

ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck
City Historian

Vol. LVIII

Fall, 1996

No. 4

THE EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

by Vincent A. Lenti





Howard Hanson, the second director of the Eastman School of Music, plays piano for visiting foreign students. (Local History Division, Rochester Public Library)

COVER: The opening of the Eastman Theatre was anxiously awaited by the community that had watched it rise floor by floor. "The Prisoner of Zenda" attracted hundreds of patrons when it opened at the Theatre. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

ROCHESTER HISTORY, published quarterly by Rochester Public Library. Address correspondence to City Historian, Rochester Public Library, 115 South Avenue, Rochester, NY 14604.

Subscriptions to the quarterly Rochester History are \$6.00 per year by mail, \$4.00 per year to people over 55 years of age and to non-profit institutions and libraries outside of Monroe County, \$3.60 per year each for orders of 50 or more copies. Foreign subscriptions are \$10.00.

© ROCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY 1996 US ISSN 0035-7413

"...A school of music of the highest standard..."

The rich musical life which has always been such a characteristic of Rochester made it perhaps inevitable that the city should be a the location of a prominent music school. However, Rochester's earliest music schools, including several in the nineteenth century, were schools in name only. In fact they were simply private teaching studios offering specialized music instruction. The real history of music schools in Rochester doesn't begin until 1906 when John D. Beall, a well-known voice teacher from the Ithaca Conservatory, started commuting to Rochester to give lessons. The following year, he opened the Rochester School of Music occupying rooms in a building on the corner of South Clinton and Court Streets. From Ithaca Beall also brought W. Grant Egbert to teach violin and Sophie Fernau to teach piano. He soon moved his school to new facilities in the Cornwall Building on Main Street, where it had a faculty of over one dozen teachers. Beall was able to offer instruction in piano, voice, violin, organ, elocution, Italian, German, and physical culture, as well as courses in solfege, harmony, and theory. In December 1907, however, competition for Beall's School arose with the incorporation of the Rochester Conservatory of Music. The charter members of this new endeavor were Floyd Spencer, H.C. Saehlenlow, and Edith Compton who later became Mrs. Spencer. The following March, the Beall School became what was then politely described as "financial embarrassed", and its assets were purchased by the new Rochester Conservatory, which also paid off Beall's debts. The Conservatory then increased its capital stock from \$10,000 to \$75,000 and engaged Beall as musical director. It also hired W. Grant Egbert as president and head of the violin department, with Floyd Spencer serving as treasurer and manager. John Beall retired from his position as musical director on July 1, 1909, citing ill health, and moved to a large private house at 86 Clinton Avenue South.

The following year, the Rochester Conservatory of Music secured necessary capital to purchase new facilities in the center of the city at 81 South Fitzhugh Street. Its faculty was sufficient for the Conservatory to be able to offer instruction in piano, organ, voice, violin, cello, harp, clarinet, and cornett, as well as in mandolin, banjo, and guitar. Courses were also offered in harmony, composition, history of fine arts, ensemble, elocution, English, German, French,

and Italian. The Conservatory curricula included a four-year collegiate course, a two-year collegiate course specifically designed for the training of teachers, and a children's department for students of pre-collegiate age. Among the faculty members were Floyd Spencer and his wife, Edith Compton Spencer. Spencer taught voice, while his wife was one of three piano teachers on the faculty. Her credentials were certainly not without merit, since she had studied piano in Europe with Liszt's famous student, Rafael Joseffy, as well as with the noted English pianist Harold Bauer. The violin teachers included W. Grant Egbert and Ludwig Schenck. Schenck was a native Rochesterian, whose training had been with Johann Lauterbach in Dresden. Before returning to his native city, he had a successful and varied career including playing in the Symphony Orchestra of New York and in the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, as well as serving as a member of the Dannreuther Quartet. In Rochester he settled into a prominent position through his work on the Conservatory faculty, as conductor of the Rochester Symphony Orchestra, and as director of orchestral studies for the city high schools.

Of all the members of the faculty, however, the most significant for the future of music education in Rochester may have been George Barlow Penny, who served as musical director (i.e. John Beall's former position) as well as being a teacher of piano, organ, voice, harmony, composition, and the history of fine arts. Unlike his European, conservatory-trained faculty colleagues, Penny was a musician with solid academic credentials, being a graduate of Cornell University. He had built a fine reputation for himself by organizing and developing the School of Fine Arts at Washburn College and the School of Fine Arts at the University of Kansas, having served as Dean of the latter institution for a period of twelve years. It is unclear what brought him to Rochester, but his interest in music training within the context of a University education proved to be of great influence during the next few years.

Sometime during the summer months of 1912, George Barlow Penny and his wife were dinner guests at the home of Rush Rhees, the President of the University of Rochester. The specific occasion of the dinner party was to entertain Alf and Alexandra Klingenberg, who were visiting the Pennys at the time. This dinner party brought together for the first time three men - Rhees, Pennys, and Klingenberg - who soon would have a major role in the events leading to the establishment of the Eastman School of Music. Alf Klingenberg was a Norwegian pianist who had personally known



Alf Klingenberg, the first director of the Eastman School of Music in his office with his secretary. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

the composer, Edvard Grieg, and who had been a student with Jan Sibelius at the Hochschule in Berlin. He came to the United States at the turn of the century and accepted a position at Hardin College in Mexico, Missouri. Some of his students at Hardin were from Topeka, Kansas, and he soon relocated there, where he maintained a private piano teaching studio. After a few years, however, he gave up his private studio to become head of the piano department at the Washburn College School of Fine Arts in Topeka, where George Barlow Penny was Dean. Penny and Klingenberg resigned from Washburn to found the Kansas College of Music, but Klingenberg was then recruited back to Washburn with an offer to become Dean of the School of Fine Arts. Thus, it was in Washburn that Klingenberg and Penny became friends. In addition to these positions in Missouri and Kansas, he taught for a while in Portland, Oregon. Frequent changes in his career suggested a man in search of a mission in life. Alf Klingenberg has been described by many as a quiet and reserved man, but an exceptionally fine musician, pianist, and teacher. Alexandra Klingenberg was, by all reports, neither quiet nor reserved. In some ways an ideal partner for her more passive husband, she had the more dominating and assertive personality. The circumstances behind their visit with George Barlow Penney and

his wife are unknown, although it may have been in connection with a Rochester concert engagement for Klingenberg. Whatever the reasons for the visit, however, it resulted in a decision for Klingenberg to relocate in Rochester and accept a position in September 1912 as head of the piano faculty at the Rochester Conservatory of Music.

