

In Memoriam

Jack Nebergall

1924–1996

Jack Nebergall, well-loved harpist and bolster of the harp world, died of cancer on 17 May 1996 in his San Francisco home. Jack will long be remembered for his outstanding support of young talent, including the establishment, in 1993, of the Doris Nebergall Award through the American Harp Society Foundation, and the donation and presentation of the third-prize award at the U.S.A. International Harp Competition in Bloomington, Indiana, each year since the competition began in 1989. In 1995 Jack donated a Lyon & Healy Electric Harp to the University of Arizona harp department, and for years generously encouraged outstanding individual young harpists, often anonymously.

Jack began his own study of music at age four. (His father was a stage manager at a vaudeville theater, an environment in which Jack lived from an early age.) His early harp teachers included Doris Helen Calkins and Kajetan Attl.

Jack was widely respected for his unique ballad style which was rich with complex jazz chords and an impeccable elegance. He had an extensive career as a pop and jazz harpist, including serving as staff harpist for CBS Radio and performing with numerous dance bands, accompanying such soloists as Nat "King" Cole and Ethel Merman. For many years, Jack performed with Danny Yale and the Regency Strings, playing both at their "home base," the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero, San Francisco, and at summer harp festivals when Jack flew the group in to give workshops. With Danny Yale, Jack made his first recordings and later released a hauntingly beautiful solo album entitled, "Ain't Misbehavin'."

Jack was teacher and performer at many summer pop and jazz harp festivals, including the very first Summer Festival of Jazz and Pop Music for Harp held in 1978 in Santa Barbara, California. At the 1995 Lyon & Healy HarpFest in Tucson, Arizona, a special evening was dedicated to celebrating Jack's contributions to the harp world. Jack was a board member of the World Harp Congress and a strong advocate of the American Harp Society. To quote a fellow harpist of many years ago, "Everyone loves Jack Nebergall." This dear friend to so many shall be sorely missed.

Carrol McLaughlin



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