

SHE WENT TO BE AN ANGEL And Stayed To Play The Harp For Henry

WINIFRED CARTER confesses, if that is the right word, that she went to the U.S.A. in 1922 to be an angel. But Ossip Gabrilowitsch heard her and persuaded her to stay and play the harp for Henry Ford's Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Now on leave, she is back in her native New Zealand and at the moment is rehearsing with Andersen Tyrer's Centennial Festival Symphony Orchestra, with which she is to go on tour as harpist. The festival over, according to present arrangements she will go on tour through New Zealand broadcasting and giving recitals. An Australian tour may follow.

The angel episode was staged by Aimee Semple McPherson, American evangelist.

Miss Carter had her first lessons on the harp from her father in Auckland, F. Carter, of Mt. Eden. From there she went to the Sydney State Conservatorium of Music. She played under Verbruggen and became Professor of the Harp at the Conservatorium.

In Aimee's Temple

It was in Australia that the evangelist saw her and her publicity possibilities. As the "Golden Harpist of Australia" she was brought from Australia to Los Angeles for Mrs. McPherson's "Angelus Temple." She played there for a year until Gabrilowitsch made an offer to her

to take the position of first harpist in the Detroit Orchestra. Only woman among 90 players, she has stayed there since, apart from breaks in which she has visited Europe to study under Grandjany at Fontainebleau, and other great teachers.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra is one of the greatest of the great subsidised American symphony orchestras. For the musicians employed in it, Miss Carter says that work is continuous, seven days a week.

With Famous Conductors

In America she has played under every famous conductor except Toscanini. On tour with the orchestra, or in Detroit with guest conductors, she has followed the batons of such men as Goossens, Walter, Schneevogt, Ormandy, Stokowski, Barbirolli, Reiner, etc.

When Mr. Tyrer knew she was in New Zealand he made sure that she was also in his Festival Orchestra. She had planned to give recitals immediately but finds orchestral rehearsal work taking so much of her time she must postpone those ideas until the festival season is finished.

Her Instrument

Apart from her magnificent playing, her harp is in itself a matter of some interest. It cost 3,000 dollars, and is an American Wurlitzer make. It is the

largest size of concert harp and has unrivalled tonal qualities.

No instrument has survived without changes or modifications in its structure as long as the harp. Miss Carter's instrument, although modern in manufacture, is immensely old in tradition. It has proved itself adaptable to changing musical techniques and is still essential to the complete orchestra. No other instrument, for example, could give the peculiar glittering tones needed in the fire-music for "The Valkyrie," and in chamber music the harp can round off the lovely effects of strings and woodwinds. The harp may be described as the strings and sounding board of a piano laid bare and divorced from the controlling keyboard and hammers, but the essential differences between the two instruments are greater than their superficial likenesses.

Dame Ethel Smyth has always been a doughty champion of the women players in orchestras. At one time she had a hard battle. Of one orchestra she wrote—"It was an all-male body, except, of course, as regards the harp . . . a solitary, daintily-clad, white-armed sample of womanhood among the black coats, as it might be a flower on a coal dump."

When listeners hear Miss Carter they will know not only that she is a very beautiful player, but also that the harp is a very beautiful instrument.



"HERE IS A REAL TENOR AT LAST"

HEDDLE NASH is a Londoner. Although he can claim descent from Heddles who were not Londoners and from Nashes who came from the home of "Beau," he still has all a Londoner's brightness and originality.

It was not, therefore, so surprising when he mixed golf, boxing and tennis in his discussion of voice production (and divers other matters) with *The Listener* soon after his arrival in New Zealand with Isobel Baillie and Gladys Ripley to take part in the Centennial Music Festival.

"The Mad Englishman"

"It's just like a good stroke at golf," said Mr. Nash, after demonstrating the free movement of his chest and vocal muscles while he skipped from one octave to another. "Or like tennis. Or boxing—" he swung a straight left—"It's all in the follow through—no tenseness at all. Easy, like that. . . ."

But it has taken more than facility of voice production to make Nash a singer of Continental repute, respected even in Italy, the home of opera, although there they do not call him "the mad Englishman." He is also gifted with an exceptionally accurate ear, not only for tone, but also for inflection and language. He sings easily in four languages, although Italian is the only one he is able to speak or read fluently. The others he sings from knowledge of basic sounds and from an expert flair for copying those sounds.

But those who know something of dialects in the British Isles may appreciate that it is an even greater feat for him to sing naturally also in Scots, Welsh, with an Irish brogue, or in any county according to the local language. He is taken in Scotland for a Scotsman, and his brogue makes him Irish in Eire. He can even sing in Welsh, and this might be taken for the greatest feat of all if it had not been for the fact that he has sung in Hebrew to Jews and been mistaken for a Jew.

And Now Maori

He is going to enjoy himself here with the Maori language and its soft purity of vowel sounds. Mainly because of the language, he said, Italians had become a nation of singers and musicians. Theirs was a language which demanded musical treatment. Latterly commercialism had tended to spoil the love of music in native Italy, but they still had their great tradition. Maori seemed similar to him. He demanded, in fact, that the stricken *Listener* representative should recite some Maori to him. He would guarantee to copy it faithfully.

"Paekakariki," and "Pahiatua" were all the Maori ready for this peremptory summons, and Mr. Nash proved his point by pronouncing them very much better than his mentor, or indeed than many Maoris these days.

Caruso Started It

Natural ability at music and voice production was not enough to make a

singer of Heddle Nash's quality. Before the war he had been listening one night with his family to a record of Caruso's. "Why don't you sing like that?" said his father to Heddle.

"I can," said Heddle.

This bravado had to be justified, so he set about the job. Not long after, Marie Brema, judge at the Blackheath Conservatoire, where he won a scholarship, said: "Here is a real tenor at last." But the real tenor went off to the war. After the war, his wife persuaded him to start where he had left off.

He secured some engagements, but his real chance came when a friend advanced the money necessary for him to go to Italy and study under Giuseppe Borgatti. He started all over again. For he sang not a note. Five hours daily he did nothing but vocalise. He studied every reaction of the nerves and muscles used in good singing. He worked, to make the story short, five hours daily for 18 months to reduce the art of singing to a formula that would suit his mind. In the end he got it, and he says now that there has been no satisfaction in life so great for him, and nothing that has led him to greater happiness.

He is a specialist, but he is restless to conquer other fields, and no doubt would if he had the time. He wants to study the production of the spoken voice, points out that few singers speak pleasantly and few good speakers sing well. He wants to know why, and hopes



Heddle Nash as David in "Die Meistersinger"

some day to find out why if he can find some elocutionist who will permit him to teach him singing.

Lively Sense of Humour

He would try anything, if he had half a chance, if only to find out how it is done. "I don't know how I'd get on at your job," he said, and seemed immediately to be turning over in his mind the possibilities of working out a formula for journalism.

He is the real enthusiast, but keeps behind all his serious application to his work a lively sense of humour, a bright Londoner's wit, and a compelling interest in everything that goes on around him.