The following year, Alf Klingenberg left the Rochester Conservatory to open his own music school, a move which he and his wife had probably contemplated since first coming to Rochester. The new school was opened in partnership with violinist/conductor, Hermann Dossenbach. The choice of Dossenbach as a partner in the new venture was particularly astute since he was perhaps Rochester's most prominently known musician at the time. He had somehow managed to give the city its first professional orchestra which, after somewhat humble beginnings, had achieved impressive financial and civic backing and was in the forefront of local musical activity. As a location for their school, Klingenberg and Dossenbach chose a building at 47 Prince Street which they purchased from William Gleason of the Gleason Works, an important local manufacturing concern. Klingenberg's choice of location was as astute as his choice of partner, since the new school was situated adjacent to the campus of the University of Rochester and diagonally across the street from Sibley Hall, which housed the Sibley Music Library. This collection, given to the University in 1904 by Hiram W. Sibley, was an invaluable resource, and its nearby location was of obvious advantage to the new school. Facilities for the new school were enhanced through the construction of a building at the rear of the property to provide for a recital hall and auditorium. The latter was equipped with a pipe organ and two grand pianos. The Dossenbach-Klingenberg School of Music opened in the fall of 1913 and was provisionally chartered by the Regents of the University of the State of New York. The music school corporation was authorized to issue capital stock in the amount of \$10,000.00, consisting of one hundred shares each with a par value of \$100.00. Klingenberg was the owner of half of these shares, while Dossenbach and his wife held the remainder.

The Dossenbach-Klingenberg School of Music had a history which was quite as turbulent and unsettled as the Rochester Conservatory of Music. Had it not been for the fact that it was the immediate predecessor of the Eastman School of Music, its existence undoubtedly would be only an interesting footnote in Rochester history. After only one year of operation, the corporation

was reorganized by bringing in a new partner, a voice teacher whose name was Oscar Gareissen. Dossenbach and Klingenberg retained equal ownership of the property rights, but the three men each held equal shares in the corporation. Apparently, new capital stock was issued in the amount of twenty-four shares, each partner holding eight. To reflect the new partnership, the name of the school was changed to the D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art, the initials reflecting the surnames of the three directors. This change of name was requested on September 16, 1914 in a formal petition to the Regents of the University of the State of New York, which approved the request at its meeting of September 24. There was a further change two years later when, in the fall of 1916, the Rochester Conservatory of Music was consolidated with the Institute, the annual catalogue-title reading "D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art and Rochester Conservatory of Music." John C. Bostlemann, Jr., who had succeeded Floyd Spencer as musical director of the Conservatory, became a "director" along with Dossenbach, Klingenberg, and Gareissen, but the terms of agreement stipulated that Bostlemann's tenure would be only until July 1, 1917. In fact, he severed his connections with the Institute before the end of the 1916-1917 academic year. The "consolidation" was apparently only a means of absorbing the older school into the Institute, and future catalogues dropped all mention of the Conservatory.



Buildings on Gibbs Street at Main before demolition of site for construction of the Eastman Theatre and School of Music. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

In the summer of 1917, a further change took place. Klingenberg became the sole owner of both the property and corporate rights. First of all, he purchased the capital stock held by both Dossenbach and Gareissen for a sum of \$100.00 per share, each man thereby-receiving \$800.00. Secondly, he purchased Dossenbach's share of the property rights for \$6200.00 and agreed to assume and pay the two mortgages on the property. These transactions certainly might suggest that the Institute was a rather shaky business venture. Nonetheless, the school was not lacking in proper friends who must have brought a high level of advice and expertise to its operation. Klingenberg's Board of Advisors was headed by University of Rochester President Rush Rhees, a man of vision and genuine administrative accomplishment. Other advisors included the Honorable James C. Cutler, former Mayor of Rochester; Harper Sibley, grandson of the founder of Western Union; the Honorable Walter S. Hubbell, a former State Assemblyman; and William Bausch of Bausch and Lomb, the optical company.

Klingenberg was also supported by a surprisingly fine faculty. When he and Dossenbach opened the school in 1913, there were twenty-one faculty members. These included Tom Karl, who had sung at La Scala in Milan; pianist Edith McMath, a graduate of the Stern Conservatory in Berlin; and cellist Emil Knoepke, a former member of both the Pittsburgh and Cincinnati Orchestras. He also secured the services of Ludwig Schenck and of his friend George Barlow Penney, both being faculty members at the rival Rochester Conservatory of Music. A significant local talent among the original faculty members was John Adams Warner. The son of J. Foster Warner, one of Rochester's leading architects, he had graduated from Harvard in 1909 and then spent considerable time studying music in Europe, including piano with Buonamici in Italy, Bauer in Paris, and Godowsky in Innsbruck. Warner also studied organ with Charles-Marie Widor and, accordingly, taught both piano and organ for Klingenberg. He was apparently a very gifted musician, but suddenly abandoned his musical career in 1917 to become the fourth man to join the newly formed New York State Police. Six years later he was appointed Superintendent (a post he held for about twenty years), and in 1927 he married Governor Al Smith's daughter. He never totally left music, however, and continued to perform, including a 1940 appearance in New York's Carnegie Hall as a concerto soloist. Another significantly talented local musician who joined the faculty was David Hochstein, who taught at the Institute during the 1915-1916 school year. Born in Rochester in

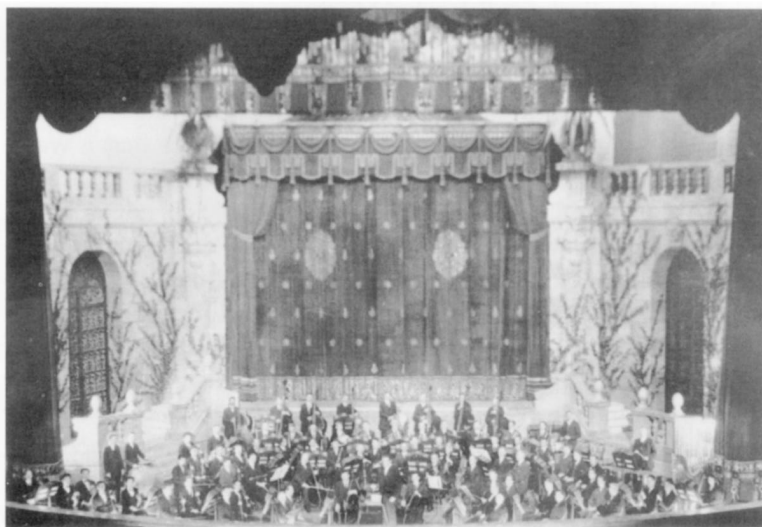
1892, he had gone to Europe following high school to study with Sevcik in Vienna and Auer in St. Petersburg. The critical acclaim which he gained for concerts given in Berlin, London, Boston, New York, and elsewhere is clear evidence that his was an extraordinary talent, and he was befriended by such distinguished musicians as Myra Hess and Harold Bauer, as well as by the American author Willa Cather. A brilliant career was not to be, however, as his life was tragically cut short by an artillery shell during the First World War.

