozo's Circus whose career spanned 40 years on WGN-Channel 9 and WGN-AM (720), died this week in Palmetto, Florida. He was 99.

To generations of viewers, Trendler's name will always be synonymous with the 13-piece Big Top Band he directed on the venerable children's show from 1961 until his retirement in 1975. Despite a 10-year waiting list for tickets at one time, Tribune Co. gradually downgraded the most popular and successful locally produced children's program in television history before finally canceling it in 2001.

The son of a Viennese prima donna, Trendler was an accomplished pianist who began his career in his hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio. He joined WGN as an arranger and conductor in 1935 during the heyday of live music on radio, and was named musical director of the WGN Orchestra in 1956.

Al Hall, longtime producer and director of Bozo's Circus, recalled why Trendler was the "obvious choice" to become the show's bandleader in The Golden Age of Chicago Children's Television. "The station had Bob under union contract and they had to pay him whether they used him or not," Hall told author Ted Okuda. "So when they came up with Bozo's Circus they decided to use him for that. Oh, his band was great! And Bob himself was a good addition to the show; he played the part of the maestro very well."

Trendler's name surfaced earlier this year when an electric organ used on Bozo's Circus was acquired at auction and donated to the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Although the organ was never part of Trendler's official studio band, its discovery set off a wave of nostalgia for the show and its music.

Trendler is survived by two sons, David and Robert Jr., six grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Chicago Tribune



Club Calendar

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL ORCHESTRA LEADERS

Regular meeting at various locations every third Wednesday of the month. For further information, please contact Brian Patti, (630) 832-9222
www.bandleaders.org

CZECHOSLOVAK-AMERICAN MUSICIANS CLUB

Regular meeting fourth Tuesday of the month, 8 p.m. at VFW Post # 3868.
8844 West Ogden, Brookfield, IL 60513
(708) 485-9670

GERMAN AMERICAN MUSICIANS CLUB

Third Monday of the month. Regular meeting, Mirabell Restaurant, 3454 W. Addison, Chicago, IL, 8 p.m. Send all communications to Mr. Zenon Grodecki, 5024 N. Moody, Chicago, IL 60630 (773) 774-2753

SOCIETY OF ITALIAN AMERICAN MUSICIANS SOCIAL CLUB

Third Monday of the month. General meeting, Superossa Banquet Hall, 4242 N. Central Avenue, Chicago, IL 60634, 8 p.m. Send all communications to John Maggio, 6916 W. Armitage, Chicago, IL 60635
(773) 745-0733

THE KOLE FACTS ASSOCIATION

Third Sunday of the month at 2 p.m. Regular meeting, Washington Park Fieldhouse, 5531 S. King Drive, Room 101, Chicago, IL 60637

POLISH AMERICAN MUSICIANS CLUB

Meetings held every second Wednesday of the month, 8:00 p.m. at A.A.C. Eagles Soccer Club, 5844 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL. Send all communications to Dave Lenkos, President, 4548 N. Mobile, Chicago, IL 60630
(773) 685-5226



CD's For Sale

*Only members in good standing are allowed to list CD's For Sale.

Phyllis Adams, Harp and Monty Adams, Flute

Opera by Request
Universal Peace
 PhyllisAdamsHarp@aol.com
 847-869-6150

Mike Alongi

Freshly Squeezed
 alongimusic@aol.com
 815-399-5112

Ray Bailey

Making Traicks
Tracking the Sly Fox
 cdbaby.com
 Bailey601@sbcglobal.net
 773-450-7880

Jimmy's Bavarians

Swingin Chicago Style
Treasures with Jim Bestman,
 Johnny Frigo, Rusty Jones,
 Annie Ondra, Wayne Roepke,
 and Don White
 Jim Bestman
 630-543-7899

Jack Baron

Jack Baron Quartet Plays the Coach
House featuring Bobby Schiff, Jerry
 Coleman and Brian Sandstrom
 Jacksax31@aol.com
 847-204-8212

Eric "Baron" Behrenfeld

Tiki Cowboys
 tikicowboys.com

Anne Burnell

Blues in the Night
 Mark Burnell
 773-862-2665
 www.burnellmusic.com
 cdbaby.com
 itunes.com

James Callen Trio

In The Tradition
 James Callen
 708-488-8877

Chicago Jazz Philharmonic

Collective Creativity
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Chicago Musicians attending TMA Conference were Paul Dallas; Heather Boehm, TMA Director for Chicago; Art Linsner, TMA President Emeritus; Leo Murphy, TMA Secretary-Treasurer and Tom Mendel, TMA President.

Chicago Theater of the Air: Radio's Largest Productions

By Charles A. Sengstock, Jr.

