

Galli-Curci Declares Her Faith in the American Song Composer

However, Many Native Musicians, She Adds, "Have Not Learned Their Trade"—Famous Diva Tells of Her Quest For Good Program Material—A Chat With the Prima Donna and Her Pianist

By HARVEY B. GAUL

Pittsburgh, Pa., May 19, 1919.

HOMER SAMUELS called up. Said he: "You know Mme. Galli-Curci said the next time we were in town we would like to have you come down. Well, we're in town." We said, "Yes, we knew." And as there was a gallon of gas left in our Detroit cootie, that answers to the patronymic of Henrietta, we cranked her up and went down to the hotel. And there was the amiable Amelita Galli-Curci with Homer Samuels, most gifted and most genial of accompanists. They were looking over new songs, just like readers in a publishing house, sketchily and nonchalantly.

"Do you know," said Mme. Galli-Curci, "the trouble with many American song writers is that they have not learned their trade."

We acquiesced, having written songs—and heard them sung.

Homer Samuels added: "The fault is not entirely the composers'. The publishers have committed many crimes, though unquestionably many of our young men want to see their compositions in print, and so they rush their work, sometimes apparently without as much as a second thought."

"We receive thousands of songs," said the diva. "You would be surprised at the number that have wrong accents, accents on the preposition, the article, the conjunction, anywhere the writer thinks—or doesn't think—the tune goes. There is one well-known song by an American of national reputation where the accent falls on the article 'the' not once but many times. Is that right?"

"Everyone wants to write me a song," she continued; "everyone who can write a waltz rhythm or in 6/8 time, with scales and arpeggios. They think that is a coloratura song. I think it takes a peculiar gift to be able to write *fiaturata*, it is a sense not entirely developed by scale writing. People think I like nothing but coloratura songs when they write. I don't. I would like to be able to sing the Irish folk-songs that John McCormack sings. He is inimitable and so are his songs. You know I do sing folk-songs; almost every recital has one or more of the French chansons in it. Sometimes it is a Weckerlein *bergerette*, sometimes it is by Julien Tiersot. You know I use 'Home, Sweet Home' and 'Loch Lomond.' I am very fond of the Scotch songs, they are so *triste*."

We asked: "Why don't you sing the Italian folk-songs, there are many of them that are beautiful?"

The Best Song Composer?

"They are," she said quizzically, "what you call so-soph-sophisticated. They are not my style. I like the Negro spirituals, they are such sincere expressions; and I like the Norwegian folk-songs. They both make use of the mordant." Then we fell to analyzing, boosting and panning the American writer, because two of us were Americans and the other had taken out her citizenship papers. We advanced that idea that "Sidney Homer was the greatest song writer in this country."

"Maybe," said the gracious Galli-Curci. "Maybe," said the humane Homer Samuels.



A Study of Mme. Galli-Curci by Saul Raskin

"Maybe," said we as we lapsed into desuetude, after having rolled a dream-stick from our favorite bag o' makin's.

"Do you know," asked Galli-Curci, "Carl M. Beecher of Chicago? He has written some of the best songs I've seen. Then there's Murdock of St. Paul, Minnesota; he has composed many fine songs. John Alden Carpenter I consider the best American song writer. Frank La Forge has done some of the *cantilena* that anyone might be proud of, American or European."

"That is all very well" we observed, "but Sidney Homer has used the finest types of texts, and he has set them and gotten under the skin of them; furthermore, he doesn't depend on the omnipresent love motif for his muse."

"Maybe so," said the gentle Galli-Curci.

"Maybe so," said the hermetic Homer Samuels.

In sheer desperation we rolled another.

"Next year," interrupted the diverting diva, "I am going to use many American songs. I have many, many concerts booked. I wish I could find some brilliant songs that had merit and were not vulgar. So many writers in striving for brilliancy only achieve the commonplace, and you know to use commonplace songs on the concert stage is to commit suicide. I have great hopes for America and American writers. Already much has been accomplished, and there is more to come, more than you or I or anyone can foresee. This summer, when I get up to my bungalow in the Catskills, I am going to look over many new songs. I want to

sing the songs of my fellow countrymen—I shall be a full-fledged American by then—and to give them first place on the program. Will I write my own cadenzas? Tut, tut. It's a secret."

And then suddenly remembering that we left our motor going we said:

"*Debbo andare.*"

"*Arrivederci,*" said Galli-Curci.

"So-long," said Homer Samuels.

"Henry Ford," said we.

Emmy Destinnova to Head Houston's List of Artists Next Season

HOUSTON, TEXAS, May 19.—Gertie Rolle, business manager of the Treble Clef Club, announces the following list of artists as engaged to be soloists for her club's regular series of three concerts during the coming season: Emmy Destinnova, Albert Spaulding and Frances Alda and Carlo Hackett of the Metropolitan. Aside from the club engagements Miss Rolle has contracted to have in Houston during the coming season Josef Hofmann and Josef Rosenblatt, cantor. W. H.

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YSAYE AND ELMAN STIR VAST THROG

Eugen Ysaye, Mischa Elman, Violinists. Joint Recital, Hippodrome, Evening, May 18. Accompanist, Josef Bonime. The Program:

Concertante for Two Violins, Mozart; Concerto for Two Violins, D Minor (by request), Bach; "Symphonie Concertante," Op. 31, for Two Violins, Alard; Suite for Two Violins, Op. 71 (by request), Moszkowski.

What a magnet is the name of a famous violinist! The appearance of Ysaye or Elman alone suffices to fill a New York auditorium. A joint recital by these knights of the bow draws a double audience, totalling many thousands, countless enthusiasts being quartered on the stage. What would happen were three violin luminaries to join forces of an evening? The walls would give way before an eager human sea.

One can hardly imagine how an extra dozen listeners could have been squeezed into the vast reaches of the Hippodrome last Sunday night. The artists had literally to elbow their way to their objective on the platform.

The musical aspects of the evening were often of a kind to warrant the demonstrations they evoked. Ysaye, the seasoned hero of a thousand concerts, and Elman, old, at least, in popular favor, distinguished themselves with some masterly duet playing. Fittingly enough, the most inspired music on the program—Bach's concerto—received the most inspired interpretation. Especially memorable was the playing of the wondrous *Largo* movement, in which Elman did some of the most exquisite legato playing that we have ever heard from his bow.

The audience was intensely enthusiastic over everything the artists played and recalled them with tireless insistence. Mr. Bonime provided satisfactory accompaniments. B. R.

To Import More French Musicians for American Tours

Richard G. Herndon, business director of the French-American Association for Musical Art, who sailed for Paris a fortnight ago, has cabled his New York associate, Frank T. Kintzing, that he has arrived safely at the French capital and will immediately complete arrangements for the importation of a number of French musical artists and organizations. The association will continue the direction of Mlle. Brard, the Société des Anciens Instruments, with Laparra and Raymonde Delaunoy, besides the new artists who will be brought here, it is announced. Quite interesting and important will be the establishment of the Théâtre Parisien in New York next season, with Mr. Herndon as the business director and M. Robert Casadésus the art director. This theater will be devoted to the lighter forms of French entertainment, with *chansons* Monmartre and other musical offerings and the lighter plays. The season will open in November.

West Point Choir Sings at Columbia

The West Point cadet choir made its annual visit to Columbia University, New York, on Sunday afternoon, May 18. A close order drill was followed by the cadets' march to St. Paul's Church.

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