

Art of Accompanying as Viewed by Master Exponent

Frank La Forge Explains His Method of Studying a New Song—
Advantage of Accompanying without a Score and of Co-operating with Single Artist over Long Period

SO much dust was raised by the triumphant arrival of the operatic folk in October that the return of a certain musician, without whose co-operation the American music season would lose one of its highly distinctive features, was accorded all too little notice. It was, indeed, a rare piece of good fortune that brought back Frank La Forge in due time to fill his unique place in the activities of the year, which otherwise would have lacked a very palpable element of completeness.

A very slight margin of time divided the noted American composer and unrivalled accompanist from Germany at the outbreak of the war. Had he left Switzerland a short time before he would undoubtedly have found himself marooned in Rothenburg instead of spending a brief vacation there, as he had originally purposed. But as the good stars of American music lovers willed it he had not crossed the border at the outbreak of hostilities, and so he turned his face toward Italy, whence most of the musical élite appear to have set out upon their American journey this year. On the same vessel was Mme. Alda, who is so fortunate as to hold a monopoly on Mr. La Forge's artistic services.

The Summer was not one of sweet doing nothing for Mr. La Forge, however. He wrote seven new songs—they will appear before long—and worked zealously with Mme. Alda on her programs for the present Winter. He succeeded, nevertheless, in visiting Paderewski in company with Mme. Sembrich, and in being present at the birthday festivities of the noted pianist. These were enlivened by the performance, among other things, of a parody on his charming song, "To a Messenger," the words of which were replaced by verses concerning Paderewski devised by Mme. Sembrich and the composer himself.

But if Mr. La Forge is very far from being an idler during the silly season, he is a person of almost disconcertingly industrious propensities at this time of the year. He has concerts and rehearsals and rehearsals and concerts, entailing an enormous amount of labor. To find him at home is a stroke of extraordinary good luck. Even more extraordinary, from the standpoint of the average being, is his delightful affability and unruffled good nature, which is, apparently, proof against the ordeal of almost incessant music making.

A "Vocal Sonata" Recital

Mr. La Forge performing the office of accompanist, a song recital assumes an added dignity and high beauty—indeed, when he plays for such artists as Mme. Alda, Mme. Sembrich or Mme. Gadski the event might be construed as a sort of vocal sonata recital. The pianist is no longer a mere accompanist in the traditional sense—he is an ensemble player of superlative qualities. Now there has been much ado over Mr. La Forge's practice of playing his share of a recital unaccompanied by a score quite à la Toscanini. But to the pianist himself that fact represents no very remarkable accomplishment.

"The truth is," he remarked recently, "that I find it easier and more natural, so that there is, in reality, no particular

credit attached to it. I should be hindered rather than helped by playing with a score in front of my face. I did not, however, make it a conscious object from



Frank La Forge, the distinguished American composer and accompanist, on his way to Europe (in the lower picture) and returning from there (in the upper one). In the first he is shown with Mme. Alda (standing) and Gutia Casini, the Russian 'cellist; in the other with Pasquale Amato, the Metropolitan baritone (at the right).

the start to play in this fashion. It merely chanced that I was asked one day to accompany Mme. Gadski in some songs. The music was not at hand and I essayed them from memory and with success. From that time I made it a practice to rely on my memory, which is good. And this kind of independence allows me greater freedom in every respect.

"My study of a new song is accomplished away from the piano. The outlines, the musical details and other characteristics of the piece suggest themselves and are mentally absorbed in the process of reading over the score. After that the song is gone over with the artist and we decide upon various matters of interpretation. This is a phase of never-failing interest, particularly as one great singer is apt to differ so materially in her ideas of tempo, or even more subtle matters, from another.

Accompanying a Single Artist

"To me it has been an unmitigated pleasure to be associated with a single artist for long periods. That is the way, it seems to me, to achieve results of an artistic unity and cohesiveness quite unattainable under conditions compelling the accompanist to play for one person to-day and another to-morrow. It permits the development of freedom and individuality, all of which are supremely essential to the modern accompanist.

"My severest critic has always been my sister, for whose opinion I have ever had the profoundest regard. Gifted with an altogether extraordinary fineness of musical perception, she has

at one time or another found fault with my work when others have most highly praised it. But I take her word in preference to that of almost anyone else."

Mr. La Forge has for some time co-operated with Mme. Alda in her recitals. But, through the courtesy of the Met-



ropolitan soprano, he is to be heard at the forthcoming concert of Mme. Sembrich. With the Polish soprano, he has been associated on several European concert tours, in which he has been acclaimed in Russian music centers as well as in Warsaw, Lodz and other Polish cities now devastated by war.

