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Can "Ragtime" Be Suppressed?

By Axel W. Christensen

MANY people like "Ragtime"; a few ignore it; some tolerate, and others cordially detest it. Some say that all forms of "Ragtime" should be suppressed, although not all of these will admit that it *can be* disentangled and eliminated from public favor. Mr. Christensen avers that "Ragtime" neither can nor should be dropped from American music, and he gives several items of evidence to support his contention. Do you agree with Mr. Christensen? If not, why not? Think it over, and if your reasons will bear analysis, put them on paper and send them to MELODY.—Editor.

ALMOST three years ago some college students in one of our smaller cities, perhaps for the want of something else to do, organized a "Society for the Suppression of Ragtime Music in America."

They have not been seen or heard of since.

No doubt they were sincere in their convictions, as there are some people who do not like ragtime, but I feel that they were just a little bit selfish in trying to take it away from people who do like it. Fortunately, however, the people who like ragtime are in such great majority that the Society for the Suppression of Ragtime found it harder than they expected to sweep the country with their movement.

Nearly every true red-blooded American citizen likes real snappy ragtime, and he asks for it and gets it wherever he is, whether it is at the restaurant, at the theatre, at the dance or at home—and if he cannot play it himself he will have Mike Bernard, John Philip Sousa and others play it for him through the phonograph.

Believe me, the Society for the Suppression of Ragtime in America had some job on its hands, and it's no wonder they were doomed to disappointment.

Having spent several years on the vaudeville stage, during which time I have had the opportunity of studying audiences in every part of the country, I have always noticed that no matter how dormant or listless people might seem at the opening of the performance, they instantly came to life when the orchestra played a good ragtime number, and the performer on the stage who used ragtime in his or her act was sure of the heartiest appreciation. And when an audience applauded a ragtime act, it was not the desultory applause that marks the spots in the average vaudeville act where the audience is kindly supposed to applaud; it was spontaneous, electrical, unanimous—applause that filled the house from the orchestra pit to the uttermost hidden regions in the gallery.

I have seen grand opera quartets that possessed wonderful merit—artists who had spent years in hard, painstaking training—fall flat and leave the stage at the end of their act with barely enough applause to take them to the entrance (in fact, I have seen them run to get to the entrance before the applause died out). On the other hand, I have seen a slip of a girl go out on the stage and deliver a half dozen snappy songs and simply "stop the show," the continued applause making it practically impossible for the next act to go on. When it came to art, she was not to be compared with the grand opera quartet—she had never spent any time in musical training—but when she sang her syncopated songs she struck the responsive chord that is to be found in the soul of every American man or woman, and so she was successful.

Some time ago the *London Times* discussed ragtime at great length in its columns. The *London Times* is of the opinion that ragtime is the typical American music, the true music of the hustler, and that it is filled with the spirit and bustle of American life.

Some ragtime is easy to play, and there is some that is quite hard to master. We have our "classic" ragtime that would baffle many a music teacher who has never played anything but the orthodox music—and if the truth were known, many of the persons who are crying "Down with Ragtime" could not play ragtime as it ought to be played if their lives depended on it. I am willing to admit that ragtime in the hands of some musicians (who would play a song like "Some Sunday Morning" with the same ponderous dignity that they would render "Asleep in the Deep") should be suppressed.

Sasanoff, the eminent Russian orchestra leader, became so enthusiastic on hearing an American orchestra play some real ragtime that he decided he would have it scored to be reproduced by his own orchestra in Russia. In his opinion, ragtime is to America what the folk songs are to Norway, Sweden, Italy or other foreign lands.

Many writers have endeavored to trace ragtime down to its origin, but there are almost as many opinions as to where ragtime had its source as there are writers on the subject. Ever since there has been such a thing as ragtime, there have been people who would tell you that ragtime was on the decline, and that it would soon be a thing of the past. Twelve or thirteen years ago a well-known music publisher told me in all seriousness to devote my efforts to something besides ragtime, because the knell of ragtime had been sounded; it had run itself to death and the publishers would soon stop printing it altogether. He sagely told me that if I had only gone into business a few years previous I might have made something out of it, but there was no longer any hope. That was twelve years ago, and ragtime is now stronger than ever. The ragtime of today, however, is not the same as that written twenty years ago. Such rags as the "Mississippi Rag," "The Georgia Camp Meeting," etc., depended mostly upon plain syncopation, while today it is not a matter of mere syncopation, because in addition to the syncopated rhythm there is the peculiar and pleasing breaking up and grouping of the chords.

Many millions of dollars are spent annually in America for popular sheet music, and in the greater portion of it you will find the ragtime rhythm somewhere. I would recommend that the "Society for the Suppression of Ragtime in America" devote its efforts to helping suppress the war in Europe, as something that might be accomplished with greater ease.

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Quantity or Quality—or Both?

By Myron V. Freese

WE seem to be living in a new world era of quantity. We talk and read and deal in quantities so enormous, so huge, and so vastly in excess of all former conceptions of mind, that the once stupendous seems to shrink by comparison almost to the infinitesimal; we no longer muster and move by thousands, but by millions—millions in men, means, munitions and monies—yet all accept and none stands aghast at the immensity, for the supernormal is now become the normal. In reality we are living in an epoch of gigantic inversions; our perspective is inverted, and vision is distorted by nearness of magnitude. The maximum of the old is now the minimum of the new; it is Pelion piled upon Ossa—a greater quantity heaped upon a great quantity, and all too often it is quantity camouflaged as quality.

It is thus with music and music production. The old law of demand and supply seemingly is inverted, and the result is prodigious quantity either with or without quality. Question those in the "knowing," and they will tell you that present music supply is most amazingly precedent to demand. This is not wholly without a reason, and one which may be traced to an inversion, *i. e.* the inversion of a former music aristocracy to a broader musical democracy—literally, the emersion of music from a luxury for the few to a necessity for the many. This in a large measure is likewise due to a sudden inversion—an inversion from citizen to citizen-soldiery and then to full-fledged soldiers of war who, and possibly for the first times in the lives of many of them, are open to recreation almost wholly through music.

The bait is a tempting one to old composers, new composers and the would-be composers, and each succeeding week sees not one or ten, but hundreds, of song publications sent out to catch the fancy of the soldiers first, and the public later—all of them issued in the fond hope of forcing the market and as a bid for popularity. These songs flood the various war camps throughout the country with—alas and alack!—quality failing to keep anywhere near an even pace with quantity. (This last statement might be adjudged as an enemy-alien utterance, if made to some of the individual producers.)

Never before in the history of music has production reached so high an altitude in quantity, and much of it never has touched such a low-water mark in quality. To quote from an editorial in a recent issue of the Boston *Evening Transcript:* "In the Y. M. C. A. headquarters building at Camp Devens alone, a whole closet bulges with music received. Sometimes the samples come with a decently modest note of presentation; more often with loud fanfare of trumpets, as though the bands already were playing them and the advent of another, the greatest of all popular national songs, firmly assured. The number of songwriters is only exceeded by the multitude of eager poets who submit the 'words only,' either for new songs or as modernizations of the old.

"This is all very good, and out of the many one must hold to the confidence that some contributions of positive merit will come. But none will come, however, except upon one condition. The ardent composers must abandon a tendency, now unhappily manifest, to assume that when they are writing a song for the United States army they must 'write down' to a popular level."

WE are not quite at one with the *Transcript* writer in the tone implication of "popular level," but in the main statement is the pith of the whole matter—the irreparable mistake (whether in art, literature or music or what) of *descending from a higher to a lower level in an obvious attempt to catch the ear of the hoi polloi.* As stated in previous writings for this magazine, the make-up of our great new American army embodies the best of our young American manhood. Throughout all the war cantonments the rank and file of the soldiery includes men who are proficient in the mechanical, the mercantile and the musical, and among these there are thousands of professional and amateur musicians who have advanced to a high degree of musical discrimination. These men, whether for recreation or as relief from the tension of monotonous routine, demand music, and it is for them that this vast output in quantity is primarily designed. But what a mistake to "write down" for men who can discriminate!

Naturally, and as a mental foil to the ever up-looming serious, these men turn to the lighter forms of music, *i. e.* to that of the popular, yet even so, let it not be forgotten that they know and can discern the good from the bad. To a greater or less extent the same is likewise true with those who do not profess music. This class also includes men of discrimination who have gained efficiency along certain lines of civilian living—in the professions, general business or specific trades—and these men either intuitively sense the good in popular music or learn it through convincing evidence from others who know, and who are not backward in proclaiming their knowledge. Simmered down to music-munitions, then, there is not much of "musical *hoi polloi*" among our soldiers that would necessitate trying to catch with the trivial and banal. Therein again lies the mistake egregious and egotistical—that of "writing down" to a class of men who do not really exist in the camps.

Those who have made any success in catering to popular public taste in music have learned to keep a finger on the public musical pulse and make no such mistake. It is true that, except in the few instances, these music-caterers do not always happen to make the direct appeal which scores a marked success, yet this is more often due to over-effort than to the mistake of "under-writing" (descending to a lower level (?) to make a "hit"). That is a mistake which lies elsewhere, for our recognized popular-song writers try, and earnestly try, to appeal to the public by uniting clean sentiment with singable tunes, and there is no other way by which to score. Nor do they overlook the appeal to the heart through the home, as witness the overwhelming popularity of "Keep the Home-fires Burning."

WHEREIN, then, are the mistakes, and who perpetrate them? It is a safe assertion, and this wholly without intent of being hypercritical, to say that the grave mistake of "writing down" either to the soldier-populace or the civilian-public (thereby producing quantity without quality) is made by the so-assumed better class of composers—the supposedly higher educated. When composers of this class attempt to write in the "popular" vein, they are prone to regard it as more or less of a musical descent (condescension, if you will), a most palpable inversion. In nine instances out of ten they never have "dabbled" in the *popular* and have no idea of the true meaning of the word. They include all forms of the "popular" in a sweeping category of "musical-piffle" and, perhaps in the same ratio of nine to ten, their temporary "descending" is due to the dangling bait of the dollar. Such composers must fail to make good in the popular line for at least three reasons: they fail to appreciate the full meaning that lies hidden in the truly popular; they cannot sense the subtle appeal in words or music or both of the songs which sweep an entire country, nor can they perceive that it is this elusive quality which really makes for quantity when it comes to the matter of solid sales.

