

How It Felt to Give the First Recital in Westminster Abbey Told by Mme. D'Alvarez

Peruvian Contralto Requested by Dean of the Abbey to Aid Restoration Fund—Recital Netted 500 Pounds, Sterling—Singer Decries Jealousy Among Artists—Declares There Is Room at the Top for Many—Discovers Fine Voice in Young London Actress

A GREAT event in the life of any artist is some unique distinction in their career. With one, it is a new rôle created or, perhaps, a new interpretation of an old rôle; with another, a song discovered, or maybe some unusual honor bestowed by a person of prominence. Marguerite d'Alvarez, the Peruvian contralto, who landed in New York on Nov. 12, however, had a privilege, shortly before leaving England, of which any singer might be proud. She gave a song recital in Westminster Abbey, and, what is more, was the first singer ever to do it.

"The way it happened was this," said Mme. d'Alvarez to a representative of MUSICAL AMERICA, "I gave a recital in Albert Hall, and as the London public has always been very good to me, the place was crowded. They even waited by the hundred to see me come out, and when I got to the top of the steps, they applauded and asked me to make a speech. I simply couldn't! It was all I could do to thank them and hurry to my motor. Well, the very next day I had a note from the Dean of Westminster Abbey asking me if I would give a recital in the Abbey for the benefit of the reconstruction fund. Of course I was overwhelmed with the honor, and said I should be delighted, so it was all arranged.

"When I got to the Abbey there was a crowd around all the doors and I was told that 3000 had been turned away. It was certainly packed inside. When my time came to sing and I stood at the head of the great nave, I was so moved that I could hardly sing a note. Think of singing there where Purcell and Handel lie, and all the other great men, not only musicians but poets and states-

men! Do you wonder I was thrilled? During the recital they took up a collection and got 500 pounds. They had expected only about 100 and had not enough bags to hold the money or they might have had even more. The applause, of course, was silent applause, a cough here and there, and even a sob or two, but it was to me a far greater tribute than any roar of hand-clappings that I have ever had given me!

"So, I shall feel now, when the restoration of the Abbey begins, that I have at least added one pinnacle to a flying-buttruss and helped preserve one of the world's great monuments.

"One thing that interested me more than I can say, and touched me as well, was receiving a letter from a young girl who had been at the Abbey. She wrote that my singing had been a far greater inspiration than any sermon she had ever heard and that music to her was a religion that pointed out the Way, as nothing else could.

"I think if singers realized this they might take a different attitude to each other. One thing I cannot understand, is why singers like to regard songs and operatic rôles as their own personal property. Why should they? I don't mind people singing the songs I sing or the operatic parts. If they do them better than I, all credit to them, and I am glad to learn where I have failed. If they don't do them so well as I, again, why should I care? Recently in Paris I gave a number of songs I had found to one of the singers in the Metropolitan. She thought at first that I was joking, and it took her some time to realize that I was acting in perfectly good faith.

"I know another operatic artist, one of your greatest, who threatened to leave Covent Garden if the rôle of *Tosca* were sung by another artist announced. This,



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Marguerite d'Alvarez Arriving in New York on the Baltic for Extended Concert Tour

it seems to me, was a confession of inferiority on her part. She couldn't have

been sure of herself or she would not have had the slightest apprehension. I should have felt that I did it so well that no one else could touch me, and then if the other artist 'walked away with it,' as you say over here, well—*le roi est mort, vive le roi!* But, after all, there is plenty of room at the top for more than one artist!

"I enjoy song recitals almost as much as opera. They are in a way, a far greater strain than opera, not only because the singer has to do the whole thing, but also because in song recitals you have to dress and undress a word and lay it bare to the bones in order to 'put it over.' Then, a real artist, as I said to an interviewer in London recently, has to take her audience along with her to lands where Cook's tours will not transport you for seven-and-six. If the public realized this there would be no empty seats."

"But all artists do not have such powers of transportation," suggested the interviewer, "in fact, very few do."

"Yes, I suppose so!" said Mme. d'Alvarez. "And more shame to them that it is so! Well, I am going to see what I can do here. I have had much success as a leader of personally conducted tours to the Land of Fancy, in England, and I hope to have as much in America, and I want the American public to love my brain-children as much as I do, and to take them to its heart.

