Critics Blaze Way for Europe’s Progress, Says Composer

Music in Europe Believed Not to Know Where It is Going—Energy and Sincerity of Several Writers Seen as Guiding Force of the Musical Stream—Public Does Not Accept New Music Just by Its Labels—Decrees Charlatanism—Promising French Composer Found—Theater at Torino Encourages Best in New Music

By LAZARE SAMINSKY

The main impression obtained from the chaotic and strangled musical life in Europe of today is that no definite arrow points the direction of its flow. It is a muddy and desolated sea in which one finds neither strong uprisings nor a willing and conscious reaction. There are, however, unexpected changes and breaks in age-old aesthetics and perennial melodic taste of some nations (Italy and Germany) which is in contrast to that sullen and bored attitude waiting for something to happen, which is reigning in other countries. The latter mood seems to have its grip over the creative musicians of France and England.

And it is curious to note that active leadership is passing to the critic who is now steering the musical boat in many a country. In France it is Henry Prunières, the famous writer and the editor of *La Revue Musicale*, a genial and scholarly gentleman who is the head of most interesting concerts of modern music.

Dr. Léon Vallas, well known critic of Paris and Lyons, professor of musical history at the Lyons University, organizer of the “Musique vivante” series representing young Parisian composers to selected audiences. Dr. Vallas’ energy contributed very much to Lyons’ becoming the second musical center in France.

In Italy it is Dr. Guido M. Gatti, the eminent Italian writer, to whom Malipiero, Bloch, Alford, Pizzetti and many others owe their recognition. Dr. Gatti is now director and organizer of the new opera house in Torino, which develops miraculous activities. These and other musical writers now do infinitely more for the new and living music than the impotent creator and the sleepy performer of today.

The opening night of the Russian Ballet season, which is always the rendezvous of all social and artistic élite of Paris, turned unexpectedly into a field of royal battle inflicted upon Serge Diaghileff, the director, by the surréalistes (super-realists) a society of painters, poets, and writers. When the first notes of the overture to a new ballet, “Romeo and Juliet”—by a young Englishman, Constant Lambert, pleasing and innocuous music to a rather witty plot—were sounded, pandemonium broke loose. Violently blown whistles and fog-horns, showers of printed circulars flying in clusters all over the hall, numerous immaculately dressed young men invading private boxes and shouting something to the public—all this came with such rhythm and precision that people thought: Here it is, the new Diaghileff sensational ballet. But the appearance of the police and the ensuing three-cornered battle between the “agents,” the rioters and some volunteers from the public showed that the situation was not so innocent.

In fact, it was a grand protest of the surréalistes against two of their colleagues and coreligionists, Messrs. Ernst and Miro, creators of the scenery who, “betraying the principles of the revolutionary surréalisme,” allowed themselves to be imprisoned by and to work for an international snob like Mr. Diaghileff.” Many representatives of the fine fleur of New York society were present at this lively function. Among them I met Alfred Bossom, the eminent New York architect who sat with Mrs. Bossom, one

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of the leading directors of the New York Philharmonic, in a box next to mine. And I may say that many shared our feelings of envy evoked by this battle. We were jealous of the Paris musical crowd, which does not take in everything given to it with a motion-like indifference, a crowd which does not think that it is good taste to applaud or to suffer any childish or charlatanistic confection because it is protected by a radical dog.

Among the Paris musical events of really great value were the guest appearances of Serge Koussouvitzky at the Opera, of the Hague "Residenz-Ouverture" under its excellent conductor, Dr. Peter van Anrooy, and Walter Straram's concerts. Mr. Koussouvitzky gave beautiful performances of "Till Eulenspiegel" and Albert Roussel's "Padamvati" Suite. One does not understand why this colorful and lively operaballet has not yet found its way to the Metropolitan Opera House.

Walter Straram, the highly gifted and much admired artist who has created the best orchestras of the world, has endeared himself to the avant garde of Paris musicians by the independence and broad-mindedness of his program making and his intelligent and carefully prepared renditions. He gave new works by Rieti, Malipiero, Ferroud, Hindemith, and others. His "Francesco ("Offrandes à Siva"), a highly gifted young composer rapidly gaining recognition.

Muhmann Vocal and Opera School

CHICAGO, Sept. 18.—The Muhmann Vocal and Opera School, established in Chicago in 1912, has moved to Suite 821 in the Kimball Building, and has opened its fall term auspiciously. Mr. Muhmann, who was born in Shirava, Russia, studied theology before entering the Odessa Conservatory, and pursued his musical education later in Vienna. After a successful career in several opera companies in Europe, he joined the Metropolitan in 1889, remaining a baritone until 1912, when he came to Chicago, at the invitation of the late Dr. Florenz Ziegfeld, to found, in the Chicago Musical College, the opera school which increased to such an extent that its maintenance as a separate institution was soon deemed inevitable. During the existence of the Muhmann School such operas as "The Marriage of Figaro," "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Madama Butterfly," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Lohengrin" and others have been produced under Mr. Muhmann's supervision, and numerous pupils have graduated into professional work as members of various opera companies.

