

# The BACON

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## Serious Facts

*An Interview with Rosa Ponselle*  
"Operatic Rehearsals" by Mary Watkins

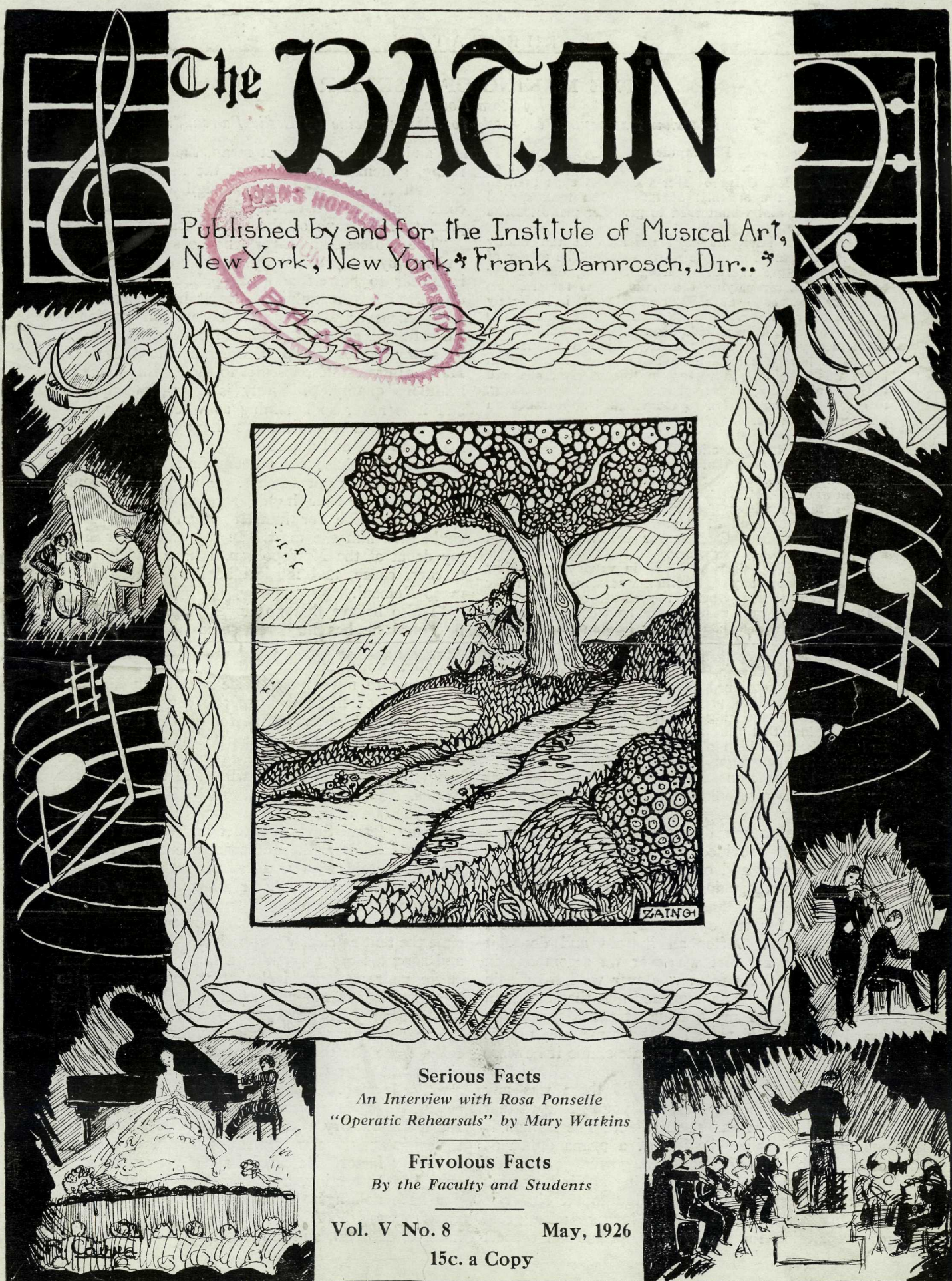
## Frivolous Facts

*By the Faculty and Students*

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## THE MAKING OF A SINGER

By Rosa Ponselle

*This interview was secured expressly for this magazine by Leslie Fairchild.*

### Biographical

At the age of ten, Rosa Ponselle joined the choir of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Her voice was even then so beautiful that the organist of the church took special interest in her and volunteered to give her piano lessons gratis.

Three years later, financial reverses in the family made it necessary for her to go to work. The owner of a moving picture theatre, hearing of this, offered her \$12.50 a week for playing the piano at his theatre. So successful was she at this, that almost immediately after that a rival movie theatre owner offered her \$18.00 a week which she accepted, because it not only meant more money for the family coffer, but also meant that she could have a certain feather for which her childish heart was longing. However, in this theatre, she had to both play, sing and improvise, as she went along, to give proper expression to the villain's appearance on the screen, the heroine's, the lovers, etc., etc.

Two years later, she accepted a position in a cabaret in New Haven, Connecticut for \$50.00 per week. It must be remembered that in those days, the entertainments in the cabarets were run on a more artistic basis than nowadays. Miss Ponselle remained there for two years, naturally with higher remuneration as time went on. Then for one and a half years, she went into vaudeville with her sister Carmela for which they received a big sum of money per week.

In March, 1917, she was heard in vaudeville in New York and immediately an audition was arranged for her at the Metropolitan Opera, the result of which was that, unheralded and unsung, she landed in the center of the picture with a contract for leading roles.

