

## "FAKING" IN "MOVIE" MUSIC CORRUPTING PUBLIC'S TASTE

Harmonic Deceptions Practised on Patrons of Picture Theaters  
Making Them Musical Perverts—Need of a Personal Campaign by Musically Cultured People to Lead House Managers Toward a Higher Standard in Accompaniment to Films

By BLANCHE GREENLAND

DO we realize that a juggernaut is bearing down upon the public of our moving picture theaters? Emblazoned over the front is its name, "Faking." This does not mean improvisation, which is, of course, legitimate and a subconscious expression of the performer—harmonically correct.

Faking, on the contrary, is a deliberate mutilation of harmony by a performer with the intention of deceiving the ear of the listener. For instance, in such well worn melodies as Rubinstein's "Melody in F," Mendelssohn's "Spring Song," and Dvorak's "Humoresque," horrid modulations are substituted, absurd inventions inserted, wrong chords introduced, producing something entirely wrong, which leaves its effect on the listener. He whistles or hums what he hears; he remembers it frequently. When he, perchance, hears a correct version he thinks it wrong because it is unfamiliar. His ear has been imposed upon by a "fake" rendition. He has been cheated. Faking is not an elaboration of a given theme or variations of a known melody. It is a vicious mingling of wrong combinations of notes perpetrated by an unlearned performer.

### Scope of Orchestral Organ

Because of the many automatic orchestral combination instruments now



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used in the moving picture theaters (where a single performer has unrestricted control of the stringed instruments, the brasses, the wood-winds, and the battery; instead of these instruments being played by from sixteen to forty musicians under a leader) there is a tremendous scope given to this single performer. He or she should not be allowed to deceive the public ear with a "fake" presentation.

The term "faking" or "fake playing" is a regular trade name familiar to producer, manager and performer are used with utmost naiveté. It is time that the musical public should realize the significance of the imposition.

Playing to pictures is an art of itself. It is not in the class of concert work. It is altogether impressionistic, and might be called music of the future. The rapid transition of emotions in the pictures requires an immense repertoire, a lightning-like ability to play appropriate selections, to transpose without a flaw. Here is where the performer has an opportunity either to create something worthy and inspire his audience or to fall in a rut.

### Duties of Player

He or she must not submerge the value of the picture; the music must remain an accompaniment, although an independent one—sometimes a mere obligato. It must be an embroidered design around the picture on the screen. It must not take the attention of the audience away from the picture. It is the *sauce piquante* that brings out the flavor and yet aids digestion and assimilation of the idea. It should leave a sub-conscious impression. But it must be pure and unadulterated with musical ignorance, or it will form a dyspeptic musical taste that will have a bad effect on the future of American music.

Our country is not yet populated entirely by Americans, or persons born in this country, but by an admixture from every country in the world. Our musical future is to be determined by these people. Our folk music will be made by them. The chosen few, comparatively speaking, who compose our contemporary musical world hold themselves aloof from *hoipolloi*. They do not condescend to discuss music with the ignorant.

Yet is not music a religion and should we not proselyte and "spread the gospel to every creature"? Where can be found so potent a medium as the "movies"?

### Say Public Demands It

But what do we hear at the "movies"? Faking, imitations, so-called "popular music." Why is this silly imitation popular? Simply because it is familiar. But here is the alarming state of affairs as the manager sees it: The public wants "faking."

Shall we allow the general public to be crushed into musical perverts? Is not the wonderful spiritual development attained by technical or aesthetic study of music a vital force—something we are privileged and obligated to extend to all? Why not enlist the power of the "movies"?

We would not countenance low and debasing pictures for the masses. We have boards of censors. We will not eat impure or adulterated food. We imprison counterfeiters of money and discovered imposters. Why should we listen to or permit "fake" music or have thrust upon our ears a heathenish rhythmic noise? We beg to differ with Lhévinne, who finds ragtime pleasing. Did he ever hear "faking" I wonder?

And yet the general public is endangered by this oncoming juggernaut of the movies.

### Kindergarten Methods

True, people flee from being forcibly educated. Why not apply kindergarten methods and combine a rational relation between pictures and music.

Let us have folk songs instead of "Ma Honey" songs. Give us the lullabies of Mozart, Schubert, Brahms and Carrie

Jacobs Bond for the sleeping scenes in pictures; exquisite barcarolles for scenes on the water; "Kammenoi Ostrow" for the chimes; any of the hundreds of characteristic national dances for such scenes; selections from a wealth of Indian transcriptions for Indian scenes; the great dramatic compositions for tragedies; the Chopin "Funeral March" on appropriate pictures; the stirring martial music of the present day and selections from the infinite variety of American composers.

Search your repertoire mentally as you look at the moving pictures, then leave a written request with the manager for appropriate music. Take up the work systematically.

Let us become musical missionaries.

### Make Good Music Popular

When the masses hear good music continually they will recognize it. It will then have become "popular." All kinds and conditions of men, women and children patronize the "movies." It is there that many of them hear the only music that comes into their lives. What a power is within our reach! To initiate a systematic, progressive course, as it might be called, of attractive, bright sympathetic or tragic music where it may be heard for five or ten cents and to inaugurate a campaign for the employment by "movie" managers of performers who are not "fake" musicians.

A word of approval spoken or written to the manager will soon open his eyes to what is good music. No business man is quicker to see possibilities for effects than a motion picture manager. Consider the vast throngs that go to the movies and take advantage of this power for establishing the musical taste of America.



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