

“Copyright Office Theme Song” Dedicated to Barbara Ringer

JUDITH NIERMAN

Register of Copyrights Barbara Ringer threw a gala party on February 26, 1977, for Copyright Office employees to celebrate the enactment of the 1976 Copyright Act (see *Copyright Notices*, January 2008). Music was an important part of the party. In fact, that night the Copyright Office Chorale performed for the first and perhaps only time an original composition dedicated to the Register. Ringer remarked that the Office might be the only government agency with its own theme song.

Charles Sens (1933-2004), a Copyright Office Music Section and Audio Visual Section cataloger and then Library Music Division reference librarian and senior music specialist, set to music the words in the Constitution on which copyright law is founded. He wrote to Ringer,

It is respectfully requested that you accept the dedication of this musical setting of the United States Constitution, Article One, Section Eight, as my contribution to the celebrations commemorating the passing of the Copyright Act of 1976.

The history of the motivation for the creation of this opus, culminating in its performance at your reception, deserves to be heard, and I look forward to having an opportunity in the near future of being permitted to reveal its origin.

With great admiration for the Register of Copyrights, I remain, most sincerely yours,
Charles



Joe Miranda conducts (left to right) Charlie Maul, unknown, Carolyn Hunter, Lynn Grimm, Harold Boyd, Becky Taylor, Jodi Rush Sigmon, John Greene, Charles Sens, unknown, and Mary Beth Parrotta Loup. Others singing at the gala included David Albee, Richard Breinig, Hugh Clark, John Davis, Jackie Darden, Ginny Kass, Bob Klein, Nancy Lawrence, and Esther Bell Watson. Below, Melissa Dadant and Mike Pew take a turn around the dance floor.

Sens studied music in his native city, New Orleans, at Loyola University College of Music and in Baton Rouge at Louisiana State University. He had a career as a singer, dancer, and composer in New Orleans before moving to Washington, DC, in about 1970 to work in the Office and to write on commission an original mass for Christ Church Washington Parish on Capitol Hill. He was, said **Ginny Kass**, “very passionate about the arts.”

Nothing is known about what he may have revealed to Ringer regarding the origin of the music. ©



The score for the Sens composition