In November of the following year, she made her debut at the Metropolitan in "La Forza del Destino," singing opposite Caruso. Then started intensive studies which she has continued ever since, to prepare herself in new roles and to prepare programs for the many concerts which she sings before and after the opera season. Since that time she has gone steadily forward and now holds a high place among the world famous artists of this generation.

I asked Miss Ponselle if she did not think that vaudeville was a stepping stone to better things and she said, "That is a very difficult question to answer, for it seems to me that everything in life is a stepping stone provided one knows how to make the best of time and opportunities. In each individual's life certain things happen for a purpose and it is up to the individual to know the next step and to look out for his opportunity or the so called stepping stones. After all is said and done, it also seems to me that whatever we accomplish in life is done entirely from whatever we have within us to do it with. It so happened that the gentleman who arranged for my hearing at the Metropolitan heard me in vaudeville, but the same might have happened if I had sung in a private studio if he were there."

I then asked Miss Ponselle if there was any special advice she could give to young singers that would assist them and she replied, "The layman is inclined to visualize the life of a prima donna as a long procession of limousines, gowns, jewels, and pedigreed Pekinese and an adoring public laying its heart and fortune at her feet, but to the singer it is quite different. To her, it is a long, ceaseless grind of preparation for the revivals, premieres, concert

tours, and the like. It must mean, therefore, early rising, systematic exercises of the mind and body, constant studying and endless vigil against sudden colds and other maladies that might attack the precious membrane of the vocal passages.

"The professional singer who does not recognize and live by the precepts which promote good health is unfair to herself and her public. She cannot do herself justice unless she is at her approximate best whenever she appears before an audience. Cheerfulness helps the quality of one's singing voice. A sunny disposition puts warmth into the voice. Habitual grouchiness imparts to the singing voice an acidulous quality. Modesty is a gracious quality and it is never so becoming as when disclosed by one whose accomplishments have prompted the masses to rise and applaud.

"I would advise the student first and foremost to choose the right teacher. The student should visit three or four highly recommended teachers and then decide for himself which one of those could give him the most. In my case, ever since my debut at the Metropolitan, I have had but one teacher, coach, and musical adviser, Maestro Romano Romani.

"I also believe that no singer is properly equipped until he has mastered some instrument, preferably the piano, as a fundamental grounding to a thorough vocal musical education.

"Strive to nurse your voice at all times. Base your rules of life upon primary consideration for the throat and voice. Strive for quality always and invariably. If this practice is rigidly adhered to, the habit will gradually be formed of doing each song so thoroughly that it will yield the hoped for results.

"Enunciate clearly. Each story in a song should be made clear. Since the poet has written a story for the composer, the audience is entitled to have that story told with a distinctness that enables it to be comprehended. After all, superiority of the human voice to all other instruments is its capacity for such. On that account, the singer should enunciate the text as clearly as possible. Make each aria and song a story as well as a musical composition. Make your audience feel that you are singing to them and for them—not at them.

"Arrange your programs so that they are well balanced and interesting. Choose your numbers carefully, some for the music critic, some for the musician, some for the music lover, and some for the average layman. It is not merely a voice and exceptional singing which constitutes all the essentials for a satisfactory vocal concert. The selection of the songs and the arrangement of them is also a very necessary factor. Be careful about your stage presence and costuming, as unlike the instrumentalist, you have nothing to distract some of the attention from yourself. Above all, be modest, gracious, humble, cheerful, and anxious to please."



*Aeroplane view of the Institute, Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary Buildings; Grant's Tomb and Riverside Drive in the foreground.*

## LITTLE ESSAYS IN ERUDITION

*By an Anonymous Member of the Faculty*

*"The programme opened with two sonatas by Scarlatti—whether Alessandro or Domenico, the programme omitted to state, but probably the latter."* (From a notice of a piano recital in a Buffalo paper.)

Let's see if we can't do something as good:

"Last night's Philharmonic programme contained a work entitled 'Don Juan' by a composer who was listed vaguely as 'Strauss.' It had apparently not occurred to the responsible official that more than one musician of distinction had borne that name, and considerable perplexity was expressed by members of the audience in regard to the identity of the particular Strauss concerned. The title led some to suspect a hitherto unknown composition by Johann; some enthusiastic disciples of a prominent New York pedagogue, firm believers in the equality of the sexes' creative powers, voted in a body for Elizabeth; the present writer, however, inclines to the opinion that Richard is the actual composer. This view is strongly supported by internal evidence."

We might go on to try the same method on a subject of even greater popular interest:

"It is reported that at a private banquet at the Biltmore yesterday evening a slashing attack on the prohibition amendment was delivered by a gentleman of the suggestive name of Butler. As we go to press we are unable to discover whether the orator in question was General Smedley D. Butler, who has recently occupied so much space in the public prints, or Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler of Morning-side Heights. We understand that sentiments of an extremely subversive nature were voiced and that the speech concluded with an impassioned peroration in which the name of Volstead was linked with those of Benedict Arnold, Torquemada and Captain Kidd. We hesitate to credit such an effusion to either the distinguished general or the eminent scholar and statesman and prefer to reserve our judgment for the present."

Finally, in the region of international affairs:

"Senator Borah, in his speech last week on the proposed adherence of the United States to the World Court, quoted extensively from a 'farewell address' by Washington—whether George or Booker T., the record fails to disclose, but probably the former."



## ANOTHER COMEDY OF ERRORS

## A Day at the Institute

*By Harold Winter*

I gave the shapeless tube of shaving-cream the last desperate squeeze of its career and discovered the water was not hot. It was seven in the morning, which at best seems like the middle of the night. However, after cutting both cheeks, my chin and the lobe of one of my ears, I considered myself shaved, having nearly swallowed the razor while practicing how to sing an augmented fourth.

