

Collapse of Europe's Art Is Following In the Wake of War, Says Eva Gauthier

Exponent of Modern Songs
Finds Depression Bessetting
All Sides of Life Abroad—
Distrust of Foreigners—
Excess and Eccentricity
Rampant in New Works—
Ravel Still Leader of
France's Composers—Low
Standards of Present Life
Reflected in Art

EVA GAUTHIER returned from Europe the week before last. She was away approximately two months. She had planned on two months more, but cut her trip short when she discovered that Europe to-day and Europe before the war were as widely separated as the poles. The admired young soprano, high priestess of modern vocal composition, took ship back to America as soon as she could complete the business that sent her abroad and gave fervent thanks to heaven when she got back. With her she carried many novelties for her forthcoming season and a quantity of agreeable recollections of some leading musicians in Paris. But of Europe she had had her fill. And it will suffice her till she returns there next April. Meanwhile she loves America and American conditions even a little more than ordinarily.

It is a depressing picture of Europe that Miss Gauthier paints—a picture of want, of misery, of degeneration. If the numberless Americans who went over this year return with similar feelings it is likely that foreign travel will speedily relapse into the desuetude of the last five years. France she found hopeless, Holland expensive and England, though not as disrupted and demoralized as the continent, filled with an undercurrent of hardship and discontent, concealed only by virtue of the English habit of suppressing the show of emotion.

"I do not know what the multitude of Americans now traveling abroad expect," she declared, shortly after her arrival, "but it seems to me that they are rushing blindly into a highly undesirable adventure. They are not loved abroad—certainly not in France, where the feeling against them, on account of political conditions, is very strong—so much so that one thinks twice before placing such things as American compositions before the public. Then there is the unwillingness to admit foreigners into the country for any but the briefest sojourn on account of the necessity of conserving the food supply. You cannot remain in France for more than three weeks, or in England, without securing special permission. I had all manner of difficulty in obtaining official consent to pass through Belgium on my way to Holland, though I had no intention of stopping off there. Again the reason was that the food supply was inadequate. In France it is almost impossible to obtain sugar. In England one has all manner of difficulty in procuring butter. Prices are enormously high and in Paris the low rate of exchange is another grudge held against the Americans. They feel we are taking advantage of their unfortunate economic conditions and are so bitterly resentful that they try to get even by raising prices to unheard of figures. On the other hand, the tales I have heard of suffering in Germany and Austria are harrowing.

Degeneracy Pervades Art

"In Paris I was particularly struck by the atmosphere of degeneracy that pervades life and art. The music hall shows have reached to limits of immodesty. Women now appear on the stage frankly naked. Parallel conditions can be noted everywhere. At the Erick Satie Festival, for instance, I was amazed at the queer types that composed the audience. Yet Satie himself is the most natural and normal sort of person. Everywhere is the feeling of illimitable weariness. People are sad and tired and nothing appears to assuage or give them refreshment. Their outlook is black. They go about in the deepest



Mme. Eva Gauthier, High Priestess of Modern Vocal Composition, From a Recent Portrait

mourning, and the wounded, the 'grands blessés,' are everywhere.

"The diseased spiritual condition arising from these accumulated miseries has reacted on art. Those who expected an elevation and a rebirth as a result of the war have thus far been disappointed. Excess and eccentricity are rampant, along the pre-war lines and to an even greater degree. That does not mean that much of surpassing interest may not be found.

"Of the composers I think Ravel is still the head. I had some delightful conferences with him. He is an indisputable wonder. I begged him to come to America, but he, too, is suffering from this feeling of hopeless, overwhelming fatigue that seems to beset the whole people and promised to consider such a trip only a year or so from now. Darius Milhaud is another genius, whom Americans know. I attended the Satie Festival, some of which was delightful, some of it very dull—notably his latest work, a 'symphonic drama' for four sopranos and orchestra called 'Socrate.' Poor Stravinsky is ill and disappointed. His ballet 'Pulcinella' was not a success.

Japanese Influence Felt

"I made the interesting discovery that the Oriental element in the works of so many of these French moderns was due to the familiarity of some of them—Debussy included—with Japanese music. Years ago, while they were still students, these men made the acquaintance of a Japanese official who happened to be in Paris and who acquainted them with the folk music of his country. I gave Ravel a collection of Japanese melodies I had with me, much to his delight, as well as to the disappointment of Louis Aubert, who declared he would have loved to use them.

Low Standards Prevail

"The standards prevalent in Paris to-day are astoundingly low. In singing this is especially true. I heard singers who would not have the slightest chance of surviving a single hearing in Amer-

ica. Yet the notion still seems to prevail that anything will do for America, that any kind of artists can be sent there with impunity. On hearing singers abroad I was impressed afresh with



Matisse's Conception of Erick Satie, the French Impressionist

the enormously high critical standards existing among us. Many a time I warned them that disaster would follow any attempt to send us anything but the best.

"The feeling against foreigners in France is not confined to Americans. At the Opéra Comique, for example, there exists the liveliest feeling against the performance of so many Italian works and it has been necessary to limit the number of 'Bohèmes' and 'Butterflies.' Then there was the Malipiero incident at Opéra.

"A very alarming tendency is the hat-

red of the lower classes for any person who appears to be well dressed and in comfortable circumstances. The attitude of the masses is sullen and alarming. One day I noticed a driver kicking his horse unmercifully. It was more than I could stand so I approached him and gave him a piece of my mind. He stopped ill-treating the animal and stepped up to me viciously. I expected he was about to strike me. Instead, he spit in my face. I was alone and could do nothing—nothing except return home and wash my face." H. F. P.

Lawrence Whipp Plays Organ at Damrosch-Finletter Wedding

PARIS, Aug. 1.—At the wedding of Margaret Blaine Damrosch, daughter of Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Symphony Orchestra to Thomas Knight Finletter at the American Church of the Holy Trinity on July 17, the young American organist, Lawrence Whipp of Denver, was the organist. Mr. Whipp, who is the brother of the gifted baritone, Hartridge Whipp, who died last year, has been in Paris only a short time. He is acting until fall as organist and choir director of the American Church of the Holy Trinity. Mr. Whipp offered a program of music chosen by Mr. Damrosch, including Karg-Elert's "Le Benediction" and the familiar Mendelssohn and Wagner wedding marches. With M. Lubron, violinist, first prize of the Conservatoire, he played a Boellmann Ballade, the Prelude to Saint-Saëns's "Le Déluge," in honor of the composer who was one of the guests, and Fauré Nocturne.

Percy Grainger and Mother Honored By Students at Chicago Musical College

CHICAGO, Aug. 4.—At Percy Grainger's last lecture-class at the summer course of the Chicago Musical College, his students presented him with a gold-mounted umbrella. During the illness of Mrs. Rose Grainger, mother of the pianist, Mr. Grainger's students kept her room filled with cut flowers and plants.