

Florence Andrew T-4-84 Part 1. Music Culture of La Porte

Interviewer: Jerrold Gustafson May 17, 1978 Andrew Home 1408 Michigan Avenue,
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Music Culture of LaPorte, Indiana

Mr. Gustafson: An interview with Florence Andrew, May 17, 1978.

Ms. Andrew: Just so I give this to you, but in 1923 the music organization here, the large one was the Civic Music Association. And this was an organization so that the very fine artists could come to LaPorte. Artists of course, which we would not be able to afford and you know and a so that began in 1923 and well I wish I could give you the exact date. It carried through until I would say about the war into the forties. And then it, we couldn't manage it. The plan is to have a drive during the previous year and then we had a very small, we had four concerts a year and each membership was \$5.00. And then we had a leader then who had come well a representative of the company which started this plan, the Civic Music Association. But then the war change in financial things and all, we couldn't afford it any longer but for three years these concerts were financed by the Civic Auditorium and so we did have but you see, then we could, artists could be hired and they knew they were going to be paid but under the other plan you see we had to do it by memberships. Well during those years, which I think is interesting as far as music, the concerts were held at the LaPorte Theater, which is now of course as you know is no longer, it's down, torn down and at that time we, during that time I think we must have had about a thousand members. At least the LaPorte Theater was filled. And we had of course, nationally, internationally known artists here. And a, Mr.

Gustafson: Who were some of those artists? Do you remember?

Andrew: Well I know we had Misha Ellman, violinist. We had Schuman Heinch and we had, let me think here of various ones, I know they were here. And I'm trying to think of a singer that everyone knew very well, Richard Crooks was here. And they were all the very top line artists you know, those years. And so Time Magazine had an article that we were the music center of the United States because of these thousand you know people. Well it was, at that time it seemed a large percentage of concert goers were in LaPorte. Well it was just through this membership you see that gave us this name. But when we had our drive this year we brought this out you know. And so, a well then after those three years the Civic Auditorium then another concern, the Columbia Artists and this is what we're now and we have had ever since then beginning as I said in the late forties and we just have finished our drive for next year. It's still going on with the membership now of course is now \$10.00 and you know there is, of course there's reciprocity with the organizations in St. Joe, Valparaiso, Hammond and a let's see so that they worked it out. Somebody said if you attended all the concerts that are afforded a member you could here all the very best artists and it cost 21 cents, 21 cents a concert you see.

Gustafson: That's a pretty good buy.

Andrew: And so, but I do go occasionally, the Michigan City has 'gad some fine ones. I've not been over to Michigan City for the last, it's cause I

don't drive and my brother in law doesn't like to at night so we haven't been able to do that as much you know but as I give you this previce for this event which has gone down in history or LaPorte, as a part of the community concerts for the year 1935, well no, I'm, I guess I'll have to retract what I've said because we were under Community Concerts in 1935 I know that but we must have just begun that under this new management you see. And I was thinking it was just the war, it must have been at the time of the, I have to correct myself. It must have been at the time of the Depression in the early thirties that we couldn't handle the concerts. I guess that's correct. So, as a part of the Community Concerts Association, that year, one of the members, a Mrs. Chipman who was active here as a vocal teacher and a choir director, she said we could have something that was home talent, so we did have through the interests of certainly the piano tuner, who went every day for two weeks, we had a concert on that day of six piano music and a there were really seven pianos who took part because there was one who was kind of a director but she also played but I do have a good picture of that was taken the night before the event, And a, of all the musical events except for school, that, that's just outstanding. And we've always thought, well, it might be repeated but it never was, it never was. And ah, well Reverend Frohne was here then. He a, yes he was here then and he must have attended it, yes he must have attended it. I didn't become the organist there until the next year, till 36.

Gustafson: What was the church named then? Was it United Church of Christ then?

Andrew: No, it began as St. Paul Evangelical, then through a merger it became St. Paul Evangelical and Reform and then, later it became the St, then another change and it became St. Paul United Church of Christ, and well you probably know that at the time there was some feeling of the cong, the congregation, some of the congregation was, that is who were members of the First Congregational Church and there is one in Michigan City, I guess they all want to join in when they became Evangelical and Reformed, so that there's, as I understand, there are some that of the churches that are still Congregational. They kept their own; you'd have to go over the records to be to be accurate on that. But I know there was feeling at that time, well no I don't want to do that, I want to be a what I am and not a Congregationalist. The a, I knew that Reverend Frohne used to say that the manner of administration was very much the same of you know of Congregational Churches and a what they used there at the church. Well a, I'm trying to think of things that, that was really a very outstanding event and of course the fact that the this two musical groups, the Civic Music and the LaPorte Community Concert Association that we've had concerts that of the finest caliber for the town ever since 1923, which was kind of a record.

