

# Musicians and Their Handwriting — An Index to Character

Clearest Means of Revelation, Says Expert, Who Tells "Musical America" Readers What May Be Learned from Study of Signatures of Famous Artists—Are These Characteristics Yours?—Look Over the List and See Whose Writing Most Nearly Resembles Your Own—Everything Revealed in a Signature, the Expert Declares—A Study of the Handwriting of Music's Most Illustrious Exponents

By MAY STANLEY

If you are a graphologist you will be interested in this story; perhaps you will be even if your knowledge of handwriting—as mine was until very recently—is limited to saying, "That's an unusual signature." Because the collection of autographs "here set forth," as the attorneys might say, represents the handwriting of fourteen of the most famous men and women in the musical world.

It occurred to me one day that it would be interesting to learn what characteristics the handwriting of some of the great artists displayed, and after painstakingly gathering them, I sallied forth to a man who knows all about graphology.

Just reflect for a moment, Miss Vocalist, that if you had studied this art in your "off" moments you might be able to look at your manager's signature on your contract and tell just how well he is going to live up to his pledges—depending on what characteristics were revealed in his signature. Or you, Mr. Manager, if you had added graphology to your other accomplishments, might after receiving his or her first letter, know what temperamental reefs to avoid in dealing with



Photo by Townsend-Sarny Studios

*Signature*

your latest songbird or violinistic prodigy. It's a wide field and worth cultivating.

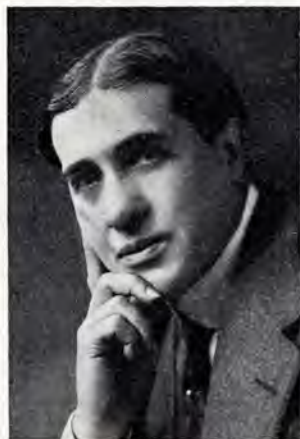
"There is no clearer means of revelation than that which one's handwriting furnishes," said the expert.

It seemed reasonable and I agreed. "Now, this handwriting," said he, taking up a letter signed by Mme. Nellie Melba, "shows exceptional powers of concentration by the comparatively small size of the writing. The letters are not always carefully joined, which indicates the presence of the idealistic mind. In the signature, however, the predominating characteristic is sequential thought, linked with logical reasoning. The large and gracious form of the capital M indicates imaginative faculty and the straight line beneath the signature emphasizes personality. It is not an expression of vanity but of force and exceptional poise.

"You see," he continued, warming to his subject experts will, "handwriting may be considered as a combination of gestures expressive of personality, and thus relationship exists between character and handwriting of the same order as between character and gesture. Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly," I replied in a weak voice. (I'm afraid of specialists, they seem to know so much and know it so thoroughly.)

He gave a chortle of delight—if great men ever do anything so undignified as chortle—as he picked up the next letter with its dashing signature of "Gerry Farrar."



—Photo © Moffett

### Originality in Farrar Signature

"There's originality for you," he exulted. "Look at the eccentric boldness in the capital G, the surest sign of great originality. The wide curve of this letter also shows imagination and the extremely varying heights of the letters indicate imagination in unusual degree. The liaison between letters and words is indicative of logical, sequential and consecutive judgment. Notice also the heavy downward strokes that indicate an extraordinary amount of vitality, love of life and its pleasures. The writer has courage, as the general coarseness of the hand indicates, and the forceful upward flourish with which the signature ends shows love of applause and admiration. Pride is indicated in the capital F, through the single, thick, straight downward stroke and the vigorous crossing of the letter.

"The higher the organization in its development," he continued, placing Miss Farrar's letter on the table, "the more susceptible is the handwriting to the finer qualities of the mind. For example, observe this specimen of Mary Garden's writing. Imagination in unusual degree is indicated in the large cowl-like formation of the M, while the absence of wakening in the down

strokes indicates not only intellectual tendencies, but a strong spiritual trend. The writer has a mind which, if not absolutely devotional, is keenly susceptible to a subtle appreciation of spiritual truths. The roundness of the writing indicates responsiveness, which is additionally shown in the varying height of the letters, although these refer more directly to the quality of mental susceptibility. Impatience is indicated by the abrupt angles in the capital G, but the curve of the small r and the large open n indicate an unusual fund of kindness in the writer's nature. The possessor of such a handwriting would act in a kindly manner, even when the nature is not distinctly kindly. Strength of will and determination in a bundle is shown in the short down stroke of the small y."



Photo by Bain News Service

*Giulio Gatti-Casazza*

### Paderewski, the Idealist

His eyes lighted again as he took up the signature, "I. J. Paderewski."

