

HOW THE PRESS AGENT CREATES MUSIC-LOVERS

Some of the Ways in Which the Artist's Publicity Representative May Serve the Musical World, as Analyzed by One of the Craft, Edward L. Bernays—Psychology as a Working Basis—How the Singer's Personality May Be Correlated with the Affairs of the Day

IN these columns last week there appeared an article entitled, "Publicity, from the Musician's Point of View," which showed that the layman is unaware of the devices employed by celebrities in the musical world to make their names household words, and which demonstrated the absolute necessity of publicity in all its varied phases.

The aforementioned essay, defining publicity as a typical American institution, served as an introduction to a series of articles which will appear in **MUSICAL AMERICA**. Having stated the case and its symptoms, it is quite fitting that the first of this series of interviews should be with the doctor, who in the matter of publicity, is the press agent. The particular dispenser of publicity whom we elected to interview is Edward L. Bernays of the Metropolitan Musical Bureau of New York, chiefly because he figured prominently in the piloting of extensive campaigns for such an organization as the Diaghileff Ballet Russe and for such artists as Barrientos, Sembach, Amato, Kurt and Schelling.

Experience in Profession

A word or two about this young "Caruso of Press Agents," as Pitts Sanborn termed him in a dedication upon a copy of the *Globe* critic's new volume of *vers libre*, "Vie de Bordeaux." Graduating from Cornell University in 1912, Mr. Bernays became editor of a scientific journal in New York. He soon after exploited the Brieux play, "Damaged Goods," and was employed by Klaw and Erlanger, the theatrical producers, as press agent for such stars as Otis Skinner and Elsie Ferguson, and by Henry Miller in a similar capacity for his play, "Daddy Long Legs." His work for musical artists is well known in this field. It is significant that Mr. Bernays is a close student of the theories of his uncle, Professor Sigmund Freud, the famous psychologist.

As to expressing his views upon the subject of publicity, Mr. Bernays seemed to fear that it might be thought that the press agent was "press-agenting" himself. When the purpose of the interview was explained, however, he gave his conception of the proper function of his calling and the service that it can be made to play in the world of music.

Freudian Theories

"A press agent," Mr. Bernays told us, "must regard his calling as an art and as a science. A science in that it employs the elementary laws of psychology, very much as advertising does. An art in that inspiration often plays the most important part in furnishing him with his happiest ideas for novelties, slogans and catch phrases.

"The capable press agent must possess activity, assiduity, ingenuity, judgment in disseminating fact and fancy, and especially the experience in co-operating effectively with the editorial offices of the newspapers.

"But a press agent nowadays must not be regarded merely as a man who depends solely upon the newspapers as an outlet for his publicity," continued Mr. Bernays. "His field to-day embraces the entire realm of promotion. Window exhibits, fashion shows, circulars, photographs, magazine articles, phonograph records, lectures, display advertising and



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SCENES LIKE TOWER OF BABEL AT BALLET'S DEPARTURE FROM NEW YORK

Wives, Babies and Pets Get Away in Confusion—Irish Messenger Boy Refuses Job of Paging Russians

New York, Oct. 30.—To provide for the eccentric Russian is not a coveted, what is

DIAGHILEFF BALLET RUSSE VISITS MANY CITIES

While the tour of Diaghileff's Ballet Russe last year was confined to a very small section of the country, the decision of the Metropolitan Opera Company directors made it possible for this organization this year to undertake a seventeen-week trans-continental tour.

Starting with a two weeks' engagement at the Manhattan Opera House, New York, the Diaghileff Ballet and its twelve car special journey through New England with dates at Boston and other cities. Thence it goes to Atlantic City. Then they go for two performances to Baltimore, three each in Washington and Philadelphia; then to Richmond, Va., Columbia, S. C., Atlanta, Ga., three per-

WASLAV NIJINSKY



Pictorial Devices Used in the Publicity Campaigns for the Diaghileff Ballet Russe and for Two Prominent Opera Singers. From Left to Right: Flora Revalles of the Ballet Russe, as a Snake Charmer, (© Underwood and Underwood); Melanie Kurt, as "Brünnhilde," and Johannes Sembach, as "Siegfried," Photographed in the Open.—(Photo by Karl Struss). Above: a Reproduction of the Ballet Russe Courier, a Pamphlet That Throws Light Upon the Doings of the Members of the Troupe

photo service syndicates all lie within his province.

"As a discussion of all these methods would involve too great a mass of detail, I shall limit myself chiefly to the relations of the press agent to the newspapers. The press agent for the musical artist should be a master of correlation. He must know the journals for which he is writing and give them exactly the type of material that will interest their readers. The good press agent can act as a valuable aid to an editor as well as to his client.

Mediocrity a Boomerang

"It is not the press agent's business to tamper with the newspaper criticisms of an artist's work," Mr. Bernays continued. "If he is conscientious he will not attempt to promote a person who is without artistic merit. An incapable artist is the worst boomerang a press agent can have. Similarly, even a well press-agented play will fail if it does not appeal to the public.

"The press agent of musical events fills a particular place in the domain of music. It is within his power to enlarge the number of music lovers by creating a widespread interest in musical artists. Of course, the public to be appealed to must be considered.

"There are those who can be counted upon to attend important musical events habitually. With these the press agent's persuasions are not particularly necessary. Then there are those who must be drawn from theatrical to musical interests. In this class are numbered those who occasionally spend a little money for music. And then there is the class that never attends a musical event. The last two classes must be made interested in the personality of the artist, and here is where the work of the press agent must be concentrated.

"The principles which guide the press agent in his campaign are aptly illustrated in the case of Barrientos. Here was a coloratura soprano of the first rank, unknown in America. It sufficed to lay her criticisms before the musicians and the music lovers. But what of the laymen?"

"The personality of Barrientos was many-sided. It was the task of the press agent to consider devices by which the various phases of her personality might be correlated with other fields.

"Now, when a coloratura soprano is mentioned one is likely to think of Barrientos. Music lovers read her criticisms and articles about her in the musical papers. The motor 'fans' saw her picture taken in a motor car. The gourmand ordered a Barrientos omelette at his hotel. Women adopted the Barrientos comb. Fond mothers doted upon her photograph with her son. Her name became associated with the revival of Spanish interests in America, and became coupled with that of Granados and 'Goyescas.' By the time the campaign

was well under way there were groups of people who never before were interested in things musical, but who knew of Barrientos and went to hear her sing. In other words, this publicity made her a box-office attraction.

"I could give you hundreds of examples of instances where non-musical persons were appealed to," Mr. Bernays added. "There was Amato, who was photographed with Mayor Mitchel. The picture of Amato exercising on the parallel bars interested the sportsman. The photograph of Melanie Kurt in costume against a natural background appealed to the artist and to the photographer. The view of Flora Revalles charming the snake aroused a morbid curiosity. The *Ballet Russe Courier*, telling little anecdotes of the members of the troupe, was like a local *Town Topics*." And so on ad infinitum. The essential thing to consider is that people were legitimately interested and for one reason or another spent money for music."

HARRY BIRNBAUM.

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