Time and trains wait for no commuter, so I hastily swallowed my coffee over the kitchen sink, threw the famous volumes of Messrs. Goetschius and Wedge into my brief-case, and ate my toast on the trolley car.

Several hours later I arrived at the Institute in a more cheerful frame of mind. I was prepared to astonish all the teachers by the brilliance with which I could render my lessons. After checking my knitting in the coat-room, I started for Room CC. The buzz of animated conversation suddenly ceased as I entered the students' room. It was painfully quiet; everyone was looking at me. Mustering all my dignity, I passed on and sought the nearest mirror. My face was a study in black and white as a result of the soft coal. I hastened to remedy the situation and presented myself with clean countenance though besmudged brain in the sight singing class.

Miss Crowthers called the roll.

"What is your name, please?" she asked an aspiring yodelist who entered the room.

"Xztwrtzxt," was the polite response.

"I asked your name," Miss Crowthers repeated, thinking she had misunderstood him.

"Mr. Xztwrtzxt," was the reply, patiently.

"How?"

"Mr. X-Z-T-W-R-Z-X-T."

"How do you pronounce it?"

"Xztwrtzxt, from the early Greek."

"Thank you; take a seat," Miss Crowthers said, without making an attempt at translating the name at sight.

Everybody in the class who wasn't coughing or taking "Honey and Tar" for a sore throat, was limbering up his vocal apparatus in preparation for his weekly thrill. I was busy trying to memorize the numbers of a six-one chord, when I was called upon to set a two-seven with five sharps and a natural to music, using letters.

I was taken by surprise. I am constantly being taken by surprise in that class. I never guess the right thing. If I'm prepared to sing one thing, I invariably am called upon to sing something else.

I tried to concentrate, and then when I thought I had it I lifted my voice in song. Before I lifted it very far, however, Miss Crowthers informed me that although my intentions were doubtless good, my pitch was a yard off key. I tried again, approximately a yard lower, but it was worse than the initial effort, so I gave an imitation of "Mother

Machree" instead, which was very well received.

Miss Crowthers next called on the new arrival, Mr. Xztwrtzxt. When she tried to pronounce his name the result was a whistle, and when Mr. Xztwrtzxt apparently understood it as his name, Miss Crowthers was so surprised that she fainted. When she recovered it was time for the class to be over.

My next lesson I expected to be an execution, with myself the subject to be acted upon. In other words, I was going to make a desperate attempt to play a Bach fugue for Mr. Lewis. I had been making this same attempt over a long period of weeks.

As I was standing outside the door of his teaching room, debating whether or not I should go to the office and exchange Mr. Lewis for a smaller teacher, physically speaking, the door suddenly opened. Mr. Lewis was glaring down at me from behind his glasses.

"Oh, it's you, is it? Well, I hoped you were sick. Since you're not, come in, and annihilate me with a fugue," he said, with an expression of despair and resignation.

I had just seated myself at the piano, and was engaged in the process of drying my hands on my bib, when Miss Strauss entered the room.

"The Lord have mercy upon us," I muttered automatically.

"You said something," agreed Mr. Lewis. "After Miss Strauss hears you play, I see where I lose my job."

With this cheering little speech to steady me, I was prepared for anything.

Miss Strauss looked at me, and then asked Mr. Lewis who I was. He told her that I was his Waterloo, and that my name had something to do with the weather.

When Miss Strauss asked me what I was going to play, I couldn't remember whether the piece was by Bach or by Shakespeare, so I suggested that I play something of my own. At this point in our conversation I noticed that Mr. Lewis looked decidedly ill. Miss Strauss appeared overcome.

In order to put myself in the peculiar frame of mind so necessary for the proper interpretation of my composition, I closed my eyes and concentrated on the geometrical formula for the following problem:

"If two sides of a triangle are equal, there must be a third side!" I drew my inspiration from this formula.

When I had the proof of the problem firmly in mind, I struck the first chord of the composition which I call "Innocence." It consists of the one chord in C major held for seventeen measures, with the four chord in B flat minor held for the next three measures, and it ends on the three chord in F sharp major, which is held until you're tired of it. You choose your own rhythm.

When I was finished I imagined great applause.



This was unnecessary because both Miss Strauss and Mr. Lewis were asleep in their chairs.

Greatly encouraged by the success of my performance, I went down to my theory class to try it out on Mr. Donovan. I learned there that there was to be no class that day as Mr. Donovan had gone home from fatigue, after having marked so many of the students' theory books with his inexorable pencil. Theory students make life so complicated. I felt that Mr. Donovan would appreciate the simplicity of my "Innocence."

If I ever meet Mr. Donovan anywhere in the next world, I expect to see him with a pencil in his hand.

My classes being over for the day, I went down to the coatroom to get my knitting and then started for my train.

Somewhere between 122nd Street and the Bowery, as I was making my way across the street, a woman chauffeur struck me a terrific blow with her taxi-cab. As I was regaining consciousness I thought I heard the bell of an ambulance approaching from the distance. But it was only the alarm-clock bringing my nightmare of "a day at the Institute" to an abrupt close.

The day was Thursday, April first; I went through the usual motions of commuting, only to realize upon arrival at the Institute that Thursday is not one of my days for lessons!



Here's to Music,  
Joy of joys!  
One man's music's  
Another man's noise.

*Contributed by Hyman Bass*

### HEIRESSES

Scene—Rich and fashionable Newport Church.

Occasion—Rehearsal of hymn, "The Church's One Foundation."

Choir sing, "By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed."

Choirmaster, interposing, "By the bye, what are heresies?"

