

A Word Of Thanks

Our father liked to say, “The music industry is a good business for a small group of people.” He didn’t coin the phrase—he attributed it to the late Philip Wyman, a revered Baldwin Piano executive—but looking back over a long life that ended last month, he was definitely a member of that fortunate “small group.” Over a four-decade span, he built *The Music Trades* into a thriving enterprise, relished his work, took pleasure in the people he encountered throughout the industry, and counted many as lifelong friends.

Literary editors struggle to get authors to “write what you know.” John Majeski needed no urging. He knew the music industry intimately and wrote about it with authority. He came of age professionally at a time when the industry was emerging from two decades of forced hibernation. The Great Depression in the ‘30s had slowed industry activity to a virtual crawl, and restrictions on consumer manufacturing during World War II had shut it down completely. As a bumper crop of brash entrepreneurs revitalized the industry in the post-war period, he used his columns to celebrate their achievements and help guide their efforts.

He was the consummate “hands-on” manager who was immersed in every detail of magazine operations, from selecting type fonts to writing subscription promotions. “Attention to detail” was his mantra, often to the exasperation of his co-workers. Like many business owners, he defined himself by his work, and reveled in it. However, he was unusual in his willingness to graciously cede the limelight to make room for a new generation. We took over the publication in the early ‘80s, in an incremental but remarkably speedy transition. Although he remained acutely interested in the industry until his death, he was the rare father who consciously stepped back and let his sons find their own way.

The relentless pace of change and the immediacy of commerce make for short memories. Our father and the titans of the music industry who were his friends and colleagues—M.H. Berlin, who founded Chicago Musical Instruments, once the industry’s largest company and the parent of Gibson and Lowrey; Vito Pascucci, the founder of Leblanc; Don Randall, the architect of Fender’s success; Henry Steinway, of the piano making family; and many others—are remembered by a dwindling number. But just as ripples radiating on the pond’s surface are visible long after the stone has sunk from

view, his influence continues to be felt. Whatever success we have achieved, personally and through the magazine, is due to our apprenticeship at his side. He was without peer in recounting industry history, and by word and deed he taught the value of diligence, thoughtful planning, and integrity. Progress of all types is the byproduct of accumulated knowledge, and his 40 years of fairly and accurately disseminating information unquestionably

helped fuel the industry’s advancement.

We mourn his passing and miss his companionship, but our sadness is offset by the knowledge that his was a full life well led, marked by good friends, a loving family, and a rewarding career. On his behalf, we offer thanks to all those in the industry, living and departed, who helped make this all possible. We know he would want to express gratitude to all those who helped make his life such a rewarding ride.

Brian & Paul Majeski
brian@musictrades.com
paul@musictrades.com



Perhaps John Majeski’s proudest moment was stepping away from the magazine and passing responsibility to his sons Paul (left) and Brian. The bust is of magazine founder John C. Freund, and the portrait is of John F. Majeski Sr., who acquired the publication in 1929.