

WAR OPENS THE DOOR OF POLAND'S ART

Karel Szymanowski Discusses the Liberation of His Country's Thought — Slavonic and Teutonic Influences — Polish Music Different from Russian — A Personal Revolution



Karel Szymanowski, Polish Composer-Pianist, Now on His First Visit to America. The Informal Picture Was Taken on Recent Trip to Florida. The Portrait Study Is by a Vienna Photographer

At a recent recital in Aeolian Hall by Paul Kochanski, Polish violinist, one of the most popular numbers was a Nocturne by Karel Szymanowski. The piece was applauded more than anything else on the program and the audience would have gladly had it repeated. Few if any present, however, knew that the composer was here in America.

Karel Szymanowski is not the type of musician who runs up a ladder with a flag whenever he does anything. One talks to him for a long time before he says anything about his own connection with music.

A recent interview began with some discussion of music in Poland after the war. "The war," said Mr. Szymanowski, "was like opening a door, not only in music, but in every other branch of thought, every other art. Poland has for so long, been bound up in a frame between Russia and Germany, nothing has had its own growth. The influence from Russia was Slavic, that from Germany, Teutonic, and Poland is neither of these. Most people think that Polish music is identical or nearly so with Russian music, but it is utterly different. One does not realize here in America, or in the western part of Europe either, for that matter, that the frontier of Russia is the boundary between the Orient and the Western world. The characteristic music of any nation is not always a matter of mechanics of rhythm. In other words, all Polish music is not written in mazurka rhythm nor is all music in that rhythm characteristically Polish. The real characteristics go deeper than that.

"I admire very much the modern Russian music which, in my opinion, began with Rimsky-Korsakoff. Scriabine and Stravinsky seem to me to represent the best of the contemporary school especially the latter in his pieces for the theater, although they are somewhat drastic at times. When I say they represent the best, I mean in my opinion. I do not say that many of the other Russian composers are not doing magnificent work.

"Personally, I feel a revolution in my own music. One can't help it. Imagine if your nation had been in what is practically a serfdom for nearly a century and suddenly became free. Could there be any phase of life in the country that would not be affected? I hardly think so. All sorts of values have been inverted. We had a deep respect for German things of all sorts. The war opened our eyes.

"One curious thing about the social rearrangement in Poland is that the aristocracy is the most democratic class there. There is no spirit of pessimism. The people have suffered much from hunger and cold but they are optimistic in spite of all."

Warsaw Opera Reborn

"What about the Warsaw opera? Is it still in existence?"

"Oh, yes! Very much so! And it has vastly improved under the direction of Emil Mlynarski. He is not only a splendid conductor but a most able artistic director and he has been hard at work for several years now, raising the level of the performances in every way. The personnel of the opera house is entirely Polish, and there are many fine singers. That is another point gained

since our freedom from Russian domination. Previously, all productions were restricted in Warsaw. Certain operas could not be given at all and others had to have arbitrary cuts made according to orders from Petrograd. Our dramatic theaters too, have now taken on a new lease of life. We have many good actors



and dramatic authors, all of whom are hard at work. An individual type of stage-setting has also come into existence. I hope you may some time have the opportunity of seeing some of these settings here, for they are most interesting."

"But about yourself and your work?"

"What shall I tell you? Does it interest you that I was born in Timochewka in 1883 and that I studied in Warsaw with Noskowski and afterwards in Germany. One had to in those days. Then, before the war I was in Vienna. I have composed already one opera and am at work on a second. The completed one is called 'Hagith' and is founded on a Biblical subject. It has not yet been performed but I expect it to be very soon. The other is also well advanced, but I would rather not talk about that. Then I have done numerous songs and violin pieces. I am very fond of the violin and although I do not play it myself, I understand it. Then there are my three symphonies. The third one, for orchestra and chorus, was played by Albert Coates in London. It is called 'The Night.' My second symphony I

Warsaw Opera Thrives Under Mlynarski — Productions No Longer Restricted and Personnel Wholly Polish — Dramatic Theaters Active — Evolve Individual Type of Stage Setting

hope to have done in this country next season. In Paris last winter, my Fantaisie in C for Piano was played by Lalewicz and was well received. The critics or rather, one of the critics said that it was 'a work of great strength in which the composer seems obsessed with the idea of transcribing for the piano the most violent accents of all other instruments and even to unloose on the keyboard the elements of Nature. Persistence of psychological preoccupation prevents the work from losing its cohesion!' Now, do you think that is a compliment or not? I can't decide. But it does seem as though they had—how do you say it in America?—'sat up and taken notice!'