The Klingenberg school essentially offered three programs, somewhat similar to those of the older Rochester Conservatory: a preparatory course for younger students, a four-year course leading to a diploma, and a public school course, graduates of which were qualified to teach music in New York State schools. The first graduates of the four-year course were Jean Ingelow and Ernestine Klinzing in 1915. Both had done the first two years of their diploma program elsewhere, presumably the Rochester Conservatory. By the time of its eighth and final commencement in 1921, the Institute had graduated twenty-six students from the four-year course and twenty-one from the public school course. The two original graduates from 1915 remained in the Rochester area for the remainder of their careers. Miss Ingelow was active as a church organist in the upstate New York area for many years, while Miss Klinzing joined the Institute faculty and later became a valued teacher at the Eastman School of Music.

The D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art, despite its noble purposes and a generally excellent faculty, was a rather modest and provincial undertaking as a music school. Rapidly occurring changes in corporate structure and changes in faculty indicate that it was a troubled school, too. When Klingenberg became the sole Director in 1917, he faced long-term debts of over \$12,000.00, not an inconsiderable sum for the times, as well as having to deal with the regular operational expenses of the school. As an institution it was certainly trying to fulfill the purpose for which it claimed to have been founded: "...to meet the demands of the musical public of Rochester for a school a music of the highest standard..." Yet, for all its good intentions, questions must have existed as to whether or not the school could survive. Help, however, was forthcoming in a manner which would dramatically change the nature of music education in Rochester as well as having a very broad impact on music education in general.

“Why don’t you have a music school?”

Early in 1918 George Eastman is said to have posed the following question to Rush Rhees: “Why don’t you have a music school?”. His proposal was to buy the D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art for the University of Rochester. Eastman’s question, perhaps first quoted in John Rothwell Slater’s biography of Rush Rhees, doesn’t appear in earlier commentaries, such as Stewart Sabin’s essays for the Rochester Historical Society or Carl Ackermann’s 1930 biography of George Eastman. Slater and others who have written since his time have used the question to suggest that the Eastman proposal was quite unanticipated by Rhees. Eastman faculty member Ernestine Klinzing, in a 1967 essay, even added that she had recalled “hearing Mrs. Klingenberg say that President Rhees was not very receptive to the idea, feeling that a professional school had no place in a university atmosphere.” The context in which Rhees may have made such a comment to Alexandra Klingenberg is difficult to understand, since the idea of a university music school had been around for a long time. It had been around in fact since 1904 when Rush Rhees had written his consulting architects that “it might be well to bear in mind a possible building for a music school - although that is in the somewhat distant future.” The date 1904 is significant in that it coincides with Eastman’s donation of



The Eastman Theatre orchestra in the 1920s. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

\$77,000.00 to the University for the construction of a new biology / physics building, his first contribution to the University and the beginnings of his long association with Rhees.

In the years following his gift to the University, Eastman demonstrated a growing interest and deepening commitment towards music. In the fall of 1905 he engaged the Dossenbach Quartette for a series of Thursday evening and Sunday afternoon musicales in his home. These musicales became an extraordinarily important part of Rochester social life, and Rush Rhees and his wife were among the regularly invited guests. Eastman also came to the support of a number of local musicians. His mother had been one of the original patronesses of Hermann Dossenbach's orchestra when it was founded in 1900. When the Musical Council, of which Rhees was President, sent Dossenbach to Europe for study during the 1911-1912 season, Eastman was the principal contributor to a fund established in support of the sabbatical. He also made annual contributions to Ludwig Schenck's Rochester Symphony and assisted David Hochstein by purchasing for him two violins, including a priceless Stradavarius.

As the D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art continued to financially struggle, it is perhaps only natural that Eastman would become involved. Three Institute graduates, who later became associated with the Eastman School of Music, all credited the Klingenberg with eliciting Eastman's interest in the music school project. Ernestine Klinzing, in her 1967 essay stated that "the credit for interesting George Eastman in the establishment of a music school endowed and connected with the University belongs in part to Mrs. Alf Klingenberg and to Mr. Hermann Dossenbach, who both worked towards that end." Arthur See, interviewed by Roger Butterfield in 1950, commented that "...It was only natural that they [the Klingenbergs] should suggest a school of music, a suggestion that reveals their perception of GE's philanthropic propensities..." But it was Mildred Brownell Mehlenbacher who provided the most interesting and revealing information when, in a 1977 interview¹, she stated that George Eastman had been financially helping the Klingenbergs prior to his decision to finally purchase the school for the University. According to Mrs. Mehlenbacher, Alexandra Klingenberg seized the initiative and went to Eastman's office to seek his support. After visiting the Prince Street school, Eastman apparently agreed to offer some kind of financial assistance. Although any early Eastman involvement with the Institute is not well-documented, Mrs. Mehlenbacher's testimony is corroborated

by Harriet Seyle Rhees in her 1942 essay for the Rochester Historical Society in which she referred to the Institute when stating that "this struggling school was helped a little by Mr. Eastman..." Since her husband was the head of the Institute's Board of Advisors, it is logical to assume that both Rush Rhees and his wife would have been aware of any financial assistance which Eastman was giving to the Klingenberg.

