

Her Trumpet Takes Her Round The World

As a frail little girl with a future of not much, she was given a trumpet as a health measure.

It was an odd trick of Fate that placed in her hands the instrument which, all the rest of her life, was to mean so much to her.

The trumpet was given to her for a weakness, but she made a strength out of it.

SHE became famous, through her trumpet.

"I found I could express myself with it," Grace Adams East told the "Record." "I had to breathe deeply to play it, my appetite increased, I felt better. Of course, it can be over-done.

"But the trumpet has brought me health, joy and everything in life that is worth while and now it is allowing me to see the world."

In the studios of 2YA the tall, jet-haired, striking lady smiled. She had just toured Australia, touring for the ABC and giving theatre performances. Now she is touring New Zealand under a six-weeks engagement to the NBS. And after that Australia, the East, Africa and London.

She travels, so to speak, on a magic trumpet.

HER trumpet has become famous in the United States. She has played her magic trumpet at the opening of the famous 'Frisco bridge, in White House for President Roosevelt, in the Grand Canyon for the memorial service to Will Rogers, on the steps of the Capitol in Washington at sunrise for the Easter Service.

This last was not so surprising.

The trumpet is famous in the story of the Bible. One Joshua had a famous trumpet and there is a certain Gabriel in the Bible well known for his trumpet.

"I consider myself a Gabrielle," smiled Grace Adams East.

So in Easter Sunday services she played her trumpets, often at nine services a day. She played "The Holy City" and "Hosanna."

When she was asked to play as soloist for the Calvary Church in Washington at the Easter morning sunrise service she gladly accepted.

SHE bought a white tailored outfit to play in, but when the morning came rain was pouring down.

"In the end," she said, "I wore a dollar white rubber cape with an old felt hat; I thought I would be the only one there, playing to myself in the rain."

But when she arrived she found thousands waiting in the rain, and as she played the rain dropped off the end of her trumpet. It is not easy to play a trumpet in the rain.

At the end of the service the sun came out and she played "The Holy City" in the sunshine.

The Crazy City

ONCE her magic trumpet took her to Hollywood, the city of the films. She found it a strange place.

There they paid her expenses for two weeks and then gave her a contract to sign. She read the contract.

"I found I was to have no say about what I was to do. They were going to remodel me and make me another person altogether.

"They were going to make me wear clothes I did not want to wear and play music I did not want to play.

"They didn't want me to be Grace Adams East," she said. "They wanted me to become a hoop-a-doop performer."

They wanted to destroy the character she had spent a lifetime in creating.

She told them to get a little girl of 18 and train her to do what they wanted.

They were rather shocked.

"You are the first who has turned down good money like this," they said.

In A Night Club

BUT Grace Adams knew what she wanted to do with her trumpet. She had proved it an instrument of charm and rare beauty.

She had studied breath control and phrasing so that she played it as a singer would sing. She played German lieder on her trumpet, the colourful music of the French composer Ravel.

Once she went into a negro night club in Southern California to find Ravel. He was working there to get atmosphere. It is rare indeed for a white woman to go into a negro night club, but she had to see Ravel.

She had her written transcription of his Habanera for the trumpet.

"I took it to him trembling," she said.

He went straight to the piano and she played her trumpet to his accompaniment. They worked for two hours. At the end of that time Ravel said:

"That is quite remarkable, Miss East. You play it as I mean it to be played. I don't mean it to be a ditty. It is meant to be ultra-sophisticated."

So Habanera is, says Miss Adams East. It is queer and strange and exciting, like some kind of cheese you've never tasted.

"Rhapsody In Blue"

IN HER concert recitals in the States she includes a technical work written for the trumpet.

"It is expected," she says.

For the piece de resistance at the end she plays George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue."

Again she made the transcription for trumpet from the rhapsody and took it to Gershwin—"one of the few musicians who had all the joys of his success before he died"—selecting the main themes from the work suitable for the trumpet.

"You have succeeded in taking the meat of my work," Gershwin told her, when he heard the transcription.

SHE aims at playing the trumpet as a singer would sing. "I do not believe in the tooting method."

She worked hard, studying German lieder with singing coaches, until she had mastered the art of phrasing.

Now she interprets her German lieder through the instrument. "And if I interpret it as it should be," she says, "I can make it tell a story."

At Grand Canyon

BUT she does not play all German lieder on her trumpet. One piece of hers that she is fond of is "Home On The Range"—the favourite melody of President Roosevelt—and her friend Will Rogers.

Up till his death, says Grace Adams East, Will Rogers was the most-adored man in America.

Once she joined with him in a concert for a vast charitable institution, the McKinley Boys' Home. She played "Home On The Range."

The concert, scheduled for two hours, lasted four hours. Will Rogers, in the middle of making a film, had to leave before the supper. But before he left he donated a personal cheque to the charity of 5 dollars a seat for every seat in the hall.

There were 6000 at the concert; his cheque came to 30,000 dollars.

"He was just full of those tricks," says Grace Adams East.

WHEN they brought his body back from Alaska there was a funeral service at Glendale, suburb of Los Angeles. There was a public ceremony at the Hollywood Bowl.

There was yet another at the Grand Canyon, and that ceremony seemed really to belong to Will Rogers.

On a pinnacle of the Grand Canyon Grace Adams East played her trumpet at the service in memory of Will Rogers. There was snow on the ground. As each slow phrase was played, the seven echoes of the great canyon cut by the Colorado River caught the sound, flung it faint and fainter still, seven times from echo to echo, until the last note died away.

SHE PLAYED "HOME ON THE RANGE."



GRACE ADAMS EAST.—"The trumpet has brought me everything in life that is worth while."