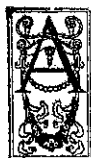


# Stokowski---Conductor of Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra



concert is not a tea party." You can't run in late, sip something, gossip a bit, and go out when you feel like it. Not if Leopold Stokowski wields the baton. Late-comers are given two minutes' grace, the concert begins, and those outside cool their heels in the lobby till the symphony is over.

Some protest against this, but Mr. Stokowski, likewise Mr. Toscanini, are adamant.

This and other characteristics of the Philadelphia Orchestra's leader is due to his "high voltage," explains Virgilia Peterson Ross in "The Outlook and Independent" (New York). This is his portrait:

"Leopold Stokowski is forty-two.

"He has a taut, mettlesome figure.

"His face is complicated by the pointed mockery of a faun and the sharp moulding of an intellectual.

"He never wears a hat. But he chooses his clothes with care.

"Form is his fetish. And a naked, dramatic simplicity."

Of Polish descent, Stokowski grew up in England, studied piano and violin as a child, but turned to science at the age of sixteen; Oxford gave him its degree. Then music won him back again. He played the organ in the church of St. James, Piccadilly, and came to America in 1906, and played the organ in St. Bartholomew's, New York. Now his orchestral concerts expose the "standing-room only" sign.

"Stokowski feels that there is too much talk, that talk stimulates too little action, in America." Also:

"Against the vitality and the passionate quest to learn flows the tide of a terrible wastage. America, with Russia, Germany, and China, is the source from which the future will draw its life heat.

"But for wisdom, he himself turns to the Orient. He feels that India has a psychic power which far exceeds our grasp. He is, in a sense, a mystic.

"He has no creed. He has no palpable religion to spread before other men. Yet he has found a power of inner inspiration which defies analysis.

"In 1912, after conducting the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Stokowski took the leadership in Philadelphia. By this time he had reached ripened power. Hours of strain lay before him. But his material had great scope. He could give his orchestra 'imperialistic guidance' with a sure knowledge of triumph.

"The musicians' union allows two and a half hours of practise five times a week. The sum of each man's energy goes into these rehearsals.

"Stokowski demands perfection from every player. He can make his violins play trills in entire unison.

"He will interrupt the practise of a concerto to say that the fourth violin played B flat instead of B sharp. He often compels a man to repeat his part separately. This habit caused a break with Mischa Mischakoff, the concert-master, last spring. Stokowski had asked him, in rehearsal, to play his score alone. Mr. Mischakoff claimed that Stokowski was 'rude and unfair.' He left the orchestra. It is generally felt, however, that Stokowski makes a just taskmaster.

"He rides his men with a light hand as long as they give him full measure."

Philadelphia clergymen objected to Sunday concerts, but Stokowski continued them because some people could come on no other day. He frequently gives concerts for children, and then becomes something of a showman as well.

"At one of these, he sent for a circus of baby animals trained by a friend.

"When all the children were seated he told them that he was keeping an elephant outside. 'You do not believe me?' he asked. 'Or perhaps you do not want to see an elephant?' Some of them called to bring him out. The conductor went backstage and reappeared leading a very young elephant by the ear.

ment. The critics find him a juicy morsel.

"He has been called the Babe Ruth, the Jackie Coogan, the sublimated Barnum of orchestra leaders.

"He himself says that he is only an agent of transmission, a sieve through which to pass the liquid notes. He says that he does not want his personality to count. Yet many people feel that he is too luminously present. For them, his egotism and his sense of drama rob him of a certain integrity.

"Most of all, perhaps, he is criticised for playing modern music.

"He won it a place on Philadelphia programmes. 'People who object to modern music are using only one side of the brain,' he has said. 'Don't resist or deride the beautiful of either



STOKOWSKI.

concerts. These are the discoveries which provoke a din of controversy.

"People guffaw and hiss. Critics wallow in acid mockery. Much of his audience cannot understand."

The future of music, so Stokowski thinks, lies in electricity:

"This is the key to mighty changes.

"It will in time enable musicians to use a quarter-tone or the fraction of a quarter-tone. Since the end of the seventeenth century half-tones have been used on the piano. These tones are purely arbitrary. Now, with new knowledge of electricity, it will be possible to drop artifice and to approach the intervals of nature.

"Theremin and Martenot have already shown the way. In the last concert of this season, Stokowski had an instrument, invented by Professor Theremin, called the Thereminophone, which tripled the volume of tone in the

(Concluded on page 10.)

## LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI, the famous conductor of the Philadelphia

Symphony Orchestra, is evidently of the opinion that the conductor of the future, if he is to adapt himself to broadcasting requirements, must be familiar with the technical side of transmission! He is taking a three-months' course of wireless engineering with a view to advising on the broadcasting of large orchestras. He hopes that this will lead to a vast improvement in the technique of concert broadcasts.

Mr. Stokowski's scheme is a thoroughly sound one, but is by no means original, for the British Broadcasting Corporation have for some years employed trained musicians to maintain a close liaison between the engineering and music departments.

"The children bellowed with delight.

"One of the musicians rushed to the platform and told Stokowski that there were crowds of elephants outside trying to come in. Three more trotted to the scene. Stokowski and the musician stood at the door pushing back the imaginary hordes beyond. By this time the children were in a fever of curiosity. The conductor then took up his baton and played the 'Carnaval des Animaux' by Saint-Saens. His little audience will probably not forget it."

He tries other stunts on his adult audiences:

"Stokowski has carried his love of experiment to the concert stage itself.

"He re-seated his orchestra. He tried a military band. He brought in the colour organ, but soon put it by. He often conducts without a score, and he played once in total darkness except for a light about his head. This plan (he found) was not feasible.

"But he still dreams of a hidden orchestra where the eye would subserve the ear.

"For quiet, he has ruled that the doors are closed during concerts. He allows late-comers two minutes' grace. If they exceed two minutes, they must wait outside for the intermission. 'A concert is not a tea party,' he said.

"Once, in the middle of playing, he left the platform because of the noise. He put on his coat and decided to go away for good. The manager persuaded him to stay. After five minutes he returned to a hushed, repentant house.

"His experiments have brought Stokowski into the glare of public com-

the old or new age.' He keeps agents digging for new gems in various cities the world over.

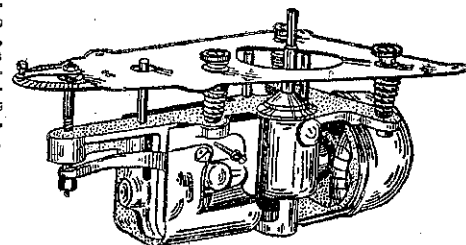
"They send him about a thousand pieces a year, from which he chooses some thirty to try with the orchestra. Three compositions finally emerge for

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