

## MEMORIES OF STUDY UNDER CARREÑO

Leslie Hodgson, One of Her Favorite Pupils, Recalls Her Method of Instruction—Observations on the Effect of the Audience Upon a Concert Pianist

By HARRIETTE BROWER

"It is a deep loss to me to know that I shall not have the counsel and help of my teacher and friend Mme. Carreño," began Leslie Hodgson, the well-known pianist and teacher. "I owe so much to her; she really was my salvation, in many ways, and I shall never cease to be grateful to her. Her interest and personal friendship have played a vital rôle in my musical development."

Mr. Hodgson has finished a busy season of teaching and playing; the talk he had promised had, of necessity, to be postponed till vacation time, which, although still occupied with musical activity, is not quite so crowded as the past months have been. Thus it happened that on a June afternoon we met in my studio to confer on the absorbing subject of the pianist's equipment.

"My first piano studies were made at my home in Canada with a German, by name Rudolf Ruth, who had at one time been a pupil of Clara Schumann; so, you

see, it was a good orthodox beginning. Later I studied with Dr. A. S. Vogt, conductor of the Mendelssohn Choir in Toronto. He gave me a thorough foundation. He is a most excellent musician and fine piano teacher. As you know, he is head of a large school of music in Toronto. I feel I owe the essential foundation upon which artistic judgment is built and my first real awakening to the importance and possibilities of beauty of tone to Dr. Vogt. After hearing his Mendelssohn Choir you know what a master-artist he is. His influence during the years I studied with him, at a very impressionable age, is something for which I shall be eternally grateful.

"With this preparation I went to Europe and put myself in the hands of Dr. Ernst Jedliczka in Berlin. From him I learned much on the interpretive side of piano playing. He opened up some fine vistas in the matter of interpretation, but he tied me up in such hard knots, physically, in his insistence on *Kraft, Kraft, Kraft*, to be attained on a purely muscular basis, that it was impossible to realize these on the keyboard. He seemed to care little for tone or tonal variety, neither did he concern himself much with technique. Perhaps at that time he had become indifferent to these things as it was the last year of his life; he passed away a few months after I stopped work with him.

"I was undecided what move to make next; my playing was far from what I wished to be and I had not found just the teacher I needed. There were plenty of famous masters in Berlin, but just which one would be the best for me I could not decide. A friend often spoke of Mme. Carreño as a wonderful teacher. I recognized her as a great pianist, but did not think of going to her for instruction, perhaps because I heard so much about her as a teacher I feared her powers were exaggerated.

### With Carreño

"However, my reluctance was finally overcome. I went to her and she did wonders for me. She opened my eyes, she loosened me up, both physically and mentally. I had become stiff and tense; she taught me how to relax. Many teachers claim to teach relaxation, but they don't carry it far enough; they begin too low down, with fingers or wrist. True relaxation should begin at the shoulder and work downwards. Carreño carried out the principle more thoroughly and in detail than anyone I have heard of. She began to loosen up my arms at the shoulder by turning and twisting them in various ways.

"Her great object was tone, a beautiful quality and variety of tone. With me she first set to work to untie all the knots and to make playing once more a thing of sheer joy to me. Among all the wonderful features of her teaching, the greatest thing, to me, was the way in which she equipped me to work out my own salvation—which every one eventually has to do, of course. One of the

things she impressed most upon me during the latter part of the time I studied with her was, 'Be true to yourself. Take all these things I tell you and think them over. If they appeal to you, adopt them; if not, you must stick to your own ideas. You have your own individuality and you must be true to yourself first, last and always.'

"I need scarcely say that I look upon my years of association with her as a priceless heritage. I cannot tell you how



Leslie Hodgson, a Pianist Whose High Artistic Ideals and Keen Musicianship Have Commanded Widespread Recognition

much the little informal chats I used to have—especially during the past winter, when I would drop in on her when she was alone of an evening—have meant to me. At such times she would talk freely and most illuminatingly in making points that would only be possible from the experience of a great world-artist.

"To revert again to her teaching, Mme. Carreño gave a few technical exercises to illustrate foundational principles, but she did not over-crowd me with these. She also used certain études which were to be played with different touches. The first and second studies of Clementi's *Grados* were favorites; these she required given with weight-legato and finger-legato, also with several kinds of staccato. Scales were to be practised with every shade of nuance and variety of touch.

"In my own teaching it has been my aim to apply these principles to the various pupils. Each one has a different mentality and the teacher must suit each case and divine as by intuition what is needed. One grows accustomed to diagnosing the pupils to determine what they require. With some it is useless to carry out rigidly a certain plan; they will not stand for it and you only beat your head

against a stone wall. With others you can insist on a course of work; they may not relish it at first, but they are willing to apply themselves and are grateful in the end that you held them up to it.

