

SEES DAWN OF NEW MUSIC ERA IN EUROPEAN CHAOS

Conductor Stransky, of New York Philharmonic, Believes War Will End Period of Experimentation and Spiritual Stagnation

THOSE who know Josef Stransky more than superficially and are consequently acquainted with his geniality and hearty charm of manner will find it no irksome task to submit to President Wilson's admonition to neutrality when they confront the affable conductor of the New York Philharmonic these days—that is, provided their sympathies do not happen to point in a Teutonic direction. For Mr. Stransky, just at present, sees the world through very Germanic spectacles and with all that passionate conviction that inspires almost every living German to brave without fear the pitfalls of logic and—well it is simply impossible to fall out with so warm-hearted and engaging a personality over the "dire combustion and confused events" of the hour. Hence, once receives his earnestly expressed contentions in urbane and neutral silence. And at the first opportunity one changes the subject. To be sure, the worthy conductor may indulge in one or two passing modulations back into the original tonality of his discourse but a word on the Philharmonic, his plans for the season or his collection of paintings quickly effects the desired transition.

It will be recalled that, at the outbreak of the war, Mr. Stransky and his wife were known to be in Marienbad. Instantly the timorous coupled the name of the Philharmonic conductor with those of a host of other musicians whom they deemed fated to engage in the trade of war. The pessimists, in fact, had solemnly given over the Philharmonic season (along with the wonted Boston Symphony, Flonzaley Quartet and Metropolitan Opera activities) even before Liège had fallen in the early days of August; and Mr. Stransky was variously pictured as slaughtering Pussians in the rôle of a cavalryman or tending the Austrian wounded in the guise of a physician. All the while he was calmly entrenched in the hospitable fastnesses of Munich, while in far-off Carnegie Hall the good managers of the Philharmonic ate out their hearts in a luxury of woe. The pall of silence oppressed them for more than a month till in a happy movement a message from Germany gave them leisure to breathe freely and to cease considering the need of a substitute.

Meantime Mr. Stransky and his wife were wanting for none of the necessities of life. They left Munich and achieved Berlin. They spent ten profitable days there, whereupon they directed their course to Christiania, and ultimately to Bergen. And from the Norwegian port they set sail for America upon the vessel of which Mrs. Stransky's father is captain. Not only did they accomplish this whole elaborate expedition without any difficulty or molestation whatsoever, but the conductor contrived to bring along the remainder of the superb collection of paintings that he has amassed with the discrimination of a keen connoisseur and which now, in its inspiring entirety transforms his Fifty-ninth Street apartment into a miniature art gallery.

Not Forced to Flee

Now while Mr. Stransky is patriotic he is far from being the unreasoning Chauvinist into which the war has converted many of the most enlightened and habitually broadest minds in Europe today. But there is one point on which he desires to be emphatic—his trip to America was not in the nature of a flight. It was carried out with the complete official sanction of the Austrian government.

"My great object just now," said the conductor very earnestly a few days ago, "is to assure the public that I took no thought of leaving Europe until the chance was freely offered me. The moment I reached Munich I went to see the Austrian consul, desiring to enlist as a physician. You see as I have never served in the army there was no question of actual fighting. But the consul assured me that the government could



Josef Stransky, Conductor New York Philharmonic Orchestra. To the right, with Mrs. Stransky

really make no use of me and that, like many other musicians who volunteered, I should probably be more of a hindrance than a help. 'You conductors have your own armies to command,' urged the consul; 'go, therefore, and command where you belong.' Upon my request he then gave me my passport for America—good until 1917! Yes, I realize that one can do more good in this world by living and faithfully carrying out one's deputed work than by rushing to be slaughtered. But such normal considerations do not obtain under circumstances so unusual as these. The spirit grips one with a force as irresistible as it is difficult to explain. It is the thought that you must be up and doing with the rest. When there is a fire in some part of the city everybody in the neighborhood is impelled to rush to it. The idea of 'being there too' is so strong as to make you forget everything else for the time being."

To-day the passport which helped the Stranskys out of Germany occupies an honorable place in the conductor's desk drawer. The officials at the German border were disposed to question its authenticity until they examined it with a microscope. Then they sent the bearer on his way with their blessing. At present he is enthusiastic at having seen the mountains and fjords of the country of Björnson and Grieg and commends it in preference to Switzerland to the next company of American tourists that goes to Europe—whatever may be the date of their excursion.

Novelties in Prospect

Excepting in one or two instances the war will not militate against the novelties which the Philharmonic is to bring forward this year. These include Erich Korngold's "Sinfonietta," Stravinsky's "Fireworks," Novak's "Slavic Suite," Hinton's "Endymion" Suite, Henry Hadley's "Lucifer," a suite by Stojowski and works by Stahlberg and Laucella—the last two members of the orchestra.

