NOTED DUTCH PIANIST UNVEILS SECRETS OF TONE PRODUCTION

How Martinus Sieveking Works Out His Unusual Theories—Piano In His Paris Studio a Curious Instrument Adapted to Its Owner's Massive Build—A Talk with the Pianist: Assists That All Musicians Use Keyboard of the Same Size—Sieveking as Player of His Own Compositions—A Past-master in the Production of Tone-Color—Eccentricities of an Artist of Remarkable Personality

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The following text is a continuation of the previous article:}

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Marinus Sieveking, the Noted Dutch Pianist and Teacher, of Paris, Who Announces That He Has Discovered a "New Method"—But, most wonderful of all were the eyes which gazed at me full and firmly with a half-irradiated, half-impressionistic expression. I was ashamed and my words of introduction were but futilely and listlessly enunciated. The object of my gaze having been made clear, however, Sieveking, in the best of French, spoke gently:

"Too long, too narrow, with the usual French doors, the first object to catch my eye being the great piano built especially for the pianist Colasens and the largest in the world. It looked very much the worse for wear. An old room—such as is used by professional photographers—had been placed on the fall of the instrument, which occupied almost the length of the apartment. Near the music rest was a large screwdriver and a wire string, evidently used to measure me. I had disturbed the gentle act of tinkering. Valuable art objects, and some priceless ancient furniture adorned the apartment, but I did not hold my attention, because, while conversing with the piano, suddenly became aware of an instant music of the best.

A Clock Collector

This came from a curious source, as I discovered when I looked about me and saw at least a score of clocks in the apartment. Grandfather, astronomer, Lesse XVI—clocks of all denotations seemed to be represented. Some must have been intended as a number of his "favourites" (the disapproving clock in the room was, in fact, as simply classified as postage stamps), but what it is Sieveking playing the theme of primary interest to the readers of Am. Single, the history of a remarkably interesting collection must be left to another writer.

"What have you been doing to Paderewski and Co.?" Sieveking enquired, lapsing into English. "Surely a great artist he should be, but there is not a single watchmaker's. If he has been playing it was because the piano did not suit him. He could not draw from the instrument what he desired, he is playing the piano. What a fault! For instance, to say that all artists should be obliged to play on a keyboard of the same size! Look at my hands! They were massive but beautifully proportioned, the muscles of my fingers were strong, and my whole body was a small man," he continued, "but, so I am not obliged to wear gloves, though these are of course, shoes that I, don't see why I should be compelled to play on Godowsky's keyboard.

Sieveking's Piano

"Come and look at my piano," said Sieveking with a genial smile. "I went over to the instrument with him and examined attentively the famous inclined keyboard slanting toward him and extraordinarily perceptible angle. The white keys were more than twice as long as the black, but were depressed with the same ease. When Sieveking sat down at the piano he carefully placed his shoes, then took a screwdriver and a wire string, evidence against the rhythm, which was suddenly observed by an insistent music. Sieveking himself sat in his apartment."

Nomination seems to be represented. Sieveking went on to explain the mechanism of a number of his "favourites" (the disapproving clock in the room was, in fact, as simply classified as postage stamps), but what is Sieveking playing the theme of primary interest to the readers of AM. Musical, the history of a remarkably interesting collection must be left to another writer.

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His Own Composition

This is my latest, little piece to be published. And Sieveking played it, and I was so humble that I must say, brilliantly thought out and harmonized, and which, needless to say, was superbly interpreted. The old but faithful pianist had seen its best days, but Sieveking drew from it a tone of such sweet resemblance that all I could do when he had finished was to stare at him in amazement.

"How do you get all those marvelous variances of tone?" I asked.

"Ah! That is my secret!" he exclaimed. "That is what I retired from professional life six years ago to evolve and study.

New method," he continued, in his quiet, short but emphatic English, which he has a habit of punctuating frequently with an abrupt and forceful "Ja!" "It is best explained by calling it the Steckbrettmeister's method. Feel my arm."

I tried to lift his arm from the keyboard and managed to raise it a few inches with a great effort. Then I let go and his fingers struck the keys with great violence.

Secret of Tone

"That is the secret of tone," said Sieveking. "I do not grieve, but just allow the weight of my arms to rest on my hands. Absolutely new method! Many do it unconsciously, though. Also notice that I move my fingers from the hand joint and not from the middle joint, which causes the hand to be cramped.

Sieveking then composed a composition, the manuscript of which he had been copying that same day. It is a delightful, rapid opus "Sonatini" and extremely modern in harmonization. After that he broke into the last known of the Beethoven sonatas, but one that he adores, which was followed by Liszt's transcription of the "Erl King." As Sieveking played and evoked that extraordinary etiquette once again I watched his method. I noted that, at no time, even in purely staccato passages, did he raise his hands far from the keyboard. This, he explained to me later, was on account of his inclined eyes, which places the black keys on the same level as the white, an arrangement which also guarantees a facility in leaping to greater leverage and general ease in executing scale characteristics of the Sieveking keyboard, which I was able to test satisfactorily for myself on another piano of the usual size.

A Performer Atlases

One fact must be taken into consideration, namely, that Martinus Sieveking is a man of stupendous muscular strength. Eugen Sandow, the famous expert in physical culture, has declared him to be his finest pupil. He is also a trained athlete, notably a swimmer, fencer and base. The width of Sieveking's biceps according to my own testimony would do credit to an ordinary man's thigh, and they are as hard as steel. Yet this man with the most of muscular energy is completely without mannerisms. All his action comes from wrists and main shoulder joints. His arms move in playing over so little and his body last at all, except in "weeping" (the keyboard).

Sieveking has, many remarkable pupils, including Henri Ellin and Paul Coppen. He emerges from his temporary seclusion before long and intends to prove his ideas by practical demonstrations. The statement of his which will interest the student most is that, given a sound elementary musical education and by following his method, one can attain to virtuosity in two years. And the teacher in willing to furnish a written guarantee to this effect.

Diminishing Attendance for St. Paul Popular Concerts

ST. PAUL, Minn., Jan. 7.—The ninth popular concert by the St. Paul Symphony Orchestra, Walter Henry Rothwell, conductor, with Rollin M. Pease,-baritone soloist, covered a program of good music played with laudable skill, but lacking in inspirational quality. The audience was pitifully small. Neither the Strauss Waltz, "The Beautiful Blue Danube," one of the orchestra's most compelling magnificence for a popular concert, nor Halévy's popular second "Vano- men!" Suite sufficed to bring the desired attendance. The diminshing size of the Sunday audiences is cause of general lamentation, but the blame is due to the lack of a certain vitalizing spark.

F. L. C. R.