

'BE NEUTRAL' TALK FOR ORCHESTRA MEN

Walter Damrosch Asks Players of Symphony to Avoid War Discussions

Absolute neutrality was the keynote of the speech delivered by Walter Damrosch, conductor of the Symphony Society of New York, to the eighty-five musicians who assembled at Æolian Hall on October 5 for the first rehearsal of the season. Mr. Damrosch said:

"As we have about thirteen nationalities represented in this orchestra, including all those now at war with each other in Europe, and as we shall be together in close companionship in New York and on tour for the next six months, it may not be a mistake for me to say a few words to you regarding the advisability of following our good and great President's advice and to maintain a coherent neutrality regarding the terrible European war. I know that such an attitude may be difficult for some of us. Artists feel all things intensely and many of you have ties of love and traditional loyalty which bind you to your mother country. But I think your life in America has taught you, as it has me, that the real cause of this war is what we consider an unreasonable race hatred which should have no place among people of to-day.

"This orchestra is abundant proof that life under the beneficent and impartial institutions of a free country does away with race hatred and many race prejudices. During the many years that I have traveled throughout this country with you and through the many weeks and even months that you and I have spent in closest contact on long railroad journeys, I have never known a quarrel to arise between any members of this orchestra because of the fact that one was a Teuton and the other a Slav or a Frenchman. Life in America makes us realize that we are all human beings and that there is no inherent reason why one race should hate or despise the other. As Americans you have had the opportunity in our orchestra to come into closer friendly contact with other Americans of different birth or racial descent and you have realized that they, too, had attained their place in this orchestra because of real ability."

Six precepts were laid down by Mr. Damrosch, and the musicians were cautioned to bear them in mind. The musicians were told to remember that they are all Americans, no matter where they were born; to open no discussion as to "who started it" to realize that patriotism and bravery, culture and civilization are not confined to the countries of their birth; to be thankful that they are in a peaceful country, and to permit themselves to be moved to pity instead of anger.

"GUEST" PERFORMANCES FOR AMERICAN SINGERS

May Scheider Thinks Metropolitan Should Give Our Artists, Now Without Positions, an Opportunity

That the Metropolitan Opera Company should inaugurate a series of "guest performances" this season to enable some of the prominent American singers who have been obliged to sacrifice their positions abroad to appear in their own country is the suggestion that was made this week to MUSICAL AMERICA by May Scheider. Miss Scheider is a soprano who returned recently from Germany, having appeared with success at the Royal Opera in Karlsruhe.

"There are a dozen or more American singers of prominence now in this country or planning to return here who deserve the opportunity to make a 'guest appearance' at the Metropolitan," said Miss Scheider. "These singers have won renown abroad and are thoroughly experienced in operatic routine.

"If the Metropolitan would open its doors to them for only one trial—one opportunity to appear in New York—the plan would serve not only to help the singers but would enable the management to become acquainted with the abilities of Americans who could be of service in the future make-up of the company."

WITH FRITZ KREISLER AT THE FRONT

Mrs. Kreisler Gives Readers of "Musical America" Intimate Account of Her Husband's Injury in Battle at Lemberg—"Martial Feeling Brushed Away the Artist in Me," Says Noted Violinist in Interview at Vienna, Where He Is Being Cared for by His Family—"The Music of Shrapnel Makes at First a Ghastly Sound," He Declares



MANY conflicting reports have been published in regard to the whereabouts and condition of Fritz Kreisler, the Austrian violinist, and these have caused no little anxiety among his many friends and admirers in America. Direct from Vienna the following letter to John C. Freund, editor of MUSICAL AMERICA, was received from Mrs. Kreisler on Monday morning, October 5, and contains the first authentic statement published up to date:

Vienna, No. 4 Starhembergasse, September 16, 1914.

Dear Mr. Freund:

I take the liberty of sending you a few pictures and a clipping from the Vienna paper, as it may be of some interest to your readers who know of my husband. He has been at the front since the beginning of August and was injured at the battle of Lemberg. In a night attack of Cossacks he was ridden down by a horse and met with a rather painful and tedious accident to his leg and a slight wound on his shoulder. That is almost better, but the leg will probably bother him for a couple of months.

Of course, he looks very worn, not having been out of his boots in three weeks, and in all that time never undressing, but sleeping only cot-naps and under the heavens. But I hope soon to have him his usual self. But such experiences leave an indelible stamp on one's soul. If you can, try and create an atmosphere for peace with your paper and all other powerful papers you may have connections with.

