

THE NEW VOGUE OF THE HARP

**ITS RICHLY
COLORFUL MUSIC
MAKING GREAT
LEAPS IN
POPULAR FAVOR**

A PICTURE that is charming, a melody that is divine.
A woman bends over her harp, her slender white fingers softly caress the tremulous strings and, as the heart of the instrument throbs its love triumphant in deliciously liquid notes, the eyes of the woman lighten, her face glows. She is lost in melody, and the lady and her harp become a poem, a literal embodiment of music.

Painters have placed the picture in colors on canvas and poets have rhapsodized about it in verse. In art you have seen Sappho leaning blissfully over her lyre, and in history you have read of the ardent devotion of Mary Queen of Scots to this rare music. For years the picture was almost lost, the music seldom heard, for woman had



Miss Aviee Boxall



Miss Dorothy Johnstone

ject of personal affection. And one can realize this when told how the harp responds so quickly to the personal touch that it interprets and expresses unuttered emotions of the player's soul." Another well-known woman player said that she believed the reason of the harp's being described by the poets as a sorrowful instrument was due to a real sorrow felt by the lovely thing when, years ago, it foresaw its doom. In the day of Moore the use of the harp had so declined that he sang of it:

Sing, sad Harp, thus sing to me:
Alike our doom is cast,
Both lost to all but memory,
We live but in the past.

And you remember the plaintive line—

My harp took up the mournful strain that from a
lost world swells.

Also that never-forgotten

Harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's wall
As if that soul were fled.

But happily the harp awakes again—beneath the touch of woman's frail white hands. And joy swells from the strings, and the great scores of Meyerbeer, Gounod, Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner are incomplete without it.

Asked how long it would take a woman to



Miss Anita Cluss

nearly forgotten her ancient melody and the harp, most graceful of instruments, was deserted.

But recently the harp has been returning to favor; many women have taken up once more the graceful instrument with enthusiasm.

“WITHIN the last several years the harp has become very popular among women,” recently declared Miss Dorothy Johnstone, widely known as one of the leading harpists in this country. “The instrument has won favor particularly in the West.

“The harp, as an instrument of melody, is wonderful. Besides, a woman looks well at the harp; in fact, is more graceful at it than at any other instrument. In learning the harp there is not the drudgery that accompanies learning to play some other instrument. One's interest is maintained so in learning that it is a pleasure—a great pleasure.

“In many homes children are learning the harp, quite a number of society women have taken it up, and it is taught in most convent schools. Women are beginning to realize the beauty of the music and the artistic possibilities of the instrument. And appearance at an instrument certainly is an important consideration with most women.”

There are in use in this country, according to an authority, between 800 and 1000 harps. This is a tremendous gain in popularity, considering the number in vogue not many years ago. Now almost every large city in the country boasts of one or more celebrated woman harpist.

Among the best known are Madame Clara Murray and Miss Helena Stone, of Chicago; Miss Maud Morgan and Miss Aviee Boxall, of New York city; Madame Margaret Wunderle, of Pittsburg; Madame Inez Carusi, of San Francisco; Miss Harriette Straw, of Boston; Madame Lovejoy, of Grand Rapids, Mich.; Miss Anita Cluss, of Washington, D. C., and Madame Dufriehe, of the Metropolitan Opera, New York city.

Among society women the harp is receiving attention long its due, especially among society leaders in New York city.

To the romantic—and what one of us is without romance?—the harp must appeal as the one instrument above all others fitted to women. It is the instrument of kings and poets. Its past is invested with the glory of romance. It charmed the ear in the days of King David, Milesius and Mary Queen of Scots. In its primitive forms it was known to the peoples of the very ancient world.

The early harps, however, were much unlike the modern instrument, and it is because of the marvelous perfection of the modern form that it has been gaining in popularity within the last few years.

