



Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

KLEINHANS MUSIC HALL

A gift to the Buffalo Community in 1940

In 1934, Edward L. Kleinhans left approximately one million dollars to the city in order to build a music hall “for the use, enjoyment and benefit of the city of Buffalo.” He left the money in memory of his wife, Mary Seaton Kleinhans and his mother, Mary Livingston.

Mr. Kleinhans owned Kleinhans, a men's clothing store, that was located on Main Street in downtown Buffalo. Both he and his wife devoted much of their lives to cultural projects, including music. Interestingly, some say Edward Kleinhans couldn't carry a tune or even whistle. His wife, however, was an accomplished singer.

Between 1934 and 1938, much discussion took place as to the location, size and style of the new building. Laos Shuk, the conductor at the time, encouraged the planners to think of the Hall as a home for the Orchestra although it would have other uses.

Architects Eliel and Eero Saarinen, a famous father and son team of architects from Finland, were chosen to design the Hall. They understood the importance of sound and were famous for practical and beautiful designs. Kleinhans Music Hall is renown for its extraordinary acoustics and unique design.

When you look at Kleinhans Music Hall from above, it looks like the body of a string instrument. Kleinhans Music Hall contains three halls. Each has the same shape but is a different size. The Main Hall seats 2,839 people. The Mary Seaton Room can seat up to 800 people. The seats are moveable, so this room can have a variety of uses. Livingston Hall seats about 200 people. Years ago the Orchestra rehearsed in this room, but now they rehearse on the main stage.

Kleinhans Music Hall opened on October 12, 1940 with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra performing the *Beethoven Violin Concerto*, the *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* by J.S. Bach, and Brahms *Symphony no. 1*. On October 12, 2000 the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra celebrated 60 years of Kleinhans Music Hall by re-creating that exact program. In the year 2001, as part of a renovation project, the Hall celebrated the reopening of the outside reflecting pool and the renovation of the restaurant.

Throughout the years, Kleinhans Music Hall has had many events and concerts other than the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. They include concerts by The Buffalo Chamber Music Society, Boston Symphony and the Zorah Berry Series as well as dances, dinners, graduations, and wedding receptions. There is even record of Captain Kangaroo performing at Kleinhans. During that event the audience is said to have “wrecked” the seats. Most importantly, however, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra regards Kleinhans Music Hall as its home.