No direct evidence exists, of course, which would present an accurate account of the time-frame and events which finally led Eastman to purchase the Institute for the University. It is highly probable, however, that conversations occurred between Eastman and Rhees on an on-going basis concerning the future of music in Rochester, conversations motivated by their mutual interest in music. Then, following Eastman's tentative involvement in the affairs of the Prince Street school, a decision was finally reached that the most expedient manner of fulfilling hopes for music education in Rochester would be to build upon what Klingenberg had already achieved by allowing the Institute to pass under University ownership. One possible scenario emerges from a rather fascinating story told by Jean Ingelow² who related that George Barlow Penny took his orchestration class on a picnic in the spring of 1915, her senior year at the Institute. According to Miss Ingelow, Professor Penny spoke at length with his students at this picnic, telling them about a new school of music which Mr. Eastman was going to build. This conversation, if it took place, happened three years prior to the supposed question of "Why don't you have a music school?" Oral history is always somewhat suspect in the absence of any supporting evidence, and Ingelow's recollections came more than six decades after the alleged conversation by Professor Penny. Nonetheless, it is interesting to speculate whether, even as early as the spring 1915, Eastman had committed himself to building a new school for the Klingenbergs, although perhaps not with any intention at that date of affiliating the school with the University of Rochester. The full story has never been told nor will it ever be related since the only people who really knew are long since gone. All that remains are fascinating little bits of information which can lead to absolutely endless speculation.

In any event, the decision to act in 1918 was most expeditious for the Institute's provisional charter was about to expire, to be replaced by an absolute charter only if it could give evidence of acquiring "resources and equipment deemed suitable and sufficient by the Regents for its chartered purpose." The charter diffi-

culties must have been in the forefront of concerns confronting the Institute's advisors, including Rush Rhees. Acquisition by the University of Rochester would be a major step towards putting music education on a firmer basis in the City of Rochester.

On March 27, 1918, Rush Rhees addressed a letter to Augustus Downing, Assistant Commissioner of the State Department of Education in Albany in which he suggested a reorganization of the D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art and its affiliation with the University of Rochester for the purpose of conferring the Bachelor of Music degree. Downing replied on April 1, 1918, in a detailed three-page letter which included a note of caution that a study of the University's charter suggested that it might not have the right to enter into such an affiliated relationship. Further correspondence ensued, but matters of real importance did not develop until April 27, the date upon which the Executive Committee of the University's Board of Trustees had its eighth meeting of the year. At this meeting, Rhees referred to the possibility of establishing a music degree program by affiliating with the D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art. Curiously, Rhees made no mention of the fact that George Eastman was prepared to purchase the Institute for the University, even though that decision had been confirmed earlier in the month. The Executive Committee responded to Rhees' report by passing a resolution favoring affiliation and authorizing a committee to study possible charter revision.

Charter revision, however, was not the road upon which Rhees opted to travel. On the same day on which he met with the Trustees, he addressed yet another letter to Augustus Downing setting forth an argument that the University of Rochester was already empowered by its charter to confer music degrees. He argued that the University's provisional charter of 1850 granted "...all the powers of conferring degrees possessed by the trustees of similar collegiate institutions in this State", a provision subsequently confirmed in the later permanent charter. Among the other collegiate institutions of the time was Columbia College which, by an act of 1787, had seen the privileges of its original 1754 Royal Charter confirmed. This original charter, by which King George II had founded Columbia as Kings College, authorized that institution to confer those degrees "...granted by any or either of our universities or colleges in that part of our kingdom called England..." Rhees had been able to confirm that Oxford had conferred Bachelor of Music degrees in the mid-eighteenth century. He reasoned that Kings College had similar authority under Royal Charter, that Columbia College in-

herited this authority by the act of 1787, and that the University of Rochester, therefore, possessed this same authority by virtue of its own charter.

Augustus Downing was undoubtedly bedazzled by this line of reasoning and could only reply that he was "very much interested in this matter" and would make a complete study of it. After a number of additional letters and memoranda, Downing finally made his reply on May 21, a two-page letter in which he simply reiterated his previous conclusions concerning the University's charter rights, stating categorically that he was "firm" in the opinion that the University did not possess the power to confer a music degree without first amending its charter. Rhees acknowledged Downing's letter on May 22, confessing that he still didn't "get the point" of Downing's interpretation of the facts, but added that the inability to understand Downing's reasoning was probably due to his "torpidity of mind." He next acted to gain Regent's authority to affiliate with the Institute as well as authority to conduct instruction leading to a bachelor of music degree. Two resolutions were duly submitted to Downing following the June meeting of the University's Board of Trustees.

The great haste with which Rush Rhees had proceeded during the spring months of 1918 suggests that he was anxious to acquire



While the Eastman Theatre is under construction, muralists relax over lunch as they listen to the phonograph in the foreground. At left is Barry Faulkner. At right of center is muralist Ezra Winter. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

the Institute and begin operating it in time for the opening of the 1918-1919 school year. His dealings with Augustus Downing necessitated a delay in that affiliation, but apparently Klingenberg's desire to sell the school could not wait. Accordingly, on July 19, 1918, George Eastman purchased the school for \$28,000.00. For this sum, he acquired both the property and corporate rights of the Institute, and for the next 315 days Eastman was the sole owner of the music school.

Eleven days later he wrote a curious letter to his niece, Ellen Dryden, which suggested that he wished to give his house and property at 900 East Avenue to the University of Rochester for a music school. The suggestion that the University should use his home for a music school, made after he had purchased the Institute for the University, would seem to give indication that, as of the summer months of 1918, Eastman may have made no commitment to provide a new building for the Institute. It would also seem to contradict Jean Ingelow's recollections of 1915. The thought that no construction plans were in the offering is supported by the fact that Rhees had not referred either to Eastman or to any pending construction when reporting to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on April 29. Further support of this contention may be found in the catalogues of the Institute itself. The 1918-1919 catalogue, issued for the fall following Eastman's purchase, simply contained a reiteration of Rush Rhees' statements that an affiliation between the Institute and University was pending. The consistent reference to affiliation for the purpose of offering a music degree and the absence of any comment concerning future plans for a new music school building does not give any indication that long-range plans for the music school project had been discussed or formulated in conjunction with Eastman's purchase of the Institute. Furthermore, during the entire period of 1918 no correspondence apparently exists which refers either to land acquisition or new construction. Such matters were only to develop later and unfold quite dramatically in 1919.

For Alf Klingenberg, however, it was business as usual when the Institute reopened in September 1918. He remained Director of the school, and no noticeable change of faculty or curricula could be observed under the new ownership. Rush Rhees, however, was anxiously awaiting Regents approval of the amendment to the University charter, which was finally accomplished on December 12, 1918. Although Rush Rhees received written confirmation from Downing of the amendment's approval in a letter dated December

24, 1918, he was anxious to have a certified copy and sent a telegram to Albany requesting this. In response to this telegram, he was mistakenly sent two copies of the bill pending in the State Assembly which would amend the charter of the City of Rochester. He rather impatiently requested correction of the matter in a letter dated January 16, 1919, receiving an immediate apology, and finally obtained the desired document on January 21. In the history of the University of Rochester, the date of January 21, 1919 is of genuine importance. Albany had claimed, with some justification, that the University of Rochester was a university in name only. The amendment to its charter, as finally received by President Rhees on that January day, made the institution a university in fact as well as in name.