The song which becomes most popular must appeal, and that which is to appeal does not preach even though it may embody the elements of the sermon. In more than fifty years there has come but one "Battle Hymn of the Republic" hot from the fires of inspiration, and never from any pulpit has there ever been preached a more powerful patriotic sermon than that embodied in the first two lines of Mrs. Julia Ward Howe's immortal song—"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored"—yet this song appeals as strongly to the soldiers of today as it did to those for whom it was written, and never was it stronger in its application than it is today. Why? Because its author regarded her effort as an ascent into the sublime, not a descent to catch the emotions, and wrote a *living popular* song.

Incidentally, in a recent letter from an officer of the 101st Engineers on active service "Somewhere in France," comes the interesting bit of news that *every American soldier in the ranks has been commanded to memorize* the wonderfully rhythmic words of this glorified war-song.

Another eloquent song-sermon, and one which carries no obvious intent of "sermonizing," speaks through the first lines of Mrs. Ford's song: "Keep the Home-fires burning while your hearts are yearning, though your lads are far away they dream of Home." To the "lads far away" and to those who soon are to go these words appeal, "appeal" grips the heart and heart-grip makes the popular. Nor does the secret of the popular song lie wholly in the music to which words are set. The melody to which the "Battle Hymn" was set is a trivial, negro-camp-meeting tune that by itself would cause a laugh, yet linked with Mrs. Howe's mighty words it assumes a dignity unsurpassed. The same is true with the setting of Mrs. Ford's song—as a melody set to other words it might have attracted but scant musical notice, but linked with the deep home sentiment of the words it strongly appeals. In these two songs there is quality which in quantity moves in millions.

IN his article on "Popular Music, Its Meaning and Its Mission," which appeared in the March issue of MELODY, the writer made the following statement: "It is such writers as Mr. Cohan—and all others of the popular song line who instill into their compositions (crude though they sometimes may be) the vital element of American life and living—who are the nuclei of the American music of the future. They are the music-mouth-pieces of the people—through their music expressing for the people the many phases of life which they of themselves feel, know and live, yet cannot express." If this statement be true, and the writer firmly believes it is, such composers do not "descend" from any self-erected pedestal. They may hope to become the accepted popular musical oracle, which is laudable, but the best of them do not indulge in musical bombast; they are of the people, and their honest effort is to appeal to that of which they themselves are part and parcel.

Quantity is a mighty fine objective when it entails quality, but the last named is never entailed by "writing down" to the public (soldiers and civilians), nor does the public (*soldiers or civilians*) generally make the mistake of buying a "mistake." The moral of the whole thing is that the true "popular" song writers (both of words and music) are born and not made to order, and to operate within the sphere of one's birth may involve ascent, but never descent. Embodied within the moral, too, there might also be found something in the nature of a hint, namely, those who are not "to the manor born" should keep out of the broad fields surrounding the "popular musical manor." The true-born tillers of the field never for a moment entertain an idea of "writing down" to anyone's level. To the contrary, they regard making the palpable "popular hit" (literally, heart and home appeal) as the very apex of the ascent which they have essayed to climb. With such motive as actuating power, who can say that eventually we shall not have popular and patriotic music of both quality and quantity?

Isn't Nature Wonderful?

By Clifford Vincent

The little doggies love to bark;
The birdies love to sing;
The horse-fly loves to scoot around
And buzz like ev'rything.

And e'en as insects, beasts and birds
Their self-made songs adore,
The busy song-smith pipes his lays
For love and nothing more!

But what he loves is not to hear
The tunes with which he toys,
Nor yet his lyrics' limpid lines—
The *Royalty's* the noise!

A Chat with Fred Fisher

Melody Staff Correspondent Writes of Interesting Interview with Man of Many Hits

By Treve Collins, Jr.

THIS is as good a place as any to inform you that the array of lines herewith is fondly supposed to be an interview with Fred Fisher, writer of *Lorraine, My Beautiful Alsace Lorraine* and a few thousand other hits that have come to roost upon your piano and stared the neighbors, friends, relatives and casual visitors in the face during the past eleven or twelve years.

One of the essential things in an interview is a photograph; a benign photograph that depicts the interviewed one gazing forth upon the world with a wealth of good cheer, well-being and tranquility in his eyes. A photograph, withal, that portrays him perching comfortably upon an antediluvian hassock of weird design while his right hand gently caresses the moth-eaten skull of a stuffed lion who is shy several front teeth and one of his glass eyes.

Such a picture of Fred Fisher—had it been obtainable—would have graced this eulogy. But alas, he had none to bestow upon us and as this issue of MELODY is being fed to the printers five full days sooner than heretofore, there's no time to have a photo taken, so we'll have to hobble along without it.

Next to a photograph, "atmosphere" is of prime importance in an interview. And that goes whether you're interviewing a bank-burglar, a church deacon or a fair young child of the slums whose forgotten uncle has suddenly departed this life and left her with a few million dollars and six or eight bales of unpaid bills. "Atmosphere" is that intangible "something" used by writers to give you a "close-up" of the victim and allow your vivid imagination a chance to do a little heavy work in picturing the general surroundings in which the interview took place.

Therefore, to garner a wad of "atmosphere" for this limping lay we fell into the Brooklyn end of the Subway and were carried over to Times Square, New York, where we hired a guide to take us to the offices of the McCarthy & Fisher Company on West 45th Street. Arriving there we watched a woe-begone pianist endeavoring to innoculate a sorry appearing singer with a flock of melodic germs.

After standing around on one foot for a considerable time waiting for somebody to come along and ask us why we were obstructing the doorway, we sent out an s. o. s. in a wild attempt to flag the attention of anybody at all.

Presently, a young man displaying a wide expanse of lavender vest and looking about as intellectual as the Sahara Desert drifted into our field of vision, looked us over with a distant blue eye and evinced a desire to know what we wanted. We asked if we could see Mr. Fisher. He of the lavender drapery regarded us with a somewhat pained expression and remarked loftily that he "guessed" we could find Mr. Fisher "around somewhere." He illustrated this choice bit of information with a wave of his hand that took in everything from the Battery to the up-town wilds of Grant's Tomb.

So we proceeded to look "around somewhere" for Mr. Fisher and soon found the object of our search reposing peacefully before a piano in one of the professional rooms, idly skidding through a few syncopated bars of melody.

Our wild career as a word-monger has robbed us of the sympathetic respect we used to have for people in peaceful repose, so we ambled into the presence of the august and amiable Mr. Fisher and shut the door gently behind us to announce our arrival.

He looked up in surprise and we told him as kindly as we could why we had thus suddenly intruded upon his solitude.

He grinned. "So you want to interview me, eh?"

We admitted that such was our intention if he thought he could stand the strain.

He thought he could and waved us to a chair.

"I suppose," he said lightly, as we sat down and tossed our last year's bonnet on top of the piano, "the first thing you'll want to know is when I was born—and why?"

We told him the "why" didn't matter so awfully much, though it was customary to find out the year, notwithstanding which we wouldn't pester him for the painful details if he didn't care to let the public have 'em.

He hadn't any scruples on this score, however, and announced that he had first seen the light of day in 1776—er, that is, 1876.

It is our desire to make this cadenza one that may be read without undue mental exertion on the part of the subscribers, so we'll tell you, before you reach for your pad and pencil to figure it out, that Fred Fisher is 42 years old.

"It is rumored," we muttered absently, "that the first word you ever said was 'piano.' But of course that's only a rumor," we added hastily.

Fisher laughed and shook his head. "I don't know who started that," he replied, "but anyway, it's all wrong. Some people seem to know more about me than I do myself."

"Quite true," we agreed, "quite true."

"I don't remember what the first word I ever said was," he went on, "but anyway what difference does it make?" he eyed us good naturedly.

"None at all," we admitted, "we just wanted to settle the point to satisfy some of our readers who've got the wild idea that even as a little child the indications were that you were going to blossom forth into a song-writer. And by the way, now that we're on the subject, how did you come to try song-writing?"

"Writing runs in my family," said Fisher. "All my family were either writers or composers. So you see," he concluded, "it sort of comes natural to me."

A few yards of silence unwound themselves while Fisher absently ran his fingers over the keys and we searched a crack in the floor with our one good eye to see if we could dig up anything brilliant to ask him.

"Do you play anything else beside the piano?" we asked at length and somewhat lamely.

"Yes," he replied, casually crossing his knees and clasping his hands over them. "I play the bass cornet, flute, and in fact all the brass instruments."

Which was quite enlightening when we stopped to consider that the average hit-smith is usually satisfied to worry along with a good working knowledge of a piano without bothering about acquiring any extended musical education.

At just about this point we manifested curiosity as to his first song and the measure of success that had attended the initial effort.

"The first song I ever wrote," he said, gazing reminiscently at the ceiling, "was 'Every Little Bit Helps.' But it didn't seem to 'help' much at first. In fact the publishers didn't care for it at all, so I published it myself."

"How did it turn out?" we inquired.

"I finally sold it to Harry Von Tilzer and quite a lot of copies were gotten rid of," he said.

We'd been told that song-writers were queer fish; that they hopped up at all hours of the night to compose their melodies, kept all the neighbors awake and disturbed things generally, so we asked him when he wrote most of his songs.

"Anytime I need them," he responded promptly, "there's no set time."

"What's your average yearly output?"

He shrugged. "It's hard to say. It depends on conditions and the way I feel. Some years I write five. Sometimes fifty. It's very uncertain."

"I see," said we, "and what do you consider your best song?"

He smiled and answered the question positively and without the slightest hesitancy—"Lorraine."

We talked a few more minutes and then as we stood up to go, a stray thought filtered into our vacuum encrusted think-tank. We paused and asked him which type of song he found easiest to write—rags or ballads. Whereupon he fixed us with an indignant eye and announced vigorously, "I don't write rags—only ballads or novelty songs."

After which we went out.

And in the outer office, the young man with the lavender covered bosom was standing by the door talking to a fair young damsel and telling her all about "Lorraine," while a dozen other people of uncertain ages and occupations were taking turns warbling it in six or seven assorted keys. Over in the corner, all by himself, a diminutive but ambitious songster, with his face screwed up into a tight knot, was having a terrible time with "They Go Wild, Simply Wild Over Me," another of Fisher's compositions.

And we thought as we left the place that if people got that bad it was time somebody put 'em in a cage, or locked 'em up, or something.

As we approach the "grand finale" of this little typographical rhapsody and take a last look back over Fred Fisher's long song-writing career, we're moved to remark that his record is one of the most phenomenal in songdom.

