

THE SAXOPHONE, HER MEDIUM OF MUSICAL EXPRESSION

Mrs. R. J. Hall, Who Appears as Soloist With the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Has Developed Her Art to a High Plane—She Has Strong Convictions Regarding Musical Conditions—Thinks It Is Proper to Hiss an Inadequate Performance

BOSTON, MASS, Feb. 21.—Mrs. R. J. Hall, under whose management the Orchestral Club of this city, now numbering about 100, will give a much anticipated concert of modern French music on the 25th, is one of the individuals to whom the public of this city owe boundless thanks for her industry and self-sacrificing enterprise in making known here so much of the important music that is being written to-day.

The labor, down to the smallest details, and the enormous expense of this undertaking have been Mrs. Hall's, almost from the time of the formation of the Orchestral Club in 1899. In proportion to the period of its existence and the number of concerts per season, this organization has produced more significant novelties than any other orchestra in the country. Nor is it the fault of Frenchmen that most of these novelties were French. Not the least interesting features of the concerts has been the masterly conducting of Georges Longy, first oboeist [sic] of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Mrs. Hall, a broadly educated musician, a saxophonist of uncommon skill and a pupil of Georges Longy, is the first amateur to have played with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This occurred when the first "L'Arlesienne" suite of Bizet was played at Symphony Hall on the 24th and 25th of last December. Then it proved difficult to find a competent saxophonist, and it was Mrs. Hall who completed the orchestral forces.

The weather outside was damp and cold, and the hall was hot, which heightened the pitch of the strings of the orchestra, and the pitch of the Boston Symphony Orchestra is already pretty high. It was necessary to hang small heating vessels both inside and outside the tube of the instrument to make its tone equivalent to that of the band. Mrs. Hall labored under difficulties, the more so as in the interval before beginning it was impossible to tell what change might have taken place in the cooling tube, but she played her solo in the first movement with a beauty of tone and legato which more than did justice to the traditions of the orchestra, she maintained a balance of tone in a hall to which she was not accustomed, and her intonation, in spite of the conditions, was true.

Mrs. Hall has received most of her musical education in Paris, where she has often played at important concerts, and there are few of the prominent French composers of the day who have not written, or are not writing, music for her. She is now dividing her studies between the saxophone and the double-bass clarinet, a modern instrument in which she is deeply interested. The double-bass clarinet, recently invented, has been very sparingly employed of late years by contemporary composers. It has a full, rich tone throughout and extensive register, which embraces the lowest C. The lower tones, in fact, resemble those of an organ. There is every likelihood that the instrument will rapidly come into general use by progressive musicians.

Mrs. Hall has opinions upon the subject of musical education which are worthy of careful consideration. She considers, for instance, that few students in America are taught to listen properly, and to remedy this defect she recommends far more extended courses in solfeggio and class lessons—for those who have ability warranting musical instruction. She thinks that conservatories should be subventioned by the State or the city, that none but the talented should be admitted to the classes, and that the professors should be only musicians of the highest renown. "If some one without talent wishes to take lessons, very good. But let him or her take them at home and pay a private teacher. There is too much finance in the matter here. Any one can command the services of the best teacher by paying his price. This should not be. At the Paris Conservatoire no one is admitted until they have passed examinations showing unquestionable ability, and then there is training such as we do not dream of in this country. Pianists can learn to hit every note in time. What is that? Every instrumentalists should sing every note of his melodies before playing them, to the their curve, their accent, their breadth. Then it is possible to feel the music. That part of musical training is emphasized in Paris, at least.

"With due respect to the great musical movement here, I do not think that there is yet enough of the genuine artistic spirit. Here in Boston, for instance, we have the clique, the clique, and so on. These circles keep strictly to themselves. In Europe musicians and students meet at the cafés to discuss artistic questions of the day. After a successful concert the green room is packed with friends and critics, come to commend and congratulate. If the performance has not been good it may be hissed, and I, for one, have no objections to such a proceeding. It is leveled at the performance, not the performers, and it should not be taken in a personal sense. It is well that a musician should know when he or she has performed inadequately. But these are not conditions in America.

There is little of such atmosphere here. Take, for instance, the orchestral players. How often are they seen enthusiastic over their music? It is business. They are paid by the hour—no a bad provision for their welfare, yet how disheartening it can be, during an earnest rehearsal, to see a player stop, look at his watch and leave. Nor is it an easy matter, I can tell you, to keep an amateur orchestra together. For all the pleasant things could be said on the subject I cannot say that I consider America in its present state compares well with Europe as a place for artistic development."

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Mrs. R. J. Hall, One of Boston's Best Known Musicians, Who Has Introduced Much of the Modern-day Music at Concerts Under Her Direction

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LHEVINNE IN MILWAUKEE

Large Audience Stirred by Brilliant Program Brilliantly Executed

MILWAUKEE, Feb. 21.—Although Milwaukee has listened to at least a score of well-known pianists this season, it was left for Joseph Lhévinne to create a genuine furor. Lhévinne appeared at the Pabst Theater, under the auspices of Mrs. Clara Bowen Shepard, and was greeted by an audience more than usually large.

Lhévinne's program brought a change of subject, at least in six numbers, which had not been played in public in Milwaukee, or not for a long time. One of the most appreciated of these was Rubinstein's Prelude and Fugue, played in the virile style of Rubinstein himself. Beethoven's grand E flat sonata, opus 81, brought a storm of applause, the audience realizing that it was listening to a wonderful Beethoven interpretation. The remarkable rendition of the Chopin and Mendelssohn selections was also a source of great pleasure. Mendelssohn's "Auf Flügeln des Gesanges" was played with a magnificent singing tone, while the entire Chopin group and the Liszt rhapsody were brilliantly executed. Lhévinne was liberal with his encores, and this was pleasing to the audience. The Liszt "Faust Potpourri" formed a brilliant close to a brilliant program. M. N. S.

Dr. Frederick Cowen's new choral work, composed for the next Cardiff Festival, is entitled "The Veil." The text is from Robert Buchanan's poem, "The Book of Orm."

A memorial service for Carl Halir, in which many of the most prominent Berlin musicians participated, was held in Berlin last month.

Arthur Van Eweyk, the Milwaukee baritone, sang in the recent first performance of Ulrich Hildebrand's cantata, "The Golden Sun," in Stettin.