Bright little boy, raising his hand, "Please, sir, ladies who inherit fortunes."

*A. Madeley Richardson*

### BELATED INTRODUCTION

Mr. Wedge had assigned his class in harmony to write an original period extended at the beginning with an introduction.

The next week, one particular girl, unusually brilliant in things other than theory, placed on the music rack before Mr. Wedge a handsome manuscript entitled:

#### FLIRTATION

##### To A Stranger

Mr. Wedge, after glancing over the composition a few seconds, asked the girl where the introduction was.

"Well," she coyly remarked, "that comes toward the end!"

### WHEN "ABSALOM" WAS HANGED

He was an Italian tenor singing the principal roles in a certain city in South America. He had created a sensation because of his graceful bearing and his passionately vibrant voice. Especially was his long, black, wavy hair admired by the young senoritas.

"Aida" was produced before an entranced audience. He was singing Radamès and was borne in his palanquin across the stage where Amneris was waiting to put the laurel wreath of victory on his raven locks which were covered with customarily spiked helmet.

The bearers set down the palanquin and Radamès arose from his seat to alight and receive his reward. But the spike got caught in the fringe at the top of the palanquin and the helmet remained there. Amneris beheld, instead of the handsome young warrior of a moment before, a hatless, middle-aged man with a large bald region running back from his forehead: his toupée had remained in the helmet.

*Lillian Eubank Kempton*

There was a crash, and Mr. Hopper rose and said to his *vis-à-vis* at the cabaret table: "Shall we dance this fox-trot, Miss Flapper?"

"Oh," she replied, "that wasn't the orchestra starting up; one of the waiters just dropped a tray of dishes."

### Must Have Been Wire Rates

What is the world's shortest letter? The records place it to the credit of Victor Hugo, noted for his impatience and impetuosity.

On the very evening of the day on which one of his new works was published, he could not resist the temptation to inquire how the sales were going. So he wrote to his publisher:

"?, Victor Hugo."

The publisher was equal to the occasion, for his reply was:

"!"



## The Baton

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MAY, 1926

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*The state of the "Student Mind" in these days of May flowers and ensemble exams at the Institute.*

### THE JUNE ISSUE

The Baton will close the season with the June issue devoted to the glory of the graduates of 1926.

### THE ANNUAL ALUMNI CONCERT

The Annual Alumni Concert and Dance were held at the Institute on the evening of April 24th. The musical part of the program was given by Miss Phyllis Kraeuter, Mr. Arthur Lora, Miss Ida Deck and Mr. Samuel Gardner. After the concert the alumni and their guests adjourned to the Rehearsal Room for dancing and refreshments.

### SKYSCRAPERS

*By Ruth Bugbee*

Above the unhallowed aisles of street,  
Measured by stories, not by feet,  
Like giant organ pipes they stand.  
And as I gaze I would demand  
What god has dared to try his skill  
With vibrant life the reeds to fill,  
Till man bows down before his power  
And lets him play there hour by hour?  
Where is the console tower high  
From which this player can defy  
The world and press the stops and keys,  
Changing the rhythm if it please  
His fancy, making discords too,—  
Ruthless ever of the crew  
Who slave to gratify his whim  
And help him play his endless hymn?

### JAZZ

*By Ruth Bugbee*

The mesmeric measure of passing feet  
Is the pulse of the throbbing City's tunes,—  
A symphony, intricate and intense,  
Through the muted nights and the dissonant noons.

Each melody starts with a thrill of life  
To be choked and strangely counterpointed.  
The loveliest voices are never heard  
And the form is vague and all disjointed.

The rhythmic hills are the pulse of nature.  
Though often there's nobody there to hear,  
A life may sing through to a perfect cadence  
With every phrase distinct and clear.

The City's clamor is young and vigorous.  
Shall we ruin our voices with screaming above it  
Or shall we get used to this weird cacophony  
And cease to sing and pretend we love it?

### THE LITTLE RAIN

*From the Chinese of Tu Fu*

Oh! she is good, the little rain! and well she knows  
our need  
Who cometh in the time of spring to aid the sun-  
drawn seed;  
She wanders with a friendly wind through silent  
nights unseen,  
The furrows feel her happy tears, and lo! the land  
is green.

Last night cloud-shadows gloomed the path that  
winds to my abode.  
And the torches of the river-boats like angry  
meteors glowed.  
To-day fresh colours break the soil, and the butter-  
flies take wing  
Down brodered lawns all bright with pearls in the  
garden of the King.



## REHEARSALS

*Reprinted by permission from BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE OPERA*

*By Mary Fitch Watkins*

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To gain admission to one of the general rehearsals at the Metropolitan Opera House is almost an impossibility. Wire pulling is useless. Only those who "belong," in their own right or by close and famous relationship, can hope to pass muster with the calm and all-seeing eye of that official—often the mighty director himself—who strolls with apparent indifference up and down the aisles, but lets nothing escape him. The dress-rehearsal is easier to attain, being a sort of semi-public occasion, especially in the case of an entire novelty, when critics and other accredited journalists are habitually admitted. It differs very little from a performance, although of course the various directors have the right to, and sometimes do, make remarks and corrections. Every one is in costume and complete make-up, and there is the same atmosphere of concentration and strain behind the curtain; for the critics often write the major part of their reviews after this preliminary glimpse.

There is, however, a more pleasing aspect for the privileged beholder, in that he may here enjoy some taste of the luxury which mad Ludwig of Bavaria found so beguiling, when he commanded whole representations for himself alone and sat in solitary state to savor them. When one is part of a little group of perhaps four-score scattered throughout a vast auditorium made to hold many thousands, and can roam or sit down at will, unrestricted by a number on a bit of pasteboard, one can snap his fingers at all princes and their perquisites.