"For present conditions, I think this will suffice," observed Mr. Stransky. "With the whole world in its present emotional upheaval it becomes the mission of art to alleviate and soothe. Sensational or elaborate novelties are there-

fore undesirable. Why should we wish to war on points of art when we are occupied in deploring the war of nations for existence? We shall crave spiritual as well as bodily rest in these disturbed times. How transcendently great Beethoven will seem to us this year!

"Moreover, what was a debated novelty three months ago seems suddenly to have lost its significance. Music must take a fresh start before we shall again have 'novelties' in the truest sense of the term to claim our serious consideration. Musical creation is dead in Europe to-day. And in the present disposition of circumstances, it could mean very little if carried on along the lines it has for some time followed. I firmly believe the conflict is going to stimulate art in wonderful fashion. Precedent justifies this belief. The Thirty Years' War, for example, was followed in Germany by Goethe, Herder, Schiller, Lessing. After the Napoleonic wars we had Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Wagner, while the war of 1870 had as one of its consequences the rise of a notable school of German painters.

"For some decades we have suffered from spiritual stagnation. Composers have squandered their time in experimentation. They have not voiced great messages. I have felt that in the case of Strauss as I have with many others. After 'Salomé' and 'Elektra' his work has been purely experimental. I heard his 'Joseph' in Paris this Summer; I did not like it at all, though the composer himself, whom I lunched with in Munich, is amply satisfied that he has succeeded handsomely in it. Poor Strauss is greatly upset by the turn matters have taken! You see he had just been made an Officer of the Legion of Honor in Paris. And on top of the necessary re-

Novelties That the Philharmonic Will Offer—Stransky Particularly Hopeful as to New Works by Stravinsky and Erich Korngold

nunciation of this honor comes the loss of large royalties because of the cancellation of English and French performances of 'Salomé' and 'Elektra' that had been scheduled.

The Wonderful Stravinsky

"One work that I heard in Paris went far to offset the disappointment I felt over 'Joseph.' That was Stravinsky's 'Petrouchka.' It is a wonderful thing and I grow more and more amazed when I consider how little attention we have paid Stravinsky in this country. His 'Fireworks' which we shall play is a brilliant piece of workmanship and of great difficulty. But I cannot sufficiently express my wonder and admiration over the Korngold 'Sinfonietta.' The greatness of that boy's work has hitherto been its promise. But the 'Sinfonietta' is no longer an artistic promise. It is a great accomplished fact. Had it been represented to me as the work of Richard Strauss I should unhesitatingly have exclaimed: 'What a masterpiece of pure inspiration!' The splendor of this creation is incredible.

"I have sought in devising the program of our first concert to satisfy my own patriotic instincts as well as simultaneously to do tribute to America. So I have chosen to open the program with the 'New World' Symphony. After that we shall have Strauss's 'Don Juan,' Stravinsky's 'Fireworks' and three Berlioz numbers from the 'Damnation of Faust.' At the second concert I shall do the Third Symphony of Brahms as *pièce de résistance*.

"My orchestra is happily practically intact. Only Mr. Leroy, our first clarinet, is absent. He is doing *gendarme* duty in the South of France, in no danger of bodily harm. But I have been able to replace him with Mr. Chiaffarelli, formerly first clarinet of the Chicago Opera. I have often admired his work and when I returned I found that Mr. Leifels had already engaged him for me. Mr. Kramer, our concertmaster, and Mr. Parme, our bass-clarinet, will not be lost to us as they are now on their way over. No orchestra in America has fared more fortunately than the Philharmonic in respect to the integrity of its personnel." H. F. P.

3,000 American Students Penniless in Berlin, Says Carolyn Cone

MILWAUKEE, WIS., Oct. 10.—Carolyn Cone, the Milwaukee pianist, reached home October 6 after a nine months' stay in Europe, which was cut short by the war. Miss Cone, who is only eighteen years old, was engaged in a concert and recital tour of Central Europe when war was declared and because of the excellent treatment accorded her by the Germans in Berlin was in no haste to leave, sailing from Rotterdam on September 19. "Three thousand American students of art and music are penniless in Berlin as the result of the discontinuance of mail service with America," said Miss Cone, "but all are being cared for gratis by the Germans."

Miss Cone leaves for New York late this week to fulfill some concert engagements. She will appear in Milwaukee early in 1915 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. M. N. S.

"Madama Butterfly" Graphically Explained in Hubbard "Opera Talk"

W. H. Hubbard gave the second of his series of "Opera Talks" last Sunday at the Century Opera House. His subject was Puccini's "Madama Butterfly." The lecturer held his audience enchanted and limned the course of John Luther Long's drama in masterly fashion. Floyd M. Baxter lent capable aid with piano illustrations. He shared with Mr. Hubbard the prolonged applause of a very large number of auditors.

Myrna Sharlow, the brilliant young soprano, has gone to Louisville, Ky., to rest for a few weeks at the home of her uncle, Milton H. Smith, president of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. Miss Sharlow will commence her concert work in the early part of November.