Many of the much-talked-of "Million-Copy-Hits" that publishers and writers alike are prone to wax ecstatic over, have come from his gifted pen and probably few living writers have been able to surpass or even equal him as a consistent writer of popular hits.

In addition to the tuneful offerings that have passed into the "Million Copy Hall of Fame" class, Fisher has given the public scores of songs that have sold well over the 400,000 copy mark. They'd make a list as long as your arm and we won't attempt to print 'em all. But just a few of those that made the biggest bid for popular favor are:

If the Man in the Moon Were a Coon.
Let Me See You Smile.
I've Said My Last Farewell, Good-Bye.
My Brudda Sylvest.
Under the Matzoth Tree.
When the Moon Plays Peekaboo.
And a Little Bit More.
When You're Not Forgotten.
Come Josephine in My Flying Machine.
Any Little Girl That's a Nice Little Girl.
Love Me.
When I Get You Alone Tonight.
Peg O' My Heart.
I'm On My Way to Mandalay.
Who Paid the Rent for Mrs. Rip Van Winkle.
There's a Little Spark of Love Still Burning.
I Want to Go to Tokio.
Norway.
You Can't Get Along When You're With 'Em or Without 'Em.
There's a Broken Heart for Every Light on Broadway.
Siam.

What's the use o' naming any more? There are dozens of others you remember, so why eat up space talking about 'em?

Why indeed!

And as there must be a beginning to every little tale, so forsooth, must even this chunk of literary bric-a-brac have an end.

And this is it.

Interpreting the Photoplay

THE HURRY HABIT

By Harry Norton

AT a social gathering of "movie" men the conversation drifted to the discussion of "music for the picture." One of the party, a well-known and popular New England manager, addressing the writer, said: "It has been my experience and observation that most movie pianists have but two speeds—fast and faster." The remark showed that he had observed one of our common failings—the fault of hurrying when there is no occasion for haste.

The habit of hurrying is not confined to the ranks of the movie musicians. It is something which every musician has to combat and continually guard against. Familiarity with a musical composition breeds the desire to "speed it up" a little bit, with the result that a *moderato* tempo becomes *allegro* or a shade faster. By his daily work at the keyboard the movie pianist acquires considerable skill and rapidity of technique and his facility in "getting over the keys" leads him into the hurrying habit simply because it is easy for him to play fast. He *can*—and he *does*.

Comedy pictures, particularly those of the "chase" variety, demand speed—the more the merrier—but when the action in the picture becomes slower the player should diminish the speed of his accompaniment if merely for the sake of contrast.

Variety of tempi is just as essential as the observance of expression marks in music. It is monotonous to the audience if a pianist plays for a great length of a time at one fixed tempo, without even an occasional *rallentando* or suggestion of a *rubato*.

A sure cure for the "hurry habit" is the simple exercise of one's will power; a firm resolve to "cut it out," coupled with watchfulness, will prove effective. To make the cure a habit try a little practice each day with the metronome.

The metronome is a hard task master. It relentlessly "shows up" your every digression from the straight and narrow path of strict tempo. It is to be deplored that so few pianists have made use of this mechanical device to aid them in a correct knowledge of relative time values. Every musician should know how to "set a tempo," but that knowledge is confined principally to orchestra leaders and they are not all proficient.

In the March number of MELODY appeared Norman Leigh's Morceau Oriental, "In Bagdad," with a metronome marking—126 eighth notes per minute. It is safe to assume that very few who played this number did so as slowly as the composer intended it should be played. Any pianist could play that number at "152" and not realize that he was hurrying it.

Much of the beauty of many compositions is marred or lost entirely if they be played faster than the indicated tempo. Passing harmonies and contrapuntal work are often slighted and the intended effect of the composition "fogged" or clouded if the tempo be too fast. It is far better to err on the "slow side" than on the "fast."

Waltzes, one-steps and fox trots are invariably played too fast by movie pianists. The waltz tempo is a very elastic one, and may vary between 144 and 200 quarter notes per minute.

One-steps in the style of George Cobb's "Here's How" (April MELODY) should be played at 120 quarter notes, two beats in a measure. Fox trots, such as "Say When" (March MELODY) require a tempo of 160 quarter notes, four beats in a measure.

If, *with the aid of the metronome*, a player will establish in his mind the suitable and proper rhythm for the several classes of compositions as those named above, he thereafter unconsciously applies those tempi to other compositions of like character and acquires the habit of "setting a tempo."

The phrase "setting a tempo" means really the musician's ability to sense the proper time or rhythm in which a number is to be played, and then start the very first measure in the tempo which will be held throughout the composition or until a change in time is made in accordance with markings on the score.

When playing a composition every indication of change of time should be heeded and obeyed. Every musician knows the meaning of the abbreviations *rit.* and *accel.*, but of what use is that knowledge if one passes by such markings without recognition of them?

The composer's intent is indicated by the various tempo, phrasing, and expression markings, and in order to bring out the character of a composition the performer must execute all commands as expressed.

Expression in Playing

IN the dark ages of the picture business the pianist served a two-fold purpose. He not only "played the pictures," but by the *double-forte* playing which the manager demanded of him he served also as a bally-hoo for the business—a blatant advertisement that there was "something doing" inside the theatre (or "store-show" as many were then called). If a pianist dared do other than imitate a brass band at a brewers' picnic, he was minus his job—"canned."

Under those conditions expression in playing became a lost art, and to judge by present day performances some players so thoroughly mislaid the art of expression that it has not since been found. Conditions have so changed, however, that the movie musician of today is not hampered in his work, but rather is encouraged to be as artistic as his capability permits.

The artistry of light and shade is the soul of the photoplay. Every emotion must be portrayed by expression. Why then should not the musical accompaniment to the photoplay be sensitive to the changing expressions on the screen? It is said of Leschetizsky that he once remarked, "Any woman can break a piano, but it takes a strong man to play softly."

We need *strong men* to play for the movies, if that be so. Nothing is finer or more appealing than soft, subdued music. It is soothing and restful, and often refreshing. Softly played music is "sweet." Patrons of the Beacon Theatre, where the writer is organist, have remarked, "How sweet the organ music is." What they really enjoyed was the effect of music at a distance, which may be attained on a pipe organ.

In our modern city life are a thousand and one harsh and discordant noises to which we become partially or wholly accustomed, yet we all desire and must have relief for our nerves' sake. The movie theatre of the big city offers a relief to the tired shopper, business man and ordinary worker. The managing executives of such theatres do all in their power for the patrons' comfort.

The musician, soloist or director should feel that he has a share in the effort to make patrons pleased and contented. His part may be accomplished by offering a well selected program of music which is also played well. *Quality* of tone production, rather than *quantity* of it, will have a better and more lasting effect on an audience.

As the "plot thickens" on the screen, the observant musician has noted that the audience becomes very quiet. Desultory conversation ceases. All interest is centered on the drama being enacted. It is then that the wise musician gets in his "fine work." Both eyes and ears are receptive on the audience's part. Loud music, unless for a sudden action on the screen, is unnecessary and may also be unpleasant. Keep the music subdued—rising and falling in volume with the light and shade of the action on the screen—and the effect is pleasing and satisfying to a discriminating audience.

An Accessory

SPEAKING of "sweet" music, it might be well to remark here that no musician, however clever he may be, can hope to produce *sweet* music from a *sour* piano. Movie house pianos are often in such condition that one wonders how the patrons can tolerate the sound of them, or how anyone calling himself a musician can perform upon such an instrument.

Recently the writer was called upon to play in a suburban theatre which had suffered a sudden disappointment by a pianist. The condition of that piano was amazing and disheartening. The action was so wretched that it was next to impossible to execute a rapid passage upon it.

After the performance the writer sought the proprietor and learned that he was not aware of the condition of the piano. His pianist had never complained, yet he welcomed the suggestion of needed repairs and asked that a competent repairer be sent to him.

In that case the musician was entirely at fault. The manager was not niggardly or trying to avoid expense, but had not been apprised of the need of attention which the piano cried aloud for.

A theatre piano should be tuned or simply "smoothed" at least once a fortnight, and thoroughly tuned with "setting of temperament" every three months. All lost motion in the action should be taken up when needed, and attention given to lifting jacks and back straps as required. This will prolong the life of the instrument as well as improve the musical sounds issuing from it.

The Question Box

Under this heading Mr. Norton answers questions of movie musicians and movie "fans." Melody subscribers are invited to avail themselves of this special service, addressing communications to **Melody** Photoplay Interpretation Dept.

K. L. O., Rochester, N. Y.

If you want to be a "regular feller," play a "chaser" or exit march while the audience is leaving the theatre. It is only a matter of three or four minutes' work, and puts the house on the "big time."

A. P. C., Houston, Tex.

Since Publisher Jacobs advertises that the January, February and March issues of MELODY are permanently out of print, it is up to him to devise ways and means of supplying back numbers of the "Interpretative Music" series, which he no doubt will do.

W. J. S., Cleveland, O.

The use of the "Musical Suggestions" sheet was recommended principally as a guide to the action in the photoplay. Unless one were the possessor of a very complete library he could not hope to have all the selections named.

L. H. K., Worcester, Mass.

The national anthems of the Allies should be treated with the respect which we accord *The Star-Spangled Banner*. The writer does not advocate their promiscuous use on Pathé Weekly or any news film. When the King and Queen of England are shown on the screen the use of "Rule Britannia" is preferable to "God Save the King," because of the latter's similarity to "America." The Belgian anthem is "La Brabanconne." Good military marches should be used for the pictures of the activities of the American Expeditionary Forces in France. The songs you mention, "Over There," "Long Way to Berlin," etc., are all right, but repetition of them week after week becomes tiresome.

C. R. I., Indianapolis, Ind.

We haven't forgotten that the drummer and "effect" man is still living. We were simply thinking about that old argument as to whether a movie drummer is a musician or a mechanic. If it can be determined that he is a musician—then in he goes with his partner, the piano-player, in the photoplay articles.

"Ragging" the Popular Song-Hits

THERE'LL BE A HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN TONIGHT

Theodore Metz Tells Melody Staff Man the Story of the Origin of This Famous Old "War Horse" of Popular Songs, Syncopated Arrangement of the Chorus of Which Appears in This Issue

By Edward R. Winn

UNIQUE in many ways is the melody chosen for "piano solo treatment" and presentment as this month's syncopated adaptation. In construction, sentiment and tradition, Theodore A. Metz's world famous *There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight* arouses pleasure and satisfaction always. As this song goes back to the days and times of twenty years ago it will interest many to learn the exact history of *Hot Time,* which has never before been published in true detail. No one is better qualified to tell this than the author himself, and when questioned on this subject Mr. Metz readily consented to give the particulars.