Florentine Sextet, Headed by Dr. Felice Boghen (Center), Which Took Part in the Russian-American Music Festival in Florence, Conducted by Mr. Saminsky

symphony concerts and a ballet. It has been created by one of the greatest captains of European industry, Riccardo Gualino, president of the "Amici di Torino," with the aid of Dr. Guido M. Gatti, the present director of the theater, and the gifted young Italian painter, Cighi Chessa. The energy, deep love of culture and broad-mindedness of these men, and particularly of Dr. Gatti, worked miracles in a short time.

They have reconstructed one of the most beautiful old Turin theaters and thus created the new Teatro di Torino; they have established their own permanent orchestra, with an excellent leader; full of young fire and energy—Vittorio Gui, formerly of La Scala, Milan. They have already given a series of concerts conducted by Signor Gui, Richard Strauss, René Béron, and Hermann Scherchen, Ernest Ansermet, and assisted by Arrigo Serato, C. Benedetti, F. Pinceti, Jacques Thibaud, Pablo Cassalis, Jascha Heifetz, Alfred Cortot, Georges Enesco and Alfredo Casella. They revived "Arioste" and "L'Italiana in Algeri" by Rossini, and recently gave "Setti Canzoni" by Malipiero, "L'Heure Espagnole" by Ravel, "Abraham and Isaac" by Pincetti, "Ariadne auf Naxos" by Strauss.

I was deeply impressed by Malipiero's opera, which has such directness of appeal, such a strong racial substance and dramatic impetus as one rarely finds in a contemporary stage work. Its performance was full of freshness and real enthusiasm.

Florentine Festival

Speaking about my Italian impressions, I must not, I believe, rest entirely silent about the Florentine American-Russian music festival directed by myself, because of the extraordinary cordiality of its atmosphere. Dr. Felice Boghen, the eminent Italian pianist-composer, professor of the Florentine Conservatory, delivered the official welcome in the name of the musicians of Italy, and he asked me to transmit their feeling of great sympathy and deep interest in the progress and achievements of the Florentine composers, some of whose works were performed on that occasion.

If I add that this program was rehearsed in the old house and studio of Benedetto Collini, at the same place where his "Pére" now standing in the Loggia Orcagna in Florence, was cast, that our charming and gifted young soloist, Adriana Nelli, is the daughter of Prof. Mario Nelli, eminent sculptor, that the concert took place in the palace of the Accademia del Belli Arti, on the other side of the park which separates Salla di Buon Humore, the concert hall, from the gallery housing Michaelangelo's "David," one will understand the thrill and joy of this event.

HEMPEL LEAVES FARM

Soprano Buys Gowns in Paris, Then Plans Airplane Trip to Berlin

PARIS, Sept. 11.—Following a twoweek vacation on a Bavarian farm, Frieda Hempel returned to Paris last week and announced that she would sing in opera in Europe after her activities in America this season.

"I'm going to sing in opera again—and in Europe," stated the singer. "I've been longing to do it, and unless plans miscarry, I shall return from my concert work in America next May for operatic engagements in Paris, Berlin and other European centers. It has been five years since I sang in opera in America, and eight years since my last operatic performance in Europe.

"My summer has been the most pleasant," she adds, "and what fun it was on that Bavarian farm! No automobiles, no radios, and it was a paradise—nothing but peace and contentment. I went right out in the fields and stayed there all day, having a regular picnic of a time. I settled down on the straw in an ox-cart and turned the clock back 100 years without even thinking of Jenny Lind or anybody else."

Asked as to her mission in Paris, she replied, "Oh, I must buy some new gowns, and then I am going to fly to Berlin to see my eighty-two-year-old father. Then I go to America, where I plan to sing in my last concert on Oct. 18, followed by my New York recital on Nov. 5, in Carnegie Hall."

Musicians in Chicago Theaters End Strike

CHICAGO, Sept. 18.—The strike of 3000 musicians in 400 moving picture theaters was settled recently. The agreement between players and exhibitors allows for an increase of $4.50 weekly for two years, with an additional $5 the third year. The contract runs for two years. Under the new scale, musicians will receive $7 a week the first year, and $9 the third. The dispute as to the employment of four-piece orchestras in the smaller theaters was left to arbitration. Dr. Karl A. Meyer, chief of staff of the Cook County Hospital, was agreed upon as chief arbiter.

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