Gustafson: What kind of programs would these events involve? What kind of music would be on these?

Andrew: It was purely the fine classic music. We, three, I think we've had three or four that have brought jazz, or related jazz you know and a that's only been, well I would say even the last five years. I've been on the board since the beginning and a, our aim has been to, of course to keep the musical taste up, and a when you fight well, rock, and a, I always say I enjoy all kinds of music, I really do, but a, I don't want to listen to jazz too much. But you'd expect that from a teacher. You know I'm trying to interest them in the very best and I do think people who play jazz, I think they have wonderful skill and a the way these groups that are a, well as you have

probably heard that they the players kind of work so wonderfully in synchronicity and they do it extemporarily a lot of the time you know, and a so I'm admiring of what they do. It's just that, having been, as Reverend Frohne's son used to say to me, well Miss Andrew it's just when you were born, it's because of when you were born. Well, you know, we weren't, we weren't influenced by all this music. When, when I was having piano lessons we didn't hear anything but what was supposed to be good for us. You know that.

Gustafson: How did you become interested in music as a child? What led to your interest in music?

Andrew: Well my father played the violin and my mother played the piano. She was really more of a musician than my father. But a, you see, we had these two remarkable teachers and only two weeks ago, a woman who is writing the life of one of them came to LaPorte to get some information and I was with her for two days. And of course they're mentioned in that 32 history. One was Marie Meyer Tenbrook and one was Hazel Harrison. And Hazel Harrison was black you see. I began my lessons with Marie Meyer. She wasn't Tenbrook then, Marie Meyer, and a man who was born in Germany and came to here, came to LaPorte. I think because of his friendship with one Dr. J. William Meyer, who was, well you know Lee Meyer. It would be through that family, that's Lee Meyer of Michigan City, that a teacher came to LaPorte who's name was Victor Heinze ?????, now maybe you remember that from this history.

Gustafson: No

Andrew: Well, he lived in LaPorte for quite a number of years. In fact, he was the husband of one of my father's cousins, who would have been contemporary with my father. But it was a marriage that didn't last. And a, but he was, he was a fine professor as they called them then you know and Professor Heinze. And a, the woman who came to see me, very interesting black woman her name was Josephine Herald Love and a she is a pianist also. Not doing lots of concertizing but she has a Masters Degree as I remember from Radcliff and they must have known there, some of her associates, that she was interested in research. And as I understand this, the plan for which she's working and came to LaPorte came through a Schlesinger Foundation. Now this is not Arthur of today, but his father and mother. His father's gone but his mother lives. And through that foundation, a, a book had been written of important women in our country. What Mrs. Love is doing is writing from important women who have died between 1925 and 75. And she was asked through her associations from Radcliff, that a, or when she lived in Cambridge anyway, that a, what she was asked what ones she, candidates she would and she said one I would think of would be Hazel Harrison. And a Hazel so, that's how she came. She wanted to know about Hazel Harrison and her father, Mrs. Love's father, had studied piano in Chicago with Victor Heinze who afterwards left LaPorte and went Chicago. Someone told me and I don't know if this is accurate but someone said that he was head of a music school in Chicago called the Cosmopolitan and I think that's reasonably accurate. Anyway, Mrs. Love's father had taught or had studied at Heinze at that time. Than afterwards her father went to Atlanta Georgia and was in the music department of two of the black colleges there. Morehouse and the other one escapes me, but two colleges there and so that there when Hazel Harrison went down to Atlanta to play in concert why this Mrs. Love had her first lesson. She was seven years old. And so of course through that early history you've learned about Marie Meyer and who after married Dr. Tenbrook and those people and