The dress-rehearsal and the "general" are, however, the culminating point of much previous effort. In the preparation of a new opera, it is inaugurated with a piano, and the principals with scores are seated comfortably about in the Ladies' Parlor, where at night the youth and beauty of society come to powder their noses. Little do they know, as they peer into the mirror at their handiwork, what a scene of earnest endeavor that same glass has reflected a few hours earlier.

If we really wish to know all about rehearsals, the best way is to watch that quintessence of phantasy and mechanical despair—Rheingold—upon a day just before it has attained the dignity of the "general." This general rehearsal, as it is called, is rarely in costume or make-up, unless some innovation in properties or investiture makes it advisable for the chorus to be partially in character. The medley of incongruities thus revealed to the wondering layman is intensely amusing. Twenty times the stage manager will cross before the footlights with flying coat-tails and hastily revise some bit of action. Sunlight, moonbeams, and lightning will be snapped off and on in bewildering confusion; singers will step out of their parts and come down to argue heatedly with the prompter; while the conductor will sing in the funny, unmusical voice he usually

possesses, and go back patiently over and over a passage with a recalcitrant oboe or harp.

The curtain is up and the stage is set for the first scene, although the lighting is not the green and submarine dimness we are accustomed to, but a bright and revealing glare which cruelly exposes the shortcomings of the aquatic flora which adorn the bottom of the Rhine. Quite plainly we can see the prosaic, dirty-looking lump on top of its rock, which, when illuminated in the depths of its properly surrounding gloom, becomes the magic and romantic Gold. Its present guardians are not sinuous and graceful mermaids, but stage-hands with ladders, hammers and nails, who go about unconcerned and apparently amphibious, in pursuit of their duties. An anxious and white-faced individual leans over the footlights, advancing an ear carefully in vain effort to hear, above the tuning and scraping and conversation of the orchestra, remarks being made at the top of leather lungs by some invisible authority in the rear of the house.

Then suddenly to our astonished vision is introduced the diverting spectacle of a young and delighted scene-shifter swinging rapidly up and down and across the entire proscenium space, and making free and noisy comment during his travels. We rub our bewildered eyes, then realize that they are merely trying out the swimming apparatus for the Rhine Daughters—which reminds us that if we wish to see this in all its mystery, we had better rush backstage immediately. Some one has already sounded an imperative whistle, and the conductor has arrived at his desk and is wiping his glasses preparatory to the business of the day. In another moment the mighty river will begin to flow in stirring chords through the orchestra.

We slip through the doors unchallenged, and in another instant are threading our way behind the great circular back-drop which so competently confines the current of the fabled waters, toward a little group of people surrounding a tangle of wires and cables. We are not a moment too soon. Even now Woglinde is climbing into her little saddle and being strapped in place like a child on a merry-go-round. Her sisters, Flosshilde and Wellgunde, are already astride, and obviously getting a grip upon their nerves while pretending to struggle with the inadequacies of their far-from-flowing modern skirts. One of them wears a smart little hat. The last one now being firmly and inescapably chained to her instrument of torture, produces a purse from her bosom and extracts a soda mint. "This always makes me so seasick!" she explains to us, with a wry face. They are all young and slender, however, so they need have no fear of repeating that famous catastrophe, when Schumann-Heink's somewhat superfluous pounds are said to have snapped a rope and precipitated her to the bottom with a thud instead of a splash.



The mounting musical bubbles of the river's flow now reach our ears. Cables are unloosed, three repetiteurs with their noses in open scores take their positions beside the three stage-hands controlling the aerial trolleys upon which depend the swimming proficiency of the mermaids. "Los!" cries Number One. . . (we had forgotten, but of course the language of the whole scene is German today) . . . and off goes Woglinde. "Auf! . . . Still! . . . Vorwaerts! . . . Zurück! . . ." directs the little conductor, and the "hand" must be more of a linguist than he looks, for he obeys with straining muscles and perspiring anxiety, in some degree of accuracy. In a pretty but sickening swoop Wellgunde makes her entrance, her hat already a trifle awry. Flosshilde soon follows her and we gaze in rapture. Surely Peter Pan never gave the Darling children a treat like this.

We soon hasten back, however, to the auditorium to observe from the front the effect of these very strange fish at their maneuvers, and arrive just as Alberich, the dwarf, who is bald and wears a mauve necktie, is adjusting his pince-nez in order to be able to place his feet more securely upon the treacherous rocks of the bottom. His pursuit of the modish maidens is further impeded by an experiment of the electricians, toying with blue and green rays, and stereopticon waves. The illumination is reduced just in time, however, for the gold to begin to glow; and, taking advantage of a pause, Woglinde is heard begging in a pitiful voice to be allowed a moment to alight, and is brought a glass of water—an extremely redundant need, one would say, for a submerged lady.

The moment of darkness following Alberich's theft does not take place today, and we hope to see the mechanics of the transformation; but no—the veils and cloud-curtains are having their own rehearsal and so hide from us, as usual, the path to Wotan's arcadian camping-place. He lies upon his rock, or rather he sits this time, not considering it necessary to endure his habitual discomfort. He wears a brown suit, and for some reason looks at his wrist-watch just as the scene is revealed. Fricka, his faithful spouse, is not with him today, the impersonating artist being practiced in the role, and furthermore, billed to sing tonight; but her place is occupied by a sub-director with a score, who looks as he doubtless feels, very foolish indeed. When the goddess has to declaim, the conductor hums and the prompter raises his modest voice. All progresses smoothly, even to the appearance of Walhalla upon the back-drop. The rest of the royal family now arrives. Freia comes at once to the footlights and, shading her eyes with outstretched palm, peers over to see if her husband is in the house, but springs back to position on the notes of her Stichwort or cue.