"In the fall of 1886, while enroute in Louisiana as musical director of the old McIntyre & Heath's Minstrels," said Mr. Metz, "we were trying over on the train at dusk one day a march which I had just completed for the band. The rest of the show people were humming along with us and some were doing a few 'steps' in the aisle of the day coach. All were in high spirits. Suddenly, as we were passing through a little place called Old Town, our attention was attracted to a lively blaze that was playing havoc with a log cabin near the roadside and making almost laughable the efforts of the small bucket brigade trying to put it out.

"'Gee whiz,' ejaculated Tom McIntyre, always one of the 'boys', 'they're having a hot time in Old Town.'

"'Say, Ted, that would make a fine title for your march,' said Tom Heath, turning to me.

"'Yes, that sounds good to me,' I told him. And so, when we got into New Orleans and played our street concert outside the theatre previous to the performance, it was first publicly heard. I played it with this show and other theatrical organizations for fully ten years, visiting every part of the country.

"All this time the music had never been printed. We played it, as we did most of our other numbers, from manuscript, and named it 'A Hot Time in Old Town.'

"While engaged in 1896 in conducting a musical agency at Broadway and Thirty-fifth Street, New York, Joe Hayden, a variety performer of the old days, came to me one afternoon, announcing as he stepped in the door, 'I have a fine set of words here which will just fit your old melody.' Then and there we fixed up the verses and chorus of *There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight,* and on May 21, 1896, I had it copyrighted. Joe Hayden went to Boston to introduce it, singing it at the old Howard Athenæum, but this brought no returns to me as publisher.

"Later on Colonel Sabel, a well-known local merchant at that time, and husband of Josephine Sabel, the actress, dropped in to see us. Bill Moore, our office man, called his attention to my new song, which I was thrumming on the piano or playing on the violin incessantly. The Colonel was 'caught' by the melody and invited us over to his home. After a fine fish dinner cooked by Mrs. Sabel herself, she tried my tune over on the piano. *Hot Time* made an instant hit with her and she promised to use it professionally if Willis Woodrow, the music publisher, would be given the publishing rights.

"Matters were soon arranged, and Mrs. Sabel opened in 'Koster's Brats,' singing *Hot Time* as only she could sing it. The song went over in great shape, but it was in Chicago, about a month later, on the Masonic or Majestic Roof Garden—I am not certain which now—that it really caught on. Here it went like wildfire, everyone in the streets whistling, singing, humming it.

"In 1897 I was directing the Thatcher, Primrose & West Minstrels orchestra, and try as I would I could not get the number in the show until May Irwin, who was then, by featuring and making popular this type of song, attracting a great deal of attention, achieved a tremendous success singing it at the Bijou Theatre, in New York.

"Then George Primrose became interested and took it up. As a minstrel piece it proved what is called in theatrical parlance 'a riot.' It won encore after encore and put a psychological enthusiasm into the whole show. We traveled to the Pacific Coast and back. Bands, orchestras and singers everywhere took it up. The song was 'made.'

"That Uncle Sam's boys adopted it as the marching song of the Spanish-American War," concluded Mr. Metz, "was indeed complimentary to me; that I have been permitted to witness its cheering effect upon the soldiers now preparing for the struggle 'over there' and to learn that thousands have already gone into battle with this song on their lips is deeply impressive as making me feel a certain personal sense of responsibility for their well-being, and impels me to give thanks, that, though arrived at an advanced age, I am, to some extent 'doing my bit'."

IN musical construction this simple diatonic tune must be ranked as a masterpiece, and—remembering it was conceived as pure melody, without any thought of the words that were later wedded to it—to say that *Hot Time,* as Mr. Metz calls it, is entitled to be and generally is ranked with those great classics of America's representative composer, Stephen C. Foster, is but placing a correct value on this immortal composition.

Mr. Metz, not forgetting his other numerous and successful pieces, including his recently issued "We'll Come Back" and "Never Do Nothing for Nobody," as well as his many other musical activities, may easily rely upon his old minstrel song for enduring memory, for no melodic expression of such primitive simplicity, assertive, concrete rhythm and fearless, fundamental harmony, nor the one giving it birth, will be forgotten for generations at least.

That *Hot Time,* having served at Santiago and San Juan Hill, should "come back" in these days of modern war songs is not surprising when it is recollected that this song of infectious march swing also went to Africa in the Boer War, has been translated into several languages and has carried hosts of troops into action on three continents. It is significant, too, that those singing it always returned victors.

As now issued by Jos. W. Stern & Co., New York, a "punch" version of the text, apropos of these times of strife and telling what will happen "When you see us all go a-sailing up the Rhine," has been added and is presented in connection with the original words and music preserved intact as when first published in 1896. J. A. Dillon and Gilbert Dodge, well-known successful lyricists, are the writers of this later poem and have done well, as those who have visited the American training camps and heard the boys "go to it" testify.

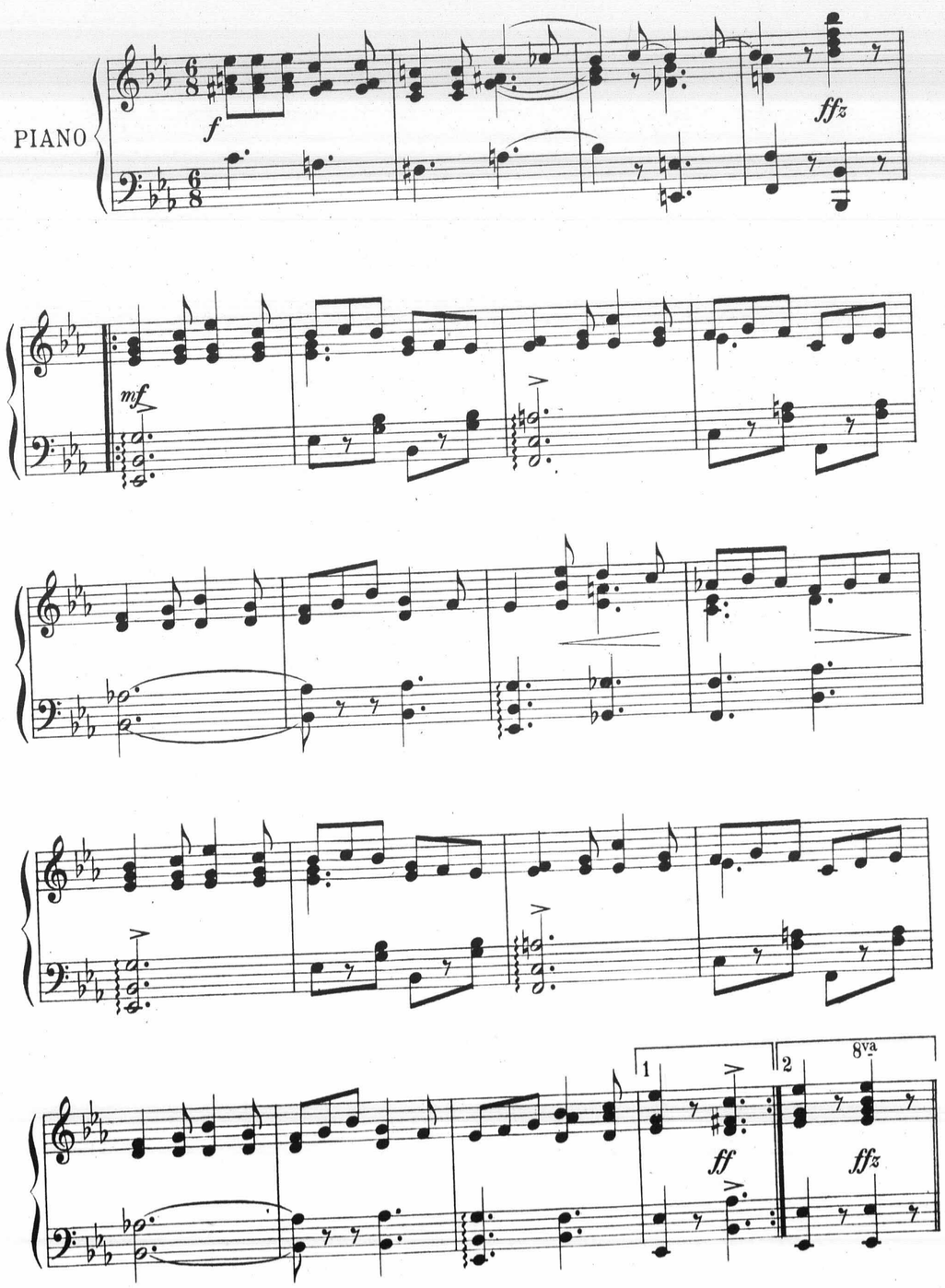
As for the arrangement appearing in the music section as promised, the writer will let the pianist judge for himself. An opportunity seemed present to develop an unusual treatment, particularly timely, though admittedly novel. Students of popular music, and those desiring to convert melodies into full piano solo style, whether in straight time or ragtime, should, in order to grasp the ideas represented, procure the published song in sheet music form for study and analysis.

For kind permission to exhibit this melody we tender our sincere thanks to the author and publishers.

Toy Poodles

NOVELTY ONE-STEP

GEORGE L. COBB



f

ff

mf

8va

MELODY

mf–f

fz

fz

1

2

ffz

MELODY

When The Lilies Bloom in France Again

Words by
ROBERT LEVENSON

Music by
GEORGE L. COBB

Moderato

PIANO

f

There's a field "o - ver there" where the
When the skies turn to gray and the

till voice

p

lil - ies grew — And the birds sang on ev - 'ry bough; — It was
sun-shine's gone — And you find that you're feel - ing blue, — Bear in

not long a - go when the skies were blue, — But there is noth-ing left there now. — Oh, they
mind af - ter dark-ness must come the dawn — And with it lots of glad - ness, too. — When the

have not died in vain For those flow'rs will bloom a - gain, That's a part of ev-'ry sol - dier's vow. —
lil - ies bloom once more, Then our trou - bles will be o'er, And I'll soon be com-ing back to you. —

CHORUS

When the lil - ies bloom in France a - gain And the fields are white as

p

2d time f

snow, — Then our work will be done — And I'll come back to the one Who'll be

wait - ing for me I know; — Then we'll all see the sil - ver

lin - ing That will soon pierce the dark clouds through; — When the lil - ies bloom in

France a - gain I'll come back, sweet-heart, to you. When the you. —

f

fz

D.S.

