His Master's Voice

MO
MUSÉE DES ONDES   EMILE BERLINER

Studio Victor 1985-2015

One of the Last Studio Victor Sessions

MOEB Plans for 2016

By Anja Borck

The year 2015 ended with a shocker that will have a huge impact on the MOEB's 2016 activities.

In early December Gaetan Pilon of Studio Victor announced that after over 30 years of recording operations the studio would close. The last session was done on 18 December and the studio officially closed its' doors on 31 December, 2015. Not only has Studio Victor been a key recording site for the local music business it has also been the go-to place for the MOEB to organize fund raising. Presently the MOEB, in alliance with the owners of the Edifice RCA, is looking for ways to keep the historic studio intact. We hope to find an option to be able to reopen it to the public. However, as long as the studio's future is undecided, alternative venues for our fundraising events and conferences will have to be found. More on the closing of Victor next issue

•   This year the MOEB will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Because this spring our main focus will be designing and opening our new temporary exhibition on "Satellites in Montreal", events marking our anniversary celebration will take place in the autumn. The exhibition will open on the 8 May, 2016.

•   Downsizing of our collection has taking place since last fall. This will enable us to fit our most precious items in a new but relatively small storage space. At the end of this process we will hold an auction and public sale. All revenues raised by this auction will be dedicated to future acquisitions. We will publish the dates for the auction and sale on our facebook page.The auction will tak place on 30 April. It will start at 9:00 am and will run until 2pm. All sales are final and only cash will be accepted.

•   With the New Year starts our development of the prototype for a project, which the museum is preparing as a contribution in the celebration of Montreal's 375 anniversary. In collaboration with Concordia University and the creative team of Little Lab, the MOEB is working on developing smart phone supported digital tours through the historic RCA building. From January until April, the MOEB will meet every two weeks with students of the software engineering department to check on the programming progress. We expect a working prototype by May and by 2017 the public will be invited to explore the building and its history with their smart phone devices.

•   On December 5th 2015, the museum held its first Christmas Bazaar fundraising event. It was so successful, that we plan to have the bazaar as a yearly event.

•   A 2016 event calendar is in the making and will soon be published online at moeb.ca. Planned are concerts, conferences, community events, and last but not least, our annual general assembly (AGM). Keep checking our website regularly so you won't miss an event.
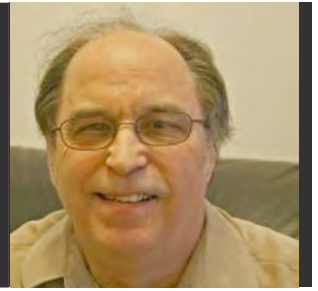

Christmas Bazaar 2015

Herbert Samuel Berliner
Father of the Canadian Record Industry

ByTim Hewlings

Herbert Samuel Berliner was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts on September 13, 1882. This was where the Berliner family spent their summers, away from his father's large house in Washington D.C.

His early education took place at the Bethel Military Academy in Virginia. At the time, this was a highly regarded school not far from the family's home in Washington. Graduates were Doctors, Lawyers and Judges in the Washington area. The school closed before WWI.

Herbert was sent to university at the Higher Vocational College/Polytechnic-Institute (German: Höhere Gewerbeschule/Polytechnische Schule), now the Leibniz University of Hannover. One of the most highly regarded schools in Germany at the time; it was also in his father's hometown, Hanover, Germany. He obtained a degree in Mechanical Engineering and while he was studying, worked for his uncle Joseph at Deutsche Grammophon for a time and it was there that he began developing his passion for, and his expertise, in sound recording.[1]

Herbert's father, Emile Berliner, had established the E. Berliner Company in Montreal in 1899. In 1904, the company was incorporated as the Berliner Gramophone Company. The purpose of the company was to press and distribute recordings from the Victor Talking Machine Company in the USA and from Berliner Gramophone affiliates around the world. Herbert Berliner at the age of 22, just out of university, was listed as one of the five stockholders, and a director of the company. It appears that during this period, Herbert travelled back and forth between Washington and Montreal. He did not have a permanent address in Montreal until 1913.

Oliver Berliner: *"Early on, Herbert had become the "black sheep" of the family, as while living in D.C he fathered a child out-of-wedlock (mother unknown) which he named Catherine Berliner. He, or perhaps Emile, recorded her in a message to the Berliner family where she played piano (quite well) and sang. The original disk is in the Library of Congress."* [2]

1906 saw the construction of a new manufacturing facility on the corner of Lenoir and St. Antoine streets in the St. Henri district of Montreal. It was ahead of its time, one of the first structures to use pre-stressed concrete construction. Given his modernist ideas and interest in state-of-the-art technology, it seems likely that Herbert would have had a hand in this design and its supervision.

