



Musical Instruments of Canada



SINCE 1960

The History of Musical Instruments of Canada

In his early teens Matt De Florio took accordion lessons and studied relentlessly. However, a visit to New York in the mid 40's changed everything when Matt had the opportunity to meet two accordion greats: Pietro Diero and Charles Magnante. These two players became a great inspiration and soon after Matt decided to begin a professional career in music. Upon returning to Toronto, Matt got a job at the Old Mill Restaurant where he played for the next three years. After leaving the Old Mill, Matt played in the prestigious Imperial Room at The Royal York Hotel for two years. Matt also took great pride in playing at the Horse Shoe Tavern alongside Peter Appleyard: the up and coming jazz vibraphonist.



Matt often performed at CBC radio shows and many private engagements. However, the most memorable experience was the five years he played on the CBC Television show *Holiday Ranch with Cliff McKay*. A total of over two hundred shows were filmed in front of a live camera between 1953-1957. Matt played many solos and wrote his own arrangements for the group during this time. *Holiday Ranch* was host to many guest artists, which included singers Robert Goulet, Perry Como and Lorne Greene from the TV show *Bonanza*. On one occasion at the Canadian National Exhibition, Matt played a solo, after which Bob Hope made a guest appearance. Matt also contributed to the accordion community by giving lessons and writing three books: *Studio Method I*, *Studio Method II*, and *Fun to Play the Accordion*. In 1958, Matt left the spotlight to start his own business in Toronto that was originally called De Florio Imports. This began after meeting with a representative from an accordion factory in Castelfidardo, Italy. Later in the 60's, the business name was changed to *Musical Instruments of Canada*.

One of the main accomplishments of MIC was the development of the *Lidovox* organ accordion, which was the only one of its kind built in Canada. Over three hundred Lidovox electronic accordions were made up until 1978.



MIC later went on to sell a new line of synthesized accordions called the *Iorio* accorgan also known as the *Elkavox*. They also had their own line of standard acoustic accordions with the brand names: *Caruso*, *Lido*, and *De Florio*. These fine lines of Italian built accordions were sold mainly to the numerous accordion schools that existed in the 60's and 70's. During that time, MIC received up to three hundred Paolo Soprani Accordions in a single shipment. They were packed in 50 crates made of pine and took over three hours to unload.

In the late 80's, Matt along with Dixie Dean started the *Canadian Accordion Club*. The CAC enabled members to meet on a Sunday afternoon at one of the local hotels to share their common interest in the accordion. Many dinners and concerts took place and guest accordionist would perform regularly. Other meetings involved videos and CDs being played to entertain the members. The club was originally held at the Ramada Inn and remained under Matt's control for 14 years.



MIC has been serving the accordion community in Toronto and across Canada for over 45 years. During this time they have had many celebrities patronize their business, including jazz great Art Van Damme, Kevin Hearne of Bare Naked Ladies and Walter Ostanek (Canada's Polka King). His son Rudy De Florio joined the business in 1966 as an accordion technician. Rudy is now the current owner and operator.



MATT DE FLORIO
12 MAR. 1922 - 16 OCT.
2004