



AMICA International Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association Honor Roll

IN MEMORIAM

Honorary Member Doug Roe - By Dorothy Bromage

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DOUG ROE, recording artist and arranger for QRS, became an Honorary Member in 1976. Between then and 1980, somehow the term "deceased" was placed beside his name in the AMICA Directory's list of Honorary Members. When Doug discovered this, he good naturedly brought to the attention of AMICA that he was very much alive. Now, however, as of January 9, 1994, Doug has actually passed away, as reported by his wife Dorothy. She said on that day he was at home, in his favorite chair, and he just put his head back and entered his final rest.



It was Bob Berkman of QRS who, in August 1980, straightened out AMICA with the following letter (excerpted) to me as Honorary Member Chairman.

"When Doug Roe saw that he was listed as a 'deceased' Honorary AMICAn in the Membership Directory, he remarked, 'News of my death is greatly exaggerated!' Doug was born in 1903, just three years after the founding of

QRS. His distinguished career as a musician includes fifteen years as pianist/arranger for the Jan Garber Orchestra with which he performed on radio, as well as in films and on records. The performers whom he knew (and knew

him) included some 'giants' of the entertainment industry."

"In 1966, at the age of 63, Doug gave up playing cocktail piano five nights a week and entered semi-retirement by joining us as a part-time arranger. Except for a brief hiatus after a mild heart attack, he has continued to work three

days a week and is usually the first person in the factory-arriving at 6:00 a.m. and leaving at 2:30 p.m. His duties these days are varied, but he still turns out rolls occasionally. He's currently working at the age of 76 on several Japanese songs for one of our overseas accounts. In lieu of new rolls, he turns out the cloth stencils required to print lyrics on the rolls; at this craft he is undoubtedly the world's leading expert."

Southern California AMICA members who were around in the fall of 1980, will recall when Doug and Dorothy came on a visit to the state. The Niagara Gazette reported: "Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Roe were recently honored at a reception while on vacation in California. The Southern California Chapter of the Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association, of which Roe is an Honorary Member, held the reception at the Francis Cherney home in Cypress. While in California, the Roe's were house guests of Mr. and Mrs. George Fortier, also of Cypress. Roe and Fortier played in the Jan Garber Orchestra during the big band era of the 1930s and 40s. Roe is an arranger and recording artist for QRS Music Rolls, Inc., Buffalo."



AMICA members with back issues may check an article about the reception that begins on page one of the Jan/Feb 1981 issue of the Bulletin. The article by Bill Toeppe includes some pictures. Also, in the September 1975 Bulletin, people may read about Doug Roe providing piano entertainment (along with Ruth Bingaman Smith and Ursula Dietrich Hollinshead) when the Buffalo AMICA Convention held a banquet at the Statler Hilton Hotel.

Reminiscences are interesting. Intermezzo, publication of the Chicago Federation of Musicians reported in November 1984 that the editors had requested thoughts about the early days of the business, and Doug had replied.

"Douglas Roe's letter from Lewiston, New York, was filled with reminiscences of Chicago since 1933 when he was with Jan Garber at the Trianon Ballroom at 63rd and Cottage Grove. 'Shad,' as he was then nicknamed, was pianist-arranger and even had to work the evening of the day he was married on Valentine's Day, 1934. His bride sat with the rest of the wedding party in the balcony, and as Jan Garber announced their marriage, the crowd of dancers gave them a big ovation."

In a letter from Doug, also November 1984, Doug said he still keeps busy tuning pianos and that he does all the pianos at the Convention Center in Niagara Falls, New York, where lots of celebrities appear. By the spring of 1989, when Doug answered the invitation to come to the AMICA Boston 1989 Convention, he was sorry to have to decline. Walking any distance, he wrote, was difficult because of arthritis in his hip. And what about the (very patient) lady he married-in the same letter, he said, "I am now 85, and I Don't get around much anymore.' Dorothy will be 79 in August, but she is very active and takes such good care of me. She goes out walking every day and is a volunteer in many different activities, Chairman of the Red Cross Volunteers at Mt. St. Mary's Hospital here and very active in our church. She is really remarkable. People think she is about 60."

Well, to Dorothy, on behalf of all AMICA members, you have our sympathy. You are strong to face any rough times and will have many wonderful memories.

Anyone who wishes to write to Dorothy Roe may do so at 325 South 7th Street, Apt. 8, Lewiston, New York 14092.