

VARIOUS LOCATIONS
Moving

BY GRACE BARNES
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When Harold Bradley returned to Niagara Falls during the 1930's the country was in the depths of the Great Depression. The bottom had dropped out of the concert world - there was little employment for anyone. Men 'rode the rods' to the west to engage in the harvesting, slept in 'flop houses'. People went from door to door, asking for small jobs with a sandwich as payment. Life was indeed difficult, but simple and everyone helped his neighbour.

It was to this that Harold Bradley returned. He continued to practise, kept his pianistic skills, played for his friends and performed whenever possible. He was a fine pianist and continued to be so, taking advantage of any opportunity.

He gradually gathered a small group of young people to prepare as teachers and ^{ARTS} to assist in the ^{research} study which he and Philipp had begun. At first he taught and studied in his parents' home on Victoria Avenue in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Within a few years he became the Music Advisor of W.H.L.D. located in the Hotel Niagara, Niagara Falls, New York, then almost ^{ENTIRELY} purely a classical radio station, where he taught in Studio A. He soon moved all his work to that location.

I joined the group in August 1939, sixteen years old, a graduate of Fifth Form (now Grade XI11), and an eager student of the wonderful world of music. I soon began teaching ⁱⁿ under the regular supervision of Harold Bradley. All of us taught in our own homes, but met for a long session every week to be instructed and to discuss our findings.

In 1948 I began to teach in Niagara Falls, N.Y. and after a succession of varied and somewhat difficult locations finally rented a small room on First Street near the Hotel Niagara. I had to buy a piano, two chairs and set up business. Later Deryck Aird and Dorothe Gervan rented space from me.

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At that time the work was known as the Harold Bradley School of Music, later the Bradley Organization and finally registered with the Ontario Government as the Bradley Institute for Music Education Research Limited.

Some time later Harold rented a room in the Strand Building, and soon after several of us followed and the group became more cohesive.

In the meantime, a number of the teachers continued to work on the Canadian side, first on Main Street and then on Queen Street where the local radio station CJRN is now located.

In 1970 the complete section of Niagara Falls, N.Y. where we had our studios in the Strand Building was demolished and we were forced to vacate. We decided to move our head-quarters to the Canadian side - to establish the entire business in Niagara Falls, Ontario. It was a ^{MOMENTOUS CHALLENGE} strenuous adventure but everything proved to be to our advantage. We continued to draw a large clientele of American students and to further the research.

There came a day in 1970 when Harold Bradley said to Deryck and me, "Come. I want to show you something". He took us to the vacant premises (^{4P}thirty-three steps up) above the CIBC on Queen Street. Bill Martin, then a member of our Board of Directors, had moved his law business to a new building on Huron Street and the entire floor above the bank was empty. We felt our way through the dark, panelled waiting room and explored the numerous rooms of various sizes, ^{ADMG} from quite small ^{to} a larger area suitable for classes, and a big area which could be used for ensemble, lectures, performance, etc.

At the conclusion of our tour, I remarked to Harold 'You shouldn't have brought me to see this'. And then 'How can we afford such an increase in rent?' Fortunately my back-ground as a member

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of a large family during the Great Depression had equipped me to take chances; to move ahead and to know that all would be well. And so we moved, and enjoyed our work in excellent conditions for fourteen years. There were disadvantages - no parking for our clients was a real problem. I marvel at how the mothers managed to bring so many very young children from a rather remote parking area and to carry or slowly walk them up those thirty-three steps. Such dedication!

1984 was a difficult year for us. So much happened. In April, Harold's wife died after a long sad illness. He was away from the studio a great deal, and we all assumed more responsibility. The day before she died, the bank manager came to Deryck and me to tell us that directions had come from the Head Office in Toronto for the bank to take over the entire building. Perhaps ~~w~~we should have been fore-warned as our lease had not been renewed, but we were busy musicians! We were given two months notice, later extended by two weeks.

During Friday afternoon Deryck and I walked up and down Queen Street looking at vacant buildings. Then we decided to put it out of our minds for the week-end. Harold returned on Tuesday, fortunately accompanied by his son Michael, and we broke the news.

Harold, amazing as ever and so well known in the city, immediately began to communicate with various people, including Gabe Mallouk who ^{WAS DOING} ~~did~~ so much to aid Niagara Falls at that time. Gabe (~~Mariner Real Estate~~) was a successful realtor and knew his field and associates well. He took us to see an empty two-storied building which seemed to be ideal and we decided to buy it. Another big undertaking!

We decided to completely gut the second floor and to re-model

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it according to our needs. Deryck, who had always leaned towards building design and architecture, drafted a plan and the staff went to work on demolition.

Harold, always a tower of strength, went to the city hall, to the bank, saw so many people to make sure the business was on a sure footing for the future.

We moved on July 13th and celebrated the occasion with a barbecue for the staff at my home.

AT LONG LAST, THE BRADLEY INSTITUTE WAS
ESTABLISHED IN ITS OWN PERMANENT LOCATION!