Dream Memories

WALTZ

INTRO

WALTER ROLFE

Lento

PIANO

WALTZ

Più mosso

Tempo I

f

p

mf

fz

cresc.

ff

Lento

Presto

MELODY

No. 11 Dramatic Tension

HARRY NORTON

Andantino con passione

PIANO

poco rit.

a tempo

Agitato con moto

molto rall.

D.C.al ⌒

MELODY

Published by Walter Jacobs, Boston

No. 12 Marche Pomposo

HARRY NORTON

PIANO

D.S.al ⌒ then Trio

TRIO

MELODY

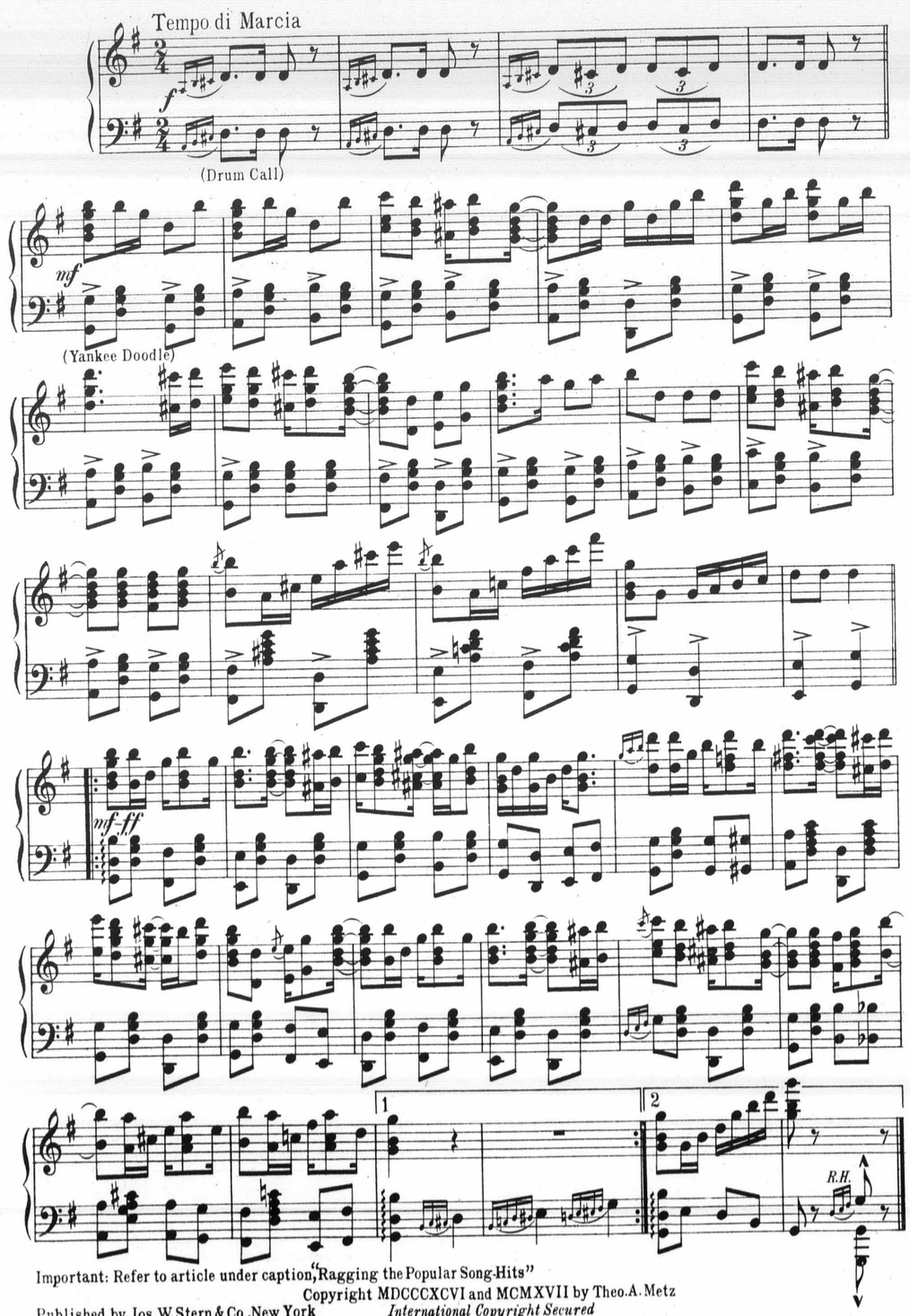
Original One-Step Arrangement of Chorus of

"There'll Be A Hot Time In The Old Town To-Night"

In Winn Style of Ragtime

Music by THEO. A. METZ

Arr. by EDWARD R. WINN



Important: Refer to article under caption, "Ragging the Popular Song-Hits"

Chicago Syncopations

By Axel W. Christensen

JANE LAMOUREUX, that delightful songbird, whose picture adorns my little corner of MELODY this month, dropped into the office for just a minute the other day.

"Jane," said I, "some singers I know wouldn't need any steel helmets if they were drafted, but somehow you are different, and I believe there is something behind those inscrutable eyes that would make good copy for a *good* music magazine. Come across with it. Does your singing make you popular, or is it you that makes your singing popular?"

Whereupon Jane spoke the following words of wisdom on how singing is an aid to popularity:

"The yearning wish to become pleasing in the eyes of other people is only a natural and wholesome desire of youth, which, if properly directed and encouraged, would become a stimulus toward acquiring a delightful and practical accomplishment, such as singing, or piano playing.

"The very parents who bemoan the fact that their Jack and Anna are running around nights could tactfully interest them in music if they knew a good musical argument to present. If they only could make their almost grown-up children realize the incalculable value of a practical course in singing or piano playing!

"Many a beautiful voice is lost to the world, lying latent in the slim white throat of a thoughtless girl, who, with bare neck, roots for her brother's football team on a raw autumn afternoon, with a most disastrous effect on her voice.

"In singing there is an inexhaustible interest. Rhythm, musical interpretation, ever-changing shades of emotional expression, correct articulation, the correlation of the varied elements of progressive vocal training—all engage the mind and heart of the youthful student, attune them to thoughts of beauty, orderliness, poise, self control, and unquestionably develop and enhance those qualities which every true mother looks for, works for, expects, but is not always able to inspire in her children.

"If the young man or the lovable daughter or the sister does not happen to possess a remarkable voice, of unusually fine, natural timbre and volume, this should not be considered an obstacle. It is well known that many of our highest salaried singers before the public today (excepting, of course, the grand opera stars) are those singers who have made the most of their voices—not always pleasing from an æsthetic standpoint—but voices which by practical training, combined with cleverness in recognizing the immense advantage in singing only popular ballads, rag, novelty and character numbers, earn for them popularity at home, as well as socially and professionally.

"Next time I come in," concluded Jane, "remind me to tell you what I think about

Jane Lamoureux

'Joyful Jazz,' and the time after that I want to tell you about—"

"Save it till then," I interrupted. "A cigarette is all I now need to complete the Arabian Nights atmosphere you created with your last words. We'll stand for 'a thousand and one of your tales,' but one at a time, Jane, as per precedent."

Passing Notes

MISS FARISTONE, originally from Galeon, Ohio, but now associated with the Wurlitzer company on their unit orchestra, is an accomplished musician, whose rendition of the classics is not to be excelled. On the other hand, she is one of the strongest boosters of ragtime I ever met. She once played a classic piece before a certain prominent musician who had heard her a couple of years before. At the close of the piece the musician said to her, "Miss Faristone, I cannot explain it, but there's something in your playing that never was there before, and it's wonderful." "I guess it's my ragtime," she said. He answered, "Well, if that's the case, I certainly am going to send every pupil I have over to you to get that very thing."

Mr. Wm. E. Schweigart, pupil of Bernard Brin of Seattle, has written two splendid songs that are sure to become very popular. They are, "You're a Grand Old Girl, Miss America" and "By the Caribbean Sea." The former is now being sung with great success by none other than Emma Carus.

Mrs. Koch, one of Mr. Brin's star pupils, at a recent lesson had done very little practicing. One of her pieces was "Some Sunday Morning." Mr. Brin had the piece on the piano and then left the room for a minute, returning to find the copy had disappeared. He looked inquiringly at Mrs. Koch, but she smiled and said nothing. Then Brin politely pulled out a professional copy of "Some Sunday Morning" and asked her to play it, whereupon she sighed, then fished the other copy from under the piano saying, "Oh, what's the use?"

Little Genevieve McCormick, who dances wonderfully, entertained during the Children's Hour at the Edgewater Beach Hotel lately, delighting the discriminating audience. It will be remembered that Genevieve made a hit as the Duchess of Tidymore in the quaint Rackety Packety House, a children's operetta presented at the La Salle Opera House, Chicago. She is one of the few child artists who have steadily progressed in artistic achievement, surprising teachers and arousing the enthusiastic approval of critics.

David Reichstein, who conducts a school of ragtime piano playing on the extreme West Side of Chicago, gave a ragtime recital and dance on April 13th.

Merlin Dappert, who wrote "When Uncle Sam Gets Fighting Mad" and a number of other songs that have had big success, enlisted when the first call for men was issued. He is now located at Camp Stanley, Texas, and is in line for a commission, and, due to his music, it looks as though he would receive a commission as musical director.

Edmund Skipp, who was connected with Miss Clement's school in Pittsburgh as a teacher of harmony and classical music never would play or teach popular music. He since enlisted with the marines and was made a conductor of a band and orchestra. Now the latest thing Miss Clement has heard from Mr. Skiff is that he must have lots of "raggy" music because that is all the players in the band will work at.

In Los Angeles, the new Kinema Theatre, on Grand Avenue, near Seventh Street, under the management of Kehrlein Brothers, was formally opened a short time ago.

The town of Sycamore, Illinois, has a new jazz band.

Rudolph Gunther, of Mt. Vernon, New York, writes that his class has grown wonderfully since last fall. He writes his letter on some very classy stationery of original design.

District Attorney Swann of New York is said to have started a move to force the managers to put more clothes on the chorus girls.

Mrs. Esther Brandt, a graduate pupil of Jacob Schwartz, is now in charge of the Cold Spring Studio, 507 Masten Avenue, Buffalo.