“...surpassed by no other in the world...”

In February of 1919 - eleven months after Rush Rhees' initial inquiry to Augustus Downing concerning the feasibility of the University affiliating with the Institute of Musical Art, and six months after Eastman's purchase of the Prince Street music school - Rochester's newspapers announced that Eastman was committing himself to providing the University with a new concert hall and school of music "surpassed by no other in the world." Plans had unfolded rapidly, and land for new buildings had been selected on the City's east side in an area bordered by Main Street on the north, Barrett Alley on the south, Gibbs Street on the west, and Swan Street on the east.

The Executive Committee of the University's Board of Trustees, at a meeting of February 24, 1919, passed a resolution approving options "for the sale and transfer to the University" of several parcels of land in this area, the purchase price of which George Eastman had generously offered to pay. Additionally, the Executive Committee authorized Rush Rhees "to make, execute, and deliver in the name of the University any and all agreements and contracts for the erection, equipment, and furnishing of buildings..." The full Board of Trustees, at a meeting of May 16, 1919, received a more detailed report from President Rhees, who explained that Eastman intended to erect a new music school with a large auditorium which would have a seating capacity of approximately three thousand, and which would be used for "high class motion pictures." Rhees also added that Eastman was committed not only to fully equip the buildings, but also to suitably endow the music

school. Upon motion made by Rush Rhees, the Board expressed thanks to Eastman and conveyed to him their desire that he should consent to have the new school bear his name. The notion held by some authors that Eastman was reluctant to have the school named after him is certainly not supported by the fact that he quickly responded to the Trustees' request on June 2, 1919, indicating that he "had no objection to calling it the Eastman School of Music."

The D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art was not forgotten, however, during all of these dramatic developments. On June 12, 1919, the University acquired the Institute and its property from George Eastman for a price of \$1.00, an action made possible by its amended charter. Rush Rhees informed Augustus Downing of this action on July 9 mentioning, perhaps prematurely, that the music school would "henceforth be known as the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester." He added that new buildings and an "ample endowment" were being provided by Mr. Eastman, but that the present work of the school would proceed with "increased vigor" under the control of the University. Apparently, however, Rhees or someone else had second thoughts concerning the notion of putting Eastman's name on the music school's present structure. Therefore, the Institute opened for its seventh year on September 8, 1919, with its catalogue-title reading "The University of Rochester Institute of Musical Art." Among newer faculty members could be found Harold Gleason and Arthur Alexander, who both came to Rochester also to serve in musical roles at Eastman's house, the former as organist and the latter as coordinator of the Thursday evening and Sunday afternoon musicales. Including Gleason and Alexander, Klingenberg's faculty numbered twenty-three for the 1919-1920 school year. There was no major expansion or change reflecting the fact that the Institute was now owned by the University.

For Rush Rhees, however, there were many new responsibilities. He met with the Executive Committee of his trustees on September 26, 1919, and reported that Eastman had deposited in the Alliance Bank one million dollars to meet construction costs for the new buildings, and had also deposited a sum of \$2,139,554.25 as an endowment for the school of music. The previous day Rhees had written another letter to Downing reminding him that the University was now the owner of the Institute and asking what steps might be necessary to secure recognition of the transfer of the Institute to the University and its re-designation as the Eastman School of Music. Apparently, the situation was somewhat without

precedent for Downing did not reply until October 14 and began his letter by saying "I have read your letter of September 25th before me and have read it pretty nearly every day since I received it." He continued by suggesting that Rhees write a formal letter simply stating that the D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art no longer existed, its stock and property having come into the possession of the University of Rochester which had organized a new Eastman School of Music. What appeared to be a stenographer's error in Downing's letter, however, caused Rhees to request a clarification



Clearing for the foundation and construction of the Eastman School and Theatre. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

in a letter dated October 20, 1919. This letter, however, was filed without reply for some reason, and this complicated question concerning recognition of the University's ownership and the relationship of the Institute's charter to the new Eastman School of Music was not addressed again until three years later.

While Rhees was occupied by such matters, Eastman pursued the problems of planning for his great enterprise. Contact was made with the Rochester architectural firm of Gordon and Kaelber and preliminary discussion ensued. In a letter dated February 17, 1919, Eastman revealed that he also intended to use a consulting architect for the project. The firm ultimately selected as consulting architects was McKim, Mead and White of New York City. In the meanwhile, however, Edwin S. Gordon began preliminary planning for the music school and theater. In April 1919 Eastman sent him on a tour of New York, Boston, Chicago, and New Haven to visit music buildings and "get ideas for the new music school", and in August of the same year he made a down-payment of \$10,000.00 for architectural fees.

In selecting Gordon and Kaelber, Eastman passed over some other notable Rochester architects such as J. Foster Warner and Claude Bragdon. But Edwin Gordon's credentials were impressive, having worked with both Warner and Bragdon in the 1890s prior to forming partnerships first with William Madden and later with William Kaelber. His association with Kaelber, extending from 1919 to his death in 1932, produced such notable Rochester buildings as the University of Rochester River Campus complex, Cutler Union, the Rochester Gas and Electric Building, and the Hiram Sibley Building on East Avenue at Alexander Street. The problems confronting Edwin Gordon were considerable. First of all, the land which was selected was not rectangular in shape since Main Street and Barrett Alley were not parallel. But a more serious problem arose when the owner of a large building on the corner of Main and Swan Streets demanded an exorbitant price for his property. Rather than yielding to an unreasonable demand, Eastman abandoned his efforts to acquire this particular parcel of property and ordered an architectural re-design to work around the corner building. This re-design meant that hopes for having the building's facade extend from Barrett Alley all around the corner along Main Street had to be altered. More important, the axis of the theater had to be repositioned so that it was no longer at a right angle to the facade.

