

Music in the Home

Power of Concentration.
In a class Harold Bauer's pupils some time ago a young woman was playing when a friend of the artist rose to leave. Mr. Bauer looked at the player, at his friend, again at the player, then rose and tiptoed to the door. Once more he looked toward the player, but finally went out. When he returned, she had finished. "Why did you not keep me in the room?" asked Mr. Bauer; "it rested with you."

It is such power to hold the listener which is the prime requisite of the player. Whether he has something to say or not, it will never be judged if he cannot get a hearing. To develop this compelling force in performance is the problem of the student and teacher alike; to cultivate a tone which "commands," in the softest passage as in the loudest, to give eloquence to the single note, even to the rest before or after the note, as to the fullest chord.

This compelling power of the artist reduces in the last analysis to his capacity for intense musical expression—that is, his capacity for thinking his music intensely and at the same time producing it in that intense form. "Intensity" may be thought of as akin to concentration, but more active (it might be called concentration in motion)—and just as utter relaxation is the most perfect form of concentration, so intensity is possible in the most perfect

form in the softest tone, the gentlest ripple of sound, as well as in the thundering chords of a great rhapsody. To act intensely one must have in mind an idea of the intense action and must then do it; he must think and act intensely. But how shall he get at this "intensity of thought and action?" Intensity depends largely on controlled, directed speed in thought and action. To develop it, then, cultivate quick thinking and quick expression of thought.

For example, use exercises in note reading (reciting) or time-beating, or exercise of the arms, wrist or finger; whatever the exercise, let the action occur at a given instant, not eagerly, not late, and let there be a pause of absolute quiet before and after, so that the action takes place in a flash at the given instant and is not scattered slowly over a longer period of time. When once the power has developed to act quickly at a given instant it will be found that "commanding" tone results, a tone of startling brilliance. From the single note, chord or phrase to the longer sections, and, finally, to the whole piece, is a gradual step; so the whole piece may be made to reflect the same notable quality. In later work, by other exercises, one cultivates intensity in quiet passages as well, and works for various qualities of tone. Even the young student, however, can, by the process of quick thinking and quick action, arrest and hold the attention of his audience through the individually artistic character of his playing.

Back-to-the-Land Musicians.
Professional men, especially musicians, are often charged with being unbusinesslike and impractical. Earned or unearned as that charge may be in the majority of cases, it cannot be laid against the great composer Verdi. The renowned operatic composer after making a mark for himself with *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*, produced *Aida* at Cairo, Egypt, in 1871. Then for sixteen years he retired to the very prac-

tical occupation of farming, having said that Italy needed good farmers more than musicians. At his farm, Verdi took a special pride in the raising of good stock and working the land. He was always ready to introduce modern improvements such as time and labor saving machinery. During this time he and his wife lived quietly, "going to bed with the hens," and rising early.

As a result of the outdoor life, he retained a robust vigor of mind and body that enabled him, much to the surprise of the musical world, to return to his art and he returned with a real modern style, up-to-date and fresh in every respect. In his closing years Verdi gave us *Otello* and *Falstaff*, the latter being completed in his eightieth year. Verdi died only seventeen years ago.

Systematic in Studies.
Much has been written about poetry in music. Technique has received, perhaps, more than its share of notice, while a minimum of consideration is the lot of concentration. And this, though the essentials of thorough musicianship are found in this latter most important factor.

Concentration does not involve a narrowing of the view to one specific object, but suggests rather a collaboration of all the faculties upon each and every phase of music study. No one is a true musician who knows the technique only of a particular instrument. The same is true of one who, appreciative of the poetry of the art, is unconscious of the rhythm. To attain to mastery of the musical art a knowledge is necessary of all the factors which make for efficiency therein, and the outcome of their concentrated action results in the highest type of art.

The hours devoted to study should be regular. The time allotted to each composition should be definite and regulated by the character of the composition.

After this, with control of the factors of rhythm and tone-color and with interpretative insight, the mas-

tery of each piece should afford the greatest pleasure and mental stimulus to the student. Most discouragements of the young art aspirant would be eliminated if the methods of the efficient expert were applied to the musical as they are to the other professions.

Music and National Sociability.
Were it possible to put down in a ledger account all that music has accomplished in the way of sociability there would be a credit balance running into figures that would stagger one. So apparent is this in the social life of our homes that we may pass over that phase of the subject to deal with it in a wider sense.

The social life of communities is very materially developed by an interchange of music. The band of one town journeys to another town to play at a fall fair or some local celebration. In a certain countryside the Presbyterian Choir each year furnishes the music for the anniversary services of the Methodist Church three or four miles away, and vice versa. Or in other cases a choral society in a town gives "The Messiah" and music lovers in near-by places go in for the occasion.

To go a step farther afield, the same exchange of musical hospitality is going on among nations. Canada has visits from the Sheffield Choir of England; the famous British Military Bands; the Russian Symphony Orchestra; the great orchestras from New York, Boston and Chicago; Padewski the Pole; Casals, the Spaniard; Saint-Saens, the Frenchman; Melba, the Australian; Caruso, the Italian; Graveure the Belgian; and so on almost indefinitely.

