

Deep River Symphony Orchestra

•A Brief History

Part 1

The IMA

•The First Fifteen Years

In the Deep River Digest for 22 November 1952 a notice- a group of ten amateur musicians proposed to form the Deep River Instrumental Music Association. Anyone with the slightest interest, expert to complete beginner, age 9 to 99, was urged to sign up.

By April of 1953, the IMA was holding regular weekly rehearsals under the baton of Fred Glendinning, who was also organist and choir director at the Community Church.

The nearest approach to a public concert in 1953 was a demonstration of instruments at an open rehearsal in December,

aimed at recruiting more members. Of course, during this early period, many of the IMA's regular players were in demand to accompany the numerous performances of a very active Choral Group who were putting on Gilbert and Sullivan, Messiah and varied choral concerts.

Finally, the IMA decided it was ready to perform in public, and a "Children's Concert" was announced for May 1955. Unfortunately, the RCAF Concert Band had been booked for the same week, and the "First IMA Concert Ever" had to be put off until December. Or was it December 1956? Unfortunately both the IMA's records and those of the NRT are missing for that period.

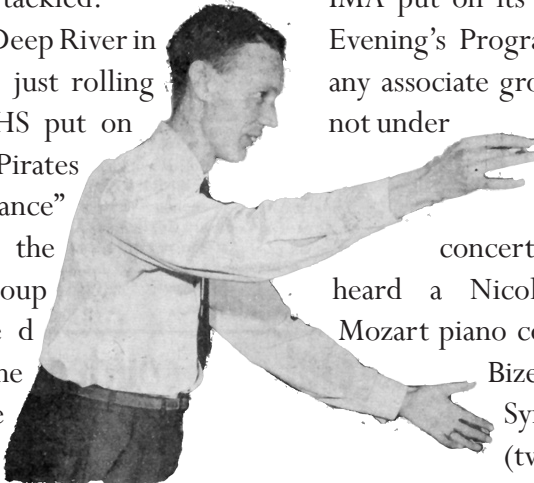
However, we do know that the Second Annual Children's Concert took place on 26 Jan. 1957, under the baton of the IMA's second conductor Alex. Moore. The program included items by Verdi, Albeniz, Weinburger, Strauss, Vaughan Williams and Mozart. That May, the IMA performed Strauss Waltzes at the Fourth



Annual Spring Ball.

Newly aroused interest among potential members had the IMA appealing for instruments in the NRT of 17 September 1958. The Third Annual Children's Concert in December 1958 brought forth the first "Argus" critique. "The orchestra carried out its duties in a workmanlike fashion". The audience enjoyed the performance of "Peter and the Wolf", narrated by Jean Simpson, and reacted to the humour of the single movement of Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony that the orchestra tackled.

Music in Deep River in 1959 was just rolling along. MHS put on "The Pirates of Penzance" in April, the Choral Group joined with the Pembroke



Community Choir in Haydn's "Creation" in May, and Al Bromley headed a committee to plan a new auditorium. The IMA staged its Fourth Children's Concert in December, with

Gounod, Frescobaldi, and Morton Gould, and Nancy James was soloist in the finale of Mozart's Horn Concerto, K.447. Argus seemed most impressed by the fact that one member of the violin section had actually made his own instrument!

Confidence was burgeoning. In 1961 the IMA joined with the Choral Group for a joint concert in January, with the Mackenzie High School Orchestra in April, and with the Choral Group again in December. But in Spring 1962, to mark its Tenth anniversary, the IMA put on its "First Complete Evening's Program", unaided by any associate group and not under

the guise of a children's concert. The audience heard a Nicolai overture, a Mozart piano concerto, Strauss, Bizet and Haydn's Symphony No. 88 (two movements).

After triumph came disaster. Sadly, that summer the orchestra's music director, and guiding spirit, Alex. Moore, was drowned in a canoe accident.

To open the new season in the Fall of 1962, a musician from

Pembroke, Horst Thueman was engaged as conductor. Horst introduced members of the Canadian Armed Forces Central Band from Camp Petawawa as soloists and to augment the local players. The IMA settled into a routine of two concerts each season, in winter and in spring. Each concert featured a symphony, and/or a concerto and some popular filler pieces.

In 1964, Brian Williams (seen in action on the facing page), from CFB Petawawa, replaced Horst Thuemen, and with Brian's arrival, the Central Armed Forces Band became a noted force within the IMA. Brian was able to assemble a children's orchestra to be known as the Junior IMA, the IMA brought in out-of-town musicians to conduct workshops, Mary Moore instituted the A.M. Moore Memorial awards for students, and the IMA began its insidious pressure on the local School Board to inaugurate a music program in Mackenzie High School. A fund was set up to purchase instruments for beginners, but again the School Board was reluctant to contribute.

The first Soiree was held in

November 1965. The soirees were conceived as a showcase for the more skilled members of the orchestra, performing solos and in small chamber groups, along with local expert vocalists. Proceeds were presented to OXFAM.

April 1966 came in with a BANG, when the IMA acquired its first pair of tympani. The School Board was now subjected to an onslaught in the pages of the NRT, from Argus, from Raven, from Phil Anderson reporting on the Ontario Music Conference, from Professor Ezra Schabas – all demanding that the School Board institute music programs in its schools. The Town and the DRCA organized a Summer School of the Arts, with visiting experts in Ballet, Creative Drama and Instrumental Music.

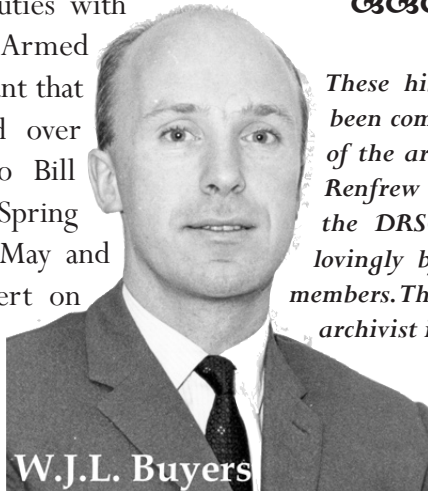
The Orchestra now began to benefit noticeably from the influx of European post-doctoral fellows and their wives, many of them skilled musicians. In fact it was rumoured that the first question on the application form for a PDF was not related to his scientific specialty, but asked "Do you or your spouse play an orchestral instrument?"

The IMA's principal contribution to the Centennial year, 1967, was a joint performance of Haydn's "Creation" with the Choral Group and professional soloists, on 25 February. This concert turned out to be Brian Williams' last with the IMA. He conducted a very successful Junior Music Club concert on 20 May, but his centennial duties with the Central Armed Forces Band meant that he had to hand over the orchestra to Bill Buyers for the Spring Concert on 13 May and the Youth Concert on 15 May. Later on in the year, the Federal government added up the cost of shipping the Band to Ottawa from Petawawa every time a foreign dignitary made a centennial visit to Ottawa, and decided to leave the Band in Ottawa for good, and the IMA lost its conductor and several of its more professional players. However, by this time, the IMA was in good shape. Bill Buyers took up the conductor's baton in earnest and the holes in the

principals' desks were soon filled by post-doctoral fellows. The 1967 year closed with a rousing performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah", and Deep River was renowned province-wide as the smallest community with its own fully-fledged symphony orchestra.



These historical notes have been compiled with the help of the archives of the North Renfrew Times and from the DRSO Scrapbooks kept lovingly by successive DRSO members. The current scrapbook archivist is Arden Okazaki.



W.J.L. Buyers

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p.2
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Further episodes of this story will appear in successive concert programs this season.