Presently the Giants enter, and although they clutch their young pine-trees as lustily as ever, they are not nearly as big and imposing as usual, even with their overcoats which they have retained to heighten the illusion. Loge, however, provides the

greatest merriment, even moving the austere celestials to a titter of amusement. It is very difficult indeed for him to "flicker like tongues of flame," in his conventional apparel of the modern male, but he does the best he can, with great earnestness holding out his coat-tails and pirouetting upon his polished tan oxfords with admirable abandon. When he and Wotan start for Nibelheim we observe that it is the day when the steam rehearses too, for the pipes belch forth with such enthusiastic hissing that they earn a sharp rebuke from the conductor, who is now heart and soul in his work, with his collar and tie depending from a corner of his rack.

The poor little Nibelungen slaves are revealed as children—the smallest of the ballet babies, and the sons and daughters, nieces and nephews of the chorus, who earn their pocket money populating the usual operatic street scenes, and indulging languidly in youthful capers. Just now they seem to be really enjoying themselves as they bend their cropped or beribboned heads and scramble off to the crack of Mime's whip. When Alberich and Wotan appear it is time for the first of the Tarnhelm tricks. The dwarf's vanishing act is at last understood. Backing up against a screen of black velvet in the rear of the cave, he steps quickly to the right and rear, and the screen revolves, presenting its blank side to the audience. By a similar step forward and left, he reappears as if by magic.

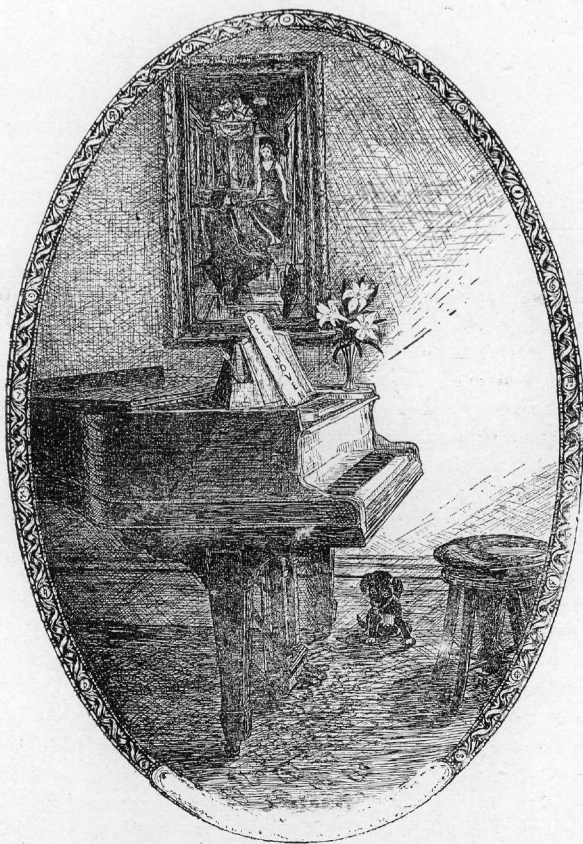
Wagner has, by his aptly descriptive musical phrase, saved the management the annoyance of introducing a real toad upon the scene, but the "loathly dragon" is another matter. This is a difficult moment. Unlike the Siegfried dragon which only rears its ugly head and shoulders, this "Wurm" must actually slither and writhe across the stage. Six "hands" have carried the fearsome reptile to his entrance coulisse: the guide wire has been located and attached; and the man who impersonates the front legs and jaws has squirmed into his tight quarters—the tail will be worked from behind in the wings. "Los!" cries the individual with the score and to orchestral undulations the monster begins its progress before the footlights.

But it is not going well—it is three beats too slow! The conductor taps with his baton and says something bitter. The stage manager leans deprecatingly over the apron, then retires precipitately in search of the technical director. Everything stops but the "Wurm," who continues his blind march. Then suddenly the director makes one of his rare appearances. In shirt-sleeved haste he pursues the creature, and remembering, although an Englishman, that this is Wagner, trumpets through his hands, "Bring back that worm!" The "worm" being some eight feet long and covered with horny excrescences, is not easily turned about, so he backs in a graceless and ignominious manner; and after some discussion the march begins again.

The last scene is uneventful. Fasolt expires without even losing his footing, and walks straight off the stage and into a waiting taxi-cab which takes him home to lunch. Donner takes off his coat to



wield his hammer, and, finding that the latter has somehow become mislaid, seizes his rejected garment and swings it about his head, producing just as satisfactory peals of thunder as with the proper tool. The hungry gods and goddesses approach the rainbow bridge. Now the Rhine Daughters, swathed in furs, hatted and gloved, wave to them saucily and sing their plaintive lament; Wotan brandishes an imaginary sword; and the curtain falls. Before one can say "knife," everything and everybody has faded away. The artists stand not on the order of their going, the orchestra exits as one man, with a parting shout or two the directors leave the stage. It is one-thirty. At two-fifteen there is a dress rehearsal of *Gioconda*!



THE STUDENT'S SANCTUARY

*Etching by John Howard Russell*

Where music dwells,  
Lingering and wandering on as loth to die,  
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof  
That they were born for immortality.