The Mendelssohn Choir of Toronto, and the Elgar Choir of Hamilton, give concerts in the cities of the United States, which country in turn also receives the famous artists and musical organizations of Europe.

A good example of one of these musical missionaries was Gullmant the most noted organist and composer of organ music which France can claim as her own. Gullmant for twenty years or more journeyed to England annually and often semi-annually for concert engagements. He opened a new organ in Rome and on that occasion gave daily concerts for two weeks when many of the works of Bach and Tandel were heard for the first time in Italy. He visited Russia and gave a series of concerts on the great organ at Riga, which up to the installation of the great Sydney organ, was the largest in the world. Gullmant also made two concert tours of America, playing in the principal cities.

Thus, through music, the intercourse of nations has gone on and on, weaving friendships, dispelling prejudices, creating confidences, and all to our national up-building.

Choosing a Teacher.
The choosing of a music teacher is a matter, the importance of which is often under-estimated. In a large metropolis, where artists of international repute are wont to establish studios, first class tuition, of an extensive character is available for the well-to-do, generally at fees quite out of proportion to the benefit derived. It has always been a matter of doubt whether concert artists make the most desirable teachers, for the equipment of the latter needs qualities which the training of the artist does not include. The concentration on technique required to produce modern virtuosity does not necessarily fit an artist for teaching. On the contrary, the greater the artist, the less patience has he with mediocrity.

Conservatories and Academies of Music in larger centres solve the problem for the great middle class, and there are many points in favor of such a course of tuition. A greater incentive to regular, systematic study than is usually obtainable from private teachers is one of the chief advantages which students derive from attendance at a conservatory. The hard and fast rules, and the academic atmosphere all tend towards greater discipline, in contrast to the laxity which is so often permitted in the private studio. The cause of such laxity, a serious drawback to progress, is twofold. Firstly, the average musician and teacher is not a business man, and secondly the fear of losing a pupil by offending him makes the teacher hesitate to insist on strict observance of rules. A wise student will see that the enforcement of reasonable regulations is bound to be productive of better and quicker results, and is therefore more economical, financially. By the same reasoning, it is obvious that ten dollars per lesson paid to a strict teacher is cheaper than five wasted on one who accepts any excuse for unprepared work, and missed lessons. There are qualities necessary in a teacher which unfortunately cannot be taught even in the best academies, and they are, patience, tact and sympathy, and it is these endowments which are worth more than half a dozen diplomas. In choosing a teacher, then, students should look for these qualifications combined with a strong personality, high moral principles, wide education and broad sympathies.

Kipling's Tribute.
In an article "France at War—Battle Spectacle and a Review," in the Glasgow Herald, Rudyard Kipling several times refers to the part played by the band. He writes of "musical bands playing a tune that seemed like the very pulse of France." Again he says: "All the while the band, on a far headland, was telling them and telling them (as if they did not know) of the passion and gaiety and high heart of their own land in the speech that only they could fully understand. (To hear the music of a country is like hearing a woman think aloud)."

Things always look different from the other fellow's view point.

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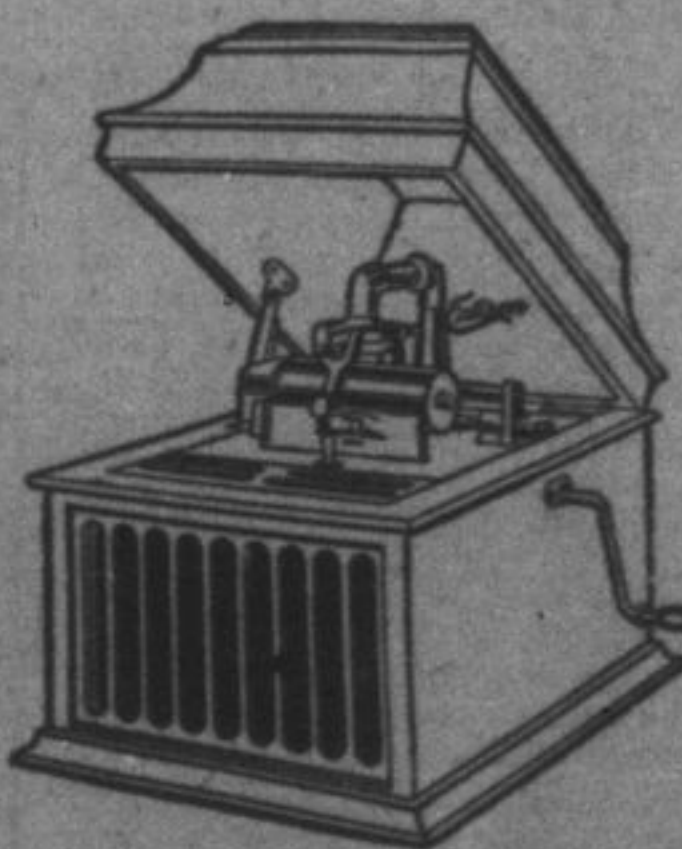
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A. J. Jeffrey, assistant librarian at the Parliament Buildings, Toronto, is dead. He once ran the *Arnprior Chronicle*. His son now publishes it.

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