When McKim, Mead, and White were consulted, they responded

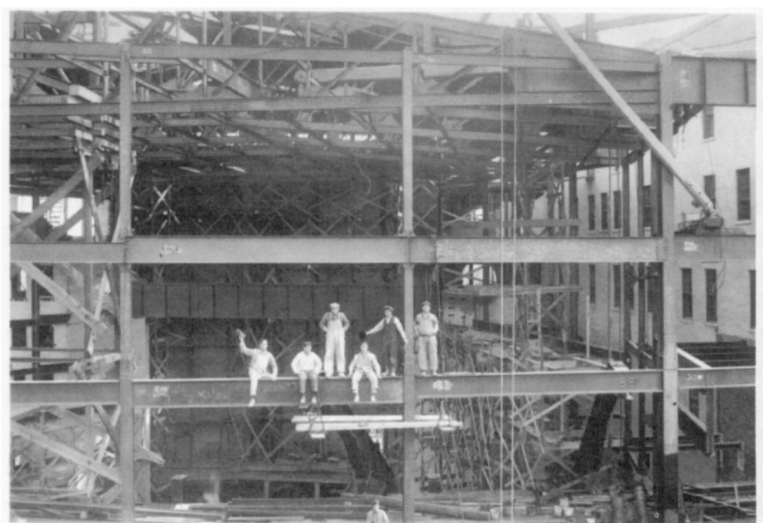
by submitting a new, alternate plan in August 1919, but Eastman answered in defense of existing plans by stating that "this plan has been worked out after about six months of hard work and consultation with the most experienced operating experts in the country, and embodies practically all their ideas, adapted to the shape of the lot which we have." A friend in New York City, F.L. Babbott, assumed the role of peace-maker with the New York architects, but it wasn't until January of the following year that they agreed to come back to the theater project on Eastman's terms, but only with the stipulation that all publicity would clearly state that they were not responsible for the floor plans. The architectural plan finally agreed upon called for the music school to occupy the land on the south side of the building site, with an adjoining theater sharing a common facade and occupying the irregular north side of the site.

Eastman saw the theater as a means towards the broadest possible educational benefit of the community-at-large by using the popular medium of motion pictures as a vehicle for promoting the enjoyment of music. Therefore, he envisioned using his theater six days a week for the showing of motion pictures, reserving only Wednesday evenings for concerts and recitals. The large theaters of the day, of course, maintained orchestras for the accompaniment of the silent films then being produced, and presentation of films was often supplemented by instrumental or organ music, by vocal entertainment, and by dance. Eastman perhaps cannot be faulted for failing to anticipate the dramatic changes which were soon to occur in the motion picture industry and which would make the use of his theater as a "movie palace" relatively brief. In 1919 the plan seemed ingenious and far-reaching, and neither expense nor effort were spared in planning for a theater which would be second to none.

By early 1920 the construction site for the theater and school had been cleared. In addition to the main site, two parcels of property were obtained on the east side of Swan Street. One was used for the construction of a heating plant, and the other was cleared to make room for a brick building which was being moved there from a parallel site on Gibbs Street, the only building from the main construction site to escape demolition.

With the school now under construction, Rush Rhees turned his attention to the problems of establishing a curriculum for the proposed bachelor of music degree. Awarding such a degree was, of course, a primary reason why the University had originally agreed

to affiliate with Klingenberg's school. On March 23, 1920, Rhees wrote Augustus Downing to ask what institutions were registered with the Regents to confer music degrees. Downing replied on April 1 to the effect that only two institutions at the time were registered to confer the music degree, but he also included a study showing that a considerable number of schools offered the degree



Construction workers pose for the camera as they take a break from the building of the Eastman Theatre. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

without asking to have it registered in Albany. More correspondence occurred during 1920, but it wasn't until December 4, 1922, that Rhees finally submitted his application for registration of the Bachelor of Music degree. The registration was approved in Albany on January 25, 1923, about seven months after the Eastman School of Music had already conferred its first baccalaureate degrees.

Even though there was yet no baccalaureate curriculum when the Institute reopened in September for its eight year, the University claimed, in the Institute's official catalogue, that the Prince Street school was already functioning as its music department, and had been doing so since the fall of 1918. The date of 1918 is, of course, incorrect since the University did not acquire the Institute until the following year. Curiously, this inaccuracy persisted in many publications for years to come.

Progress continued quite dramatically at the construction site. The music school building had been given priority over the theater so that it would be available for use the following September. By the end of 1920 the frame of the school building was nearing completion, and work progressed rapidly during the early months of 1921. A.W. Hopeman and Sons Co. was the general contractor, and the amount of work accomplished in a relatively short time was quite impressive. For the school itself, not including the theater which had hardly begun, twelve hundred tons of steel were used along with close to a half million bricks, over twenty-five hundred tons of stone facing, and four thousand five hundred barrels of cement.

On June 4, 1921, the Institute held its annual commencement, graduating three students from its Four Year Course and seven students from the Public School Music Course. The commencement ceremony brought to an effective end eight years of music education on Prince Street. These eight years had seen the opening of the Dossenbach-Klingenberg School in 1913, its reorganization as the D.K.G. Institute of Musical Art in 1914, its consolidation with the Rochester Conservatory in 1916, the sole directorship and ownership of Alf Klingenberg in 1917, the purchase by George Eastman in 1918, and the acquisition by the University of Rochester in 1919. The simply yet dramatic move to Gibbs Street, planned for September 1921, would so profoundly change music education in Rochester that the entire history of accomplishment on Prince Street would quickly recede from memory.

“...building musical capacity on a large scale...”

While the new Eastman School buildings were still under construction, it became clear that the one million dollar construction fund provided by George Eastman would be insufficient to cover all costs. In accepting the fund from Eastman, the University had agreed to relieve him of any further obligation which might be incurred. His help was needed, however, and he generously gave the University 5,000 shares of Eastman Kodak stock on April 20, 1921, for use as collateral for borrowing money payable to the building fund, with income from the stock being used to pay the interest on such loans. This gift in April brought his total contribution to slightly more than three and a half million dollars, and by the completion of construction Eastman had increased support to a total of close to five and a half million dollars. This, in turn, grew with additional contributions to more than twelve million dollars within a few years, and the best estimate of Eastman's total cost for the school was an eventual figure of nearly seventeen and a half million dollars, about five times his original commitment to the project.

In a New York Times interview³ dating from the beginnings of the construction period, Eastman had explained his motivation in this rather extraordinary endeavor:

I am interested in music personally, and I am led thereby, merely to want to share my pleasure with others. For a great many years I have been connected with musical organizations in Rochester. I have helped to support a symphony orchestra. Recurrently, we have faced the fact that what was needed was a body of trained listeners quite as much as a body of competent performers. It is fairly easy to employ skillful musicians. It is impossible to buy an appreciation of music. Yet, without appreciation, without a presence of a large body of people who understand music and who get joy out of it, any attempt to develop the musical resources of any city is doomed to failure. Because, in Rochester, we realize this, we have undertaken a scheme for building musical capacity on a large scale from childhood.

