



## MOEB at the Montréal Audio Fest



# The History of Broadcasting in Montréal part 2

By Tim Hewlings, with much help from Alain Dufour



## WIRELESS CONCERT GIVEN FOR OTTAWA

Royal Society of Canada Heard Songs From Montreal Last Night

### THE NEW TELEPHONY

Contact Was Established, But Noises of Montreal Frustrated Complete Success From Ottawa end

The concert began at 9:00 with a greeting from the Montreal operator J. O. G. Cann, who was the chief engineer at Marconi. His first words were "Hello Ottawa; we will now play a record for you," and he then played a recording of "Believe Me if All Those Endearing Young Charms,"

"Hold the line", he said a few minutes later; "we are going to give you another record; or, perhaps I should say 'hold the ether!'." He then played a record of "Dear Old Pal of Mine" sung by the famous John McCormick. The audio was captured by a microphone placed in front of the horn of a gramophone.

After that, to prove to the audience in Ottawa that this was not some kind of trick, the engineer read a message from the president of the RSC that had been sent to Montreal via telegraph the previous day.

The next thing on the program was a live performance by a singer named Dorothy Lutton. The Gazette article lists among the attendees to the session, a "Miss Lichtenstein". [Note: This was probably Clara Lichtenstein, a well-known pianist, teacher and founder of the music department at McGill University where she taught from 1899 until 1929. She was no doubt Miss Lutton's accompanist that evening.]

Miss Lutton sang two songs, "Believe me if all those endearing young charms," followed by a song called "Merrily Shall I Live".

However, the background noise in the Montreal location appears to have been something of a problem. According to the reporter in Ottawa,

"The magna vox however, not only accentuated the sounds coming from the telephone receiver, but also the ordinary noises of a city and for that reason at times the singing was slightly interrupted. Dr. Eve explained that scientists were endeavouring to so develop the instrument that only the sounds coming from the wire would be increased. Another test was made from a gramophone that was half a mile away and that was very distinct. Several members of the audience wore receivers similar to those used by "Centrals" [operators] at the regular telephone exchange and they heard the singing with absolute accuracy."

Ottawa was equally fascinated. The headline from the Ottawa Journal Friday, May 21, 1920 read:

OTTAWA HEARS MONTREAL CONCERT  
OVER THE WIRELESS TELEPHONE;  
EXPERIMENT COMPLETE SUCCESS

**M**ontréal was at the forefront of broadcasting from its very beginnings. Although Americans claim the first radio broadcasts, arguably, the first regular radio broadcasts were made by XWA in Montreal from the Marconi factory.

The Canadian government ended restrictions on Wireless telephony on April 15, 1919.

Four days later, La Presse in Montreal reported that Marconi had established a wireless telephone service between Cape Breton, NS and Ireland.

In the Montreal area, experimentation continued throughout the rest of 1919 and 1920. On February 26, as reported by both the Toronto Globe and The Montreal Gazette, Marconi held a wireless telephone conversation between their stations in Montreal and Quebec City.

On March 10, La Presse reported a demonstration of wireless telephony given to the Rotary Club by Mr. Arthur Hyatt-Morse of the Canadian Marconi Co.

### AN HISTORIC BROADCAST

The Royal Society of Canada is an organisation of scholars, academics and scientists that has existed since 1882. In 1920, it was holding its annual general meeting in Ottawa.

