

EDWARD B. MOOGK

15 July 1914, Weston, Ont. - 18 December 1979, London, Ont.

Obituary and Personal Reminiscences

On 18 December of last year the "grand old man" of Canadian recorded sound research and collecting, Edward B. Moogk, died in London, Ontario, the city of which he was most fond and to which he chose to move upon his retirement only a few short months before in June 1979. His death be-  
leaves not only his close and beloved family but also saddens a wide circle of radio fans who remember his long-running radio show (1945-1970) "Roll Back the Years" recalling an earlier era in recorded sound, a programme which he hosted using the name Ed Manning and which became a CBC network feature in 1950.

One of his achievements for which Ed will long be remembered is the founding and development of the National Library's Recorded Sound Collection. Ed came into his position as head of this collection in an interesting manner that reflected his dynamic concern for his field of interest, his initiative, and the singular force of persuasion which he could exert by dint of his personality and prestige. Being aware that the Centennial Commission was seeking projects to fund to celebrate the centennial of Canadian Confederation, Ed on 6 August 1964 presented to this commission the idea of forming a collection of sound recordings of Canadian content (composers, lyricists, arrangers, performers, topics, etc.) illustrating our country's musical heritage. After the centennial celebrations a home for the collection so gathered, much of it from Ed's personal library, would be provided in a federal institution. Eventually the National Library of Canada accepted this addition to its collecting mandate, the collection of recordings, to which Mr. Moogk had continued to add, becoming part of the Music Division, Ed being appointed the first collection head of the National Library's Recorded Sound Collection in that division, in which capacity he continued to build up the rich retrospective holdings of a national collection which he had launched so auspiciously.

Ed's long years of experience in discography, collecting, broadcasting, and work in the record business, as well as his personal acquaintance with many surviving artists and entrepreneurs of the pioneer days of the gramophone, combined with the opportunities afforded him by his position at the National Library and the help of its staff, enabled him to document the Canadian record industry and its recorded output so outstandingly in his book Roll Back the Years/En remontant les annes which the National Library published in 1975 in magnificently produced English and French editions, the English text, obviously, named after his famous radio show. The 1975 book documents Canada's recorded heritage to 1930, and only his premature death halted progress toward completion of a companion volume to complete the historical and

discographical account through the end of the 78 r.p.m. era.

Mr. Moogk, a gallant gentleman of "the old school," worked at the National Library from 1972 to 1979. During those years he earned the esteem and affection of his colleagues and the Library's regular patrons. He knew personally nearly all the important Canadian and American researchers in recorded sound, especially those involved in label and corporate research and jazz/swing discography. His warm personality and provision of substantial research aid and access to his phenomenal memory concerning all matters relating to recorded sound endeared him to this confraternity. He was almost a father figure to his many friends in the Montreal and Toronto based groups comprising the Canadian Collectors' Congress and in the Association for Recorded Sound Collections, who justly regarded him as a pioneer in his field as well as a good friend.

Ed's musical and collecting interests were as broad as his achievements. He was a superb dance band musician in his younger years. His playing as a drummer is documented on a recorded swing anthology which Ross Brethour produced a couple of years ago. At a Canadian Collectors' Congress annual meeting Brethour played the segment of this disc featuring the dance band of which Ed was a member between 1940-1942, the anthology being "hot off the presses" and thus new to those present, during a mischievous "guess who?" musical quiz. Asked to identify the "mystery drummer" of the band, the astute and well informed attendees desperately guessed celebrities from George Wettling to Gene Krupa--the playing was that good--and consternation reigned when Brethour revealed to all assembled that Ed Moogk, sitting in their midst, was the drummer. Such a grin on Ed's face, such a chuckle! However, Ed's tastes were broad and well informed. He loved most kinds of music, from jazz, to classics, to the old "heart songs" and much in between, even if, as could be expected of a man of his years, he did not exactly jump up and boogie to the latest CanCon disco hits. He had special enthusiasms, like any true collector, for certain types of recordings, such as the special niche in his affections for records of Canadian school choirs, band, etc., which for him were, in his own words, "people music." Of course, the National Library avidly continues to collect these and other amateur recordings. On the other hand, although opera was not the focus of his collecting interests, he had developed through the years an outstanding collection of 78 r.p.m. operatic discs, especially of unusually rare ones. In the case of opera, as in other musical genres and styles, he certainly knew what was the most praiseworthy and valuable in this area, as in others. I was lucky enough to be offered my choice of those records not needed for the National Library's collection, which he was disposing of before moving back to London, Ontario, and I purchased thus many fine and rare records which I might otherwise have despaired of ever finding for my personal collection. Ed was profoundly well informed of even the few types of music he disliked, a real collecting "pro".

As a musician, collector, researcher, discographer, broadcaster, writer, and library collection builder, Ed Moogk led a full and rewarding

life in music. Just as it would be impossible to detail in the space available here his myriad activities and accomplishments before his years at the National Library, so it would be equally impossible to enumerate the exhibitions he mounted, the speeches he delivered, his many research projects, and his many other pursuits during his years in Ottawa and even in his brief retirement. His personal life was enviably tranquil and rewarding, shared with his incomparably warm and loyal wife Edith and their genial family. This close and faithful family was at hand all through Ed's difficult final illness and present in force at the moving and touchingly appropriate memorial service at Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church, London, Ontario, along with many of Ed's friends and colleagues from the many fields of musical endeavour which he so successfully pursued and which the service so poignantly summarized. A memorial fund to honour Ed Moogk is being established at the National Library. The Edward B. Moogk Memorial Fund will be used to purchase Canadian sound recordings and materials relating to recorded sound for the Music Division of the National Library. Any contributions are welcome and may be sent to Gerald Parker, Music Division, National Library of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N4. ARSC members may also be pleased to know that the National Library of Canada has just reprinted the English edition of Ed's book Roll Back the Years (the French edition never having gone out-of-print and thus available in the original printing). Copies of the book may be obtained for \$14.95 (Canada) or \$17.95 (U.S. and other foreign), the prices in Canadian dollars, by sending a cheque or money order with a request to the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, Hull, P.Q. K1A 0S9; please cite the order number: SN3-37/1975.

C. Gerald Parker