

THE JEW IN MUSIC

REPRESENTED IN ALL PHASES OF MUSICAL ACTIVITY

(This is the last of a series of three articles by Eugene V. Segal. In the first two articles were enumerated the great Jewish composers, violinists and pianists. In the following article is an outline of the Jewish contribution to other branches of music.—Editor.)

The leaders of some of the greatest symphony orchestras in the country are Jews. There is Damrosch, for instance, the conductor of the New York Philharmonic Society. He has done much for the development of music in America, having been associated with a number of large musical enterprises. He was at one time conductor of the Newark Harmonic Society and was assistant to his father, Leopold Damrosch, as director at the Metropolitan Opera House. He succeeded his father as director of the New York Oratorio Society. Damrosch produced Wagner's "Parsifal" in America for the first time. He organized his own opera company.

Leopold Stokowski, a pianist of note is director of the Philadelphia Symphony orchestra. He formerly directed the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

Samuel Franco

Samuel Franco, former conductor of the Metropolitan Orchestra, New York, and his own orchestra, is an American born. His birthplace is New Orleans. At the age of eight he toured the world as a violinist with Adelina Patti. He is now conducting a studio in New York City.

Alfred Hertz conducted various orchestras in Germany, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. He was decorated with the order for Art and Science by the King of Saxony. Nathan Frank and Volpe are other well-known American conductors.

Varied Fields

There are many other fields of music in which Jews are engaged. Marc A. Blumberg is one of the foremost musical critics. Of the large number of Jewish vocalists may be mentioned Alma Gluck, Rosa Raisa, Sophie Bresslau, Mabel Riegelman, and Cantors Sirota, Rosenblatt, Kwartin, Fuchs, etc. It is said of Rosenblatt that he refused a handsome offer to sing a leading role in Halévy's "La Juive," preferring rather to serve the synagogue to which he dedicated himself.

The development of music in America to-day is receiving its impetus largely from Jews, who, as has been shown are not only some of the greatest musicians in the country, but the patrons and promoters of music, as well. Otto Kahn, Adolph Lewisohn, Oscar Straus, Leo Fall, and Jean Gallert are pre-eminent among the Jews who are lending their zealous support to music.

While speaking of music in America it is necessary to call attention to the Jew's position in that branch of music which is typically American. It has been said that ragtime music is the product of the American Jew. A few of the well-known ragtime writers are Berlin, Hirsh, Costa, Schwartz, Jerome Kern and Lewis Brown.

A Great Contribution

And thus one could investigate all the various phases of music, and find Jews contributing vitally to their existence and development, if not as actual musicians, then at least as those who are interested from a cultural standpoint and willing to lend their support, just as they are ready to foster any other of the finer tastes and accomplishments of mankind which they have long cherished in their conception of a better world. If, as Wagner insinuates, the Jew is a technician and not a creator, then the effects of it should have been felt first of all in music. For in the light of the facts which have been set forth above, may it not be truthfully stated that had the Jew ever ceased to create and begun merely mechanically to follow the lead of his predecessors, music would not have reached the high point of development it has attained to-day? On the other hand it may be stated without the least conjecture that were it rolled of its Jewish devotees and the creations of Jewish composers, the world's music would suffer a distinct loss.