Time and time again, Herbert would show the same innovative spirit that drove his father. Throughout his life he was an experimenter, always pushing the envelope, using the latest technology available.

Another example is the double-sided disk. Herbert tried time and again to convince Victor to start producing records with material recorded on both sides. The technology had been available since 1904, and a German company, Odeon, was producing them. Victor held the US Patent but refused to use it. According to Herbert "Victor hung on to the single-sided record like Henry Ford hung on to the model T!"[3] Finally, in 1908, Herbert had had enough and began issuing double-sided disks in Montreal.

In 1909 the Berliner Gramophone Company underwent reorganization. Herbert was appointed Vice-President and General Manager with his younger brother. Edgar. as Secretary-Treasurer. Over the next 10 years he led the company to extraordinary growth and expansion. Their father Emile remained President, but lived in Washington, and left the running of the company in Montreal to his two sons.

He and his brother were apparently quite ruthless as businessmen, holding Gramophone and record dealers to severe exclusivity contracts. In the early years they took legal action against a number of Gramophone dealers who had the temerity to sell other products in their stores.

Around 1915, patents begin to expire on the disc technology that had been monopolized by Victor, Berliner and Columbia until that time. Dozens of independent record companies begin to spring up. By 1916, business at Berliner Gramophone was doing well, but a large part of the profits were being sent to Victor in the US in the form of royalties. Herbert was a gifted recording engineer in his own right, and just reproducing copies of imported recordings must have irritated him as well. He must have been itching to make his own recordings. So, in order to reduce their dependence on the American company, Herbert began recording and releasing recordings by local Canadian artists.

The first three releases on his new 216000 series consisted of funny stories told by comics Gus Stone and Harry Green. It was found out many years later that theses two characters were H.S. Berliner himself. He was also a fine musician and played piano and organ on numerous records.

1 Edward Moogk:" Roll back the Years", National Library of Cnada, On 1975 p. 21
2 Personal correspondance from Oliver Berliner
3 Moogk, p. 21

His dedication to innovation shows up again around this time. One of the biggest technological challenges of the day was to make "talking pictures" - movies with sound. Herbert began to experiment with this new medium and made the first sound recording synchronized to film in the country. It should be noted that he also had a top-notch technical staff. His assistant in this project was a young Walter Darling, who went on to be one of the founders of Canada's first radio station CFCF, and later on worked with Associated Screen News. Herbert would later collaborate with both these organizations in broadcasting and synchronization of sound and film.[4]

This was a period of great technological advancement, no doubt brought on by World War I. Radio broadcasting was in its infancy and around this time the Canadian Government issued a broadcasting license to the Canadian Marconi Company for an experimental broadcasting station called XWA
.

In 1917, despite increased competition from new independent gramophone and record manufacturers, business was booming at Berliner Gramophone. Sales were so good that they were having trouble filling orders.[5] (To be continued)

L'enregistrement des disques à Montrèal

C'est grâce à l'initiative de la compagnie de gramophones Berliner, si nous avons maintenant à Montréal, tout ce qu'il faut, pour l'enregistrement de records parmi les nôtres.

La Direction de ce département a été confiée à notre distingué compositeur et collaborateur, M. Henri Miro. Ce dernier a un excellent orchestre à sa disposition, et l'enregistrement des records a lieu trois fois par semaine.

Le chanteur Dalberty a déjà enregistré plusieurs chansons fort populaires et fort en demande, chez les principaux marchands, et plusieurs autres chanteurs et chanteuses auront prochainement leur tour. On désire surtout des ténors.

Voilà une excellente occasion pour les nôtres de se produire en permanence devant le public, tout en faisant de l'argent, sans qu'ils aient le trouble d'aller à New-York.

Rappelons en passant que parmi nos Canadiens déjà enregistrés chez Berliner et dont les disques provoquent une bonne demande dans le public, se trouvent MM. Joseph Saucier, Edouard LeBel, J.-M. Magnan, Art. Lapierre, Hector Pellerin, Elzéar Hamel, aussi l'artiste Mallet, Mlle Eva Gauthier. D'autres vont suivre.