"There are also piano sonatas and a concert overture for orchestra and—oh, I don't know, quite a lot of things. I may give some concerts when I come back next year. In fact, I hope to do so because not only do I want to put my own works before the American public but also those of a number of other Polish composers who should be better known here. No, I do not expect to give a concert this visit, but I shall be back. America interests me and although I have had a very flattering offer from a European university I don't know whether I shall accept it or not."

J. A. H.

Seattle Musical Club Celebrates Thirtieth Anniversary

SEATTLE, WASH., April 2. — The thirtieth anniversary of the Ladies' Musical Club was celebrated with a musical tea at the home of Mrs. Charles Hibbard. Mrs. A. S. Kerry, of Portland, sang her own compositions which she has dedicated to Mrs. M. A. Gottstein in recognition of her services to the club since its foundation. The artists engaged for the summer term at the Cornish School of Music include Adolph Bolm, E. Robert Schmitz and Sergei Klubansky. M. B.

Roscoe Leonard, a pupil of William A. C. Zeffi, has been engaged as tenor soloist at the Second Presbyterian Church, N. Y.

"MASTER OF THE INSTRUMENT."—Florida Metropolis, Jacksonville, Florida.
 "MADE A TREMENDOUS HIT."—Spokesman-Review, Spokane, Wash.
 "EXCELLENT YOUNG ARTIST WHOSE PLAYING IS SUPERB."—San Jose, (Cal.), Mercury-Herald.
 "MADE OF THE REAL STUFF."—St. Louis Times.

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"Has developed wonderfully since he was heard in recital about a year ago, and it is this steady, forward march that makes him worth while. He has a gorgeous tone, all kinds of facility, and shows fine intelligence."—ST. LOUIS TIMES.

"He demonstrated a conscientiousness and seriousness in his work which compelled admiration. He possesses power, technique, and execution. Although only twenty years old, he displays excellent understanding of the compositions he essays."—ST. LOUIS STAR.

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"Unusual ability as a musical artist. . . . Although he had a critical audience, there was much applause and appreciation shown. Each one spoke complimentarily of the young man's rare charm. . . . His program consisted of many difficult selections, closing with a wonderful rendition of 'March Militaire,' by Schubert Tausig."—URBANA NEWS.

CANTON, OHIO

"Local music lovers heard another artist of rare and exceptional ability. . . . His 'Ballade' G Minor, an extremely difficult piece, was played with such precision that the most technical critic in the country could hardly have detected a flaw. He was encoored time and time again."—CANTON DAILY NEWS.

SPOKANE, WASH.

"Made a tremendous hit as a solo pianist. He has a velvety and delicate touch, which can be exchanged at will to the most forceful execution."—SPOKESMAN-REVIEW, Spokane, Wash.

PORTLAND, ORE.

"Played with marked ability and displayed a touch of velvet."—MORNING OREGONIAN.

"Gruen is a young pianist whose technique, tone and interpretative ability indicate that he will find a conspicuous place in the concert field."—DAILY JOURNAL.

"Came into instant favor. . . . Enthusiastically received."—PORTLAND TELEGRAM.

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"We made the delightful acquaintance of an excellent young artist, whose playing is superb. . . . Extremely notable style. An extra fine interpretation of Chopin Ballade in G Minor was followed by a highly pleasing rendition of Dett's Juba Dance, and this was followed by a most brilliant playing of Rubinstein's Valse Caprice. The remarkable playing drew forth great applause."—MERCURY-HERALD.

OAKLAND, CAL.

" . . . Demonstrated pianistic ability of a notable order. His playing of Chopin was both deft and powerful. His phrasing, expression and varied tempo were good to hear. . . . The audience gave him a most enthusiastic reception."—OAKLAND TRIBUNE.

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