



AMICA International

Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

Honor Roll

New Honorary Member Frances Hall Ballard

by Emmett M. Ford
From the AMICA, Oct 1982

Frances Hall, Duo-Art piano roll artist, concert pianist and teacher was born in Erie, Pennsylvania. Her music study began at the age of five and later on with a scholarship she became a student of Ernest Hutchenson at the Julliard School of Music. Instruction was also from Rubin Goldmark and Eduard Kilenyi in harmony, theory and composition. Later there was instruction from Howard Brockway.

Her debut was in 1920 in her home town when she played the Rubinstein piano concerto with the touring New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Josef Stransky. The New York debut was in Aeolian Hall, October 26, 1922. Many recitals were in Town Hall, between the years of 1926 and 1940. She made tours in the U.S., Holland and Germany.

On June 4, 1932 she married the pianist and teacher, Rudolph Gruen in the Riverside Church. Mr. Paul Althouse sang Mr. Gruen's song, "Vision." The couple gave duo-piano recitals weekly over radio station WNBC from 1930 to 1936. A son (1) was born who now lives in France as an international lawyer with the French Foreign Ministry. The couple were divorced in 1941 and in 1946 she married Professor Lyman Ballard, a Naval architect. His death was in 1975.

Mrs. Ballard was soloist with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra in the summers of 1941 and 1943 (2). She gave duo-piano recitals with Jerome Rappaport.

Mrs. Ballard retired May, 1981 after teaching for 47 years at the Manhattan School of Music. She continues to do a small amount of teaching to advanced pianists in her home.

There were two compositions of merit: "A Christmas Anthem" was published by Theodore Presser & Company and performed many times by the Riverside Church Choir and other church choirs. An anthem, "The Lamb and Jesus Slept" was published under the name of Frances Hall.

Mrs Ballard tells of the Duo-Art piano rolls as follows. "I do recall the recording sessions for Duo-Art. I was not entirely pleased with the rolls due to their mechanical qualities which robbed them of style and color."

(1) Legally changed his name from Gruen to Ballard.

(2) Played the Beethoven piano concertos Nos. III and IV.

(Note: My sincere thanks and appreciation to Mrs. Ballard for her help in preparing this sketch.)

Frances Hall Ballard Receives Degree

By Emmett M. Ford - The AMICA Sept/Oct 1988

The sixty-second commencement of the Manhattan School of Music was Sunday, May Fifteenth, Nineteen Hundred Eighty-eight, 2 p.m. in the John C. Borden Auditorium, 120 Claremont Avenue, New York City, Frances Hall Ballard, Honorary Member of AMICA* was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Music, Honoris Causa.

This is a great honor for Mrs. Ballard to receive, at the age of eighty-nine, after nearly fifty years of teaching.

She was a favorite student of Ernest Hutcheson and made her debut as a pianist in New York City, 1922. A dedicated career as a pianist took her on tours of Europe and the U.S. She was involved in a series of radio programs on NBC network, first in duo-piano with Rudolph Gruen + and then Jerome Rappaport.

In gratitude for her teaching and interest in young students the Frances Hall Ballard Library was so named in her honor.



Her husband died in 1975 and a son and his family live in France.

* Ref. AMICA Bulletin Aug/Sept., 1982

+ first husband and divorced. Mr. Greun made
piano rolls.

Photograph by Joyce Culver, courtesy of Carole Schaffer of Manhattan School of Music.