One of the largest Hope Jones Unit Organs made by the Wurlitzer Company was recently installed at Denver, Colo. This mammoth organ is located in the City Auditorium in that city, and Clarence Reynolds is the new municipal organist.

Miss Freda Snow is now pianist at the Vaudette Theatre in Springfield, Ill.

Carmenza Von de Lezz, star organist for the Wurlitzer Company, has just returned from an engagement at Boston, Mass.

Edna Morton, who was for a time connected with Miss Hattie Smith's school of ragtime in Detroit, has taken charge of a school of popular music in Chicago.

Frank G. Corbitt of Boston, with the assistance of the pupils and faculty of his school, gave a Ragtime Recital at Haynes Hall in Franklin Square House.

Ed. Mellinger of St. Louis calls on prospective pupils in his eight-cylinder King car, thereby taking time by the forelock. During the recent street car strike he called for and delivered the pupils of his school.

Ray Worley, who taught ragtime for eight years in Chicago, is now located in Kansas City.

Mabel Rogers, who taught popular music and ragtime in Kansas City, is critically ill with double pneumonia.

George Schulte of Cleveland reports that grippe made a shortage of teachers at his school last month.

Edythe Hornie has been made assistant manager of Mr. Corbitt's Boston piano school.

(Continued on page 28)

Just Between You and Me

GEORGE L. COBB'S own corner, wherein he answers questions, criticises manuscripts, and discusses the various little matters close to the hearts of Melody readers—all of a more or less personal" nature, and for that very reason of interest to all

No Manuscripts Returned Unless Accompanied by Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope. Address all communications direct to MELODY.

AS has been repeatedly stated in the columns of this magazine, anonymous letters are not welcome and as a rule are consigned to the waste basket. We do not print names or even the initials if requested to omit or "camouflage" them, but we must be furnished with full name and address of each correspondent as evidence of good faith. A semi-anonymous letter has been received from Canada, however, containing a few questions of considerable importance to beginners in the song-writing field, and I feel justified in replying to the Canadian owner of the initials which were attached to the letter, as I can at the same time cover a number of questions of similar nature that are likely to be propounded by other readers. The incognito correspondent writes as follows:

Will you state in the columns of George L. Cobb's "Own Corner" what are the rules in sending a composition to a publisher? Does the sender put a price on same, and ask the publisher to buy the manuscript? Should it be sent by mail the usual way or is it necessary to see the publisher personally? Will the publisher return the manuscript if stamps are enclosed if he does not accept the same?

No, the composer should not put a price on his manuscript. The question of price will come up in due time if the publisher is interested in your number. If sent by mail, the manuscript should be registered. I would advise no one to spend very much money on railroad fares to go calling on music publishers. In event of your manuscript being unavailable, it will be returned to you, providing you have sent sufficient stamps.

M. M. G., Wetaskinin, Canada.

It will not be necessary for you to secure a copyright before you submit your song to a publisher. I would advise you to get the opinion of a publisher before considering publishing the number yourself. There would be nothing in it for you unless you have an outlet for a large number of copies. No, I do not answer any personal letters connected with my department.

L. D., Phoenix, Ariz.

I thought it about time for you to bob up again with another one of your "quaint" titles and lyrics. This beats the one I sat on in the February issue of MELODY. Again you do not enclose stamps for the return of your nut poem. I know now that you are not serious when you send in such stuff. Please don't send in your brain-storms more than four times a year; that will be plenty. Dear readers, what else can I say about a title like "Poor Butterfly Is Working in a Dairy Now?" Next.

H. B. S., Harvey, Ill.

Your ballad is not worthy of criticism. The words have no connection; rhymes are poor (where there are any) and the music can hardly be called music. Worse than amateurish. The waltz song has some commendable points, but there is nothing original in the lyric or the music. The arrangement is good, but not perfect, and the chorus needs a few nails or something to hold the last two lines to the preceding lines. Repairing the latter difficulty would make the song, on the whole, as good as many hits of the day as far as workmanship is concerned. The only thing it lacks is originality and a few "punches." This is like telling your wife that she has made a lovely pumpkin pie, only she forgot to put the pumpkin in. No matter how much crust you have you can't build a pie or a popular song without a few other knick-knacks.

K. L. M., Green Bay, Wisc.

Poets don't work with a yardstick, although their lines are measured by "feet." I greatly fear—judging by the samples you have sent in—that a lyric factory was not included in the mental equipment with which you were born, so I can't help you except by suggesting that you find another hobby. Rules and advice would never make a poet of anyone who just naturally isn't a poet anyhow.

P. S.—Your handsomely lettered manuscript title page, with its cute ink sketch, convinces me that you have more than ordinary skill in the manipulation of the pen and pencil. That is a talent worth cultivating.

Y. N., Quebec.

Your poem will not do at all. I didn't count the extra feet in the third and fifth lines of the first verse, but the resemblance to a centipede could easily be seen with the naked eye. The title you have chosen is good and has a punch; why not make use of that punch in the chorus? You can improve this lyric, I am sure, if I may judge by the quality of work you have previously submitted. Please give your brain-child a little thought-treatment and then send it on for another examination.

Harry K., Chicago.

This is wonderful! I haven't seen such a bit of lyric assembling since Uncle Paschal's pup died. I hasten to print the chorus, which I am sure the readers will admit is really and truly unique:

Early to bed and early to rise
Makes a man healthy and makes a man wise—
But he misses the soft lights of cabaret shows,
And he misses the Misses and all their fine clothes,
And he misses their kisses and he never knows
The light that lies in a woman's eyes
If he never gets out with the girls and the b'ys.
So what good does it do him to be healthy and wise?

D. P. W., Bridgeport, Conn.

So you have written a complete musical comedy; music, lyrics and book, and you want to know how to dispose of it. I would advise you to have it gone over very, very carefully by someone who is thoroughly competent to judge such work and take his opinion before submitting it to a producer. He may tell you how to dispose of it in a way that will save you much wampum. On the other hand, you may be a genius and have a young gold mine up your sleeve for all I know. You say you are an amateur and know very little about music, but are sure that you have the "most original plot and the most entrancing music ever written for a musical comedy." Maybe you're right, and I sincerely hope so. Luck to you.

E. F., Scranton, Pa.

"Beautiful Land of Jazz" is a good waltz song; that is, the melody is good. But who ever heard of putting jazz words to ballad music? Write a 2-4 or 4-4 melody and fit your lyric to it, and you'll have a regular song. Your words suggest a very syncopated melody and that is just what they require. Do it over and send it in again.

F. T., Washington, D. C.

Title: "Don't Tell Mother." Punch line: "While I'm in a hospital in France, keep mother in ignorance." This is *some* lyric. Wish I had a few more like this to toy with this beautiful spring morning. If it matters not to you that the public cares little for "war sob-songs," keep on writing them, but don't send them here. Others beware.

Mrs. E. Z. G., Memphis, Tenn.

Your novelette for piano, as yet unnamed, is a very catchy composition of more than ordinary merit. I would suggest that you simplify the left-hand octave work a bit, as it seems a trifle difficult for the average player. Your third strain is highly original and very pretty and dainty. The composition is sufficiently worthy to grace the catalog of any publishing house.

W. S. B., Lancaster, Ohio.

Per your request, we are publishing the chorus of your song, "I'm Staying Where," etc.

I'm staying where the weather suits my clothes—
I'd love to be there with you, goodness knows,
But just now where I happen to be
The weather hasn't got a thing on me.
So I'm staying where the weather suits my clothes.

Any composer who desires to write music for this poem may get the complete lyric by addressing W. S. B., care of MELODY.

W. W., Sheridan, Wyo.

The fact that you happened to be born an Indian will not bar you from achieving success in song writing if you have the inherent gift. Send in some of your efforts and I will give you my candid opinion of them. I shall be glad to help and encourage you every way that I can.

H. L. M., Atlanta, Ga.

Yes, that is my picture at the head of this department—taken before I was fifty years of age. The editor put it there—don't blame it on me. I cannot answer all of your questions—why don't you buy an Encyclopedia Britannica? Yes, I can do other things besides write songs—I can ride a bicycle and blow smoke rings. I am not bald-headed, but I would be if very many correspondents sent in questions like yours.

M. M. C., Wilson, S. C.

"It is difficult for me to tell whether your song, "You and I," is a "love" or a "sacred" song. Your meaning is so vague and your train of thought so rambling that I can come to no definite conclusion regarding it. Your melody is quite impossible the way it is written. In future would advise you to send the lyrics alone unless a comprehensive manuscript accompanies it. Another thing—make your verses "jibe" in the matter of accents, feet, etc. A melody that would fit your first verse would have a few unused notes floating around during the rendition of the second verse.

D. O., Newark, N. J.

Would advise you to scan the pages of the leading theatrical weeklies for the information you desire, as we do not run an employment bureau in connection with this department. If you do not find what you are looking for, write again—I may be able to tip you off to other mediums which might afford you assistance.

Jack T. L., Riverside, Cal.

"California" has been done to death the same as all "state" songs. Your poem is good enough as a poem, but your story makes it a purely local affair. It would never interest the music buying public at large. You should pay more attention to your rhyming. "Strain" and "fame," "sunshine" and "daytime" are very far-fetched rhymes; in fact, they don't jibe at all. The day of "state" songs, I think, is past, so try to write something that has an appeal in it for anyone. You sent too much postage for the return of your poetry and your letter came three cents due, so we'll call it square.

F. O., San Francisco, Cal.

"It Will Take Us Yanks" is a fair sample of a comic "war song," with music a la Casey Jones and lyrics semi-original. You can consider yourself lucky if you succeed in placing this song. It may be one of those songs that catch on and "go over" over night and it may be a terrible flop. Who knows who knows?

Belle V., Rochester, N. Y.

"Call Me on the Phone When You're Lonely" is a good "conversation" telephone song. Would be a corker for a double act, but would never be a best seller if published. Mr. J., who wrote your music, is evidently no amateur, judging by the way he arranges his music and makes his manuscript. The song is catchy, has the popular swing and is O. K. for a stage song; nothing more.

