

No German Music--Lest We Forget

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Herewith is presented a musical artist's view of German music. Mme. de Cisneros was prompted to write this on hearing Brangaena's cry at a concert in New York recently. She is a mezzo-soprano widely known from her connection with the Metropolitan Opera House and other opera houses in Europe. During the war she sang frequently for Red Cross funds, and recently was decorated for her services to the organization.

"If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields!"

IT was at a symphony concert. My soul had responded to the eternal beauty and purity of the "Unfinished Symphony." The world seemed lovely even if the rain made Sunday gloomy and unsympathetic. Krehbiel, that dean of music critics, had been telling of the days when Mozart was sung with a religious simplicity which only the truly great artist evokes, and my memory brought me back to the student days here in old New York, when we learned from the lips of a Sembrich and a Lehmann what tradition in music (singing music) means.

Suddenly it seemed to me that I was on a ship—an old Viking's ship! In the distance a pale woman lay on a purple velvet couch, on a near-by table stood a golden goblet. I watched the woman, then I watched the blue sea, and again I watched the woman, whose sadness made me sad. And through it all came an insidious music that made me suffer. Music that pulsed with life and love and a longing never satisfied. Suddenly I no longer saw the ship. I saw the Somme! I saw a place in "No Man's Land" that for a year had not been crossed but by the dead! It was night, a moonless night, and thousands of tiny lights moved over the fantastic field. Strange phosphorescent spirits rushed

past me and were lost in the impenetrable darkness beyond, and through it all came a moaning, a cry of pitiful pleading—"Do not forget us so soon!"—and the glowworms over the slimy bed of death flew wildly as if forced by the ever-increasing volume of unsatiated harmonies.

The vision passed! But it seemed as if my heart would break with sadness



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Mme. Eleonora de Cisneros.

and pain! No longer was I "Brangaena" visualizing my "Isoldas," from the German Gadski to sweet Lillian Nordica. (I was her last Brangaena); from the Italian, French, Russian, and Polish soprano who had sung the Irish Princess with me to the Austrian Matzenauer. (we sang the last "Tristan" that will be heard for many a day in Paris.) Even the frightful Somme vanished and I was listening to a superb rendition of the "Prelude" of "Tristan und Isolde." The

first Wagner music I had heard since 1916.

Around me were hundreds of Americans—I presume they were Americans. There is a certain Dr. Max Winter, who says that there are 800,000 Germans in New York City who want German music! But you men and women who listened to that music, if you have a drop of allied blood in your veins, how could you applaud it? To me it was as full of tragedy as the "Marche Funebre" of Chopin, and I would as soon have applauded as I would have laughed at a procession of the weeping, violated women-children of France and Belgium!

Wagner's music is a consolation to German ears. I myself, an American.

love it. It is not wildly temperamental as the Italian music, nor as sensuous as the French. It is the music of thought, full of unsatisfied desires, of "sehnsucht," of longing. To the German soul it heals the wounds that even our enemies have. To them it is above all else the spiritual symbol of the German Spirit, the Fatherland! The man or woman who can today listen to German music as in ante-bellum days is either a German, a neutral, or a pacifist!

The time is not yet ripe for the German music propaganda. Let our dead have time to sleep. Our wounded time to heal. Our maimed time to walk happily, even be it with one leg or one arm! Our blind time to smile with sightless eyes! Then, too, may the flowers bloom over the trenches that the Germans glorified with the names of Wagner's heroes—Wotan! Siegfried! Until then, let them wait—lest we forget!