Chicago played a prominent role in the early days of radio and through most of the 1930s and '40s. It became a key originating point for network shows resulting in the employment of many Chicago musicians. By 1931, Chicago Federation of Musicians members working in radio studios were said to be the highest paid in the United States, receiving between \$120 and \$150 per week, more than their fellow musicians in New York or Los Angeles, according to a show business publication.

One of the major shows originating here—WGN's Chicago Theater of the Air—eventually became the largest radio program produced in the United States. By the mid-1940s the cast and orchestra onstage grew to nearly one hundred. The one-hour weekly show aired from May of 1940 through 1956 and featured abbreviated versions of popular operas, operettas, and fairy tales set to music as well as holiday specials. There had been an earlier show on WGN in the mid-30s also called Chicago Theater of the Air, but it was a broadcast of the Chicago Theater Orchestra playing concerts from the stage of the downtown theater.

The Chicago Theater of the Air cast performed *The Merry Widow*, *Desert Song*, *Carmen*, *I Pagliacci*, *La Boheme*, *The New Moon*, *Naughty Marietta* and many other major musical works over the years. Operettas seemed to be the major source of program material most likely because it was easier to adapt the music and spoken works to the radio format.

The broadcast quickly gained popularity with listeners of the Mutual Broadcasting System, over which it was carried each week. During its first season alone it drew 200,000 letters from listeners all over the country. It became a veritable showcase for operatic singers and a steady source of employment for Chicago musicians and actors.

WGN Music Director Henry Weber and his wife, operatic soprano Marion Claire, were said to have originated the program idea. Weber was ideally suited for the role of music director because of his long experience with the Chicago Civic Opera during the 1920s. He and the WGN staff had to edit some rather lengthy musical works for classical composers to make them fit within the constraints of the one-hour time slot.



Henry Weber, WGN music director, conducting the Chicago Theater of the Air orchestra during a broadcast. The orchestra over time grew to 50 players. (WGN Photo, used with permission. From author's collection)

Marion Claire was the program's resident lead soprano until 1947 when she retired to the role of program producer. The leading tenors and baritones were drawn from opera companies and broadcasting in New York and elsewhere. Among the frequent male leads through the years were James Melton, Igor Gorin Jan Pearce, Thomas L. Thomas, Bruce Foote, and Richard Tucker.

Following Marion Claire's retirement from active performing on the show several singers took the female leads, many for one performance only: Nancy Carr, Virginia Haskins, Penny Perry, Marion Schroeder Levitt, Helen George and Madelaine Chambers.

At first, the show originated from the stage of WGN's new audience studio adjacent to the Tribune Tower on Michigan Avenue. But its growing popularity with listeners wanting to attend the show demanded a larger venue and, in 1943, WGN moved the show to the nearby Medinah Temple.

It was at the Medinah Temple that the show's cast and orchestra expanded in size. The previous cast looked kind of puny on the giant Medinah stage, according to former WGN music director Robert Trendler, who directed the 14-voice chorus that supported the lead singers. The orchestra increased to about forty musicians, later to fifty, according to Trendler.

The Chicago Theater of the Air always had two separate casts, a singing cast and an acting cast that spoke the lines. Some of the popular acting cast members included Olan Soulé, Bret Morrison, Marvin Miller ("The Millionaire"), Hal Perry (later "The Great Gildersleeve") and Johnnie Coons in male roles, Sondra Gair, later of WBEZ, was one of the actresses.

Directing the weekly production was a difficult task assigned at first to William A. Bacher, a veteran radio director and writer, brought in from Hollywood by WGN. Later in the 1940s, Jack LaFrandra joined and assisted in the writing and, later, directing of the show. Trendler called LaFrandra a "genius at writing."

An integral but non-musical part of each program was a short homily or address by Colonel Robert R.

McCormick, owner and publisher of the Chicago Tribune and of WGN. Director Bacher was credited with the idea of adding the Colonel to the weekly broadcast but it is also suggested by author Richard Norton Smith in his book, *The Colonel, The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick*, that Col. McCormick assumed a role in the show from the beginning.

The Colonel's monologues, most often on American history and, in particular military history, frequently ran long necessitating last-minute cuts in the program. Occasionally the program would run short by a few minutes, another and often as challenging a situation was running overtime. To the producer and director's credit, however, the broadcasts seemed always to be brought to a satisfying conclusion, the listening audience totally unaware of any problem at all.

The entire Mutual Broadcasting System carried the show but it never had a sponsor. Some say that Col. McCormick's strong political views discouraged potential advertisers. Others think that the Colonel never intended the show to be sponsored. As a result, it ended up costing WGN about a million dollars a year, the equivalent of multiple millions in today's dollars.

