

Musicians Only Human After All



The great Paderewski . . . has a passion for making small bets. . . . At Monte Carlo he once won 34 times in succession.

THEIR audiences see them only in the light of the dignity and glamour that surrounds them on the concert stage. Little is generally known of the Paderewski who has a passion for lemon ices and rewards himself with one after every public recital; the Schumann-Heink who reads herself to sleep with the latest detective story; the Damrosch who spends hours making a Punch and Judy show for his grandchildren; the Werrenrath who, as regularly as the tide, goes to a Chinese restaurant once a week for chicken chow mein.

The greater the musician the more human he seems to be, and the more all-round his interests. It was Mischa Levitski, who when a concert admirer expressed surprise at seeing him rooting vociferously at a baseball game, announced with pride:

"I can tell you who has won the championship for the past 10 years—what's more, I can tell you the name of every player on this field"—and then he continued more seriously:

"Art should never completely absorb an artist. If he is a great artist, he must have many interests—make all sorts of contacts. His art will be all the finer for what it absorbs from other arts and interests."

To return to Paderewski, one of his weaknesses is making small bets. He invariably wagers two or three dollars with a member of his entourage on the number of people who will attend each recital. When he guesses wrong, he cheerfully pays up, and when he is right, he is fully as cheerful about collecting. He bets on many other things, but never for high stakes.

Once at Monte Carlo, he had an irresistible impulse to play, being sure that he would win. He did win—34 times in succession, but at no time would he gamble more than a dollar, despite the pleadings of other Casino guests, who implored him to take advantage of his luck and place higher bets.

They tried to place their money on his numbers, but having a hunch he should play a lone hand, he was careful to wait until the very last moment, and then left his money lie where it dropped. His run of luck was said by Casino officials to be almost without precedent.

HE has the Pole's inherent love of land, and is strongly attached to his American ranch at Paso Robles, California, spending three or four weeks there each year that he visits this country. The ranch is about 2600 acres in size and is under cultivation mainly to almonds, prunes, grapes and walnuts.

Paderewski is extremely superstitious and refuses to shake hands or talk with anyone over a threshold, believing it will bring bad luck. He also shudders at the thought of lighting three cigarettes from a single match. He used to feed tramps whenever they came around his private Pullman car, but the Knights of the Road passed the word around so generally and came in such hordes that the harassed chef finally took matters into his own hands and took to chasing them off with a kitchen knife.

Movies, cooking her own noodle soup and reading every mystery yarn she can lay her hands on form the chief recreations of Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink.

She admits she likes her own cooking better than anyone's else. When recently she came to New York to spend two or three months, the first thing that concerned her was fitting out her hotel apartment with pots and pans, dishes and an electric stove, so that she might get her own meals whenever she felt like it.

She loves corned beef and cabbage. She takes a delight in finding out a person's favorite dish, then inviting him to dinner and serving that dish.

An early riser (she usually is up at six o'clock), she casts a scornful eye at the sluggards who, when visiting her, do not get out of bed at that hour. She has a horror of being late, though she has never yet been late for anything in her life. When she is on tour, she always insists on being at the railroad station half an hour before the train is due.

Shakespeare is the only "highbrow" author she likes. She is a connoisseur of great sculpture, and once wistfully remarked:

"If I had my life to live over again, I think I should like to be Rodin."

PROBABLY the artist with the greatest talent outside of his own profession is Walter Damrosch. Had he not been a musician, he probably would have achieved almost as great distinction as an architect, a landscape gardener, a painter or a writer.

Not long ago he picked up some beautiful old hand-painted Chinese panels. When he came to paneling the foyer of his home with them, he discovered there was one

John Charles Thomas is a golf bug . . . and is shown here singing for the radio . . . in a plane high over New York.



Not wrapped in cotton wool . . . Paul Kochanski, Polish violinist, once tried bull fighting, and came off second best. . . . He is an all-round sportsman.

too few for the space. He painted another himself, painstakingly copying all the lotuses, leaves and elaborate background design—and did it so skillfully that the eye of the layman could not detect the straying.

He loves to go to auction sales and enjoys bidding. His home is full of lovely things he has secured in this way.

He himself laid out the grounds and gardens at his Bar Harbor summer home, designing and actually building with the aid of his gardener, a beautiful fountain.

Once Damrosch brought down the house at the august Century Club by dressing up as a girl and singing "Alice Ben Bolt." He is famous for his hospitality and it is rarely that the Damroschs sit down alone to dinner. His home is always filled with people, not only musicians, but also writers, engineers, painters, and people of every other profession and business.