C. E. C., Anchorage, Alaska.

I find no serious flaws in any of your seven poems now before me. They are good poems—some of them very good. I cannot call them good song-poems, however, as they lack that elusive element I have so often referred to called "popular appeal"—the ingredient that must be mixed in the "makings" of every composition in order to secure the attention (and cash) of the music-buying bolsheviki. I think you have sufficient talent as a lyricist to merit encouragement, and suggest that you study the big-selling popular songs of the day. Experience is the only school

(Continued on page 27)

Ragtime Piano Playing

Lesson XIX

A Practical Course of Instruction for Pianists

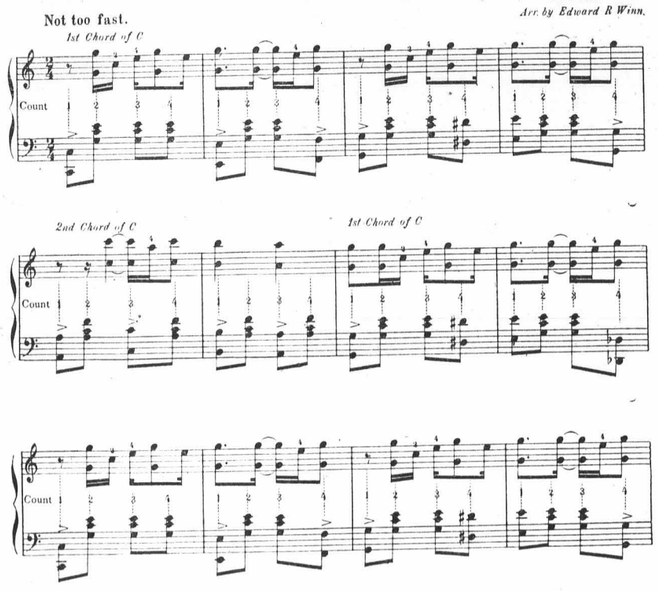
By Edward R. Winn

Playing the Melody with the Left Hand

Old Black Joe.

In Ragtime - Employing Various Rhythms and Combinations

FOSTER
Arr. by Edward R Winn.



IN the arrangement shown herewith, the melody is played in straight time in the bass with the left hand and the chords (harmony) ragged in the treble with the right hand. The rhythm patterns and effective combinations previously given are employed in the treble, the chords being ragged in close or extended (arpeggio) form. The left hand, when not striking melody notes in octaves should play the chords forming the accompaniment. The melody must be strongly accented and the accompaniment, both right and left hands, played somewhat lighter.

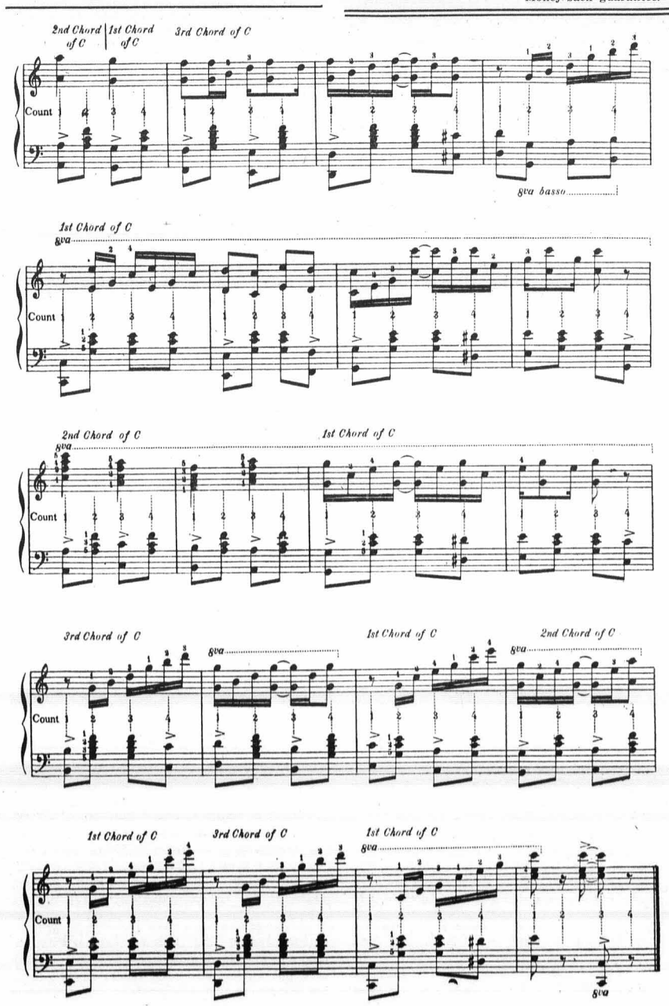
When converting a composition into this style of ragtime it is a rule that if the majority of the measures contain more than four melody notes each measure must be given eight counts or divided in half, and four counts given to each half, as explained in Lesson XI in October issue when describing and applying double straight bass.

The melody notes are indicated in the arrangement herewith shown by an accent mark placed over each one. They are to be struck with force, sustaining them with the right pedal. It may be necessary for some to practice each hand separately before facility in playing both hands together can be acquired.

The pupil is urged to apply this style of melody playing to up-to-date popular compositions, both in two-step and waltz metre, playing the melody notes in octaves in the bass with the left hand on their usual counts, and employing the chords on the remaining counts. For the right hand a four note chord may be formed in the treble by consulting the notes of the piano (instrumental) part as written in the sheet music or as explained in Lessons I, II and III, which were devoted to practical chord formation and classification, and then ragged, using the syncopated rhythm figures and their effective combinations previously studied in this course. (*To be continued.*)

"Sammy of the U. S. A." and "How Hiram Green Wrecked a Submarine" (With a Ford machine) are the titles of two brand new numbers issued by the Song Hit Publishing Co., a new Los Angeles concern claiming a capital of $200,000. The firm's policy is "Few songs, but good ones." Part of the chorus of the "Sammy" song reads: "England has her Tommy, and France her good 'Poilu'; But Damme! Here's to SAMMY —Of the Red, White and Blue!"

Jerome, Lloyd & Dow, Inc., Providence, R. I., has been chartered with capital stock of $10,000 to engage in the business of music publishing. The incorporators are J. L. Canning, Mrs. J. L. Canning, David Dow and L. C. Robbins.



NOTICE

The January, February and March, 1918, issues of MELODY are *permanently* OUT OF PRINT. It is for this reason that subscriptions ordered to start with any of these issues have been entered to begin with this, the APRIL issue.

Walter Jacobs, Publisher.

The Reader and the Publisher

Subscribers are invited to contribute letters or short articles voicing personal opinions or suggestions, and space will be given in this department to all that are of sufficient general interest

G. C. Boyd, Payson, Ariz.

IF we were in the habit of placing headings over the contributions printed on this page, we might have captioned your latest bit, "From the Outside Looking In." But we happened to read the letter through a second time, thereby heading off the afore-mentioned heading with a well-defined idea that a more fitting title would be, "How the Inside Outlook Looks Inside Out." Then our taste for excitement led us off from second base and we slid into a third reading of the epistle, and this perusal, like the others, nullified all previously conceived impressions of your intent. Had we read the baffling billet once more before sticking it on the copy hook, we would have been so mixed on headings that we should undoubtedly have *be*-headed the thing or something or somebody. But we didn't and we haven't, and it's a long way to Arizona. Besides, we don't use headings on this page. So here's the letter; Mr. Collins and friends send flowers prepaid:

MELODY, Boston, Mass.—Mr. Treve Collins, Jr., has certainly mixed up a batch in "From the Inside Looking Out" (doesn't say what he is in for) that ought to knock all the aspiring, amateur, budding song-writers off their perches at one fell swipe. However, I'm afraid it won't—they're awful hard to knock off.

I infer from his rhetorical disquisition that he was—at some time in his career—afflicted with the amateur song-writer's malady, otherwise he would not feel so solicitous about the new crop of "buds." He is modest enough, too, to admit he does not know it all. We thank him, for that gives us a chance to scrape up what he has overlooked. He affirms that lyric writing is serious business. Wonder if it is as bad as soldiering? I note he makes use of the word "weirder"—probably coined it for the occasion, as it is a new one on me. Mr. Swinburne says that "weird" and all of its relations are supposed to be dead.

We agree that people do pretty much as Mr. Collins says they do regarding the erection of lyrics and tunes, but we wonder just what particular business it is of his. If he had sold us this recipe for a couple of "plunks," we should have thought a lot more of him. We like to think we have paid something for anything that we value, even if it isn't valuable. He says a lyric writer must know music. We do not agree with him on that subject, nor do we think he can substantiate his claim. And then he wants to do away with our principal stock-in-trade of *Moon, Croon, June, Soon* and *Spoon*. We won't stand for that unless he provides us with a new vocabulary to take their places.

Still, we might try CHEESE for Moon—for instance, instead of "O, Mister Moon, why do you go to sleep so soon" we could have it "O, Mister Cheese, why don't you stay awake and freeze?" Quite an innovation, and means exactly the same thing. Then we could use "hum" or "hummed" for "croon," but it does not somehow seem to fit. As for the rest of them, we couldn't possibly part with them. Think what a howl would go up when the prospective brides of the month of June came to find out their beautiful name had been, or was to be, relegated to the "scrap-heap"! Nothing doing. For "soon" we might use "hurry," or "get a move on," but they wouldn't rhyme with "June," and so far as quitting good old "spoon"—well, I guess not! There is no term in the English language that can take the place of "SPOON." I don't care how you twist or distort the substitute, it won't fit—not like "Spoon." I've tried it.

Mr. Collins no doubt had good intentions when he stirred up his batch of "inside stuff;" what he lacked was the wisdom to appreciate the fact that it was a thankless task. He is to be excused on the ground that he was looking at the thing purely from a commercial standpoint—from a standardized standpoint. That is one of the faults of this nation; everything is made by machinery, including the Arts. There is but one soul to it—the DOLLAR. No matter how meritorious or how beautiful a song or composition is, if it does not SELL it is worthless in the eyes of the "Professionals" and their ilk. Thanks be that they are harmless.

Henry Keane, St. Thomas., V. I., U. S. A.

NO personal replies were given to any letters which referred solely to the "Name Contest" recently conducted by this magazine. Every title suggested was printed in the columns devoted to the contest, and if you did not receive credit for any of the names you submitted you will find that someone else was under the wire ahead of you with the same entries.

W. J. C., Vallejo, Calif.

YOU certainly are "breaking into print" right frequently, and the extended notice given your "Grizzlies" song by the San Francisco dailies is very flattering indeed. We congratulate you. We feel disposed to encourage you, for your letter offers assurance that it is safe to do so; in fact, what you have written is such an excellent sequel to your letter and our comments thereon as printed in the March MELODY, that you are just automatically "breaking into print" again:

MELODY, Boston, Mass.—I received my copy of March MELODY O. K., and I was surprised and delighted—yes, I say it unblushingly—"delighted" to see my name printed in your page devoted to Reader and Publisher. It was really very kind of you to give my letter so much space, and it is all the more appreciated because it was entirely "unsuspected" on my part. When I wrote you that letter I never expected to hear from it again—much less see it printed with such favorable comment.