### Choice of Material

"I use some studies in teaching, though I do not crowd the pupil with them unless I cannot secure technical practice in any other way. Some pupils, you know, will absolutely not work at pure technique; for such the étude is useful. Of course, I use considerable Bach whenever I can—the Fugues, Suites and other things. I am fond of the old French music; but it is a difficult matter for pupils to use it in public, as it should be played with such absolute perfection. Another composer, Debussy, I hesitate to give much of, for he is difficult to be understood. I do use much Chopin, however, though some teachers carefully avoid him.

### Public Performance

"You bring up the question of the mind during public performance. It is true some players can totally forget the audience; I am not one of those for I am very conscious of the audience. I am very sensitive to the mental quality of my listeners and the response I can draw from them. For, of course, we are there to please the audience; if they were not there we would not be playing to them. We should think of this and try to make them respond. If I am playing for a few, I can always feel the unsympathetic ones; even though they may be behind me I could turn and pick them out unerringly.

"When one glances over an audience at the start, a few faces here and there will always catch the eye; I play to those. I may notice one sympathetic countenance; I single that one out and play especially to him. It is a fine thing if the player can so control himself and concentrate his thought as to be oblivious to his hearers, and I would not in the least disparage this gift. On the other hand, the player can receive much help and inspiration from his audience, if they are responsive. It is a reciprocal condition, a sort of give and take proceeding, in which each side is benefited by the rapport which can be established between them.

### Singer or Player

"It is often asked which is the greater student, the singer or the player. I hold it is far easier to make a success as a singer, if you have the voice, than it is to win a success with the piano. The singer has only to sing one tone at a time; the player may give out a dozen. The former has the assistance of an accompanist, the help of words, gesture or costume; the latter is the whole thing, the whole orchestra, everything. He must do it all. The singer literally 'comes before her audience'; she can stand before them, smile at them, use every play of feature at her command. The player must sit passive and one only sees his profile. I hold pianists must of necessity be thorough in their grasp of their subject, highly cultivated, broad-minded, simple, sincere and generous in their attitude to their colleagues. And such, in my experience, have I always found them."

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### Wolf Institute at Lancaster Has Music Festival by Pupils

LANCASTER, PA., July 3.—Three recitals of exceptional merit on June 30 marked the graduating exercises of students of the Wolf Institute of Pianoforte and Organ Playing. Teachers' diplomas were awarded Belle H. Gordon and Frances F. Harkness. Artist students' diplomas were awarded to George H. Sponsor and Joseph H. Gordon. Certificates for completing the prescribed course for the season 1916-1917 were awarded to Nellie H. Adams, Delphine Groff, Howard S. Brady, Ferne A. Des-sau, Earle H. Echternach, Miriam E. Hupper, Marion C. Hocking, Gwen E. Jeffries and John Krupa.

### Endicott-Johnson Co. Gives Free Concerts to Johnson City, Pa.

JOHNSON CITY, N. Y., July 7.—Not satisfied with furnishing their employees with free community concerts during the winter season, the Endicott-Johnson Co., through their musical director, Harold Albert, is now furnishing free band concerts to the people of Binghamton, Endicott and Johnson City, in addition to horse races, motor races, baseball and free swimming pools and recreation centers. W. R. H.

Jacques Urlus, Wagnerian tenor of the Metropolitan Opera Company, recently left an Atlantic port on a steamer bound for his native land, Holland. He will fill important opera engagements there.

### Marcella Craft Wins Audience at Civic Concert

One of the most interesting actresses of contemporary opera, if discriminating persons who have seen her in Europe are to be believed, is Miss Marcella Craft. Under a more comprehensive operatic régime New York would have had the chance some time ago to judge for itself this American soprano in the rôles in which she is so much esteemed. But, alas for the American who comes knocking at our operatic gates! Man or woman, the American must knock long and loud, and they are wise who do not return to our shores unschooled in the gentle art of manipulating the jimmy.

In the field of song recital Miss Craft has shown herself here an artist of marked individuality and uncommon charm. At the concert of the Civic Orchestral Society in the St. Nicholas Rink last evening she revealed the breadth and authority of her art in a large hall and under conditions not wholly favorable to a soloist. The numerous audience was clearly captivated by the fine and appropriate expression with which she vitalized the thrice familiar airs for soprano from the first acts of "La Traviata" and "La Bohème," and its thunderous applause would have spurred many a singer to add "encore" after "encore."

As singer pure and simple Miss Craft was heard to especial advantage. The roundness and brightness of her tones and a generous measure of technical skill gave pleasure apart from the feeling that imbued her singing. Nor was she insensible to the value of pose and facial expression in a concert singer, though never threatening for a moment to exceed in that delicate matter the limits imposed by discretion and good taste.

Pitts Sanborn in New York Globe, June 28, 1917.

Miss Craft is under the management of  
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