Music the One Thing More Than All Others that Wounded Soldiers Seem to Crave, and Herbert Fryer, the English Pianist, Recounts His Experiences in Supplying it Last Summer—Work that Benefits Needy Musicians as Well as the Soldiers

BY HERBERT FRYER

It was my great privilege to have the opportunity of taking concert parties to the front in France during my recent vacation in Europe, a wonderful, unforgettable and unique experience, full of vivid and unusual impressions, many of which will last a lifetime.

These concerts are arranged in London by Lena Ashwell, one of our greatest stage favorites, being organized at the Three Arts Club and under the patronage of the Princess Victoria. Primarily the scheme is to give entertainment to the British soldiers in France (not in the trenches, as so many people rather ridiculously imagine, nor within a dangerous distance of the firing line, but in the base hospitals, camps, etc., in the Bapaume-Boulogne district, or the Havre-Boulogne neighborhood), for they say, one and all, the thing for which they pine most of all is music.

Secondarily, and of almost equal importance, these concerts give engagements to a large number of artists, many of whom, as in all the countries of war, are now raged, are in very reduced circumstances, and although they only get all "expenses paid" and about twenty dollars a week the maximum is twenty-five dollars, the minimum fifteen dollars) it does help many of them along, and this particularly during July, August and September, when things are always difficult for professional people. Of course, those of the artists who can afford to, give their services without recompense.

Now, before going further, I wish to state that all this is necessarily a costly affair (entailing artist fees, passage money, hotel bills, procuring of passports, etc.), and it takes about $300 per week to keep one of these parties going, a party of seven or eight artists. For the sake of the men at the front, who have given everything and are sacrificing their lives for their country, as well as for our brothers and sisters in art, I would appeal to all my colleagues in the profession to assist me in this work by sending me a donation toward the Concerts at the Front Funds.

At this time it will be a most welcome Christmas present, from many who are not experiencing trying times in this country to those who are having real struggles to keep the wolf from the door. This appeal is made both to the amateurs and professional musicians of the United States.

Three Concerts a Day

I went to France in the capacity of manager, pianist, accompanist, interpreter, program maker, etc., and as, where we gave an average of three concerts per day and sometimes four, and about twenty concerts in five weeks, it can be readily imagined that it was hard work for everybody concerned. I know that on one or two occasions, due to the acoustic point of view, these concerts and accompanying efforts at the end of each concert by the artists, made the men feel the struggle and to an extent did not have the required influence.

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Herbert Fryer, the English Pianist, and, on the Right, a View of One of the Concert Parties He Managed. In the Group Mr. Fryer May Be Identified by the Arrow.