



# AMICA International

## Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

### Honor Roll

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JAN CHIAPUSSO

By Emmett M. Ford

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Jan Chiapusso, an Ampico artist, concert pianist, lecturer, author and instructor, was born in Java (Dutch West Indies) of Italian and Dutch parentage in 1890. His early education was in the city of Hymegen, Holland. At the age of seventeen he entered the Conservatory of Cologne. Later his studies were with Frederick Lamond and the great French pianist and teacher, Raoul Pugno. In 1911 he won the MUSICAL PRIZE in Paris. Among the contestants were individuals who I later became famous pianists, including Ethel Leginska, Schramm and others. Judges in the contest were Alfred Cortot, Harold Bauer, Isadore Phillip and Raoul Pugno.

In 1916 he came to America where he successfully concertized and taught in a college in Rome, Georgia. In 1927 he returned to Europe to concertize in the large cities. Upon his return to America he was an instructor of piano at the Bush Conservatory in Chicago and the University of Chicago.

In 1924 he became Professor of Piano and Musicology at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, for twenty-six years. After his retirement in 1960, he toured in concert and gave lectures.

Mr. Chiapusso was an authority on the works of Bach and wrote a book entitled "Bach's World", published by the Indiana University Press in 1969. The book brought wide acclaim from musicians for its valuable contents.

My first hearing of Mr. Chiapusso's playing was when he was presented by the Friends University Department of Music in a guest recital in the Alumni Auditorium, Friday, October 23, 1964. A friend of mine and an excellent local piano instructor, Floyd Beebe, told me of Mr. Chiapusso's forthcoming recital. Mr. Stanley Levy (brother of Henoit Levy, a Welte artist) had spoken highly of Mr. Chiapusso's playing and recommended Mr. Beebe to hear him. Mr. Beebe asked me to go with him to the recital and I still remember Mr. Chiapusso's playing; a big bold tone, never harsh, and an excellent control.

It wasn't until the fall of 1966 when I met Mr. Chiapusso. Mrs. Levy, wife of Stanley Levy (a teacher of mine for two years) telephoned me to be a guest for dinner at her home on a Sunday. The Sunday dinners were followed by guests going into her piano studio to hear students and others play the grand pianos. Mr. Chiapusso was to be the guest of honor that day. Mr. Chiapusso was teaching, and lecturing as an artist in residence at Friends University that season. Since Mr. Chiapusso didn't have a car, I offered to drive him to Mrs. Levy's home. I recall his apartment was filled with books, stacks of music, photographs of famous pianists whom he had known and a huge Steinway grand piano.

Mr. Chiapusso was a man who had traveled all over the world, read constantly and had met many prominent men and women in the musical world. He was not for small-talk, but if one seriously started a conversation, he would talk of the works of Chopin, Liszt, Beethoven and above all, his principal interest, Bach and his works. He loved to play Bach's music and stressed the importance of the music to piano students.

During his year's teaching at Friends University he was required to give a Faculty Recital. It became a terrible experience for him; his mind and fingers failed him in one selection, but he managed to get through the program. Later at one of Mrs. Levy's famous and enjoyable dinners and musical gatherings, he stated that he would never play again in public and that he should never have attempted to play the recital. There was no way to console him; he knew his mind and fingers had told him he must sensibly bow out of the concert world.

Mr. Chiapusso passed away August 21, 1969, at the age of 79 in Lawrence, Kansas. His wife, Beulah, had passed away several years before and there were no children.

According to my 1925 edition of the Ampico catalog, three Ampico rolls are listed. Recently, I saw that he had made the Etude Op 25 No. 10 Chopin on Ampico 64613. He may have made other rolls after the 1925 printing of the catalog.