

HOPES OF POLAND CRYSTALLIZED IN STOJOWSKI'S NEW CANTATA

"Prayer for Poland" by Noted Polish Musician to Be Given Its Première Next Month by the Schola Cantorum under Kurt Schindler—The Composer's Prologue, Scherzo and Variations to Be Introduced During the Same Week by His Compatriot, Paderewski

MARCH will certainly be a momentous time for Sigismond Stojowski this year. In the first week of that month there will occur in New York musical events which will symbolize not only Mr. Stojowski's musical ideals, but the grief over Poland's woes that oppresses every loyal Pole in this war-swept year. It is the latter which is responsible for the première of the Stojowski cantata, "Prayer for Poland," to be given by the Schola Cantorum, under Kurt Schindler, with the New York Symphony Orchestra, at Carnegie Hall on March 7. The other event is the performance by Paderewski of Mr. Stojowski's "Prologue, Scherzo and Variations" with the New York Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall on March 4.

"We of Poland cannot think of our native country to-day without anguish," says Mr. Stojowski. "While gazing from afar, across the ocean, toward my stricken country last summer—I had to turn for spiritual help to the romantic poetry of Poland in the early nineteenth century, which was conceived 'to strike fire out of the heart of man.' In Christian Poland a hundred years ago a generation of poets arose to whom the martyrdom of the mother country seemed, like that of Christ, ordained for the world's redemption. One of these poets, Krasinski, whose muse rose from the love of the suffering country to the serene contemplation of future humanity, prophesied that a day of universal love would come. It is Krasinski's 'Modlitwa za Polskę' which is the text of my cantata. This 'Prayer for Poland' is a prayer not of despair, but of hope, and it expresses the aspiration of the Poles to-day. Surely, if there is any justice on earth, the self-sacrifice of Poland will be recognized by the world and it will be given its rightful place among nations."

Its Timely Nature

The timeliness of the Krasinski text, written in 1839, may be seen from this excerpt:

"This world is shattered, shattered into pieces!
No single one of its rent and ruptured fragments
Prays any more unto Thee, Oh heavenly Virgin!"

"The cult of the Virgin is widespread in Poland," related Mr. Stojowski, "and this prayer is an invocation to the famous Madonna of Czestochowa. Have I made the music typically Polish in color and spirit? There is a suggestion of Polish folk-lore in the soprano and baritone solos, but I have, on the whole, treated the cantata from a broader viewpoint and tried to translate with the help of the rich resources of the modern orchestra the poet's thought into a musical language of universal appeal."

In the playing of Mr. Stojowski's second concerto by Paderewski there is double significance, for not only are the two Polish pianists firm friends of long standing, but they are both strong forces in the campaign that is being made to enlist the sympathy of Americans in the cause of Poland's sufferers. "Mr. Paderewski will play my concerto with the Boston Symphony in Boston, as well as



Sigismond Stojowski, the Eminent Polish Pianist, Pedagogue and Composer, a Member of the Von Ende School of Music Faculty

with Mr. Damrosch here," explained the composer. "I went abroad in 1913 to play the concerto with Arthur Nikisch and the London Symphony at Queen's Hall, on which occasion it was given for the first time."

"After my works have been played in March," continued Mr. Stojowski, "I'm going to give a recital in Aeolian Hall for the Polish Victims' Relief Fund. That will come in the latter part of March, and will be my only appearance of the season."

Mother His First Teacher

Mr. Stojowski had made these remarks in his New York studio. "It was this lady," said he, indicating his mother, who sat across the table from him, "that was my first teacher. When I was a lad at our home in Cracow, my mother had a salon there, and to our house came the prominent artists of our own country and those who visited there. Thus I was fired with the ambition to become a musician. But influences around me made me feel that a broad cultural education was necessary for an artist. After I was graduated in Cracow, I went to Paris to study, both at the University of Paris and at the Conservatoire."

"In Paris, then, I attended my classes in history, philosophy and literature at the Sorbonne and kept up my work at the Conservatoire—it meant hard labor, I assure you. I studied piano with Louis Diemer, composition with Leo Delibes and won a first prize in both in 1889. I gave my first concert in 1891 with the Colonne Orchestra, a program of my own works, including the Orchestral Ballade and First Piano Concerto."

"Among the influences upon my development foremost was that of Paderewski. When I was a lad I met him at my mother's house at the time when he appeared in Cracow in recital for the first time. I feel proud now when I recall that I then had a subconscious feeling of Paderewski's greatness before the world

Contribution of Sigismond Stojowski to the Musical Advancement of America During the Ten Years of His Residence Here—Successive Steps of a Career Which Received Its Initial Impetus from Gatherings of Musicians in His Mother's Salon at Cracow

knew it and before I could consciously realize it myself.

Paderewski's Stimulus

"Later on, in Paris, I met Paderewski again, and it was he who, several years after my graduation from the Conservatoire, turned my activity back to the piano after it had for a time been devoted largely to composition. He pointed out to me that it was foolish to let go to waste the pianistic equipment on which I had spent so much energy in my early days. He made me see the good sense of utilizing its earning power. You know, composition is a career of luxury, as an old copyist said to me when I objected to the high charges in his bill."

