

# NO SHORT CUTS TO ART SAYS JOSEF ADAMOWSKI

Distinguished Member of New England Conservatory Faculty  
Pleads for More Seriousness, Thoroughness and Minute  
Care on the Part of American Students—What Study  
in a Russian Conservatory Means—Elements That Will  
Bring Preeminence to Our Music Schools

By LOUISE LLEWELLYN

BOSTON, April 4.

IT is the rare American student who makes the most of his foreign education. Those of us who have lived in Europe and watched hundreds of young people come and go know that this is true. Every man and woman who possesses sensibilities and imagination can readily understand why it is true.

Take an inexperienced and impressionable boy or girl from the prairies or the hills, set him down in a new world and expect him to resist the fascination of the new and strange, the picturesque, the (to him) mysterious and unknown. You ask a great deal. Almost any young soul, alert, eager, hungry for knowledge and experience, will yield more or less, according to his temperament, training and the presence or absence of restraint upon him, to his natural instinct for experiment and exploration. Everywhere he turns he meets with an interesting "difference" in speech, in manner, in custom, in feeling, in form, in taste. Who, born with a love of life and people, does not long to break the ice and peer into the depths? He who has not lived long enough to know that a great knowledge of one thing brings with it the desired knowledge of the many things, is feverishly tempted by the apparent short cuts whose beginnings surround him.

It is this very human perception, this emotion, this aspiration that makes the artist, although he is the victorious result of the army of controlled emotions and aspirations. The dilettante is the result of riot and abandon.

Let the young student then in the normal and familiar surroundings of his own fatherland choose his direction—for all life is a process of selection—and prove his right of way. This will not affect his ultimate appreciation and enjoyment of and his profit from older civilizations; it will not prevent his mingling with theirs his intelligent and demonstrated realization of art and his respect for it as the most exalted language known to man; it will not stay the growth and development that comes of association, comparison and the exchange of much corroborative experience and feeling. From a pinnacle of conviction and security he may then enjoy—observing them in their true proportions and their proper relation to his own life and purpose—the forces that would threaten the peace and safety of the immature.

### A Stupid Fetish

Going to Europe to study has indeed become a stupid fetish among young students and the American public, and although this does not alter the value of real and honest contact with the artistic life of Europe to the student who has proved his right and readiness, technically, interpretatively and personally, it is high time we stopped to realize what is the original and legitimate reason for going to Europe for a musical education; what constitutes eligibility to this advantage, and how we can facilitate the conditions of foreign study, which seems to have degenerated, in so many cases, into an empty convention.

Unquestionably we can do this by improving the system of education in America, and by enlarging the public point of view toward art at home. The more we can offer our students here the more they will assimilate in other countries and environments.

Compare, for example, the conditions now existing for music study in America to those of the Slavic countries, where the type is perhaps psychologically more akin to us than that of many other races. Let us go for information to Joseph Adamowski, head of the cello faculty, ensemble and quartet classes of the New England Conservatory of Music—a high-minded lofty-spirited musician with the interests of his American pupils at heart, and twenty-five years of American experience from which to argue—a man whose word may be relied upon and whose judgment may be trusted. Mr. Adamowski attained to a higher development of musical intelligence as a student than is usual among Americans, even

among exceptionally talented Americans—yet by his testimony he was a representative of the standard maintained in his own environment.

realize that it takes just as long to become a good musician as it does to become a good lawyer or a good doctor. What scientist of ordinary seriousness of purpose does not include a term of graduate work (from two to four years) as a matter of course in his allotted time for study before he thinks of setting up as a professional? There are no short cuts to art. An artist may as well annihilate his sense of time and space at the outset, for limitations are fatal to his development.

Mr. Adamowski received his early musical education in the Conservatory of Warsaw. Later he went to the Imperial Conservatory at Moscow, under Rubinstein, Fitzenhagen and Tschalkowsky. Here the course is about eight or nine years, and one is not permitted to enter except as a candidate for gradu-

secondary course of all students, and all must be able to sing anything placed before them in the *solfege* classes. These examinations are of the most rigid character.

Students are not received unless they are musically talented, and they must pass an examination upon entering in the ordinary high school branches, or else attend the high school which exists in connection with the Conservatory. In this school the lecturers are all professors from the universities, which argues at once a more scholarly preparation than that available in the regular high school or academy.