Article from Le Passe-Temps 1919 source BANQ

Herbert Berliner, John Bradley and an unknown technician

Next His Master's Voice

The Closing Of Studio Victor

RCA AR 88

The Opening of "Satellites in Montreal"

4 Gerald G. Graham: "Canadian Film Technology, 1896-1986 University of Delaware Press

5 Moogk, p. 64

MOEB Auction

April 30th 2016,

- RCA building, storage room of the MOEB, see plan below
- the auction is held in collaboration with the SQCRA (sqcra.org).
- Opening 9:00 a.m.
- Auction starts at 10:00 a.m.
- Closing of the auction is planned for 2:00 p.m.
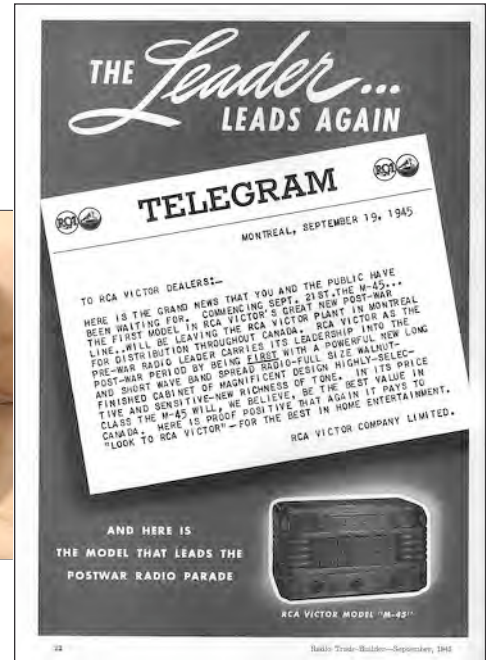-All sales will be final, cash only.

F-112

gramophones, radios, record players, tape recorders, televisions, VCR recorders, oscillographs, vacuum tubes and other sound related technical equipment from approximately the 1930 to the 1990s

MONTRÉAL
DANS L'ESPACE / IN SPACE
08/05/16 - 19/03/17

MO
MUSÉE DES ONDES
EMILE BERLINER

VERNISSAGE   OPENING
dimanche   Sunday,
8 mai 2016   May 8, 2016
à 14h00   at 2:00 PM

Le conseil d'administration a le plaisir de vous inviter à l'inauguration de la nouvelle exposition.

L'exposition a bénéficié d'une subvention du Programme de soutien à la diffusion du patrimoine montréalais 2015. Géré par le ministère de la Culture, des Communications du Québec et de la Ville de Montréal, ce programme s'inscrit dans le cadre de l'Entente sur le développement culturel de Montréal.

Musée des ondes Emile Berliner
1001, rue Lenoir, local E-206
Métro Place Saint-Henri
(514) 932-9663   moeb.ca

The members of the Board of Directors take pleasure in inviting you to celebrate the opening of the new exhibition,

This exhibition has received financial support from the "Programme de soutien à la diffusion du patrimoine montréalais 2015 - Entente sur le développement culturel de Montréal" (the Agreement on the cultural development of Montreal) reached between the City of Montreal and the "Ministère de la Culture, des Communications du Québec".

ENTENTE SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT
CULTUREL DE MONTRÉAL

Culture et Communications
Québec

Montréal

RCA   MDA   THE HOME DEPOT

RCA M-45

by Daniel Labelle

On 19 of September 1945, after many years of producing product to supply the military, the RCA St-Henri plant released the M-45 receiver. This was the first civilian model built post war by any of the electronics manufacturers. The M-45 unit can receive shortwave and medium-wave signals thanks to a circuit built using five tubes inside a sold wood cabinet. This cabinet is a big step forward from the pre-war units that were made from veneer-covered board.

THE *Leader* ... LEADS AGAIN

TELEGRAM

MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER 19, 1945

TO RCA VICTOR DEALERS:—

HERE IS THE GRAND NEWS THAT YOU AND THE PUBLIC HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR. COMMENCING SEPT. 21ST. THE M-45... THE FIRST MODEL IN RCA VICTOR'S GREAT NEW POST-WAR LINE...WILL BE LEAVING THE RCA VICTOR PLANT IN MONTREAL FOR DISTRIBUTION THROUGHOUT CANADA. RCA VICTOR AS THE PRE-WAR RADIO LEADER CARRIES ITS LEADERSHIP INTO THE POST-WAR PERIOD BY BEING FIRST WITH A POWERFUL NEW LONG AND SHORT WAVE BAND SPREAD RADIO—FULL SIZE WALNUT-FINISHED CABINET OF MAGNIFICENT DESIGN HIGHLY-SELEC-TIVE AND SENSITIVE—NEW RICHNESS OF TONE. IN ITS PRICE CLASS THE M-45 WILL, WE BELIEVE, BE THE BEST VALUE IN CANADA. HERE IS PROOF POSITIVE THAT AGAIN IT PAYS TO "LOOK TO RCA VICTOR"—FOR THE BEST IN HOME ENTERTAINMENT.

RCA VICTOR COMPANY LIMITED.

