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EXPERIMENT IN HARMONY

Unique Harp and Piano Recital from IYA

THE IYA studios will be the scene, on Wednesday evening next, May 7, of an experiment which should be of more than passing interest to musicians, and which, at the same time, should prove equally enjoyable for those who, while they may not be capable of a technical interest, yet enjoy good music when they hear it.

The experiment, which will take the form of a joint recital by Winifred Carter, first harpist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, who is at present staying in New Zealand, and Henri Penn, the English pianist, is one which has not been made before either in New Zealand or Australia, and neither of these artists is aware of its having been attempted anywhere else.

"It should be a novel affair," said Mr. Penn. "Both the piano and the harp are used extensively in large orchestras nowadays, but so far no one has tried to make the dual combination. Even in London the harp is still used only in its solo form."

Arrangements of both small and large works in the repertoire of the instrument are being made by Mr. Penn and some of the pieces will be broadcast for the first time in New Zealand. Works which will be heard complete will include Ravel's "Introduction and Allegro," and the "Grand Duet" by Thomas. Handel's "Harmonious Blacksmith," arranged by Mr. Penn, will also be heard.

"In the smaller works," said Mr. Penn, "some very startling and unusual effects are obtained from the harp and new effects or technical devices are used. These include sounds not necessarily from the strings. Other small pieces showing contrasts in harp technique should be of special interest."

Miss Carter is equally interested in the experiment, and the opportunity which it will afford her to demonstrate the advance in the harpist's technique during the last decade or so. As an instance of this, she pointed out that in recent years modern composers for the harp had been using the enharmonic glissando (change of key without sound) in place of the old arpeggio form. In fact, the instrument, which was once used mainly to display well-turned and dimpled elbows, was coming into its own.

Popular in United States

Not only in chamber music was the harp growing in popularity, she went on. Almost every jazz band of any standing in the United States now had a harpist for modulatory purposes and for connecting themes. The harp was also very much in vogue there as a solo instrument, partly, of course, because modern composers were coming to understand the instrument better. In American churches the harp was used extensively, alone, with organ and with choir, and in the Roman Catholic churches there it was frequently used at the celebration of Mass.

The recital next week will not be the first occasion on which Miss Carter and Mr. Penn have played together. "I played with her," said Mr. Penn, "at the Sydney Conservatorium many years ago, when she was studying there. Now, having been in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra after having been with Henri Verbrugghen, director and conductor of the New South Wales Symphony Orchestra, she has accumulated an immense capability on this difficult instrument. She has a first class orchestral knowledge and a large repertoire of solo work."

Like Mr. Penn, who has played with the Beecham Symphony Orchestra (and at one time under Saint-Saens, one of the first modern composers to give particular attention to the harp), Miss Carter has played under the batons of many famous conductors. On one occasion she played under Siegfried Wagner, conducting some of his father's works, and she has also appeared with Stokowski and



WINIFRED CARTER
More than a dimpled elbow

with Eugene Ormandy, who has succeeded Stokowski as conductor of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. She has also played under Stravinsky, a composer after her own heart, whose "Fire-bird" is studded with gorgeous harp passages. And, of course, as *Listener* readers are already aware, she has even played for Aimee Semple McPherson.

A Famous Clown

GROCK, the famous Continental clown, was always a popular figure in England. Most of his clowning was old-fashioned, but who cared? Instead of drawing the chair up to the piano, he pushed the piano to the chair. He brought on the stage a tiny violin that was kept in a case almost large enough to enclose Big Ben. He sat on the back of a cane-bottomed chair until his big feet dropped through the cane; then with an acrobatic jump he regained his position on the back of the chair. He played the tiny violin with considerable charm, but then, he could play almost any instrument in the orchestra. He began his career as a boy acrobat and musician in an inn kept by his father in Switzerland, performing for the amusement of customers every Saturday and Sunday.

Listeners to IYA will hear Grock and his partner in "Grock's Music Hall Sketch" on Saturday, May 10.

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