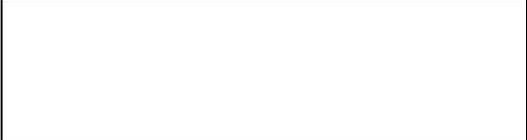


BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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There’s Music In The Air (Part 4—conclusion)

The love and enjoyment of performing or listening to music knows no season or era.

December, 1919, the American Legion Jesse B. Cooley Post #235, “...of young and active ex-service men” was organized. The list of 15 charter members includes many who loved making (and had been) music in Brighton. January 26, 27, 1928, the group of over 51 Legion members presented a “Legion Minstrel Review” at the Washington Theater (222 W. Grand River) which had opened August 12, 1926. A complete listing of the 47 members in the cast, all local, would be tedious. (Contact this compiler for information.) One of the ads in the souvenir program is for Bill Seger’s Band, “Music for all Occasions; Pep, Harmony, Rhythm”. Seger’s band was active into the 1940’s; recorded as performing the 2nd in a series of summer concerts on the east shore of the mill pond in June, 1944. In the orchestra are Frank Seger, trombone; Harold Seger, piano; Ned Seger, bass and William A. Seger, trumpet.

Copies of two original programs presented by the “Brighton Minstrels” reveal many local residents participating in comedy sketches, vocal and musical solos and instrumentals. Research indicates this group was active in the late 1920s/1930s.

To a public outcry of “There’s nothing to do”, the Livingston County Concert Band was formed, April 12, 1972. All ages, all vocations were represented. Family oriented activities assured everyone could be involved. This group followed the demise, c. 1963, of the first Livingston County Concert Band which was organized in the mid 1950s. For various reasons (the advent of TV?) this group did not last.

About 1975, Guy Smith, a Brighton Township resident, created the Fifth Michigan Regiment Band. This group emphasizes historically accurate music, uniforms, instruments and equipment of the original Civil War band.

July, 1977, the Livingston County Press announced the formation of a recreation of the 1863 United States Marine Band, President Lincoln’s own, in Brighton. Authentic music and instrumentation are the mainstay of this band. By 1979 members had logged 6000 miles performing at a variety of historical events in the U.S. and Canada. Kiwanis gazebo summer concerts by the mill pond were performed and Independence Day concerts.

Presently one finds local churches have chorale and instrumental groups that often perform in public in addition to worship services. Schools, elementary and secondary, offer many opportunities to musicians and listeners. Besides being part of the curriculum, groups of parents, local residents and merchants support and encourage school connected participation. Seasonal concerts and parades give players the occasions to bring joy to listeners. The Livingston Symphony Orchestra is playing locally and a number of community choruses and instrumental groups thrive in the county. There is still plenty of music in the air.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from Brighton Area Historical Society archives and Carol McMacken's; “From Settlement to City” and Society archives. Additions/corrections requested. 810-229-6402.)