



Musician for 65 years

Seventy-seven-year-old Charles Scott, of Elizabeth Street in Midland, has been playing music for 65 years. His talents have taken him through many phases—from providing background music to silent movies, to playing in symphonic orchestras. Presently, Mr. Scott

plays for the Barrie City Band, senior citizen's group in Balm Beach, and is taking an active part in the organization of the Huronia District Band.

Staff photo

Charles Scott played violin during silent screen era

Moviegoers in the last five years have witnessed radical changes in the films they watch. Rapid technical advances in Hollywood have transformed movies from something that is seen, into something that is also heard. Movies are now billed as having such audio delights as "Sensations" and stereophonic soundtracks—features which completely bath the onlooker in the sounds of crashing buildings, exploding bombs, and ultra-amplified rock concerts.

The advent of the talkie spelled the end of Mr. Scott's movie house career. But, fortunately, as the silent film industry was petering out, the dance craze of the late 1920's began to boom in England. So for eight years, Mr. Scott played in dance bands, performing such popular styles of music as the Charleston and the Foxtrot. He and his violin would travel to different London clubs and dance halls, performing in several bands.

Gradually, says Mr. Scott, he tired of the dance circuit. "After I'd had about eight years of that, it got to be a little much. We would be playing four or five nights a week, and doing the same thing each time. You get a little bored, you know."

So Mr. Scott dropped out of the dance orchestras, and began playing in his spare time only. He took a fulltime job, and in 1941, moved to Canada, settling in Hamilton.

There Mr. Scott began working for the Singer Sewing Machine Company, and at the same time began serious playing once again. During World War II and until he and his wife moved to Midland, Mr. Scott played with the prestigious symphony orchestra in Hamilton—an orchestra which he claims, had some of the best musicians of the day in its ranks.

A few years later, Mr. and Mrs. Scott moved to Midland. Since he has been in the area, Mr. Scott estimates that he has performed on a regular basis in eight different bands, and on an informal basis, in countless groups. In Midland he also began giving music lessons, although he says he rarely accepted money for his services.

Since moving to the area, Mr. Scott has been involved in various town bands, including ones in Midland and Victoria Harbour. Five years ago, at the age of 72, he began learning how to play the clarinet, and it is that instrument on which he performs mostly now, although he is quick to pull out his 35 year old violin and play a tune.

At the moment, he plays in two groups: the Barrie City Orchestra, and a senior citizen's band in Balm Beach. When the Huronia District Band begins performing in the summer, the 77-year-old man will be playing in three groups on a regular basis.

Amazingly spry for his age, Mr. Scott says that it is his active interest in music that has kept him fit.

"If some youngster asks me if he should take music lessons, I always tell him yes, because you really appreciate being able to play when you get to my age," he explains.

Besides the violin and the clarinet, Mr. Scott also plays the accordion, the piano, guitar, mandolin, and recorder. He says he likes to sing too, breaking into lyrics he wrote for the well-known song, "The

Homecoming". Two summers ago, Mr. Scott, backed by the now-defunct Midland-Penitanguishene Citizen's Band, sang the song at a concert given at the Mental Health Centre in Penitanguishene.

Mr. Scott says he is looking very much forward to the forming of the new Huronia District Band, a group which he says "the area needs very badly." Area music lovers will be able to see Mr. Scott play with the band beginning this summer, and most certainly for many performances, after that.

Declining enrolment will affect Midland: report

A report prepared for the Simcoe County Board of Education has indicated that declining enrolments in elementary and secondary schools will affect the Midland area more than other parts of the county.

Presented at Wednesday night's board meeting in Barrie, by Superintendent of Planning and Curriculum, Dr. Robert Thomas, the report suggests that while enrolments will decline generally across the county in the next seven years, schools in the Midland peninsula area will not experience a diminishing decline rate predicted for the latter years of the period.

Emphasizing that predictions contained in the report may not necessarily take into account unforeseen changes in enrolment patterns, Dr. Thomas said that nonetheless, he feels it indicates a shift in school enrolments that will affect education in the county.

At the county level, the report forecasts a decrease in enrolments for 1978 and 1979. During 1980 and 1981, it suggests that enrolments will begin to climb slightly, but by 1982 will have begun to decline once more.

Area Three of the Simcoe County school district, which comprises the Midland peninsula area, will not experience the slight upswing in enrolments predicted for 1980-81, the report states.

In secondary schools, the report forecasts a general province-wide decline through the period 1978 to 1985. A minimal upswing in enrolments may occur during the last two years of this period, the report goes on to suggest.

Area Three will also see a continuing decline through the seven-year period, although it is not expected that the possible slight increase in enrolments predicted for other parts of the county will affect the Midland area.

Dr. Thomas says that the predictions contained in his report are based upon enrolment trends experienced in the last two years. It does not go any further than 1985 in its forecasts, because, as Dr. Thomas puts it, "to go beyond that, is virtually meaningless because trends can change so quickly."

He suggests that the main effect of the predicted enrolment decreases will be a surplus teacher problem,

and bus transportation difficulties caused by lesser concentrations of students in rural areas. He said the surplus teacher problem could be

dealt with by relocating teachers throughout the county, and upgrading qualifications so that teachers could be transferred to different

teaching levels. "Our hope is that actual layoffs won't occur, assuming of course, that there is a willingness on the part of teachers to

transfer from elementary to secondary schools and from area to area," Dr. Thomas commented. "It's not a pleasant picture from the point of

view of the teaching profession, but we have to realize that we're a lot better off than most other areas in the province," he added.

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