

MUSIC

By HENRIETTA M. REES.

JUST see the advantages of music that are offered in Omaha!

There are several papers of this great daily paper given over exclusively to the teachers of different branches of the art who live right here among us, whom we may know and meet in our daily life, and whose work may be seen and studied both at long and short range.

There are opportunities offered to woo the heavenly maid of music by many means, by the divine instrument which is formed by our vocal chords, or by any of a variety of man-made instruments which have been for centuries developing to their present forms, some of which are even yet in a transitional stage.

The most generally studied subjects are the voice, piano and violin. The vocal chords of course form the most wonderful instrument, being able to add words to sounds of ineffable beauty. These are capable of remarkable development, and one of the fascinating as well as difficult things about the training of the voice is that each one is different and has different possibilities in its development.

On the other hand there are so many pupils who never ask the teacher anything. They take what the teacher says to take and either fearing to expose ignorance or that the teacher will think they are stupid, they never ask why they are doing certain things. It may never occur to them to ask, but like the troopers at Balaclava they blindly do the best they can. One might say that the best pupils are those who own and use a musical dictionary, and supplement its use by asking their teachers the most questions. They are paying the teacher to teach them music, and unless he can give them satisfactory reasons for doing certain things thus and so, there is no reason why they should do it.

Just as there is a variety of instruments that one may study in Omaha, so there is also a variety of instructors from whom one may study, and just as these

YOUNG VIOLINIST WHO HAS OPENED STUDIO.



Miss Luella Anderson

mean we must have had good teachers, but not necessarily celebrities or residents of some foreign capital. The teacher does not furnish the preparation, he merely furnishes the means, by which the pupil must prepare himself. He must have developed under good instruction. He must have observed, listened and worked, practiced studied and worked, thought, felt, formed opinions of his own and worked, and then worked a little extra for luck. Any person who has done this, no matter when they have studied, would have something to teach. Celebrated teachers behind a teacher, are very much like the honors in a game of bridge whist. If you have them and know how to play the chances are that you will take the tricks, but unless you know how to play the game often a general good hand and careful playing will win more tricks without them.

The personality of the teacher has much to do with his success. If he is sincere, his individuality will be noticeable in his teaching and playing. His personal appearance has more or less of a subconscious effect upon the pupils, and the manner of speech will often impress or fail to impress certain truths. The teachers general interest, the subjects which appeal to him besides the music, all bear an indirect effect upon the manner of his teaching.

There are three things which good teachers always consider in the development of a pupil, the physical, the mental and the spiritual. The general health of the pupil would also be considered tempering the work to the strength, and the choice of good wholesome music for the weaker ones which will keep the mind and spirits in a good state of healthy activity. The main point considered in the physical development concerns the development of those tendons and muscles required in the performance of the best musical literature. Different studies are needed to fit different cases—what is hard for one to gain often being easy for another. In the mental development, observation and reason are the main qualities to be appealed to for an understanding and development of the logic of music. Pupils differ in mental equipment just as they do in physical characteristics, no two approaching the study of music with the same previous mental training, and each looking at it from his own point of view, and each needs a different sort of mental stimulation to accomplish the best results. The spiritual side must be developed. They must be taught to feel the language of music, and to express it as they feel it. It is through the spiritual side that the individuality of playing best develops, and if it is carefully fostered and guided, it will help the pupils to play with that charm of manner, without which no virtuoso can succeed, no matter how great his digital dexterity. The ideal development is a perfect union of the three, at which all teachers of worth aim, but which is not always gained. Some excel in the physical development, some in the mental and some in the spiritual, and pupils unless they are careful in their eager pursuit of one of these are liable to slight the other two. There are teachers who are successful in all three considerations and some of these live here in Omaha, because I have heard pupils sing and play who have spent considerable time under their care.

There are great opportunities for our Omaha music teachers for the city is growing, it is prosperous and has not

fallen behind other American cities in the spread of appreciation of good music. The phonograph, the mechanical piano-playing devices, and last but not least the work of the teachers who have been here long enough to spread their influence and gain recognition, have done much for this. When people in general can see the improvement in the work of some of their musical friends, and can see them gradually winning for themselves a place in the musical life of the city or elsewhere, where it is necessary for them to stand solely on their own merits the chances are that the people who taught those pupils knew their business, and their fame spreads. We have many amateur musicians here in Omaha. Some who do really very meritorious work have never taken a lesson outside our city walls, some who do not do nearly as good work who are graduates of some of the eastern conservatories, or who have spent some time in music study abroad.

Perhaps you know some of both. We have teachers here who are capable at starting the youthful student upon the right track, who can help him over the bumps and make the lessons interesting as well as instructive. We have teachers who can guide the young player or singer on the higher levels, and enthrall him to greater efforts toward the perfect ideal. We have teachers who can take the young player or singer through the theory or the art who can show him the development of the musical ideas, the progression of the voices, the science of chords and the balance of form throughout, and if he suffers enough and works hard enough and long enough they can teach him how to speak in the musical idiom, providing, he has anything to say.