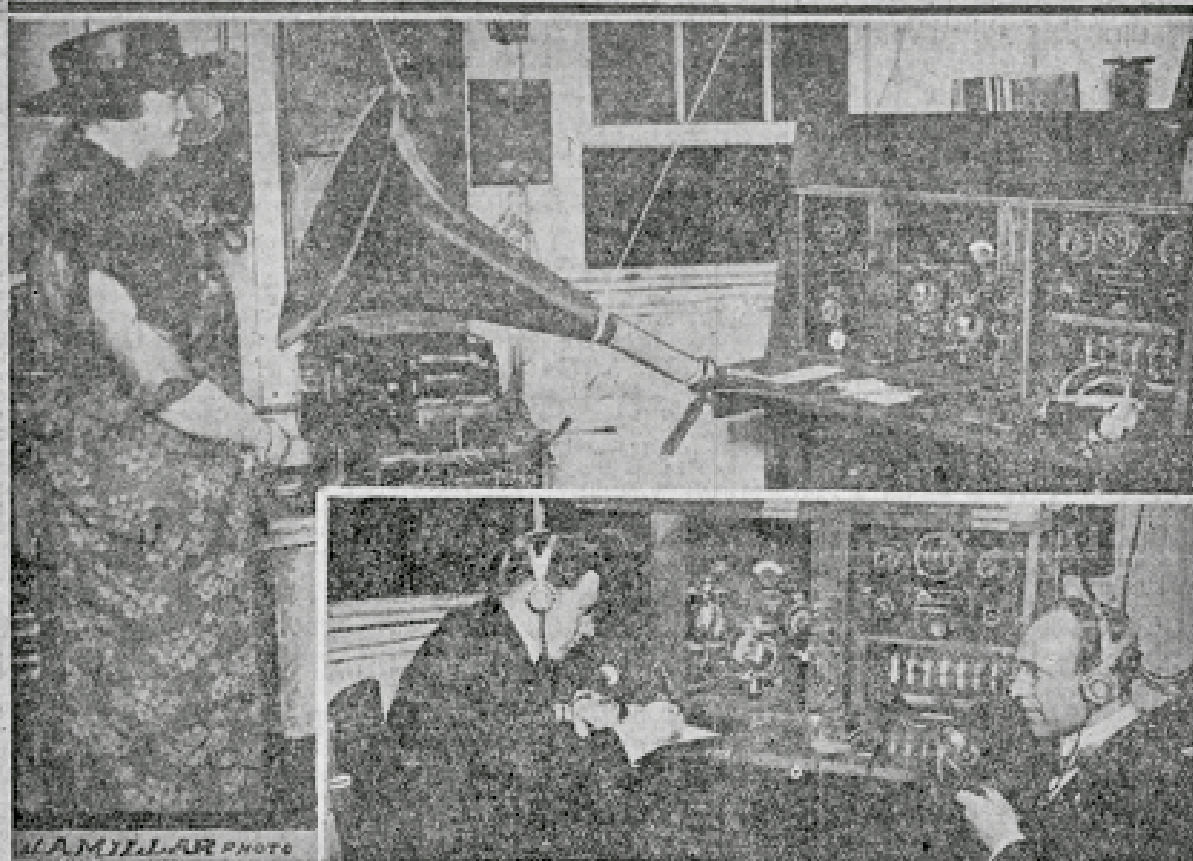
On Thursday May 20, Dr. A. S. Eve of McGill University was presenting a paper called "Some Inventions of the Great War". Part of his presentation consisted of a radio broadcast from Montreal. It was in two parts, the first being a concert broadcast live from Montreal to the assembled audience in Ottawa. The second was broadcast from the meeting in Ottawa to the group in Montreal.

In Montreal, the broadcast originated from the Marconi studios on William street using the equipment Darby Coats described in Part 1 of this story. It was received by a similar station at Canadian Naval headquarters in Ottawa, and then retransmitted to listeners in the Chateau Laurier via telephone lines. The listeners in Ottawa heard the broadcast through an amplifier and loudspeaker that they called a "Magna Vox." The broadcast from Ottawa, was transmitted via land line to the Naval radio station and then broadcast to Montreal.

The next day, both the Montreal Gazette, and the Ottawa Journal carried extensive articles about this event on the day after the broadcast. The following are excerpts from articles that appeared in The Montreal Gazette and the Ottawa Journal. The concert was reported in all the major news papers.

The headline from the Montreal Gazette on Friday, May 21, 1920, read:

## MONTREAL SINGS TO OTTAWA BY TELEPHONE WITHOUT WIRES



Last evening successful tests were conducted upon the wireless telephone between Montreal, at the Marconi Company's plant and Ottawa, at which end connection was made with the Chateau Laurier, where the Royal Society of Canada was assembled. Dr. Eve of McGill University delivered a lecture to the latter which was heard in Montreal. The above picture shows Miss Dorothy Tulson singing into the wireless phone. Below is a nearer view of the apparatus. A. H. Max, managing director of the Marconi Company was present at the demonstration.

Girl Singing 110 Miles Away  
Listened to by Vast  
Audience at Chateau

### WORDS AND MUSIC CLEAR

Gramophone Music and Orchestra  
Selections Danced to at the  
Radio Stations Here.

The reaction was much the same as that from Montreal. The Journal said:

"The members of the large audience in the comfortable ball room of the Chateau Laurier sat in amazement, realising that they were listening to one of those wonders that has been so much talked about but seldom demonstrated. The sweet voice they heard was that of Miss Lutton, singing into a radio-telephone instrument in Montreal. Every inflection of her beautiful voice and every word was audible to the Chateau audience, yet no wires connected the two points, 110 miles apart."