The scope of this undertaking was very broad. The school was to function as a university department which would train candidates for the bachelor of music degree and, in addition, serve as a community school offering instruction to both adults and children. Furthermore, the theater was designed to provide a cultural exposure to the broadest possible segment of the community.

The anticipated completion of the school building for use in September 1921 was eagerly awaited. An expansion in faculty was planned, and Klingenberg was involved in recruitment for a considerable period of time. There was great hope that Jan Sibelius might accept an offer to teach composition, and Klingenberg was sent to Finland to pursue the matter. Negotiations with Sibelius have led to a persistent assertion that the great Finnish composer was offered the Director's position at the Eastman School of Music. This story has been endlessly repeated, including by many of Sibelius' biographers. It is, however, totally untrue. Sibelius was approached to teach composition, not to direct the school. Karl Ekman, in his 1936 biography of Sibelius⁴, may have been the first to make the claim that the Director's position had been offered to the Finnish composer. Since Ekman's book was widely considered to be the "authorized biography" of Sibelius, it was generally viewed as the indispensable source for all later writers. Almost



The nearly completed Eastman Theatre. The Theatre and School made Rochester an internationally known center of musical education. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

thirty years later, Robert Layton was repeating the same erroneous information in his biography of Sibelius,⁵ and even the prestigious Grove's Dictionary⁶ asserts that Sibelius was offered the Director's position at Eastman. It is unfortunate that Layton and the editors of Grove's Dictionary, among others, did not refer to Harold Johnson's well researched biography of Sibelius⁷, published in 1959, which specifically corrected Ekman's earlier misreading of the facts. The facts are clearly presented in his book:

One year prior to the grand opening of the Eastman School of Music, Klingenberg, who retained his title as director, toured Europe in search of a well-known faculty. In answer to a letter inquiring whether he would be interested in teaching theory and composition, Sibelius wrote that the proposition was "not disagreeable." ...In September 1920, Klingenberg visited Järrenpää, where he was staggered to learn that Sibelius demanded a salary of \$20,000 for nine months of teaching... By January of the following year, all of the composer's demands had been met... In April, however, the composer had a change of heart...

Johnson's account is fully supported by the documentary evidence, including a copy of a telegram to Alf Klingenberg⁸ during the period of negotiation with Sibelius, which authorized him to offer Sibelius \$20,000.00 for teaching composition at the Eastman School of Music during 1921-1922. Unfortunately, repeated misinformation has a tendency to become a permanent part of any story, and the connection between Sibelius and the Eastman School of Music undoubtedly will continue to be misstated for many, many years to come.

The failure to secure Sibelius as a teacher of composition led to offering the position to the Norwegian composer, Christian Sinding, who taught at the Eastman School during its inaugural year and who was succeeded by the Finnish composer, Selim Palmgren. Klingenberg also successfully recruited a number of other prominent European musicians. Thomas Henry Yorke Trotter secured a leave of absence from his position as Principal of the London Academy of Music to join the Eastman School theory department, and organist Joseph Bonnett agreed to come from France to join Harold Gleason on the organ teaching staff. Also from France came the

distinguished pianist, Pierre Augieras, who had been a colleague of Isidore Philip at the Paris Conservatory. Closer to come, Raymond Wilson left Syracuse University to join the 1921 Eastman piano faculty, thereby beginning a career at the school which would



Clockwise from top left: Robert Hall, construction engineer, Lawrence White, Eastman Theatre architect, muralist Ezra Winter and Director Victor Wagner. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music.)

span over three decades and which would see Wilson become Assistant Director, head of the piano faculty, Director of the Preparatory Department, and Director of the Summer Session. In all there were about a dozen new faculty members who were recruited by the Director and who joined the existing Institute faculty when the Eastman School of Music opened in 1921.

Construction, unfortunately, had fallen behind schedule and hopes for a completed music school in time for the opening of the 1921-1922 school year were not fulfilled. Nonetheless, two floors - the third and fourth - were ready for use by students and faculty in September 1921. Access to the third and fourth floors was through a temporary passageway leading from the Gibbs Street entrance directly to the elevators. The third floor contained an assembly room, eleven studios, and four classrooms for instructional purposes, while the fourth floor provided an additional assembly hall, lecture room, theory room, office, and nineteen studios in addition to the organ department. Pierre Augieras is reported to have had the distinction of giving the first lesson in the new building, and Ella Mason was apparently the first student to receive instruction. By a strange coincidence, faculty member Mabel Cooper found herself with exactly the same schedule of hours that she had previously had at the Institute. The new school year also saw more than one hundred students enrolled in George Barlow Penny's music history class, with a similarly high level of enrollment in Yorke Trotter's theory classes. Total enrollment of students during the year reached 1,023 of which only 38 were candidates for the bachelor of music degree. The first student recital was held on Wednesday afternoon, October 19, and featured Dorothy Dodd, Roslyn Weisberg, and George McNabb, all of whom had come with Raymond Wilson from Syracuse University. McNabb had already graduated from Syracuse and had been given a scholarship for post-graduate work, but he preferred to follow his teacher to Eastman. He was soon to join the piano faculty at the new school.

During all of these activities, construction continued. The noise, confusion, dirt, and debris were all a source of concern and annoyance to everyone, and someone humorously volunteered the suggestion that a musical attachment be given to the rivetters working on the theater so that they could at least "play in unison." The completion of the school building was marked by a formal opening to the public on Friday, March 3, 1922. A number of people have recalled that Eastman personally inspected the building to insure that everything was in order before the public was admit-

ted. In addition to the third and fourth floors, already in use, the basement, main floor, mezzanine, and second floor were now ready. The basement provided seventeen practice rooms and other facilities. On the main floor could be found the business office, bureau of publications, director's office and studio, and the new home in the east wing for the Sibley Music Library which was moved from the Prince Street campus. Also on the main floor was Kilbourn Hall, a lovely recital hall in Italian renaissance design, seating about 500 and dedicated in memory of Eastman's mother. The mezzanine provided an office and other facilities, while the second floor contained an assembly hall and fifteen additional studios. The evening following the formal opening of the school was the occasion for the official dedication of Kilbourn Hall, which featured the Kilbourn Quartette and Alf Klingenberg as piano soloist.

