

TOSCANINI ANXIOUS TO RETURN, DECLARES SPALDING

Conductor Informs the Violinist that Inability to Get Along With the "Powers That Be" Alone Prevents His Resuming His Career in America—Asserts He Did Not Decline Boston Symphony Leadership

"TOSCANINI told me that he longed to return to America. He said he loved the country and felt homesick for it. He felt certain, moreover, that the Americans had a warm spot in their hearts for him. As long as the war was in progress he would not have left Italy, the more as his son was serving in the Italian army. He would gladly come back to us now, but he could not, so he declared, get along with 'the powers that be.'"

Albert Spalding communicated this information last week, a few days after disembarking from the *Dante Alighieri* and doffing the emblems of his two years' soldiering. A meeting with Toscanini had been one of the few incidents of a musical connotation that lent relief to the arduousness of aviation. The great Arturo was apparently more than usually confiding. And his sentiments as just quoted confirm decidedly what has long been a strong surmise if not an open secret. Only those same "powers that be" (let the reader exert himself to fix their identity) stand between Toscanini's persistent absence and our enjoyment of his Olympian art. So report has given us to understand and now *ipse dixit*.

"Boston had gotten in touch with Toscanini as to the conductorship of its orchestra. He did not reject the proposal. Instead, he cabled back, making certain inquiries. His cable, he told me, was never answered. So he continued his operatic and symphonic direction in different centers of Italy. His success was vast. None the less he was exasperated when his purpose of conducting Wagner numbers was frustrated by the public attitude. He showed some surprise that his feat of conducting a band during the progress of a difficult offensive should have won him so much admiration. He assured me he had found nothing so enormously exciting in it. But when accounts of the incident were read to him he somewhat changed his mind and concluded that 'it must have been quite exciting after all.'"

Little Leisure for Violin

Mr. Spalding paid little attention to his violin during his regular military



Albert Spalding, America's Famous Violinist, As He Appeared on His Recent Arrival in New York from Italy

life. After the armistice he played formally, but otherwise, apart from a little momentary musical indulgence in such off minutes as a soldier's crowded day allows, he let the instrument lie unused. He did not set out, like many of his fellow musicians, to win the war by an intensive exercise of his peace-time profession. The other seemed to him incomparably the weightier obligation, one to be fulfilled at the denial, if there were need, of all things else. And in those fugitive moments of musical distraction there was no thought of practice. Only when the war ended did he

revert to his violin with a pre-war enthusiasm. And then he played publicly. He was perhaps the brightest star of Molinari's famous "All-American" concert at the Augusteo in Rome, when he performed the Mendelssohn Concerto at the tail end of the program.

But if he had small leisure to play Mr. Spalding did manage to observe. And his observations on the effects of the war, musically, are sufficiently engrossing. The cataclysm has not yet put forth its musical fruits. It will not for some time to come, in his opinion.

"We are yet too near the holocaust.

Giocanda's meditations upon suicide, and—aided by the chorus—the Easter prayer from "Cavalleria." Especially in the Verdi music the sensational Connecticut soprano's voice displayed its extraordinary loveliness and lustrous beauty. And its resonance far surpassed any orchestral instrument or mass of instruments. Indeed, Miss Ponselle never sang her "Forza" air better during the past winter or more feelingly.

Is it merely to remind the public of the cost of present-day existence that the programs must needs be bartered for a quarter of a dollar? Why be unnecessarily exorbitant for a scrap of paper? H. F. P.

Musical at Meeting of Stadium Concerts Committee

An informal afternoon of music was given in the home of Adolf Lewisohn, New York, by the Maintenance Committee of the Stadium Symphony Concerts, on the afternoon of June 26. Andres de Seguro, chairman of the committee, made a brief address, in which he expressed his belief in the success of the coming series of concerts because they were the right thing done in the right place, at the right time, and in the right way. Mr. Lewisohn said that he hoped everyone present would see to it that there was an overflow at every one of the concerts. The musical program was offered by Philip Gordon, pianist; Gladys Axman, soprano, and Elias Breeskin, violinist.

ing streets, or sat on a nearby hillock and got their music at long range. A few more venturesome occupied the ledges of apartment house roofs and dangled their legs from these coigns of vantage. Fine weather and temperature suited to the best purposes of *al fresco* enjoyment furthered the evening's comfort and cheer.

Orchestral strains in the open can never be what they are in the concert hall, whatever the acoustical benignance of topography and sounding boards. But granted this, the instrumental sounds at the Lewisohn Stadium are satisfyingly audible—notably to those occupying seats of medium elevation—especially in modern music, with its complex sonorities and high coloring. Some things evaporated in the more delicate portions of the Beethoven Symphony, but such was to be expected. Besides the orchestra had not yet found itself as it will have after the second or third concert. Mr. Volpe's presentation of the work is familiar and intelligent. The finale, with its triumphant trombones, greatly excited the hearers.

Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Capriccio Espagnol" and Tchaikovsky's "Marche Slav" made up the other orchestral numbers, the previously announced "Oberon" Overture having been unaccountably withdrawn. The soloist, upon whom there beat the fiercest splendor of the evening, was Rosa Ponselle, who gave the "Pace, Mio Dio," air from "La Forza del Destino"—thus far her best opera—the "Paolucci" Bird Song as an encore:

Effects of War Upon Italy's Musical Life as Spalding Has Observed Them—The Former Lieutenant Home Again to Return to His Violin So Long Neglected in Favor of His Military Duties

There has been so far no opportunity for the inner impressions and reactions to crystallize. And these things must be if we are to have an artistic expression of a tremendous time. Until there has been a greater advance in material reconstruction, until the considerations immediately affecting life are disposed of, one cannot look for any considerable flowering forth of the spirit. But influences are not the less at work and they are shaping themselves to definite artistic ends, small though the issues still appear. I remarked a decided tendency in Italy to break away from the preponderating exclusiveness of opera. The Italian has for years been bound down by the dominance of Verdi. I am not saying this in disparagement of his genius. But Italians have kept their gaze on none but the operatic goal.

"To-day there is a decided increase in the production of absolute music. More, in absolute music expressed through the simplest instrumental medium. Great aggregations of orchestral forces are not obtainable as they were before the war. And the limitation of orchestral means has resulted in a utilization of the familiar instruments for a much greater variety of purposes than used to be. Composers no longer make the lavish demands they did five years ago. Their music would not be heard if they did. They are writing much chamber music, for one thing. And compositions that may grow into elaborate orchestral proportions are first being designed for piano. At some future time their expansion may come. But fragments are the order of the hour. Mental and physical leisure is lacking for their further efflorescence. Still these fragments point to a new condition, to a new life. At some future time I believe the big man will come and give great expression to what has been more or less successfully formulating itself in them.

"The works by these younger men have a decidedly Italian tinge. They are not academic and imitative, as the symphonic music of Italians has so frequently been. Montemezzi has been writing for orchestra. So have a number of others. I was much struck by the popularity lately achieved by the choral works of Perosi. I admired them greatly myself—indeed, I consider Perosi the most gifted church writer living. And the Italians, on their part, are to-day receiving his work with the greatest display of interest and enthusiasm."

H. F. P.

EXEMPT CRITICS FROM TAX

Writers Need Not Pay the Ten Per Cent Impost—Curb "Brokers"

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 2.—"Persons who administer to the comfort or safety of audiences at concerts, operas or theaters generally are counted as 'employees' by the Bureau of Internal Revenue here, and are exempt from payment of the admission taxes," according to an interpretation of the law just rendered by the bureau.

The MUSICAL AMERICA representative is informed at the Internal Revenue Bureau's offices that this exemption "includes critics, sports writers, vendors of candies, etc., and also physicians called in to attend a person suddenly taken ill."

A curb is put on ticket speculators by the ruling that tickets sold in excess of the regular price by speculators or others must bear the name of the person selling the ticket, who must pay five per cent of the excess if not more than fifty cents. If the excess is more than fifty cents the speculator must pay fifty per cent of the excess as a tax. A. T. M.

Bruno Huhn at East Hampton

Bruno Huhn, the organist, conductor and composer, has gone to his summer home, The Hunting Inn, at East Hampton, L. I. Mr. Huhn will resume his studio activities in New York on Sept.

STADIUM CONCERTS OPEN AUSPICIOUSLY

The season of summertime orchestral concerts in the Lewisohn Stadium began last Monday evening in a manner to all intents auspicious. Arnold Volpe, last year's conductor, again exercises leadership and the entertainments, being closely affiliated with the Metropolitan Opera House management and influences, profit by the services of Metropolitan artists, of the larger and smaller fry, and such other accessories from that exalted source as the genuine Metropolitan chorus directed by a genuine Metropolitan chorus master. Indications point to more interesting musical ceremonies this summer than last, for the counsels of the foolish no longer prevail and the classic masterpieces of German music find a place on the programs from which they were debarred last season, to the irretrievable detriment of the entire series. The return of sanity was celebrated Monday night by a representation of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which led off the event following some prefatory words by Adolph Lewisohn, donor of the concerts.

A great throng, numbering prominent musical folks as well as the *profanum vulgus*, attended and applauded everything with signal zest. The audience was not confined to the concrete Stadium and the field space fronting the bandstand. Crowds pressed themselves against the railings along the neighbor-