*Wordsworth.*

## ROME

*For those planning to visit Mussolini during vacation*

When you're in Rome it's up to you  
To do the way the Romans do,  
And lives of ordinary Romans  
Are far from those of Oklahomans.  
The Romans leave their happy homes  
For grisly tombs and catacombs;  
Unvexed by thoughts of jobs and salaries,  
They spend their days in picture galleries.  
They sometimes promenade the Corso,  
That's like Broadway, but rather more so,  
But much prefer, in proud decorum,  
To view within the Roman Forum  
Below where Nero lived—the boulder!—  
The grave of Romulus, their Founder.  
How oft they come to gaze upon  
The monumental Pantheon!  
How often, reverently solemn,  
They brood on Trajan's mighty column  
Or wander through the Colosseum  
Or else the Vatican Museum  
Or visit glorious St. Peter's  
To estimate its height in meters!

At home I never stare and wonder,  
For that would be a social blunder;  
But Romans prize their city's stories  
And flock to scan her ancient glories;  
So when in Rome, as duly bid,  
I did the way the Romans did.

*Arthur Guiterman.*

## LAST NIGHT

With apologies to Kjerulf

The boughs were bowing to the sheaves:  
The wind was winding through the leaves:  
The rhymster rhymed of beds and breeze,  
Of turnips, motor-cars and cheese.  
I was perplexed at many things:  
I wondered why a whale has wings,  
And trembled at the thunderous roar  
Of wicked waves down on the shore.  
My steps were tottery on the steep:  
The cliff gave way:—'twas awfully deep!  
The grass I grasped to hold me back  
Came out by the roots with a crackety-crack.  
I tumbled down the precipice  
Towards the waves that roar and hiss.  
Amid the echoes of a snore  
I rolled in slumber to the floor.  
I turned to the tuft of grass to thank it:—  
Behold!—it was the quilt and blanket.

*John Howard Russell*

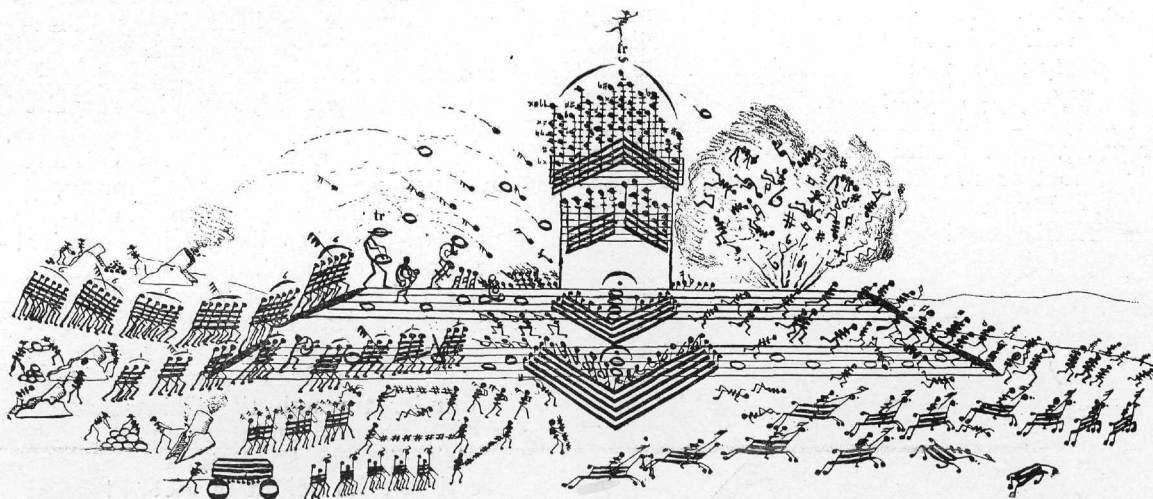
Francisco Bollonio Gollotto  
Met a very fierce beast in a grotto.  
Its Breath was red hot O  
Ah! sad was the lot O  
Of Francisco Bollonio Gollotto.

*John Howard Russell*



## MARCH ON!

By Martin Nathenson



Music has followed the ever changing panorama of the ages—the ecclesiastical with Palestrina, Josquin, Di Lasso;—the classic beginning with Bach and on to Beethoven—the subsequent romantic epoch represented by a host of familiar names culminating gorgeously, extravagantly, in that melting pot of human emotion, that curiously complicated organism, the creative force of Richard Wagner. On, on, always changing, a constant exploiting of existing laws and idioms—a veritable evolution of the expression of the human soul, soaring high in the heavens of inspiration and then with a clash brought to earth by the modernists.

Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Honegger, Varese, Rugles, Griffes, Ornstein, Carpenter, Bax, Bloch, Hindemith, Casella, Malipiero, Respighi, Debussy, Ravel, De Falla, the "Six,"—a list of names, a score of musical innovations, a host of compositions, the growth of new forms, the appearance of new, fresh forces in musical expression.

Music is identifying itself with an age of scientific synthesis controlling the elements with man-made machines, ingenious, infinitely complex, tingling with movement, pounding at the walls of the accepted, seeking neither to gather disciples, nor to save the world, but attempting to mirror its swirling, headlong progress.

Never has it been so difficult to establish a new order. And no wonder since the new movement is not another development of the classic laws but a new beginning founded on a new set of laws, consistently devised and applied. The questions of good or bad, beautiful or ugly, harmonious or cacophonous, or even right or wrong,—these do not enter into the consideration. This new form has the dignity of creation, of struggle. It demands the approach through the intellect and the realization of the new

path. Modern music is no longer an experiment. It is able to speak for itself from the summit of its rich contributions. Without attempting either to analyze or describe, one has but to name such significant creations as Stravinsky's "Le Sacre," Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire," Honegger's "Pacific," Varese's "Intégrales," Ornstein's "Concerto for Two Pianos," Bloch's "Concerto Grosso," Prokefiëff's "Violin Concerto," Carpenter's ballets, Respighi's "Pines of Rome," Debussy's "Pelleas," De Falla's "El Retablo," or realize the amazing possibilities opened by the creation of the new quarter tone scale by Julian Carrillo containing ninety-seven tones to the octave to become doubtful that musical creation has ceased to matter since Beethoven gave us the noble "Fifth Symphony."

