

Tribute



More than 75 of his former students came together Thursday night in Stevenson Auditorium for a musical salute to the late teacher C. Frederic Ulmer. Doug Kington (below, right) sings "Only Make Believe" during part one. Also singing in part one was Dale Antley Clark (below, left) with "Buttercup." (T&D photos by David P. Phillips)

Musical memories before a packed house

By THOMAS BROWN
T&D Staff Writer

Every seat in the Stevenson Auditorium was filled Thursday night at the salute to the late C. Frederic Ulmer.

Anyone there who did not know the man certainly learned from his former students and other admirers that he was loved, respected and remembered.

Every individual who paraded across the stage credited Ulmer with giving them a start and making them aware of their talent.

"He was a man with a gift for pulling talent out of everybody," former Miss USA Betty Lane Gramling said. "Personally, he taught me to make an entrance and to hold the audience once I had their attention."

Gramling said she relied on much of what she learned from Ulmer during her reign as Miss USA, especially



when meeting dignitaries, politicians and celebrities.

A career that spanned more than 30 years, the Orangeburg High and Orangeburg-Wilkinson music teacher was mentor not only to future musicians and performers, but his insistence on excellence from his students in all their endeavors forged in them the necessity to give their best.

"It is a tribute to his greatness that so many people showed up," Bill Whetsell said. "How many people do you know that could draw this

kind of crowd 17 years after his death? But we're here because of what he gave us," he said. "He gave us the gift of confidence in ourselves. And that will last a lifetime."

Concert pianist Mac Frampton told the audience that Ulmer allowed him to be the accompanist for the high school chorus and, along with other musical tributes, did a lush rendition of "Drink To Me Only," Ulmer's favorite

audition song.

"No man was more important in my career than C. Frederic Ulmer," Frampton said. "He was my window on the world. And for me, he was a bridge from amateur to professional. This tribute is both exciting and moving, that so many lives were touched by this man."

Probably traveling the farthest to come to the salute, Frampton came from Tahiti, where he just finished a concert tour.

All funds raised will go to establish a permanent music



Please see **Memories**, 6A

He never really knew how much he meant to the Orangeburg community'

Ulmer

Continued from Page 1C

Salley and dozens more.

"Next to my family and church, I am convinced that Frederick Ulmer influenced my life more than any other person," said Annie Flintom McLeod. "The idea of establishing a music scholarship in his honor is long overdue. Under the supervision of Debbie Roland and her staff, I am sure it will be well supervised."

Harry Bryant smiled as he remembered those days in 9th through 12th grades when he played the lead role in "Carousel." He remembered that dress rehearsals were always held on a Wednesday morning and the performances were on Thursday and Friday nights. And he fondly remembers the special man who directed that play.

"I began performing in the ninth grade and I was in 'The Student Prince' with Pierce Arant (now a music educator at the University of Georgia), who was the leading actor. Then, in the 10th grade, we did 'South Pacific.' I wasn't in that; I played baseball that year. Bootsie King Wolfe was the star of that musical and it was a major production, with special sets.

"The next year, in 1969, we did 'Carousel' and I had the leading role in that. It was a lot of fun! In my senior year, 1960, we did 'Naughty Marietta' with Eleanor Corley Salley as the leading female actress. Andy Hill had the male lead.

"Yes, Mr. Ulmer was a great teacher. He taught chorus as a class, an elective, but you had to audition for it. But he could take a fella that thought he was tone deaf and turn him into a performer. He really did have a special teaching talent."

Annie McLeod agrees. "He developed talent in individuals that no one else knew was there, or tried to discover. Those devoted to his memory must number in the thousands."

"I'll bet you could go to nearly

every church in this town and you could find someone in that choir who was taught by Mr. Ulmer. He was a buddy; you could go to him and he would listen and talk to you about it," Bryant said.

All his students know one sure thing about Ulmer — he never went anywhere without his bottle of Maalox!

"There were all kinds of Maalox jokes," said Ray Hartzog. "We worried him so much he had to take Maalox!"

"Yes," Bryant said, "we performed live on television every Christmas and one year we were going to WIS and on the way up there, he drank two or three bottles of Maalox."

Bryant said he believes that Ulmer had an ulcer, but he never let it slow him down. His way was to take his medicine and keep on going.

"There were over 100 in the chorus. Most of the athletes were in the mixed chorus," Bryant said, "and they would leave football practice any time to sing in the chorus. We all played football, but we all sang in the chorus, too."

Ray and Stephen Hartzog both were among Ulmer's students and they, too, remember him with affection.

"He was more than a choral director to the kids, and to me, too," Ray Hartzog said. "Most kids he had confidence in; he always believed in the best in them. He had a good sense of humor, which I guess he needed with us! He was a fine musician; he played piano and he sang. He taught singing techniques that were invaluable."

Hartzog was in "Oklahoma" during his student years, 1967-68, and said he remembers all the things Ulmer taught the cast.

"You know, long after the craze



over playing games and such is gone, the music is still there. What Mr. Ulmer taught us lives on."

Ray Hartzog also had a small role in "My Fair Lady," and says that was fun, too.

"He never really knew how much he meant to the Orangeburg community, I don't think," Hartzog said quietly.

His brother, Stephen Hartzog, was a student of Ulmer from 1967-1971.

"His love for music and his work was everything," Stephen said. "He was the ultimate music teacher. He strived to instill in everyone he worked with, even if you were only in his music class, that it was important for them to always have music in their lives."

"I don't know that I ever had any teacher who was more dedicated," Stephen Hartzog said. "Mr. Ulmer also had a fine musical background both as a singer and instrumentalist."

Hartzog was in several productions, including "Brigadoon," "Oklahoma," "My Fair Lady" and "Hello, Dolly!"

"He drilled us for hours and hours. The choreography was by (the late) Bob Fraley. It was so enjoyable, you just loved it."

Annie McLeod of Calhoun County considers Ulmer to have been a major influence in her life.

"He offered many students in the Orangeburg area the opportunity to learn, and enjoy, music — proceed with strict discipline and a sense that music could be fun if



Admiration for the late C. Frederick Ulmer, who died in October 1979 following a car accident, has inspired the Calhoun County Museum and Cultural Center, with the support of the S.C. Arts Commission, The NEA and The Darrell Cooper Memorial Fund, to sponsor a special tribute to Ulmer. Noted pianist Mac Frampton, a former Orangeburg resident who appears in concert all over the world, has made special plans to perform at the tribute next February. These photos come from the 1950s, with the performance being identified as Mikado in 1953 and the Singers bus photo dated June 1951.



one gave it the time and energy," she said. "Today, my life reflects the glow of Frederick Ulmer in our church choir and in the appreciation of fine music."

"Of course," she added, "the yearly WIS Christmas presentations and the annual operettas offered his chorus an opportunity to

show off their talents.

"I am indebted to, and dearly loved, this man who brought so much pleasure to Orangeburg for nearly a quarter of a century," Ms. McLeod said, adding that she is much in favor of a "long overdue" tribute to Ulmer, such as the proposed music scholarship.

Anyone who would like to be part of this tribute to a man who shared so much of himself with his students, and with his community, may call Debbie Roland at the Calhoun County Museum and Cultural Center (803-874-3964) or write her at 303 Butler St., St. Matthews, S.C., 29133.

LAURA SADLER
is now associated with
REFLECTIONS
Manicures • Pedicures • Fiberglass Nails
1296 Broughton St.
Call for an Appointment
Tuesday - Saturday
534-3359