Please express to your "Answer Man" my thanks for saving me from getting the "big head." One little word in his criticism prevented that awful catastrophe. As I read your comments I could feel the microbe of the B. H. taking root—and then your "Answer Man" said I "possessed *some* natural talent." And the microbe was routed! Just think what would have happened if he had left out that word "*some*" and had said I "possessed natural talent."

I am not going to take up your valuable time with a long letter this time. No doubt you believe in the apt expression "brevity is the soul of wit," and you said in your article I was witty. I will try to justify your deduction and be brief. Before closing, though, I wish to say a word about the observations of Mr. Collins in his article "From the Inside Looking Out." I think it is the best article I have ever seen on that subject. Truly, it has set me thinking; tell him it is splendid.

Our "Answer Man" tells us that he could extend encouragement more freely to numerous budding but unblossomed song-writers if such level-headedness as that displayed by our California friend were a more common characteristic among the would-be tune tinkers and word weavers.

H. B. S.

YOUR first letter was slated for a place on this page, and was merely awaiting its turn. However, your second communication is so far ahead of the former in human (or inhuman) interest that we have no choice but to slip epistle No. 1 into the waste basket and print No. 2. Verily, this is a sizzler. (Audience will please remain seated while the mourners pass around the beer!)

MELODY, Boston, Mass.—some time ago I wrote you a letter, enclosing a manuscrip and a 3 ct. stamp for reply. You sen back the manuscrip and said you didnt not criticise manuscrip by mail, but would be glad to criticise in the paper if I want you to. I overlook that you did not send back the stamp. [Wasn't it on the outside of the envelope we used to return your MS? Perhaps we carelessly used the wrong stamp, as we had another one in the office at the time.—Ed.] and wrote again and said go ahead. I also gave my criticism of MELODY and what I thought about the change of name from *The Tuneful Yankee*. expecting it would be put in the paper. No atention was gave to either one or the other. Now I ask you if this is the way you expect to make MELODY popular with song writers, authors and composers? I don't care about not printing my letter because it wasn't complementry which is no doubt the reason why it wasnt put in the paper. Why didn't you criticis my song words and music? Aren't you man enough to take what is coming to you in case it don't taist good and give a fellow a square deal? Friends who know there business say it is a good song better than some in *Tuneful Yankee* and MELODY. I guess they is a coon in the woodshed. If you cant give all a square deal you better quite business and go to work for a living. It aint that I care about your not printing my letter but its the principal of the whole thing. Now I am send another song for criticism and if you dont print it in the next issue and send back my manuscrip I will take it up with the authorities and se that you get justice dam quick. You made a big mistake when you changed to "Melody" and you will find it out soon enough even if you don't print my other letter. Believe me. Yours truly, etc.

R. P. B., New York City.

YOUR letter interested the publisher, and tickled the "tainted" family. It is absolutely unique in sentiment, and would be printed for the delectation of our readers, if it were not so apparent that there is a "nigger in the woodpile."

Just Between You and Me

(Continued from page 23)

for the popular composer and author of this day, but there are plenty of ready-printed text books to be found in the works which are the products of the experience—labors, successes and failures—of others.

I shall be interested in your book of poetry, "Beyond the Sky-line"—you have a gift of rhyme and rhythm that many lyric writers might well covet, and you are rightly called "The Bard of Kuskowin," I am sure. Come again, Bard.

J. De L., Charleston, S. C.

You are "a boy fifteen years old and a good piano player and have mastered Chopin and Godard" and now you want to get a job in vaudeville. Don't think of it—keep studying if you possibly can. If you play and play *well* what you say you can at your present age, what will you be able to do in a few years from now? Regarding writing variations to an old time hymn—I would advise you to ascertain whether the hymn is a noncopyright or not. Don't "take chances" especially if you expect to publish your variations. I am glad that you like my instrumental compositions. Thanks, and good luck to you, my promising young friend.

T. Q., Austin, Texas.

"On An Old Time Tandem Ride with the Girl You Love." Beautiful, T. Q., beautiful; but who's doing it now? Riding a tandem with your best girl nowadays is as obsolete as the use of ear spoons or white bread. Your melody is fine and well arranged but your lyric is moss covered in its antiquity. Please write something modern if you expect me to give it a fair criticism. Next.

Lill—Hello, Dotty! I've been wanting to tell you something for a week back.
Dot—I haven't got a weak back.

Melody Agents

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Office Chair Chat

CANTUS FIRMUS, *Musical America's* Gb minor humorist, extemporizes thusly anent the music composing machine recently described in a feature article in this magazine:

A music composing machine has been invented by a member of the House of Representatives, so we are told by "Melody" of Boston. Simply insert a sheet of paper and turn a knob—and a waltz comes out, warm for the piano. Millions of combinations are possible, we read further.

It goes without saying that a trust should control the output of our new anthropoid American composer. All that is necessary to make the machine actually resemble one of its Broadway colleagues is a light tan derby, a set of half-pound diamond scenery and a phonographic attachment which continually yells "I made $900,000 out of my latest hit, I did!"

A week later, Cantus thought of something else, and this item appeared in his "Point and Counterpoint" column:

We have verified the item printed in this column last week, that a member of the House of Representatives, Blanchard, of Massachusetts, has invented a music-composing machine.

As if we haven't had enough trouble from Congress!

The idea! Did he entertain misgivings as to the truth of our statement regarding Mr. Blanchard's machine? Or was it the latter paragraph of his first item that worried the honest Mr. Firmus? If so, we want to find out why it took him a whole week to verify his conception of a New York popular music composer.

WE see by the daily papers that the Krupps, the big gunmakers in Germany, are financing a series of concerts in neutral countries, and have sent orchestras and soloists to Switzerland and Holland to feature music by German composers. It is declared that the German Government spent $6,000,000 in music propaganda before the Krupps took up the task.

ACCORDING to a New York paper, a Harlem theatre audience was surprised one evening recently to hear a member of the audience join in the rendition of the song "When the War Is Over I'll Return to You," and to more than one in the audience the man's voice brought up memories of a favorite singer of years ago. The singer was later recognized as Meyer Cohen, the old-time footlight favorite, who is now head of his own publishing firm, and who could not resist the temptation to help put one of his songs over. The audience would not let the singer sit down until they heard four repetitions of the chorus.

WE HEAR that the National Anthem Association wants the public to stand and sing both "America" and "The Star Spangled Banner" whenever played. We don't mind adding another "stand-up" obligation to our patriotic duties, but we do object to the indiscriminate manner in which certain classes of notoriety seekers attempt to take advantage of the "stand-up" stipulation to get "a rise out of their audiences." The National Anthem has no more place as a theatrical adjunct than the Doxology.

IT has been announced that Treve Collins, Jr., the well-known young lyricist and newspaper writer, has written the lyrics for George Carstair's one-act musical comedy, "Sweet Marie," in which Gertrude Hay and George Boyce will play the leading roles. "Where the Chapel Chimes are Ringing on the Bay of Old Biscay;" Maori Love;" "But Not Since Little George Comes Round," and "Sweet Marie," are the featured numbers.

C. H. STOVER, writer of the song "On the Beach at Waikiki," one of the first Hawaiian songs to sweep the country in the recent craze, died recently in Denver, Colo., and according to his expressed wishes Mr. Stover's ashes were taken to Honolulu by a friend and scattered on the beach at Waikiki.

A LONDON correspondent of the New York Globe gives a splendid picture of the morale of our none too care-free Allies: "London is full of 'bomb' excitement. They carry puzzles to work out to steady their nerves during a raid. One theatre has a huge sign which reads: 'This theatre is bombproof. The proprietor is away doing his bit.' But this excitement isn't fear. During a raid I heard a crowd in the street singing 'Over There' as if no Zeps were in sight. That song, by the bye, is as popular in London as it is in New York. They change it, however, to end 'Over Here.'"

THE NATIONAL VIGILANCE COMMITTEE of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, which makes a specialty of getting after fraudulent advertisers throughout the country, is getting after the "fake song publishers." The committee has issued a list of ten "Pitfalls of Classified Advertising," "pitfall No. 5 being dug by those who advertise to develop song writers—charging a fee for setting verses to music and printing and creating a demand for songs." This magazine has devoted columns of space to exposure of the methods and tricks of the "quacks," and is glad to receive the co-operation of so powerful an organization as the A. A. C.

Chicago Syncopations

(Continued from page 21)

Miss McCaull of Des Moines is moving her studio May 1.

Ethyl B. Smith, the composer of several well-known rags, songs and instrumental numbers, has opened a studio for ragtime and popular music in Jefferson City, Mo.

Miss E. C. Perry, whose teaching was interrupted for a time on account of illness, is again at her Western Avenue school in Chicago.

Hannah Harris, who had to return to her home in Merrill, Wis., on account of sickness, was summoned by long distance telephone to take charge of Mr. Schultz's Milwaukee school when Schultz joined his regiment.

Harold Van Meter has resigned his position as teacher at the Western Avenue school in Chicago.

Robert Marine of New York has gone into the wholesale business when it comes to popular music. Bob now teaches it by mail.

Frances Moe, who has been connected with a school of popular music in Chicago for eight years, was married recently to John Scheck, who operates a prosperous conservatory on the Northwest side of Chicago. Popular music brought these two loving souls together.

Alice Lambert, teacher of popular music and dancing, has made application to go to France as telephone operator. As Miss Lambert can talk French faster than she can English, it appears that Chicago musical circles will lose her soon.

Billie Cole, known in Minneapolis as the "Queen of Song," has left the Hotel Radisson for the summer.

W. T. Gleason of San Francisco has his own billiard room adjoining his music studio, so that when pupils are waiting for lessons they can play billiards. What does he do with the table when there are no pupils waiting? Then *he* plays *himself*.

During the severe cold spell we had not long ago in this part of the country, Philip Kaufman, who teaches with great profit in Los Angeles, drove to and from his studio every day with the top down and wearing palm beach clothes.

Melissa Hogue of Denver is opening branch schools in a number of Colorado towns.

Ed. Meredith, one of the best known figures in Chicago vaudeville, due to his snappy, unbiased and sometimes vitriolic newspaper criticisms, is spending some time in his home town, Fairmont, Va.

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