"The first conductor to accept an orchestral work of mine was Hans von Bülow, who placed two movements of my First Orchestral Suite on a program of his last season in Hamburg. Tchaikowsky included the same work on a program of the music of young composers, which unfortunately he did not live to conduct, in St. Petersburg."

Twenty-Year-Old Novelty

"It has been my experience that, in Europe, the young composer meets with plenty of encouragement at the hands of the masters of the art. It is an encouragement to me now that some of my youthful works are being revived. My brilliant colleague, Percy Grainger, told me that my Orchestral Suite, which Josef Stransky produced last season with the New York Philharmonic, had, almost simultaneously, been done in London, and friends over there have informed me since that it was considered 'one of the most interesting novelties of the season.' I was considerably amused at the epithet 'refreshing' applied by the press to a twenty-year-old novelty!"

After he had resumed his devotion to the piano, owing to the wonderful incentive of Paderewski's teaching, Mr. Stojowski appeared in concerts throughout many of the countries of Europe.

"I have found it difficult," he stated, "to maintain harmony in the relation between composition and virtuosity. The former is likely to encroach upon the latter, and, although the importance of technique in piano playing is frequently over-estimated, it is true that the pianist must keep his technique constantly exercised. When I met Rubinstein, he asked me: 'What do you do?' I answered: 'I play the piano like a composer and compose like a pianist.' This seemed to amuse the old master, who laughingly retorted: 'That's what I have been trying to do all my life.'"

Godard's Formula

"That exercise is unnecessary for the creative artist is not true. Here's testimony on that point: Benjamin Godard, who had conducted my concert with the Colonne Orchestra, met me three weeks afterward, and said, 'Well, have you written a great deal since?' I, who was resting on my thin laurels and idling, was amazed at the question."

"Don't you write every day?" said Godard.

"Still more amazed, I asked: 'Do you? And do you feel like it each day?'"

"A composer ought to write every day," was his reply, "and when I don't feel like it, I write a string quartet or a bit of a mass."

Mr. Stojowski added, "Mendelssohn also contended that it was necessary for a composer to work every day. There is something muscular in brain work. In the summer, after my creative faculties have been relaxed for several days, when I try a bit of composition again,

I find that I can command neither technical facility nor ideas. On the second day the technical facility bridges over the gap caused by the lack of ideas, and on the third an idea suddenly takes hold of me, and I work it out eagerly."

Lose Self-Criticism

"We can scarcely agree with the dictum that a composer should develop every idea that comes to him, even though it does produce facility. Chamfort declared, 'Facility is an admirable gift, provided one does not make any use of it.' Would it not be better, you ask, for the composer to pick out the best ideas that come to him and to develop those? Yes, but it seems to be a characteristic of those possessing extreme facility that they begin to lose this faculty of self-criticism."

When the pianist was asked how he had happened to come to America, he replied: "I had been teaching in Europe during my career as virtuoso (as almost all virtuosos do over there), and one day Frank Damrosch entered my Paris apartment and asked me to come to America and head the piano department of the Institute of Musical Art, just founded. I decided to take a chance on the possibilities here, and I was tempted by this vast field of novel experience. It is thrilling to a European of old race to watch—and help!—the building up of a great new civilization. I have been here now almost ten years—touring, teaching, writing, lecturing—and going over to Europe every summer, like a good American!"

KENNETH S. CLARK.

RECITAL BY MME. PARDON

Belgian Pianist Demonstrates That She Is Well-Equipped Artist

Mme. Amelie Pardon, a Belgian pianist and former professor of the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, gave an interesting piano recital in New York on Feb. 16. Her program showed her leanings toward the romantic school of composers, for Schumann, Beethoven, Chopin, Chaminade, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Cyril Scott and Tchaikowsky were represented by numbers of a more or less romantic nature.

Mme. Pardon is well-equipped to interpret music of this kind. Her tone is round and warm, her finger work deft and accurate, her sense of rhythm excellent and her feeling for contrasting values is marked. She caught and transmitted perfectly the spirit of the Schumann "Humoresque" and the Romance in F Sharp Major, the delicacy of the "Fauns" of Chaminade, and the weird, oriental strains of the misnamed "Danse Nègre" of Cyril Scott. The well-known twelfth Rhapsody of Liszt she played with brilliance and vigor, and a fine display of tone. An unfamiliar number was the "Harmonies du Soir" of H. Pachulski.

Mme. Pardon was very enthusiastically received by the audience that filled the auditorium of the church, where the recital was given. A concert of the pupils of Mme. Pardon was announced for Feb. 24.

H. B.

Houghton, Mich., Hears Organist in Farewell Recital

HOUGHTON, MICH., Feb. 12.—A large audience attended the farewell organ recital given at Trinity Episcopal Church on Thursday evening, Feb. 10, by Paul Allen Beymer, who is leaving Trinity to become organist of St. Matthews's Church, Wheeling, W. Va. A most exacting program, ranging from light pieces by English composers to the "Finlandia" symphonic poem by Sibelius and the difficult organ transcription of the Wagner "Ride of the Valkyries" showed perfect mastery of the organ, in sense of rhythm, singing tone and smooth legato.

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