Our fine teachers here in Omaha would be fine teachers anywhere, and work with them will compare with work under any other teacher anywhere, under similar conditions and those three last words carry a weight of meaning with them. Many a time the reason pupils do not succeed is not the teacher's fault but rather because an unmusical home life, unmusical conditions in school work and unmusical friends exercise a counter-

influence which more than overbalances all the interest the teacher can inspire in the brief lesson period. Too often the teacher alone works against every outside interest the pupil has, instead of having the outside interests strengthened and uphold the music.

With the young pupil who attends the public school, which occupies the most of his day, if his parents are desirous of his becoming skilled in music, everything should be done to foster his interest in it, no obstacle should be put or allowed to project itself into his practice hour. His instruction and practice should be regular, even though only a little time be given to music. He is forming musical habits, and a little thinking and working each day will put him further on the highway to success than a day or two of several hours practice each week.

Once upon a time there were two music teachers. One began at the age of seven and studied more or less continuously except in the summertime, until the age of sixteen. After that instruction was less regular until the completion of the High school course, when a year was spent in nothing but musical work. A college course then interfered, but after that another period of music study, and then instructing. The other did not study at all until the age of fifteen, after which five or six years of continuous work followed. Of course in a teacher's life there is more or less performing demanded, and also more or less interference in regular practice. After a summer spent away from music for both of them, the teacher who studied in childhood will regain fluency and technical command in half the time of the other, while the one who started in later life is really the better worker of the two.

If it were a case of physical digestion the necessity would be apparent. The man who eats a small meal three times a day will have a better constitution than the man who waits until night and then stuffs all he can hold into his poor stomach. The little drop of water falling constantly upon a stone for several years will make a deeper and different impression upon its

surface than will a stream turned upon it for a shorter time.

There is no reason why Omaha students and teachers should not hold their own in comparison with students and teachers in any other city where, as has been said, conditions are similar. The key to success is to never be satisfied with mediocrity from oneself, even though it may satisfy someone else. If a detail does not satisfy think of the parable of the ninety and nine and go after it, for it is important, too, and there is an immense amount of religion in good, clean, honest work.

If the students will demand from themselves nothing but the best that is in them and will not listen to the siren pleasures which so often lure them astray, if they do not cease their striving when they feel that they have forged ahead of their local contemporaries, but keep a constant watch in the lookout tower for something new to learn to speed them on their way, there is no reason why they cannot become a power for the advancement of musical art in our city and an inspiration to other students, as well as to their teachers.

If they would do this under the best instruction they could find in Omaha, when they went forth for new fields to conquer they might be surprised to find out how much they had been able to learn by staying home and doing good, hard, real work under their own vine and fig tree.

The reason Omaha does not develop more wonderful prodigies and larger species of the same kind is not because competent instruction is not right at hand, but because our petted and pampered younger generations do not know the meaning of those magical words—careful, conscientious, hard work.

There is a little couplet which has come down to the writer through several generations from the time when her grandmothers spun, which goes something like this:

The fault is not in the wheel, and the fault is not in the lazy one who takes the wheel in hand. It was meant personally for the writer

when it was handed down, and it is meant now personally. Our teachers are here. There are many who are capable of excellent results. It is up to the students to give them a fair chance.

Miss Luella Anderson returned to Omaha to spend the summer with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Anderson, and had planned to return to Brussels early this fall when the war broke out and changed everything. She has now decided to remain in Omaha and to devote herself to concertizing and teaching. She has already made arrangements to give a recital in South Omaha very soon, and an Omaha appearance will follow.

Miss Luella Anderson, celebrated Bohemian violinist, who is touring the country, will give a concert on Thursday evening, October 8, at Sokol hall, Thirteenth and Martha streets, under the auspices of the Tel Jed Sokol Girls society. This is her first appearance in Omaha and the girls are anxious to make it a success financially as well as musically.

Louise Jansen Wylie opens her concert season today with the Wichita symphony orchestra at Wichita, Kan., followed by some recitals at Wellington, Kan., and Oklahoma City, Okl. Mrs. Wylie will be in Iowa the following week and will be heard in Omaha early in November.

The first student assembly of the Omaha Conservatory of Music and Art was held last Thursday evening at the Metropolitan building, 234 Harney street, when an interesting and enjoyable program was given, comprising selections from several departments. Among the students who took part in the program were Miss Edith Merriam, Mr. Max Martin, A. L. Vickory, Miss Margaret Williams and Evelyn Vore.

When I was your age," said Mr. Dustin Stax, "I did not stay out and dance all night as you do. "I know it," replied his scoldable son. "And I'm mighty sorry about it. That's why I'm trying to get you to come along and make up for some of the chances you've missed."—Washington Star.

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