"One thing more I want to tell you, and that is, I think I discovered a remarkable voice just before leaving England. I went to see *Tosca*, the dramatic version, at the Aldwych Theater, and was greatly struck with the speaking voice of a young girl who acted the part of the boy, *Gennarino*, in the first act. In one or two places she uttered a little cry of joy that was almost a musical sound, and I was so impressed that I wrote her to come to see me. She had never sung, but had always wanted to do so. I tried her voice and found it to be a beautiful pure soprano. I told her then that I was going to put her with a good teacher. She overwhelmed me with thanks, but I said to her that that was all very nice, but what I wanted was work, and that when I got back to London in the spring I expected to find not a student but a rival.

"We shall see!" said the singer. "It is true that very few of these 'finds' turn out to be anything but hideous disappointments, but I suppose we must go on trying because it is the duty of every artist to pass on the torch to the younger generation." JOHN ALAN HAUGHTON.

Youthful Cuban Pianist Effects New York Début

A youthful Cuban pianist, Pepito Echániz, made his début in Aeolian Hall on the afternoon of Nov. 11, playing an ambitious program which included several indisputable masterpieces. In these, viz.: The Bach-Busoni "Chaconne," the Franck "Prélude, Chorale and Fugue," and Chopin's so-called "Heroic" Polonaise, the youth was at a disadvantage, inasmuch as they require arms of supple steel, a sense of the epic, and pedaling of the most finished order. His strong

points, which are a poetic sense, a touch capable of much delicate tone-color, and ability to produce pure arpeggios, were much better displayed in Chopin's Ballade in G Minor, Impromptu in F Sharp, the wonderful nocturne in C Minor, De-

bussy's "Reflets dans l'Eau," and pieces of lesser musical value by Fauré, Dubois, Vogrich and Paganini-Liszt.

A fair-sized audience applauded Mr. Echániz's best efforts with evident sincerity. B. R.

CHICAGO BOWS TO KREISLER

Sold Out House Greets Violinist, Who Again Renews Popularity

CHICAGO, Nov. 11.—Fritz Kreisler showed that he has lost none of his old-time popularity, when the Auditorium Theater was completely sold out for his recital last Sunday, three days in advance of his appearance. There was a rush for the doors by disappointed devotees, who offered three and four times the price of admission tickets to those who held them, and the latter were loath to part with their tickets.

The light, exquisite tone that has been so loved by his hearers was again in evidence, with the flawless technique and broad musicianship which have endeared him to thousands. His music-hungry audience kept him playing extras long after his scheduled program was finished. F. W.

At his concert on Oct. 14, in Chicago, Louis Graveure sang at the end of his program as an encore Frederick W. Vanderpool's "The Want of You."

Notes of Chicago Studios

Gertrude Mandelstamm, pupil of Alexander Raab, has been engaged for a four weeks' tour in Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Illinois and Ohio with the Kryl Concert Company.

Anah Webb, pupil of Leon Sametini, has been engaged by the Chicago Operatic Quartet for its concert tour this season.

The concert given by the Chicago Musical College in Ziegfeld Theater Saturday morning was presented by students in the piano, violin and vocal departments, the following taking part: Lillian Levinson, Flora Phillips, Ruth Miller, Orilla Kraft, Ethel Stenn, Herbert Brandvig, pupil of Frederik Frederiksen; Mark Hoffmann, pupil of Rudolph Reuter; Edythe E. Gilfillen, Anah Webb, pupil of Leon Sametini; Louise Trevor, pupil of Adolf Muhlmann; Carolyn Schuyler, student of Alexander Raab.

Applaud Kitchell Pupils

Pupils from the vocal studios of Charles Kitchell have many interesting and varied engagements booked.

Marie Bashian, the Armenian soprano, whose concerts in and around Chicago were so successful this past summer, presented her lecture-recital of folk-songs in costume at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Nov. 12, and at Columbia University, Dec. 1, following which she will fill engagements out of town.

Annetta Ribecova, lyric soprano, who toured as soloist with Vessella's Band in the South, and in Canada during the summer, has been re-engaged by Mr. Vessella for a tour beginning in January, prior to which she will concertize throughout Georgia.

Blanche Stoney, soprano, has been engaged as preceptor of the Williams Avenue, M. E. Church, Brooklyn. She will be soloist at the Brooklyn Y. M. C. A., Nov. 14.

Elvire LaMar, contralto, has been engaged for a tour of Georgia, to begin in December.

Frances Dwight Woodbridge is teaching in Stephens College, Columbia, Mo., where she is head of the vocal department.

At his studios, Mr. Kitchell has begun his critic classes for the season and is making arrangements for a series of lectures.

Frances Alda
Mary Garden
Carolina Lazzari
Charles Hackett
Renato Zanelli
Rudolph Ganz
Raoul Vidas
and
John McCormack

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