No other group should be better identified with the new music than the students of this generation. It is a fertile field, opulent with unpicked fruit. In a comparatively short time of three or four years, several progressive orchestral leaders and especially the League of Composers, the International Composers' Guild, the Society of the Friends of Music, the Franco-American Referendum Society have accomplished something phenomenal in bringing modern music and its creators to the attention of the serious minded and into the realms of art. May I urge those who are interested and those who should like to become interested to contribute to an open forum of contemporary musical activity in *The Baton*? It is the duty of this generation, our generation, to prepare for the carrying on of a new movement. Give your opinions, state your problems and become alive to a great vitalizing force—modern musical expression! May I apologize for any omissions of significant and important items in a sketchy resumé of a tremendous march!



## FANTASIE NOCTURNE

You see, the Cello loved the Violin,  
Whose head, high arched, and back, fine curved,  
bespoke  
The haughty aristocracy of her.  
She traced her sinuous, solitary way,  
Proudly aloof from the concerted mass,  
Who alternately faltered at her heels.  
Yet dared the humble Cello lift his head  
To rest sad eyes upon her, silently.

Humbly, sadly, he followed where she led,  
A shadowy symbol of mute loyalty;  
And when she sang her fine high melodies,  
Trembling, he murmured, soft and low, his love.  
Almost he died, upon that ecstasy—  
His heart welled forth, and lent unto his voice  
Such glowing sombre beauty that—she heard,  
And felt strange warmth pervade the untouched  
soul.

She heard, and bade him join her loneliness,—  
Bade him forever murmur by her side,  
So that the fervent throbbing of his voice  
Might add, to star-like chill, humanity.  
But where, now, was the humble murmuring?  
Where the accustomed, yearning wistfulness?  
The raucous rasp of triumph held full sway—  
His joyousness made discord with her song!

Swift she recovered former haughtiness—  
Arched anew her aristocratic head—  
Resumed again her lone, proud, sinuous path,  
Leaving him, dazed, behind, a slave once more.

Humbly, sadly, he follows where she leads,  
Resting sad eyes upon her, silently;  
And when she sings her fine, high melodies,  
Trembling, he murmurs, soft and low, his love.

By Nat Lewis Rothman  
C. C. N. Y.

## ALUMNI NEWS

A unique instrument in recitals is the bassoon, yet Angel del Busto demonstrated its possibilities when he appeared in joint recital with Dorothy Bedford, pianist, at the Army Music School at Washington Barracks. The "Intermezzo" written especially for this occasion by Samuel Gardner and Grainger's arrangement of "An Old Irish Air of County Derry" brought out the finest qualities of this instrument which possesses a plaintiveness and resonance that are truly amazing. Mr. del Busto was an artist in the quality and variety of his tone and his execution.

Miss Bedford also proved herself a talented musician. A young artist, graduate of the Institute of Musical Art, Miss Bedford should become a very individual asset to Washington's music.

*Comments from Washington Newspapers*

## CONCERT PLANS

George Engles, manager of the New York Symphony Society has issued a preliminary announcement of plans for next season.

Concerts will begin October 29 and will last until April 10. The New York season will be briefly interrupted in January by a two weeks' tour to the middle west.

Walter Damrosch will conduct the orchestra during the first half of the season. On January 3 he will hand over the baton to Otto Klemperer, who has been reengaged as guest conductor for an eight weeks period. His second visit to this country will last until March 6.

Although the Symphony Society has decided to give the same number of Thursday afternoon, Friday evening and Sunday afternoon concerts as during the season just closed, a change is being made in the pairing of programs. The Thursday afternoon and Friday evening concerts at Carnegie Hall will be held on alternate weeks instead of on successive days as heretofore, and the programs of the two series will be entirely different.

Madame Ernestine Schuman-Heink will make her only New York orchestral appearance with the New York Symphony in a Wagner program, with Walter Damrosch conducting. Other soloists who have been engaged as assisting artists are Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Albert Spalding, Pablo Casals, Joseph Szigeti, Walter Gieseking, Alfredo Casella and Alfred Cortot.

Several composers have been commissioned to write new works for next season. Jean Sibelius, the distinguished Finnish composer, is already at work on a symphonic poem, "The Wood," which will have its first performance early in the fall under Mr. Damrosch. Alfredo Casella is also writing a special work for the Symphony Society. It is to be known as "Scarlattiana" and will be based on the themes of Scarlatti. At the premiere performance Casella himself will be at the piano. Among other new works to be performed will be "Phaedre" by Arthur Honegger, composer of "Pacific 231," and "Le Roi David." The inspiration for this work was derived from d'Annunzio's novel of the same name.

Prices will be kept at the same low level adopted last year when the Symphony Society moved its Sunday concerts to Mecca Auditorium. The results of the past season have proved that New York needs a large hall with a low scale of prices to house the audiences wishing to hear symphonic music. At Otto Klemperer's last concert in Mecca Auditorium, the number present exceeded 4,000. Rates for tickets for the Sunday concerts will range from thirty-five cents to \$1.50 with a twenty per cent reduction on subscription tickets for twenty concerts. For the Carnegie Hall concerts the price for single concerts ranges from twenty-five cents to \$2.50 and for the series of twelve concerts from \$3.00 to \$20.00.



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