Marie Meyer's brother and we have a picture, a large picture of Otto which I took down and somebody sent me of her brother who was a fine violinist. So they were important in the musical life. Well, Lee Meyer in Michigan City is the grandson see, would be the, lets see, would be the great nephew of Marie and so that, those people were important. Now we had a number of both pianists and violinists who were of abilities but those people were really outstanding you know. And ah it was quite interesting that a Miss Harrison had her first lesson with the organist of the First Presbyterian Church and he was a fine English musician. His name was Richard Pello and Marie Meyer had her first lessons with Mr. Heinze who had come to LaPorte as I say through the friendship of the Meyer's and I think I'm giving this to you all accurately. Then it was through Marie Meyer in 1907, she felt that young people, or older ones too, musicians who had music in their early life and wanted to be with those who were like interest and she thought there should be an organization so there'd be an opportunity for performance for interested audience you know, and so she, with, there were six others. I had the book here to show you, ah somebody the other day. I'll find it for you cause I know it's in this, in these papers. She founded what was called the LaPorte Amateur Musical Club. It's now in its 71st year. Probably one of the oldest organizations except for the Women's Literary in LaPorte, as you know, which has just had its hundredth birthday. And ah so that organization has continued. That's the reason I have two pianos here. Through the years that, well the club was very active, it is active now but of course with so many people having extra work in order to live, you know, well it's been a little different. But we have an enthusiastic group. But in the earlier years, the supervisor, the elementary supervisor in school here, her name was Mrs. Frank Water, and she thought we should have a piano so that's how we bought a piano and that's one of the pianos that was here. The one at the east here and we moved around from various places, the Methodist Church parlor, we went to the annex of the school, and then it came about the time my father had passed, so I said I don't know whether I'm going to remain in the family home or not but they can come here. So I had regular meetings, the monthly meetings here for a number of years. But it was too much for me, with teaching and a church position and all. But the piano stayed and I don't feel quite right about that but a, I talked to one of our other musicians. You know we do have one really very capable composer, Grace Kenney Flooring. Do you know about her?

Gustafson: No

Andrew: Well, she is the organist of the First Baptist Church. Her father was pastor in our state of the Baptist Church and also here as was her uncle. And a there is very great music in the family and Grace has a number of things that have been published. And she

Gustafson: Was she, at one time was she a music instructor at the schools?

Andrew: That's right, you may, well, you probably had her.

Gustafson: Sure

Andrew: But were you at, now she was in the county first. Out at

Gustafson: I think it probably would have been elementary school.

Andrew: She was at Crichfield, at first I think she did those schools and then she was the elementary supervisor. And a very able person. She has a master's degree from the American Conservatory in Chicago, and then she has an Honorary Degree from Oakland I think it's either Oakland Univers, Oakland College or they're connected with Franklin, that's a college too. She has an Honorary Degree. I think it's from the Oakland. That I'm not certain of but I know she has an honorary degree. And a she does know teaching. She simply devotes all of her life to the music work in the schools.

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Andrew: Wouldn't have my, well I knew you must be, you wouldn't have had my sister, no because she's been retired a, she's been retired fourteen years.

Gustafson: No, that was before my time then.

Andrew: She's, well she's, they were married forty years, in 38, but Ruth was 80, she was born in 97, so she was always one year, she was 80 and she taught one more year than she, or according to her birthday I guess she taught until 60, yes 66. She taught until she was 66, so she's been retired that many years. She was, as I said she was 80 this year, in 77. I don't know what other special events.

Gustafson: I have a question. How did you decide to go about teaching music then? What prompted that decision?

Andrew: Well that's an interesting question. My, I guess with me, I just like playing the piano. I enjoy music, I really didn't think of, and I really didn't think of it as so many young people now in high school they know a little bit what they're going to. Now my sister did know. She thought she wanted to teach mathematics. Well, really her greatest enthusiasm came in teaching piano, or no, in English and math. She, well she had a number of interesting English courses at Smith College where she graduated but math was her, she's always said well math was her major and I think botany, which she never taught at all was a minor. And, but I just knew I liked to play and ah I think it was true of others. Of you know, pupils of Hazel Harrison because I had lessons with Marie for just one year than I think she went to Germany to have further study and so then I was with Hazel until I went off to school. But, I really never thought about what I would do but did begin teaching quite early you know. It seemed to be the thing to do I guess you know.

Gustafson: Who were some of your more outstanding pupils? We talked a little bit about Reverend Frohne and his interest in music here. Did you ever instruct his son Victor Frohne?