AND HERE IS THE MODEL THAT LEADS THE POSTWAR RADIO PARADE

RCA VICTOR MODEL "M-45"

H.B Pinsky on the right , manager of manufacturing, presents the first M-45 to N.J. Sims,manager of general sales.
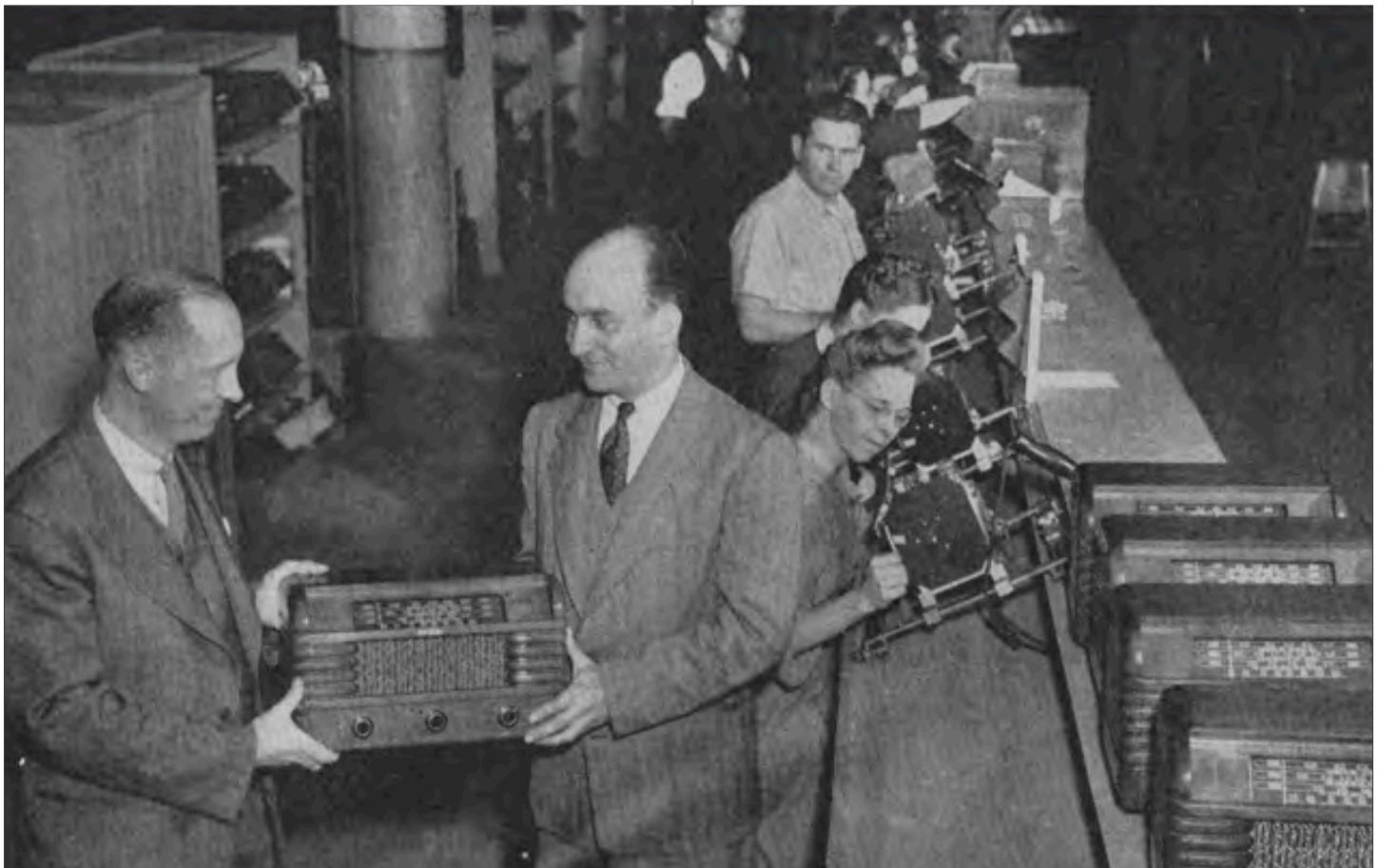
Musée des ondes Emile Berliner: Calendar

30 April, MOEB Auction 30 April.
08 May, the exhibition "Satellites in Montreal" opens 08 May. Exhibition located in Room E-206
28 May, MOEB 20th anniversary fund raiser. More details on our websie: www.moeb.ca

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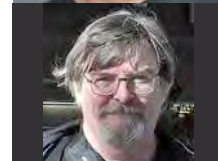514-979-1477

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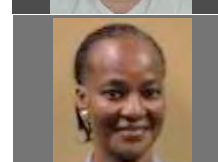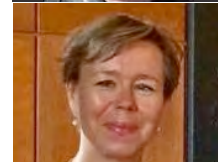
Proud partners of the Musée des ondes Emile Berliner