

Minnesota Music Hall of Fame Inductee



Whoppee John Wilfahrt (1893-1961). Inducted in 1989

“Daddy of the Concertina” grew up in New Ulm area where family, friends and the lively music there influenced his musical growth. He formed his first band very early with this brother, Edwin, on clarinet and his cousin, Edward Kretsch, on cornet. The concertina became the backbone of the New Ulm style of old-tyme music and continues to this day. A radio and TV performer for 34 years, his Sunday afternoon broadcasts had many fans turning in. He achieved considerable fame within his field as a dance band musician and leader. The band recorded over 1,000 selections and was the second musical artist to sign with Decca records. For nearly everyone, his most remembered song was the “Mariechen Waltz.”

