

## An American Musician in Munich During the Great War

Edwin Hughes Describes Conditions in Early Weeks of Struggle—War Songs of the Marching Troops the Only Music in the City for a Time, But Theaters Are Gradually Reopening and Concerts Being Resumed—How News of Victories Was Received

By EDWIN HUGHES

MUNICH, Sept. 10.

AS I sit on my balcony overlooking the clear, green stream of the Isar, with the towers and red-tiled roofs of Munich stretched out before me in the peaceful late Summer sunshine, it seems impossible to realize that on the French and Russian frontiers the guns are booming and the greatest struggle in the world's history is being fought out. Former wars have brought hundreds of thousands of warriors face to face; here millions are battling one another.

Of the rich feast of music which Munich alone among all the cities of continental Europe offers to its Summer guests, hardly one or two courses had been spread when the situation became too earnest for the enjoyment of further pleasures of this sort. The gentle offices of the muses had perforce to be dispensed with, for the war-god had risen in all his might and the clank of his weapons was in every by-way of the town.

On Friday, July 31, had begun the festival performances at the beautiful playhouse in Bogenhausen, with a performance of "Parsifal," and there was no empty seat in the theater. The next evening came the order for the mobilization, followed quickly on Sunday morning by the declaration of war against Russia. On Tuesday evening the Wagner performances were closed with "Tristan." The terrible seriousness of these first days of the conflict lay like a pall on music-loving Munich, with the result that for the first time in the history of the festival performances a half empty house greeted the singers. Those who had come found themselves in poor mood for love-potions and chromatic modulations, and felt rather half ashamed to be taking part in a musical feast while outside the streets of the city were ringing with the heavy tread of columns of husky German infantry in their green-gray uniforms, tramping confidently off to the waiting trains at the station.

In Bayreuth things were little better. The orchestra and the stage personnel were depleted in short order by the calling of many of the members to the colors, and after bravely seeing the first "Ring" Cycle through the management was obliged to cancel all further performances.

The Mozart Festival in Munich opened and at the same time closed on August 2 with a performance of "Figaro's Hochzeit," and from Salzburg came the news

of the abandonment of the Mozart Festival concerts and performances just over the Austrian border.

### War Songs the Only Music

Even the chimes in the gothic tower of the city hall, which delight hundreds of unmusical persons daily at eleven o'clock by jangling familiar tunes with the most excruciating dissonances, were silent. One feared to touch the keys of a piano for perhaps the neighbors might take offense at any such exuberance of spirits at this most earnest moment in European history. The only music in the place came from the lusty German throats of the marching troops—war songs hale and hearty, full of deeply-felt sentiment for the Fatherland and a superb confidence in victory over every foe. The members of the orchestras at the cafés, who, a few days previous, had roused the public each afternoon and evening to perfect frenzies of enthusiasm with spirited performances of the beloved melodies of the Fatherland (many of them are youngsters fresh from the conservatory) had for the most part said farewell to violin, cello and clarinet and were already on their way to the front.

Then came days of tense quiet and anxious waiting. The office of the Quartermaster General in Berlin, through which all authentic news of events at the front must go before reaching the newspapers, was singularly silent. Finally came the news of the storming of Liège on August 7, and while the outer world, cut off as it was and still is from direct telegraphic communication with Germany, was marvelling at the Paris dispatches of the successful Belgian defence, every German city was rejoicing over the fall of Liège. Then more waiting for some decisive news from the French frontier. Finally the arrival of the dispatch announcing the victory of the German army under Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria in the mighty battle in Alsace-Lorraine. The town went wild with enthusiasm, the chimes in the city hall tower seemed to start up all of themselves at the unheard-of hour of five in the afternoon, and Bavarian and German flags appeared on nearly every house and tower in Munich.

### Theaters Reopen

Four theaters have already been reopened, the "kinos" have been running full blast for weeks and it is planned now to open the Royal Opera House shortly for regular performances.

The popular orchestral concerts on Sunday evenings were resumed last Sun-

day week and a full house was in attendance at the first concert. The Konzertverein Orchestra was reduced by only some twelve or fifteen members as a result of the mobilization, and as substitutes were easily found, the body is now completely intact again. The usual series of popular concerts and "Volkskonzerte" is assured for the coming season, the subscription series being held up for the present on account of the war. But there is good prospect of their taking place if the victories of the German army continue.

Even the small variety stages, the "cabarets"—a less French sounding name will doubtless soon be forthcoming—have resumed their activities on a patriotic basis, and a little music-making is being regarded again as a thing of necessity in café-houses and beer hall.

### Treatment of Americans

At the outbreak of the war there were nearly 2,000 Americans in Munich, visitors to the Summer music festivals, ordinary job-lot tourists, music students and permanent residents. The treatment of these Americans by the authorities and by the people in general has been marked by a degree of tact and consid-

eration that could hardly be equalled in any other country under the stress of such conditions.

Among the American visitors have been a number of well known personages in the musical world, whose enforced stay of a week or so longer than they had perhaps intended at the Bavarian capital will certainly not be among their unpleasant recollections. As soon as the railways were partially clear of troops trains three well-equipped special trains with sleepers and dining cars were despatched weekly from Munich to Holland exclusively for Americans, enabling all who wished to leave by this route to do so without trouble or molestation. The mayor of Munich was on hand at the departure of each of these trains to wish the travelers a pleasant journey, and by his order one of the Americans leaving the city was presented with a bouquet of flowers and two books on Munich as remembrance of the sojourn in the town. A little touch of courtesy which could happen nowhere else than in the Fatherland!

Most of the members of the permanent American colony in Munich have no intention whatsoever of leaving, in spite of the war, and as a number of visitors are also going to stay through the Winter the city will not lack altogether the usual American tinge in its art and student life.

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