Andrew: I taught both the boys, but Victor and Vincent. But of course Vincent was the, is the distinguished one. I taught him until he attended DePaul. And a I would say that I have had three students that have been very outstanding. One is Vincent, probably is the most outstanding because you see has a Doctor's Degree. First he was graduated from DePaul. Then he went to Eastman and he has his Doctors degree from Eastman he has his doctors degree. And then he received the Pri De Rome????? in for three years for composition and

coarse that's quite a plume you know and he is know, he is now teaching at the University Of Tulsa. It's a Presbyterian College I am told.

Gustafson: He's the head of the department there isn't he?

Andrew: Yes, yes he is. And then I had another student from that church. His name is Wedow. Gary Wedow. Now of course he would have been graduated let's see, ten years ago. It's a, he has done very well. He was graduated Indiana University Music School after he left me and then he had an opportunity, well through to do some summer work at Cape Cod and through acquaintances there why he went to Boston and was in a group at the, he did both singing and playing at the Sheraton Boston Hotel for a number of years. And then, since he knew his forte was accompanying, then he entered the New England Conservatory of Music, which strangely enough I had attended way back in 1915. And he entered there and received his degree and a master's degree in accompanying you see and he also became, which I am pleased a member of Phi Kappa Lamda. Now that's the music fraternity, which is like Phi Beta Kappa. You probably know that. And the Alpha Chapter of that was in 1919, the year I was at Northwestern. Of course I was just a sophomore that year, but it's kind of nice to know was there when that began. It was very interesting this I don't know if there's any, it's just pure conversation but there's a young woman who lives down in the next block. I had she's lived here seven years. Well, I had not become acquainted with her until two weeks ago. She wanted some information about music in LaPorte and she also wanted to know if we had certain the music club had symbols or if the any I knew of any other symbols such as well you know for Little Theater it's comedy and tragedy and well she wanted to know about things of that sort and she is having her graduation this year from Northwestern and well I don't know. I know of friends but she didn't have piano lessons and I just never had come in contact with her. And as she told me as part of her degree requirements she is making a mural on the senior citizens building. The old fire station you know and well she wanted to in some way correlate music symbols of some kind. I don't know just how, I couldn't give her anything except the Amateur Music Club at 50 years did to the founders and there were only two living at that time. Had little you know, little pins but this wasn't something every member had you know. And so I didn't feel like I really give her much help. Now Little Theater, you probably know I was the first president of Little Theater and that was 53 years ago. I could tell her about that you know. About those symbols but everybody knows. But well that's to be one of the things and there is a course at Northwestern, I didn't know it but I just got the Northwestern News and it's called, it's called Coach, American I've got to find it before I can give you the actual American Culture, and that's the name of the course because it tells about in this daily that 22 year old American Culture major. And she told me all about this course. So it's something you see that combines all of these arts. One summer when I was at Northwestern, I think because I was there for about four summers, I think in about 1940 they had a course which was entitled Comparative Art. And we had an excellent professor who was from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and for the summer. Well it combined the various arts

you know. We had to know what was going on, paintings, sculpture, besides music, political science, architecture and so I suppose this is similar.

Gustafson: I've got about fifteen minutes of tape left. Would you like to play something right now, can we set that up.

Andrew: All right.

Gustafson: Thank you that should maybe??????????

Miss Andrew then plays a Schubert Arabesque for Jerrold Gustafson

Andrew: That's the end of it. And I like to play that. I used to play it for an offering for the Sunday School at St. Paul's Church. But I should have practiced before this, but that's a little bit but I wouldn't want them to hear all of that and I'd like you to hear the record by Horowitz which I was practicing when I was going to do it for the club.

Gustafson: That's Schuman Arabesque?

Andrew: Schuman Arabesque, and I'd turn it on and then I'd listen to Horowitz and then I'd try and oh. It's one of my favorites. It certainly is.

Miss Andrew plays again.

Andrew: Should I go on?

Gustafson: Sure

Miss Andrew plays again

Andrew: Now that last part, that was good. I don't, I wouldn't want anybody to hear I think I let, how can you erase some of, so I that I could play just the first part. I wouldn't feel, I wouldn't want anybody to hear. I have the record by Horowitz so I guess I know. And, so I'd be glad to have that first part, can you, in fact I'd like to do it over. But can you, will that can you erase that off and let me

Gustafson: I can take it back right now if you'd like.

Andrew: What?

Gustafson: I can take it back right now if you'd

Andrew: Take it right back

end of tape