By Olea Samaroff, Mme. Leopold Stokowski

"LITTLE old I think," laughingly remarked Mrs. Leopold Stokowski, who is known professionally as Olga Samaroff, the pianist, chatting with the Musical America representative in her studio, a few days ago, "when I first appeared as soloist in Philadelphia, under Mr. Farkas, in "The Rake's Progress.""

The pianist has an ideal studio to work in, hourly regular and in addition to this is a studio, because the pianist said, "with the grand piano at one end and full of the best of music, and a piano of unlimited influence." The pianist went on to talk about a piano that has everything in it, and to add that the pianist is to play music that is entirely unfounded.

"Not at all," she declared, "but I want to give piano recitals. That was too much for him. He could not think of exploiting a young pianist who is absolutely unknown and who had never played anywhere. He advised me to give the whole thing up, to go back to Europe. "Why, I have just come from Europe," I cried, "I have no more to go back to Europe. I want to give recitals here." But not a glimmer of hope or encouragement did Mr. Wolfsohn give me. I asked him if he couldn't let me have a grand piano. No, he rented only the grand, and he was also kind enough to consent to hear me play. I sat down at the piano, and while I was playing, as luck would have it, more excellent, in came Mr. Wolfsohn. He stood and listened, and when I finished, soberly remarked, "I guess you'll do. Come and see me again to-morrow.""

The First Recital

The result was that Mr. Wolfsohn arranged a recital for me in Carnegie Hall—my first. Think of it! I don't know how I played that night. In fact, I never knew that I played at all. I was frozen with terror, but I got through with it, and the next morning the critics spoiled my life. They were about evenly divided as to my merits, but some of them were very kind, and it was a start. It was for that recital that I chose the name of Olga Samaroff. You see, my maiden name was Hinnenkopp, and Mr. Wolfsohn flatly refused to present me with the burden of such a cognomen. I thought of my mother's name, but also of the objection that the family would have of seeing that name on the billboards, so I went back and explored further the different branches of the family tree and finally hit upon the name of my Russian grandmother—who was Olga Samaroff. It was with this name, and under the circumstances I have related, that, on the 18th of January, 1905, I made my first appearance on any stage, in Carnegie Hall, New York City. I soon had an engagement with the New York Symphony Orchestra, and later all of the other prominent orchestras in the country.

As a final question the interview inquired: "Have you found that being an American is an obstacle to a career in the United States?"

"No, I have not," replied Mme. Samaroff, with emphasis. "Not at all. As I said before, I am thoroughly an American, notwithstanding the choice of such a foreign-sounding name, and for four seasons played in this country, and I hope, with success.

No, there is nothing in the idea that the American artist cannot succeed in America. And once more let me speak of Philadelphia, the city of my adoption, which has won my affections. I find life here delightful, and I find, too, that the idea that Philadelphia is not a musical city is entirely unfounded. So far as my modest efforts have had any effect, I am bound to do all I can to destroy this mistaken impression. The idea is foolish. Philadelphia, indeed, is one of the most musical of cities. I have attended every concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra that my husband has conducted, and have closely watched the audiences. The people here are eager for music, and they are discriminating and know what is good when they hear it."

In addition to the work of preparing her repertoire for next season Miss Samaroff also has several advanced piano pupils whom she was finally persuaded to accept also one little boy, whom she believes to be wonderfully talented. In speaking of her forthcoming tour she remarks that her one regret is that it will take her away from her home, to which she is devoted. "But my season, which is to begin next October, will be limited to forty concerts of which all will be as near Philadelphia as possible. And one of my engagements, I conclude," she continued, "will be right here in Philadelphia—as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, under my husband's direction that will be interesting. Won't it?"

Arthur L. Tuhill