

Obituary: Donald Christlieb

(October 10, 1912- February 16, 2001)

The bassoon world was saddened by the report of the passing of **Donald Christlieb** on Friday, February 16th of this year in his home in Sherman Oaks, California. He was 88 years old.

Don Christlieb was born in southern California on October 10, 1912, and he has remained a major musical figure in that area for over 60 years. Don studied first with Belgian bassoonist **Achilles Heyner** and later with fellow IDRS Honorary Member **Frederick Moritz**, who was principal bassoon of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at that time. Don has performed with the LA Philharmonic and the Glendale Symphony, but his primary position was that of principal bassoon with the Fox and MGM movie studios for many years. While there, he participated in hundreds of sound tracks for major films during Hollywood's "Golden Days" with such movies as *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*. Don was also a driving force for contemporary music as an organizer and performer in the famous Monday Evening Concerts-at one time the most important new music concerts in the nation. He worked closely with such composers as Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg, and was the bassoonist on the landmark first recording of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Zeitmass* under the direction of Robert Craft in the late 1950's.

As a founder and owner of Christlieb Products, Don was a pioneer in reedmaking techniques in America, introducing such products as the dial indicator. He also did pioneer research in measuring the conical bore of wing joints on bassoons and has influenced considerable further studies on bassoon bore measurement.

Don was a member of IDRS almost from the start. In 1978 he hosted an excellent Conference in Los Angeles and for many years organized and conducted the final concert performance of Handel's *Royal Fireworks Music* at the

annual Conferences. He was elected an Honorary Member at the IDRS Conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in August, 1990.

In Don's memory, **Andy Klein** of Los Angeles wrote the following tribute on the internet on Feb. 17, 2001:

There are no words to express the sadness of the news on Don Christlieb's passing. Don shared so much with so many. His well documented career demonstrates why he was so articulate and well versed on important matters. His many fine stories of the greatest and important figures of the past century will remain an important recollection for generations. His impeccable skill as a bassoonist inspired all who heard him. That means millions and millions of people. That's our Don Christlieb. As a clinician and author his work is indispensable. He leaves an important legacy-one that encompasses an important time in history. Don's ability to document this period is invaluable. Don always had an open door and an open heart.

Pearl, Don's wife, is all that makes life wonderful; my heart-felt prayers are with her and her sons, Pete and Tony, and the entire Christlieb family.

In remembering your hearty laugh and kind soul, ad vitam aeternam.

Donald Christlieb was a legend in the bassoon world. We in the IDRS join the bassoon world in mourning the loss of one of our greatest stars. He is survived by his widow, Pearl and his two sons, Tony and Peter. Condolences can be sent to their home at 3311 Scadlock Lane, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403.