Henry Weber was a child prodigy, who was trained in Vienna and, by 21 years of age, was conducting the Bremen Royal Opera orchestra. Well-known in Europe as a conductor of many of the continent's orchestras, he was recruited in 1924 by the Chicago Civic Opera as conductor of the orchestra. At 23 he was the youngest conductor of an opera orchestra in the world.

Weber remained with the Opera Company for five years. After leaving the Civic Opera, he continued to conduct international orchestras and spent several years at NBC in Chicago before joining WGN in 1934, where he became the station's second director of music.

Weber had met the blond and vivacious soprano Marion Claire while he was in Europe searching for singers for the Chicago Civic Opera. She was described as a breath-taking beauty and, by then, she was well known in Europe's opera houses. Weber and Marion Claire were married in 1929. It was through Weber and Claire's circle of opera performer-friends that The Chicago Theater of the Air was able to attract so many top artists to Chicago.

Bob Trendler also was a prodigy. He had a full scholarship at the College of Music in Cincinnati beginning at age five and made his debut as a pianist at age six. At 13 he was accompanist to his mother,



Bob Trendler was director of the chorus for the duration of the Chicago Theater of the Air program. He also arranged music for several other radio shows of the period and later succeeded Weber as WGN music director. (WGN Photo, used with permission. From author's collection)

a celebrated Viennese prima donna, during a European tour. He left Cincinnati and the College of Music at age 17 to go to New York where he worked as an accompanist to a dance team and other performers.

His experience in radio broadcasting later at Cincinnati's WLW as accompanist and vocal arranger prepared him well for his later move to Chicago, where he worked for several different stations before joining WGN in the early thirties as music

coordinator and supervisor of the arranging staff. In 1940 he became director of the chorus on the Chicago Theater of the Air.

Through the years, The Chicago Theater of the Air became closely associated with Col. McCormick because of his weekly addresses. As mentioned earlier, some feel the program stayed on the air as long as it did because of the Colonel. As if to validate that opinion, the program went off the air in March of 1955, just about one month before the Colonel died. It could also have been a coincidence since television by then was eroding much of the evening prime-time radio audience.

The Chicago Theater of the Air had been a dazzling showcase for operatic and concert singers and, at the same time provided work for hundreds of Chicago's musicians over the fifteen years of its life span. It became a popular Saturday evening program that drew large amounts of mail and thousands of people to the broadcasts at the giant Medinah Temple.

By 1955, however, WGN had its own television channel and was affiliated with the old Dumont network. From that point forward, much of the station's creative efforts were channeled in that direction.

Note: The author wishes to thank the late Robert Trendler and Loren Binford for providing information for this article.



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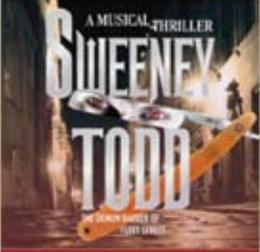


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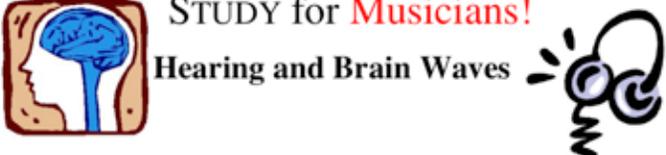
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Make checks payable to the **Musicians Relief Fund**

and mail them to the **Chicago Federation of Musicians**
656 W. Randolph St. #2W
Chicago, IL 60661
Attn: Membership Dept.

TO VIEW THE LIST OF CFM
CONTRIBUTORS, GO TO
CFM10208.COM

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TEMPO FUND

TOTAL: \$2,878.00

TEMPO is the new name for the **LEGISLATIVE ACTION FUND**. It is the AFM's nonpartisan, multi-candidate political action fund that is supported entirely by the voluntary contributions of AFM members. **TEMPO** makes disbursements to congressional candidates of either party who have a demonstrated record of support for professional musicians, issues of concern to its members and the arts in general.

To make a contribution, make your check payable to **TEMPO**

and send it c/o **Chicago Federation of Musicians**
656 W. Randolph St., #2W
Chicago, IL 60661
Attn: Membership Dept.

We will add your name to the list of contributors and forward your check to the AFM.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CFM SCHOLARSHIP FUND

TOTAL: \$2,410.00

The CFM College Scholarship Fund for Music Students has been set up in memory of Leland Baska. This fund helps the CFM continue to offer financial assistance for children of CFM members as well as students of CFM members that are currently working toward a music degree.

Make checks payable to the **CFM Scholarship Fund**

and mail them to the **Chicago Federation of Musicians**
656 W. Randolph St. #2W
Chicago, IL 60661
Attn: Membership Dept.

We will add your name to the list of contributors on our website.

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