

Panama Canal Makes American Place for Music Study of Australasians

Commercial Rapprochement Between Two Continents Should Put This Country in Position of Musical Mecca of Antipodes, Says Prominent Trade Investigator After Tour—Suggests Scholarships to Promote Interest in Our Educational Advantages

"OUT of the commercial rapprochement between Australasia and America that is to come about as the result of the opening of the Panama Canal should also evolve a social and artistic rapprochement. The most natural place on earth for the Australasian to complete a musical education would appear to be the United States, which now stands easily at the head of the world's nations in musical training."

In these words, Dr. Albert A. Snowden, chairman of the Foreign Trade Commission of the National Association of Manufacturers, which lately returned to the United States from an official tour of Australia and New Zealand, in the interest of the manufacturing industries of this country, voiced his endorsement of the propaganda in behalf of American teachers of music that is being advanced by John C. Freund, the editor of *MUSICAL AMERICA*.

"The Anglo-Saxon peoples beneath the Southern Cross, who are soon to be so close to us in a business way, are just now taking a great deal of interest in the Americans, who form the largest division of Anglo-Saxon people in the world," said Dr. Snowden. "It would seem to be a favorable time for promoting mutual relationships all around."

"Both the Australians and the New Zealanders are devoted to music. Pianos and organs are to be found in a very large number of the homes, and fully twice as many of these instruments are imported, in proportion to the population, as in any other country of the world. The number of those in Australia who play some musical instrument, or who sing, is relatively great. Brass bands and orchestras are everywhere to be found and a great many of the women belong to the latter organizations. Singing societies of the Welsh

and Cornish type are numerous. Singing is taught in all the public schools, by the way.

"So I reiterate that under the growing bond of amity between the two continents, far-distant though they be from one another, the idea of a musical education in the United States should have a decided appeal for the Australasian. Nowhere in the world, for instance, is opera produced as well as in New York. I know whereof I speak, for I have seen the best of the work in this line that is done at the musical centers of Europe. And there is certainly no need for students to make sacrifices for the purpose of getting an inferior musical training in Europe under inferior conditions, when all that wealth, skill and talent can offer for the promotion of music is to be found in our own American cities."

"Could not *MUSICAL AMERICA* promote a few scholarships for Australian music students who would come to America—raising the fund for the scholarships through the medium of your powerful journal? In this way we might give publicity to the American advantages. After that the matter would take care of itself."

"The chief artistic support in the recent Australasian concert tour of Paul Dufault, the Canadian tenor, was a young soprano who came from the mining town of Bendigo. At Charters Towers, in tropical Queensland, in cultured Melbourne or Adelaide, in the construction camps of Barren Jack, or the 'squatter's' home at Will-I-Go-Bung—from Thursday Island to Hobart and from Auckland to the Bluff—you will always find 'music in the air,' and a whole lot of it will be good music, too."

Music Life in Australasia

"Public music began in Australasia with the church choir, of course, but it soon advanced to the concert stage. Nowadays musical festivals are frequent, performances of orchestral and chamber music are often given and recitals are innumerable. More than that, they are generally well attended."

"As to 'popular music,' so-called, you will hear more of the American songs and instrumental numbers than anything from other nations. The lilt and jingle of our syncopated airs in particular, seem to strike the popular fancy there. "Many of the leading concert artists

have been heard in Australia and New Zealand, both countries always being included in any tour of Australasia. Dolores, Albani, Stanley, Nordica, Paderewski, Camilla Urso and Jan Kubelik have had the most enthusiastic reception. Melba is, of course, a native-born Australian, as were Amy Carter, Marie Narelle, Ada Crossley and a host of others."

"A Pacific Coast opera company was the first to make regular trips to Australasia—in the sixties—introducing 'The Bohemian Girl' and a large repertory of Italian operas with English librettos. In later years Italian opera companies produced the whole Italian repertory—the Verdis, Bellinis, Donizettis and Rossinis—as well as some of the French operas. 'Carmen' was played there first in the early eighties. A little later the comic opera wave struck with full force. The Gilbert and Sullivan scores were the most popular, and they have not lost their vogue yet."

"Saving a few individual performances of certain of the 'Ring' dramas by the Quinlan Opera Company of London in the middle of last year, Wagnerian operas are almost unknown to the general public of the Commonwealth and the Dominion."

High Standard in Music Halls

"The latest Broadway and musical comedy successes are soon transplanted to Australasia, and the six hundred American vaudeville artists at present appearing in the music halls there are called upon to sing a class of songs that is infinitely superior to the offerings that are in demand on the vaudeville stage here. In fact, I may say that the American vaudeville singer, presenting artistically superior ballads and songs verging closely upon the classic, has been a decided factor in the musical uplift of Australasia. And American artists, whether vaudeville, concert or operatic, are always assured a cordial hearing there, provided they observe the high artistic standard that prevails."

Oratorio choruses abound in both the cities and the rural districts of Australia and New Zealand, Dr. Snowden told the *MUSICAL AMERICA* representative, and he smilingly recalled the statement of an enthusiastic New Zealander, regarding the great numbers of musical instruments to be found in town and hamlet."

"We fill the towns with them," the native told him, "we broadcast them over the country, we include them in the weapons served out to our war contingents before they start for the tented field. If ever an observatory arises above the topmost glaciers of Mount Cook it will certainly be supplied with a piano, and perhaps with a harmonium, and thus aspiring New Zealand will get as near as possible to 'the music of the spheres.'"

"There are virtually no foreigners in Australasia," Dr. Snowden continued, "nothing but English, Irish, Scotch and Welsh and the long-time blend that is called Australasian or New Zealander. The people are more like Americans than

they are like any other race of people in the world. But they are not so familiar with the German or French or Italian people as we are."

Governmental and municipal support of concert and opera has not progressed in Britain's southern dominions to the degree that it has in Europe and in the United States, he told the reporter, but he pointed to the Town Halls, in the large and handsome auditoriums of which concert performances are invariably given, as evidence of the artistic sympathy that is developing between the State and the people of Australia and New Zealand.

H. C. P.



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