A Complete Success.

"This experiment, the first ever carried on in Canada... Since Tuesday the officers of the Naval Radio Service and engineers of the Canadian Marconi Company have been making ready for the test. Weather conditions were reported as decidedly unfavorable during the evening, but the entire programme was carried out without a hitch, congratulations were sent backwards and forwards by all concerned.

Three Stations Operating.

The whole programme had been arranged beforehand. The station at the Marconi plant in Montreal and that of the Naval Radio Service in Ottawa were the main stations, with a receiving

station at the Chateau Laurier. Here a huge amplifier was installed so the entire audience was enabled to hear the programme between the two main stations. This is the first time that such an elaborate programme has been attempted, and one of the longest distances over which a wireless telephone conversation has been attempted....

Absolutely Clear.

There was a short pause then clearly and distinctly, the beautiful words and music of "Believe Me if All Those Endearing Young Charms," were heard sung by Miss Lutton in Montreal. The members of the audience were amazed and the little group in the wireless station elated at the success of their experiment. By request, Miss Lutton sang a second song.

Wireless Sparks "Butt in".

It was then Ottawa's turn to speak to Montreal. The Ottawa operator explained to the Chateau audience something of the experiment, and then Mr. E. Hawken, an officer of the Marine Department sang "Annie Laurie". Deafening applause greeted this at the Chateau and the second verse was requested. Then, several dance records were played at the Ottawa station....

To be continued:



## A Few Words From Our Director

Photo by Maurice McDuff

By Anja Borck



age new members for the museum, as well as more visitors and more group visits. The interest was overwhelming.

Starting April 30th, for six to twelve months, we will host short Lunch Concerts, organized by our volunteer Pierre Huot. He plans to film each concert and put the footage online. We will keep you informed about this ongoing project on our web site and on our Facebook page.

Check out [archive.moeb.ca](http://archive.moeb.ca): Over the last year, the museum has created a new, publicly accessible archival project funded by the Library and Archives Canada through their Documentary Heritage Communities Program. We call it the Emile Berliner Sound & Image Archive (EBS&IA).

MOEB at the Audio Fest, with over 1500 visitors at our kiosk

**D**ear friend of the Musée des ondes Emile Berliner,  
We have just returned from the Salon Audio Montreal Audio Fest at the Hotel Bonaventure, where we presented a neat show on the 75th anniversary of the RCA Victor Studio to a crowd of 1500 sound enthusiasts. Jean Belisle, Ducharme Marion and many more of our active group of now over 50 volunteers helped to make it a fun and informative event. We hope our participation will encour-



We were lucky to find a young professional, Connie Wilson, who was just the perfect fit for this demanding project, funded by Young Canada Works. I would like to thank her for accomplishing this incredible feat. You can find the link to our Berliner Archive on our moeb.ca page, or you can go directly to archive.moeb.ca. From rare recordings to old advertisements, from beautiful picture disks, to a unique handwritten notebook by Mr. Berliner – please feel welcome to explore the many documents from our large collection that are usually hiding in shelves and drawers, tucked away, never seen or heard. The project is ongoing so new information and documents will be added to the online source regularly. The unknown testimonies of Canada's sound-recording history are now a click away from you.

For June, July and August the museum is offering listening sessions, given by Mariana Mejia, an audio preservationist from McGill University. Fun but also informative, the sessions will deal with music and recording history, along with technological developments in the context of the digitized items in the Emile Berliner Sound and Image Archive. The activity will introduce you to the significance of the sonic items that were chosen for digital preservation and give a more complete historical context to content that is accessible on the online archive. The sessions are open to all, and the group size will be limited to 10 to 15 participants, the museum will offer them in both French and English. Check in on our web page and on our social media. The schedule will be accessible soon.

The Musée des ondes Emile Berliner was invited to take part in the Industrial Heritage Tour, initiated by l'Association Québécoise pour le patrimoine industriel. We are curious to see this online tool being developed. It is based on the idea of the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH), a large European network of industrial heritage sites open to visitors. We hope you will have time to experience the many facets of Montreal's fascinating industrial past. The Circuit de commémoration du Sud-Ouest that includes the former RCA Victor Building is already in place.

For some time now, MOEB volunteers and I have been regularly posting news of the museum and on subjects around sound recording, recording technology, the come-back of vinyl and much more on our Facebook page and on our Instagram account.