H. F. P.

McGill Orchestra Plays Suite by Its Conductor, Dr. Perrin

MONTREAL, Dec. 12.—The orchestra of the McGill University Conservatorium of Music has made its first appearance of the season with great success, conducted by Dr. H. C. Perrin, the director. The program included Dvorak's "New World" Symphony, a pastoral suite by Dr. Perrin and music by Sibelius and Bach. A large audience was delighted both with the orchestra and with the soloists, all students of the Conservatorium. These concerts are usually given by invitation, but tickets were sold for this one, the proceeds going to the Red Cross.

BORWICK HEARD IN BEETHOVEN CONCERTO

Pianist Soloist with Philadelphia Orchestra—Stokowski's Strong Readings

Bureau of Musical America,
No. 1706 Chestnut Street,
Philadelphia, Dec. 14, 1914.

AFTER an absence of a week, during which it made successful appearances in several cities of the Middle West, the Philadelphia Orchestra was warmly welcomed home at the Academy of Music last Friday afternoon and Saturday evening. The special orchestral feature was Brahms's Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, played with command and sympathy under Mr. Stokowski's elucidating guidance.

While the opening *allegro* did not show the orchestra to the utmost advantage, the tonal quality being somewhat clouded and rough, this defect, probably an after-

RUDOLPH GANZ STAR OF SWISS CONCERT

Pianist and Chorus of Fellow-Countrymen in Program for Relief Fund

For the benefit of the Swiss Relief Fund a concert was given on Saturday evening, December 12 at Æolian Hall, New York, by the Helvetia Männerchor of New York, Johannes Werschinger, conductor, and Rudolph Ganz, the Swiss pianist.

The auditorium was filled with representative Swiss-American citizens, and the center box, in which sat the Ambassador and Consul, was decorated with Swiss and American flags. Mr. Ganz played Beethoven's Sonata "Appassionata" with a wealth of emotional variety and a mastery that placed him at once in his audience's favor. A group of shorter pieces contained his own "In May," op. 23, and "Bauerntanz," op. 24, two splendid pieces, Blanchet's Serenade, op. 15 and Volkmar Andreae's "Frage," op. 20, four Swiss works representing composers born in Zurich, Lausanne and Berne, respectively. Liszt's "Sonnette del Petrarca," op. 123, and the E Major Polonaise followed. Mr. Ganz played them in a truly wonderful manner, arousing such enthusiasm that two extras, Liszt's popular "Liebestraum," No. 3, and Chopin's A Flat Waltz had to be added.

Under Mr. Werschinger's able direction the chorus, which is an efficient body of some forty male singers, was heard in a *capella* part-songs, works by Swiss composers, Attenhofer's "Gruss der Heimat," "Vale" and "Mein Schweizerland wach auf!" Volkmar Andreae's "Der Jungschmied," Hegar's "Morgen im Walde" and as a final number, with William Josy at the organ, Kremser's "Prayer of Thanksgiving." A small string orchestra played Mendelssohn's "Heimkehr aus der Fremde," Tschai-kowsky's familiar Andante Cantabile, the Sokolow-Liadov, "Les Vendredis," Rubinstein's "Music of the Spheres," Meyer-Helmund's "Serenade Rocco," the Rheinberger-Kramer "Vision" and Tellam's "En Sourdine." A. W. K.

Flonzaleys Open Their Philadelphia Series

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 14.—The first of the Flonzaley Quartet's three concerts in Witherspoon Hall this season, under the local management of Robert Patterson Strine, took place last Tuesday evening. The program was of rare artistic merit and interest. The two movements of Darius Milhaud's strongly impressionistic quartet claimed prime attention, not only from an analytical standpoint, but because the organization reached the greatest efficiency in its ensemble in these vaguely interesting, but withal beautiful, movements. Tschai-kowsky's charming quartet, the E Flat Major, op. 30, opened the program, and the closing number was the Haydn G Major Quartet, played with a verve peculiar to this organization.

math of the strenuous combination of travel and playing in strange cities, with the gloomiest sort of weather to contend with, was soon eradicated, and the *andante* was given with smoothness and sympathy. The orchestra was at its best in the delightful *giocoso scherzo*, and the *finale* came with power and impressiveness. In addition to this great work the enjoyable opening and closing numbers were the "Magic Flute" Overture of Mozart and the Overture to Weber's "Oberon."

The soloist of the program was Leonard Borwick, the English pianist, who was engaged to fill the vacancy caused by the inability of Ferruccio Busoni to leave war-ridden Europe. To take the place of such an artist as Busoni is no easy task, and it is very much to the credit of the pianist from England that he not only satisfied his two audiences on Friday afternoon and Saturday evening, but provided real delight and edification as well. Borwick played Beethoven's Concerto No. 3, in E Minor, and played with exquisite beauty of tone, elegance of style and a refinement and sincerity that were refreshing. It was good, sane, sound piano playing. More of Borwick's appearances, even in this season of many pianists and concerts and recitals galore, would not come amiss.

ARTHUR L. TUBBS.

ANTONIA SAWYER

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THE DISTINGUISHED AUSTRALIAN PIANIST

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on Thursday afternoon, February 11, 1915