In the spring of 1922, the issue involving the Institute's charter was finally resolved. Walter Hubbell, attorney for the University, wrote to Augustus Downing on April 26 suggesting that the University desired to surrender the charter of the Institute in view of the fact that the Institute's property "was now owned and used by the University in its Eastman School of Music." Downing replied on May 2, indicating that this procedure "would be sufficient to close up the affairs of the D.K.G. Institute." A month later the University of Rochester commencement included the first conferal of the new bachelor of music degree.

The summer months saw what was described as feverish work to complete the theater, and this included the final installment of the huge theater organ with its 10,000 pipes and 140 stops, as well as completion of art work by the noted muralists, Ezra Winter and Barry Faulkner. The previous November Eastman finally agreed to have the auditorium bear his name rather than being called the "National Academy of Motion Pictures", and on September 2, 1922, the Eastman Theatre opened its doors for a special preview for distinguished guests. On Labor Day, September 4, the theater was opened to the general public, with continuous performances from 1:00 in the afternoon until 11:00 at night. The show opened with a performance of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, and the feature movie was "The Prisoner of Zenda."

At approximately the same time, the school opened for its second year. With the new facilities now being totally available, the Institute building on Prince Street was converted into a University dormitory, serving students for the next eighteen years before being demolished in 1940. The number of degree students in Sep-

tember 1922 increased to eighty-four, and additional enrollment totalled twelve hundred. Operational receipts for the first year had been \$239,287.00, while expenditures totalled only \$196,562.00, giving indication that the business aspects of the operation were on a very sound basis compared with the Prince Street enterprise.

A growing student body, a faculty of ability and prestige, incomparable facilities, and a budget where receipts exceeded expenditures would all seem to indicate that the Eastman School of Music was not only thriving but also under very capable management. But on June 22, 1923, at the end of the school's second year, Alf Klingenberg received a letter from Eastman requesting his resignation. His contract, signed in 1918 when he sold the Institute to George Eastman, had been for a term of five years, but there is nothing to suggest that he was not anticipating a renewal of his appointment as Director. Public announcement of the director's resignation was accompanied by a statement that irreconcilable differences had arisen between Klingenberg and the school's Board of Managers (which consisted of Klingenberg, Rush Rhees, Eastman, and Rochester industrialist George Todd). It is, of course, highly significant that the request for Klingenberg's resignation came from Eastman rather than from the University President. The differences alluded to must have evolved gradually through many private conversations and meetings of which no record has been kept.

Klingenberg's outlook and training was, of course, very much of the European conservatory mentality. Perhaps he was reluctant to see the importance of the school as a university department, and the relatively long amount of time required for the development of the baccalaureate program may indicate this. Yet, his earlier work in Kansas would certainly suggest that he was open to the academic side of music training. Whatever the reasons behind Eastman's letter of June 22, however, Alf Klingenberg was forced to leave his position as Director of the Eastman School of Music after guiding the new school for only two years. On June 28, 1923, Rush Rhees announced to the faculty that Arthur See, Secretary of the Eastman School, would be "in administrative charge" pending appointment of a new Director, but in September this was superseded by an announcement that Raymond Wilson would serve as Acting Director.

Prior to their departure from Rochester, the Klingenbergs were given a series of farewell entertainments and he was given a watch by President Rhees on behalf of the Eastman School faculty. Then,

on the evening of October 5, 1923, Alf and Alexandra Klingenberg left Rochester for New York City. On May 29 of the following year, Rush Rhees announced to the faculty that Howard Hanson, "an American of cosmopolitan musical training and experience", had been selected as the new Director. Hanson's arrival in the fall of 1924 marked the beginning of a forty-year tenure at the school which led to the establishment of the Eastman School of Music as an institution of international fame and importance.

In later life Alf Klingenberg lived mostly in France during the winter and in Norway for the summer months, where he had a beautiful home near Oslo. He led a modest and quiet life, occasionally giving concerts, but his leisure time was increasingly spent with painting and sculpture, for which he had considerable talent. He also composed music, but with undue modesty burned most his works prior to his death. Eleven years after leaving Rochester, Alf and Alexandra Klingenberg returned for a four-month stay in the United States, including a visit to Rochester where they were warmly greeted by their many friends. He generously made a visit to the Eastman School of Music to meet his successor, Howard Hanson, whom he described as "a man of charming personality, a musical genius, and a very able director."⁹ Alf Klingenberg died after a long illness in Vestre Gausdal, Norway, during the winter of 1944. Alexandra Klingenberg outlived her husband by several years, during which time she destroyed his papers and correspondence. Little remains in Rochester or in Norway, therefore, to fully document the contributions made by her husband towards the establishment of the Eastman School of Music. What can be said, however, is that the rich accomplishments of Howard Hanson and his successors were only possible because of the vision and dedication of Alf Klingenberg.

By founding the Institute of Musical Art, he gave Rochester a music school of sufficient distinction so as to attract the interest and support of many important citizens of the city. By professionally associating himself with people such as George Barlow Penny, he prepared his school for the important transition from a conservatory to a university music department, and elicited the interest and support of Rush Rhees towards that goal. Together with Rhees and other like-minded colleagues, he and his wife secured George Eastman's participation in their dream, without which the music school project would have never succeeded. He helped plan and prepare for the new building on Gibbs Street and was responsible for the selection of the initial Eastman School faculty, many of whom

continued at the School with great distinction for many, many years. Finally, Klingenberg helped to develop the initial baccalaureate program and to award the first bachelor of music degrees conferred by the Eastman School of Music. These were great accomplishments for which the school's first director deserves much more credit than he is customarily given.

Vincent A. Lenti is a longtime member of the Eastman School of Music faculty.

END NOTES

1. Interviewed by the author.
2. Interviewed by the author, and included in Miss Ingelow's written notes which are now housed in the Eastman School of Music's Sibley Music Library.
3. "Philanthropy Under A Bushel", March 21, 1920.
4. Ekman, Karl. Sibelius. Alan Wilmer Ltd., London, 1936.
5. Layton, Robert. Sibelius. J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1965.
6. The New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Macmillian, London, 1980. Volume 17, page 283.
7. Johnson, Harold. Sibelius. Alfred Knopf, New York, 1959.
8. Contained in the archives of Rush Rhees Library at the University of Rochester.
9. Quoted from an unidentified contemporary newsclipping.

BACK COVER: The Eastman Theatre under construction and School of Music from Gibbs Street looking toward Main Street in 1921. (Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music)