The museum's current show on Design Montréal RCA will continue throughout the summer months. The MOEB is in a transformation process, which will result in the museum having finally a permanent exhibition in an additional room. There will be much more to report on in, our next issue.

Truly yours  
Anja

**HMV 22.1 Cover**  
**Control Room of the RCA studio on Lacasse Street in the late 1940s**



**Vintage RCA Console at the Audio Fest**



**In the next His Master's Voice**  
**Broadcasting in Montreal part 3**  
**Studio Six and la relève Québécoise**



# At the MOEB

Design Montréal RCA The Sixties and the Seventies continues

## News from the Exec:

**W**e are happy to announce that the MOEB has added two new board members, more details in the next HMV.

**Audrey Azoulay, Economist**



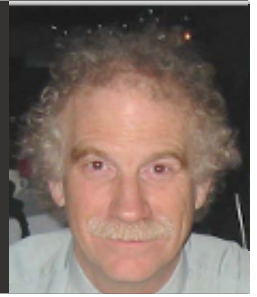
**Johanne Viens, Museologist**



# The MOEB at the Montréal Audio Fest

Photos by Maurice McDuff

by Michael Delaney



The 2018 Salon Audio Montréal Audio Fest took place at the Hotel Bonaventure from March 23 to 25, and again this year the Musée des Ondes Berliner set up a display. For the first time in a few years, I was able volunteer my services to meet visitors and answer their questions. I really enjoy working at this event. The contrast between our displays and those of the other booths featuring all the latest audio technology, speakers, and cables was quite striking.

This year Jean Belisle and a small group of volunteers set up a compact but interesting display of objects from the MOEB's collection highlighting the 75th anniversary of the RCA Studio on Lacasse Street.

75th Logo and Rek-O-Kut Home recording Disc Cutter



Rather than have everyone set up in an enormous room, the Audio Fest has most of the participants set up in smaller halls or rooms. The MOEB was set up in the Hampstead Room along with the Association Montréalaise des Audiophiles. The AMA had a small system with a set of very good sounding homemade speakers.



AMA Team. Photo from the AMA Facebook

My first shift as a volunteer started in the late afternoon of the first day. When I arrived, I took a quick look and what we had set up from the museum's collection and tried to guess what would be the biggest draw, what would be the magnet that pulled the visitors in. I decided on the disk cutting lathe, since it is part of the "return of vinyl". In fact, visitors were even more curious about the transcription disk. These disks are larger than a 33 1/3 LP, usually 40 cm (16in) in diameter. They were most commonly used to record radio shows (broadcast transcription or radio transcription - nicknamed platters). After the Second World War, these transcription disks were replaced by magnetic tape.

Vintage Disc Professional Cutter





Visitors fell into two groups; those that had very little knowledge and were curious about the various objects, and those visitors who were very, very knowledgeable but still curious. We placed the cutting lathe and an RCA mixer next to the transcription disk, so we had the control room equipment for a 1940s recording session. For the recording room of our imaginary session there were two vintage RCA ribbon microphones, a classic RCA 44 and an RCA 77. To help visitors fill in the details of our imaginary session there were several pictures of a late 40s early 50s recording session in the RCA studio on Lacasse street.

Other key items on display were a "home recording" disk cutter and many working Gramophones. Visitors were amazed to hear the sound coming out of the horn, realizing that there was no electricity involved. In the heyday of these units, the recording and playback process was all acoustic.

Over the three days, we passed out many membership brochures, so we hope to attract a host of new members. The 2019 Salon Audio Montréal Audio Fest will be held from 22-24 March.

Late 1940s recording session in the RCA Lacasse Street Studio



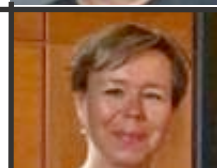


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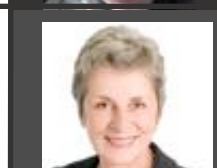
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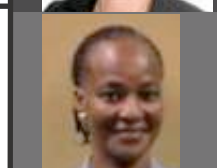
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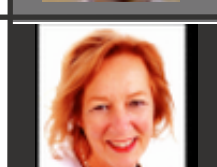
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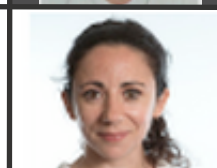
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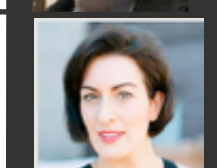
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