### The System of Scholarships

Nearly all of the exceptionally talented students have scholarships which cover not only tuition but living expenses as well. Many others have purses covering only tuition, which is very high, and which is actually paid by a minority of the students. The Conservatory is a government institution, but is sustained in part by many private subscriptions as well. A professorship is an appointment recommended to the government by a committee. It includes a pension to be paid upon retirement after a certain term of service and is an honor conferred upon the few.

In Warsaw each student must learn to play one orchestral instrument besides his own. Mr. Adamowski played the tympani, and Mr. Paderewski, of whom he was a classmate, was a trombonist.

Where the American conservatory graduates eighty or ninety students a year the Conservatory of Moscow sends out five or six. There are many differences in the operating schemes of American and foreign conservatories, each of which may be studied, often with material advantage to the other. For instance, in Moscow there is, as a rule, but one professor of each branch, theory, violin, cello, singing, piano. He directs a staff, however, of assistants, adjutants and instructors. A pupil starts in with an instructor and works his way up, and while all his work is conducted on the same general plan he has the advantage of contact with the various personalities and powers of his several teachers.

On the other hand, according to Mr. Adamowski's judgment, our American system of paying—the professor receiving remuneration according to the number of hours he works—is superior to that of the foreign conservatories, as he observes that it is human to gauge the effort to a certain extent upon the material necessity for exertion.

Pupils are frequently diverted from absolute concentration by the necessity to earn money. This, you venture, must be true in any country. A young violinist must sometimes fiddle in a café; a pianist must play dance tunes in order to eke out a bodily subsistence.

Not so, says Mr. Adamowski. "Don't play until you can!" he says with stern conviction. "Do anything. Black boots, sell papers, be a waiter—anything—and then earn \$100 a night instead of \$2—when you are prepared."

Mr. Adamowski is convinced that a higher sense of personal responsibility—a calmer, steadier devotion to an ideal in art is fostered by this more drastic system of education.

"We lay our foundations not for five years, but for five hundred," he asserts.

Too frequently we meet in America conservatory graduates who do not know their syntax; who cannot read and analyze. This would be an impossibility in such conservatories as Moscow and Warsaw.

One feels in Mr. Adamowski's classes at the New England Conservatory a reflection of this old world thoroughness. There is a devotional atmosphere about the ensemble concerts given by them twice a year, always to distinguished audiences. His pupils remain with him as a rule from seven to eight years. Starting out twelve years ago with the minimum of material from which to build, this eminent educator now numbers some twenty cellists, twenty violinists and ninety pianists in his classes. The ensemble work is a requirement for graduation in the case of all pianists and instrumentalists in the New England Conservatory.

"When all these conditions shall hold good throughout all the departments of all conservatories; when our educators who have stayed the tide of the restless seekers for foreign study have brought about a more general musical education here and a higher, more definite standard and ideal among students; when the country east and west shall realize that music is not only a substantial calling, requiring a substantial equipment in every way, but that real music is the higher mathematics—the ultimate equilibrium—then America may lay claim to a prevailing musical atmosphere."

There are no special students. One goes there to become a musician, not to become merely a cellist, a pianist, a singer, a flautist. Each student is put through a system that runs about as follows: Two years of theory of music, two years of harmony, two years of counterpoint, two years of fugue, one year of composition, one year of instrumentation, and from one to two years' experience, if he be an instrumentalist, playing with the symphony orchestra, which was conducted during Mr. Adamowski's school days by Nicolai Rubinstein.

Five years of piano is required as a



Above, Joseph Adamowski, From a Painting by Mrs. Chase. Below, the Graduates With Honors of the Ensemble Classes of the New England Conservatory of Music (The Virginia Stickney Trio), Virginia Stickney, Francis Snow and Rudolph Ringwall

What is responsible for this condition? The system of education, says Mr. Adamowski. "There are plenty of gifted students here. In my own classes there are many talented virtuosi who should be world famous. Most of them will never be so. Why? Because they are not grounded musicians."

The situation seems to be due largely to the prevalence in this country of regarding music as an accomplishment merely. Even the student with professional aspirations is too often more or less casual in his attitude, and almost always in haste. He does not seem to