

## Russia's Upheaval Has Wrought Three-Fold Distortion in Her Music, Says Saminsky

Composer and Conductor, Just Arrived in America, Discusses the Artistic Conditions of His Country—Decentralization of Music—Dispersion of the Artists—Awakening of New Utterances—Miascowski and Gniessen, the Ascendant Musical Figures of Present-Day Russia, He Says—Hebrew Music as He Found It

By FRANCES R. GRANT

OF that younger force in Russian music represented by the disciples of the five Bogatyrs, America has heard but vaguely. Only now and then does word of them penetrate the murky darkness which conceals news of all Muscovy.

With the coming to this country last week of Lazare Saminsky, Russian composer and conductor, and one of this legion, it has been possible to obtain a definite impression of these lights and of the changes which the political upheaval has made there. Mr. Saminsky, himself a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff, until a year ago was a diligent *voyageur* in the search for folksongs of the Orient, and his word comes as one who knows his native land. Through the Caucasus, Turkey, Syria, Palestine and Egypt he traveled, collecting and studying the folk and religious songs of the people, then going to London a year ago, from whence he comes to America.

To Mr. Saminsky the political changes in his country have had three distinct musical results and the art life of the old Russia, developing in definite line, has undergone a triple distortion. First of these is the decentralization of musical life.

"From the foci of Moscow and Petrograd," said Mr. Saminsky, "the revo-

lution has thrust musical activities to the peripheries of the Russias. Once musical progress was limited to these two centers and the distal points endured in artistic torpor. Pecuniary want has dispatched the leaders of Russian music out of these two centers into the provinces, there to earn their bread by teaching.

"For instance Medtner, that celebrated pianist and composer, is now directing a school in the suburbs of Moscow, and Engel, one of our greatest critics and musicologists, is also teaching in a smaller town. And there are many others. That this is engendering prophetic artistic things for the provinces, and inspiring a new musical life is easily understood. Great personalities are stirring those distant provinces to new creation. But this has its serious disadvantages, which brings me to the second great change in our artistic life.

"As much as the collective music life has benefited by these conditions, to the same extent has the individual musician suffered. Want, suffering, the dispersion of these artists to far-off provinces and out of the country, has cost Russia its toll in representative musicians. Not, however, that this has killed our musical life. On the contrary, we have brilliant workers in the cause of Russian music. Possibly the greatest of our present day composers may be named as Michael Gniessen and Nicolas Miascowsky, who



Lazare Saminsky, Russian Composer and Conductor

are the ascendant figures in our music, both pupils of Rimsky-Korsakoff.

### Miascowsky, the Cosmopolite

"Although a pupil of this master, Miascowsky is more of a cosmopolite in his music, leaning somewhat to Tchaikovsky. It is he who has brought into Russia the modern Western influence I would say, besides which he has conceived a distinctly new musical form, especially in the Symphonic Poem, of which he has written five; these are works in two and three parts of which the internal structure is distinctly new.

"Gniessen, who is a Jew, is of a different type. An aesthete, an exalted priest, one would call him, who in his vocal works (in which he specializes) reflects the philosopher, exponent of a religious cult, although that cult is one of panthe-

ism. Both these men, it may interest you to know, are lovers of Shelley and Poe, and have written works to the poems of these masters; an affection, by the way, which seems to be held by all Russian composers, and which I also share.

"Then we have other writers; and also—a point which may be especially interesting in view of the freedom of women here—many women composers. Chief among these last I would mention Julie Weisberg, also a Jewess, the daughter-in-law of Rimsky-Korsakoff, having married his second son, one of our greatest critics, and a professor of philosophy and aesthetics.

"The third distinct result of the political upheaval, I would say, was that the various nations comprising the Russias are beginning to assert themselves musically. Armenians, Georgians and others are being roused to an artistic expression of their own, and native works are beginning to show themselves. Instead of imitating the musical centers in their music, Armenia and Georgia have both produced national operas for the first time recently, and the art therein is beginning to reflect the people itself. These three, I would say, sum up the consequences wrought by the political fervor."

In the conciseness and logic of Mr. Saminsky's reasoning one may discern, besides the musician, the mathematician, for Saminsky has also attained eminence in this branch of study, having been a teacher of mathematics before devoting himself entirely to music. He has to his credit, two thesis on the subject, one being a defense of the Kantian philosophy of which he is a disciple, and entitled "Critics of the Metageometric Generalizations."

It is on another subject, however, that of Jewish music, that Mr. Saminsky is most at ease. Having been elected permanent president of the Association of all Hebrew composers in Russia, some twenty-five in number, affiliated with the Folk music society in Petrograd, he has also made intensive study of Hebrew melody, a research encouraged by the confidence of Rimsky-Korsakoff.

Of Hebrew music, Saminsky has some interesting information.

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# BERÚMEN TRIUMPHS IN NEW YORK RECITAL

AEOLIAN HALL, DEC. 28th

## WHAT THE CRITICS WROTE:

HE PRESENTS EQUALLY WELL THE DRAMATIC, THE PICTURESQUE AND THE ROMANTIC IN HIS PIANO TONE PICTURES.  
—Morning Telegraph

MR. BERÚMEN IS RIGHTFULLY CREDITED WITH BEING MEXICO'S MOST DISTINGUISHED PIANIST.  
—N. Y. American

A PIONEER OF THE PAN-AMERICANS BEFORE NOVAES ON THE LOCAL STAGE. HIS TALENT FOR THE PICTURESQUE CARRIED HIS HEARERS INTO FORGOTTEN BYWAYS FROM HANDEL TO BRAHMS.  
—New York Times

AN ALLEGRO DE CONCERT BY GRANADOS AND PALMGREN'S "A NIGHT IN MAY" DISCLOSED GREATER BRILLIANCY AND DELICATE INTERPRETATIVE POWER.  
—New York Sun

THIS YOUNG MEXICAN EXERCISES A WARMTH OF TONE, A TASTE AND AN INTELLIGENCE IN HIS PLAYING THAT COMBINE TO MAKE ANYTHING HE DOES INTERESTING.  
—Evening Mail

THE "MINUETTO," BY HAYDN, WAS GIVEN WITH DELICACY AND SINGULAR CLEARNESS OF PHRASING AS WELL AS SWEETNESS OF TONE, WHILE THE BRAHMS "RHAPSODY IN E FLAT," AS IN CONTRAST, WAS DEVELOPED WITH A DELICIOUS DEPTH OF RESONANCE AND POWER.  
—Morning Telegraph

HE PLAYED WITH GREAT VIGOR AND SPIRIT BUT CONSIDERABLE LIGHTNESS AND DELICACY WERE NOTICEABLE WITH A TECHNICAL SKILL WELL SHOWN IN THE LISZT "MEPHISTO" WALTZ.  
—New York Tribune

NOT ONLY HE REVEALED HIS RARE ABILITY IN CLASSIC AND FAMILIAR WORKS, BUT HE PLAYED WITH A FINE REGARD FOR ARTISTIC EFFECTS A NEW TRANSCRIPTION OF LISZT'S "OH QUAND JE DORS," BY ADOLF BRUNE.  
—New York American

MR. BERÚMEN COUNTS NATURAL BORN TALENT, MUSICAL FEELING AND TASTE, AN UNUSUALLY VIVID TEMPERAMENT AND A BRILLIANT TECHNIQUE AS THE FACTORS IN HIS SUCCESS.  
—N. Y. Staats-Zeitung



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