A brilliant triumph of mechanical skill is

the harp of today. Constructed on a system of interchangeable parts, it is possible to substitute injured sections easily; with the pedal rod inside a special tube, the unpleasant rattling of old harps has been obviated, while an enlarged sounding board increases the volume of tone.

The extreme liability of the harp to derangement was long a factor that weighed against its use. And in this connection it is interesting to note that the most highly perfected harps are made in the United States; in fact, nearly all the harps of the national and royal

Miss Maud Morgan



Miss Mabel Munro



Miss Inez Carusi

learn to play a harp, a well-known teacher replied:

“A lifetime.”

By that she meant that one could spend a lifetime perfecting one's self and finding new charm and power in the instrument.

“With proper study, a young person should be able to do solo work within four or five years after taking up the study,” she continued. “The harp is more expensive to keep than a piano. It will need stringing three or four times a year, at a cost of \$16 each time. A person should take two lessons a week, and practice several hours a day. Lessons cost \$3 to \$5 each. Harps range in price from about \$400 to more than \$1000.

“Many persons who can afford a piano cannot afford a harp. Among the women who can afford it it is being taken up enthusiastically. Why, where there were hardly a dozen players in New York twenty years ago, there are now possibly 150 to 200 society women alone who are quite proficient.”

A teacher says that the first thing for a pupil is to learn the proper attitude—the artistic, graceful attitude. It is necessary for a pupil to learn to sit perfectly upright and lean the

instrument on the shoulder. The pupil is taught how to use the hands and feet and body, and next the finger motions, which sustain the accompaniment, and those of the thumb.

Two of the best-known teachers in the East are Miss Johnstone, of Philadelphia, and Miss Maud Morgan, of New York city. Miss Johnstone has earned widespread fame as a soloist, and has often appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra. She began her career about nine years ago, and, under the instruction of the best teachers in Europe, accomplished a wonderful proficiency. She has played in the leading Protestant Episcopal churches in New York, and is the harpist at the Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany, in Philadelphia.

Miss Morgan at her harp recalls the Grecian poetess at her lyre. She has been extremely active in trying to popularize the instrument, and years ago attracted notice by public harp matinees, when she illustrated the history and change of the harp during different periods by playing selections from those ancient days. She appeared with Ole Bull when she was 11 years of age. At present she is harpist at Grace Church, in New York.

Madame Wunderle does remarkable work in the Pittsburg Orchestra, and Miss Straw, of Boston, has many meritorious compositions to her credit. One of the most notable harpists in the world is Mlle. Ada Sassoli, of Paris, who has traveled the United States with Madame Melba.

A story goes that, while Hermes—this was one day long, long ago—a high priest of Osiris, was wandering along the Nile, he saw a curious object lying in the dust—a half-baked tortoise shell, spanned by dried ligaments. Carelessly picking it up he touched the ligaments, and thereon a pleasing sound smote the air. Struck by the tone, the high priest experimented until he developed the lyre, which afterward evolved into the harp.

In the pictures carved on the stone tombs of Egypt one can see the harp players, with the instruments on their shoulders. The Egyptian harp was strung with catgut and differed slightly from the Assyrian harp. When Rameses III ruled over the Mizraim the harp, which then had twenty-eight strings, was played only by the priests and nobles. Gradually it fell into disuse; but the alert Phenicians, seeing the possibilities for ravishing melody, adopted it, and one of their descendants, King Milesius, carried it to Ireland 1260 years before Christ. At first the Irish harp was crude, possessing only eleven strings; it was developed to an instrument of thirty-two strings. To the Druids is due the invention of the pillar, afterward adopted universally.

Three rows of strings were introduced into the Welsh harp about 520 A. D., but the modern instrument had its beginning when Sebastian Erard perfected the pedal harp in 1810.

orchestras abroad are purchased in this country.

“There is no instrument which a woman can learn to love so intensely as this,” declared a well-known harpist. “It becomes a friend—one's dearest friend. It really becomes an ob-