Although I believe Austria and Germany are fighting a humane and rightful cause, yet the loss of life everywhere is awful. I have had many opportunities of judging (as I have been actively employed day and night in the Red Cross) of our just and kind treatment of our enemies; it is more than I can say of the others, as the use of "dumdum" bullets and machines has been positively proven.

Urges Peace

Try and do your best to stop this cruel war. It is dreadful to have to feel an enmity to any nation or race.



Fritz Kreisler Appearing in Concert at Leoben, Steiermark, on August 12 for Red Cross Before Leaving for Front. Below, Mr. and Mrs. Kreisler. The Picture Shows the Garb Mrs. Kreisler Wore Before Her Red Cross Costume Was Ready.

Pardon my troubling you, but I do want everyone to help.

With very kindest greetings in which my husband joins me. Believe me, Sincerely,

(MRS. FRITZ) HARRIET KREISLER.

With the above letter was sent the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* of September 16. In it there is related Mr. Kreisler's being in Ragaz in Switzerland when war broke out, arranging his concert tour in which Paris, London and St. Petersburg were to be the principal cities visited. He hastened at once to his regiment. His wife, who is characterized by this journal as "a brave American" (*eine tapfere Amerikanerin*) at once gave her time to the preparing of aid for the soldiers.

Kreisler's place in the army was with

that portion of it which operated southwest of Lemberg. Then is related the manner in which the distinguished violinist was wounded in the night attack by Cossacks. On September 11 he returned from the scene of battle to Vienna, where he is now being cared for by his family. He was given a four weeks' leave of absence to recover and will doubtless spend the time in Baden. Mr. Kreisler told a reporter of the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* the following:

"As an artist one lives in one's own world; one has one's own particular experiences and emotions. But I can say that as I hastened to the banner of my regiment I was overcome by a feeling which brushed away the artist in me. Scarcely had I donned my uniform when I felt myself a soldier, filled with the spirit of war.

Life in the Trenches

"The shrapnel howled. This music makes at first a ghastly sound, but one accustoms oneself to it quickly. Thus I lay in the trenches talking with our men and waiting for the night. There was moonlight. Every night the pack-animals brought up warm food. No elaborate banquet ever tasted so well to me as this simple, healthful fare! The general atmosphere was such that the soldiers in my company played cards by moonlight in the trenches. Our men wanted to go into the fight at once, and it was difficult to restrain them. When one fights with such troops, men whose souls are filled with enthusiasm, when one sees acts of heroism before one daily, one knows no hardship. One is made younger and given new strength.

"For twelve days I was continually in my clothes, but it caused me no inconvenience. Every night I slept on the wet grass with no cover but my coat. Had I done this as a civilian I suppose I would have gotten pneumonia from it! But in the field I didn't even have a cold. All one's senses sharpen themselves. One sees and hears more keenly. And in the field the ordinary man is the officer's friend.

"So I cannot wait for my recovery when I shall immediately rejoin my regiment and meet again my comrades who, in a very short time, have become very dear to me."

JULIA CLAUSSEN RETURNS

Reaches Chicago After a Peaceful Summer in Sweden

CHICAGO, Oct. 5.—Julia Claussen, the Swedish mezzo-soprano, arrived from Europe last week much improved physically by her several months' vacation. After completing her operatic engagements in Paris and London, she repaired to Sweden and visited various resorts there, spending one month at Saltsjebaden, taking the cure.

Captain Claussen who returned to America with his wife, explained that

he was relieved from Swedish army duty through the circumstance that the government did not take all available military men into service. He is a captain in the navy. Some 600,000 men had been mobilized, he said. Sweden, he thought, would most likely take sides with Germany, should it become necessary to go to war.

The Claussens came to America on the *New York* of the American Line, sailing from Stockholm by way of Gothenberg and Scotland.

Mme. Claussen was disappointed in not meeting Carolina White and Paul Longone, as intended, at Capri last Summer, but the war made that meeting an

impossibility. During the singer's absence her daughters, Sonia and Bojan, have been attending school in this city.

On October 15 Mme. Claussen begins her many concert engagements for this season. She will travel to Portland, Everett, Seattle, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Kansas City and then will be heard in Chicago and Eastern cities, including New York. Many of these engagements are with symphony orchestras. M. R.

Success in music is defined by David Bispham in the *Opera Magazine* as "not so much a matter of places and persons as of pains and personality."