"Do you see the extravagant lengthening of the loop in both the 'I' and the 'J'?" he queried. "That is the certain mark of the visionary mind—the idealist. The open formation of the top of both letters indicates forceful and direct will power. This writing has every characteristic of the idealistic nature, in the long loop which is again shown in the capital 'P,' and in the almost total absence of liaison between the letters. It is the writing of a person whose spiritual nature dominates the physical and material, almost to the exclusion of the latter. The minuteness of the letters show forth the concentration and mental suppleness so characteristic of great minds. His affections are excessively tender, sympathetic and sensitive, as the extreme slope of the writing indicates, while the voluminous flourish argues rich, imaginative thought."

Making a mental note to examine the slope in the handwriting of several friends, I laid before the expert the neat signature of Henry Hadley.

"Tell me about this one," said I.

"That F in the 'Faithfully' is the un-failing characteristic of the artistic mind," said he. "It is simple and precise and

shows a tendency toward severity of taste. The strong cross stroke indicates the possession of a firm will. As in the case of Mr. Paderewski's writing, the smallness of the characters shows concentration. Culture, that combination quality, may be inferred from the symmetrical writing, harmonious capitals, small but distinct writing and the small Greek d. Grace beyond the rules of art is evidenced throughout the writing.

"Now in this signature," he continued, taking up a letter by Charles Wakefield Cadman, "the general irregularity of the writing indicates a great deal of sensibility—a sensitive condition of nervous system is shown. The nature is not essentially a generous one, the writing is too crowded, and his relations to the material issues of life are not very clearly defined. The dot flying high over the small 'i' shows a marked degree of spirituality, while simplicity and artistic taste are exemplified in the capital C. This formation of the C is more closely associated, by the way, with literary ability than any other form."

### Gatti-Casazza and Caruso

To turn from composers to operatic managers is but natural, and the next signature submitted was that of Signor Gatti-Casazza.

"Here you have the scholar and man of refinement, as the capital G shows," my informant explained. "This form presupposes artistic taste and cultivation, combined with a strong will, the latter being the infer-

ence from the lengthened down stroke. The return up stroke shows a conciliatory tendency, and the habitual use of this up stroke in the capital G indicates a kindly disposition. Here in this signature also the liaison between the letters indicates sequence of thought, and the kindly nature which the G indicated is emphasized in the curving loop of the small z. The graceful down stroke of the concluding letter is indicative both of defensiveness and incessant activity.

"Now, Caruso's handwriting is made more strikingly original by its concluding flourish. It is the hand of a self-assertive nature and in the writing of a man of inferior accomplishments would point to vanity. The statements of such a writer are always positive and the nature will brook no opposition. Taken in any form, the flourish is an unerring sign of love of admiration. Self-esteem is indicated in the large capitals, while the heavy down strokes show a fondness for all the good things of life.

"Did you know, speaking of Caruso," my informant went on, "that the Italians have produced the most beautiful specimens of cursive writing? Next to the Italians are the English. The English educated hand is the most distinguished and dignified in the world, but it is not the most graceful. Which is the worst? The average handwriting in America. It is usually slovenly and in most cases commonplace. The chief causes for the lack of expertness with the pen in this country are hurry, nervous excitement and lack of poise."

I met, exceedingly legible handwriting of Mme. Schumann-Heink was next submitted.

"The greatest individuality in this handwriting is contained in the flourish," the graphologist explained. "This is usually true where a small, neat script is

written. The straight line of the flourish, ending in the two loops, indicates quiet self-assertion. The firm stroke ending in the small hook gives evidence of considerable obstinacy, but its chief meaning is self-assertion of the firmest but least obtrusive kind. Imagination, defensiveness and considerable business ability are also indicated."

Another handwriting in which the flourish plays a significant part is that of Cleofonte Campanini of the Chicago Opera.

"Look at that straight line under the signature and tell me what it means," the expert suddenly demanded.

Wildly trying to collect some of the information that had been showered on me in the last half hour, I ventured the remark that it seemed to indicate the defensive person.

"Not at all," was the prompt answer. "Whenever you see that straight line under a signature you may feel confident that the writer is a person of exceptional poise and firmness of will. The firm upward strokes show a decided mind, of penetrating insight. These strokes in such a handwriting as Mr. Campanini's also give evidence of a strong, aspiring will, combined with much energy. The decisive crossing of the small t shows a persistent nature, one that will not relinquish any object greatly desired until it is won.

"In the writing of Mme. Amelita Galli-Curci the fine and tenuous lines show a degree of refinement almost spiritual, a fact which is again emphasized in the long loop of the capital G. As in the signature of Paderewski, this artist displays tenderness and an excessively sympathetic nature in the extreme slope of the writing. Everything she does she finishes perfectly, and the carefully closed a's indicate a spirit of reticence and modesty. Such a one would discourse little about her own achievements.



Photo by Paul Thompson

*Caruso*



Photo by Arnold Genthe

*I. J. Paderewski*

*In Souvenir de S. Minatore New York 1918*