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MUSIC DOES NOT CEASE Prague's Spoiled Children

Music will not cease, though death drop from the skies, Here is a "Listener" interview with a young Czech violinist who recently arrived in this country.

MUSICALLY, the people of Prague are spoiled children." In these words, Otto Hubscher, a young musician of that city who has come to make his home in New Zealand, summed up the attractions of the Czech capital for the music-lover.

A student of the violin and a pupil of the French master, Professor Henri Marteau, Mr. Hubscher has during the past decade heard most of the famous musicians of Europe, both instrumentalists and conductors, whose names are familiar to everyone using the programme-pages of *The Listener*, and in some cases he has met the artists themselves. Of their playing and conducting he had his own interesting opinions.

One for whom he has the greatest admiration is the Spanish 'cellist Pablo (Pau) Casals, who he described as one of the greatest interpretative artists of the age.

"It sounds extraordinary," he said, "but I have heard Casals, a Spaniard, play the 'Concerto for Cello and Orchestra' by Dvorak, a Czech, in a way which the Czechs themselves had never heard surpassed."

Indeed, Mr. Hubscher ranks Casals higher as a 'cellist than he does Kreisler as a violinist. There was only one violinist who equalled Casals in interpretation and execution, in his opinion, and that was Heifetz.

"Like Casals," he said, "Heifetz is a 'personal' artist. He has his own thoughts. Menuhin, though as an artist he is not yet fully developed, is of the same type."

Of course, he added, one had always to remember that there were two schools of thought where the question of interpretation arose. Some contended that the artist

should give his own interpretation, others believed that the art lay in recapturing the spirit of the composer.

Among modern pianists, Mr. Hubscher is particularly interested in Horowitz and Brailowsky. "When I heard Horowitz play 'Variations on a Theme by Paganini' in Prague, I had no further doubt that he was one of the greatest living pianists and his playing of Bach is unequalled. Brailowsky, on the other hand, is one of the most hotly disputed artists on the Continent. He has a marvellous staccato—but some critics call it 'hammering.' Still, his interpretation of Liszt's 'Danse Macabre' is really outstanding."

Regarding conductors, Mr. Hubscher unhesitatingly agrees with the general verdict that Toscanini is the greatest of them all.

"In Salzburg," he said, "I heard him present Beethoven's 'Fidelio,' and though I had heard it perhaps

a dozen times before, I was left with the feeling that until that day I had not known 'Fidelio.'"

Of Bruno Walter, he has the memory of watching him conduct a full orchestra and playing the piano solo of Mozart's "Concerto in F Major" at the same time. . . "As the cadenzas ended, he would sign to the orchestra briefly with his hand, though, of course, since it was the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra it didn't require so very much direction."

One widely known conductor whom Mr. Hubscher has not yet heard is Stokowski. "I would greatly like to hear him, but so far I have only seen him on the films, and I would not dare to base an opinion on that. After all, he had to act and conduct too."

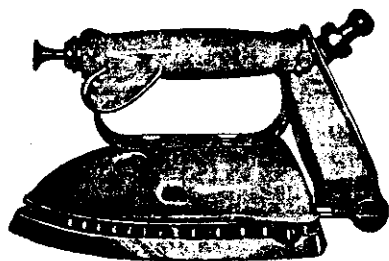
Mr. Hubscher only landed in New Zealand about two months ago, and until last week he was working on a dairy farm in the Hamilton district. But he hopes to work here as a teacher of music. While he likes the country, milking and manual labour are hard on the hands, and the hands are all-important to a violinist.



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