DAMROSCH parties are famous. Musicians schedule tours so as to be in New York for his New Year's party. At that time each year there assembles an enormous gathering of orchestra players, theatrical people, music critics and all the world's famous artists who are within traveling distance of New York at the time. And the host is always the liveliest of the amazingly lively party.

He likes to wear bright colored shirts—with a particular leaning toward sapphire blue.

He loves France and the French and dashes off to Paris at every possible opportunity.

It affords Damrosch vast amusement that people who have never seen him recognize him on the street, in eleva-

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Mischa Levitski . . . knows who plays shortstop . . . and Al Simmons' batting average.

Amusing stories told about stars of the radio and concert stage to show that they make whoopee and eat just like real people, in spite of all their genius

Reinold Werrenrath . . . has a yen for chow mein . . . and is not averse to leap frog on the beach.



ON a par with Damrosch as a host, delightful entertainer and brilliant conversationalist is his close friend, Paul Kochanski, Polish violinist. He is a most versatile fellow, and a perfect host. The advice once given by one famous artist to another has become almost a byword among musical people:

"If you are suffering from ennui at any time, go to Paul Kochanski's."

Drop in at his New York apartment any afternoon or evening when he is not on tour and you will find a gathering that resembles a musical Who's Who, with Zimbalist playing chopsticks on the piano, Spalding and Horowitz trying their hand at playing each other's instruments, and such personalities as Cortot, Furla, Hietzer, and Glazounoff drifting about.

Kochanski's face bears a mark of his virile and adventurous spirit. Offsetting his ethereal features is a scar which he looks upon as a great trophy. It is a lifelong reminder of the occasion, some 10 years ago, when he audaciously stepped into the bull ring in Seville and for three thrilling minutes experienced what it feels like to be a Spanish matador. The bull would seem to have had the better of it.

There are parts of Europe where Kochanski is as well known as a tennis player as he is as a violinist. He once won the tennis finals at Ostende. He hunts in Scotland. He

skis in Switzerland, taking hair-raising chances on the most difficult slopes. In fact, many of the things he does as a natural part of his existence bring cold chills to those who think a great artist owes it to the world to keep himself wrapped in wool.

There is John Charles Thomas, famous American baritone, who is so addicted to golf that he often comes to operatic rehearsals clad in plus fours, with his clubs slung over his shoulder.

AS for that brilliant Italian-American soprano, Dusolina

Giamini, perfume, dogs and Russian literature are her chief weaknesses. The greatest admirer of her vocal capabilities is her Pekingese dog, who listens rapturously while she practices an aria, but refuses to let anyone else sing in the home of his mistress. Giamini is a great linguist and can speak French, Italian, German, Spanish and English with equal facility. She is now engrossed in studying Russian, so that she can read in the original the literary masterpieces of the Russian authors whom she admires so intensely.

There is Mischa Levitski, one of the hardest and most conscientious workers among the musical artists, who guiltily slips away from practicing to take in a prize fight, and whose one regret when his tour season opens is that he is prevented from attending the major league baseball games.

He loves to dance, swim and play tennis. He plays jazz almost as well as he does the classics. Once he was at a hotel in a small town, where his name meant nothing to the population. A bevy of girls accosted him as he was coming through the lobby. Someone had told them a pianist was staying there, and to them a pianist meant only one thing. They asked if he would play for a dance they were giving that evening. The musician they had intended to have had been suddenly taken ill.

The beloved Walter Damrosch . . . tries a radio program on his grandson, Blaine Littell. . . . Damrosch could be architect, painter, writer, gardener.



Dusolina Giamini . . . goes for perfume, dogs, and Russian literature. . . . She now speaks five languages, and is adding Russian.



tours, in restaurants, by his voice. They have heard it so many times in the radio concerts he broadcasts each week from the studios of the National Broadcasting Company.

Not long ago in a little restaurant in Vermont Mr. and Mrs. Damrosch were absorbed in ordering a meal. At a table nearby sat two rather elderly ladies whispering eagerly to each other and casting furtive glances at the Damrosches. Finally one of them could control her curiosity no longer and approached the other table.

"Aren't you Mr. Damrosch?" she asked.

He admitted he was. She turned triumphantly to her companion and announced, "There, didn't I tell you so," and feeling an explanation was necessary, she said to Mr. Damrosch: "I knew you when I heard you order those lamb chops. I recognized your voice."

CHUCKLING gleefully over this request, Levitski agreed. He was even more gleeful later when a young couple dancing by threw out the remark: "Gosh! You're good! You play for a real jazz band somewhere, don't you?"

There is Rudolf Ganz, who is as devoted to dancing as is Levitski. He loves playing practical jokes and has been known to write vitriolic anonymous letters to the newspapers, criticizing the way he himself conducted an orchestral work or played a piano composition.

Pass any of the off-stage personalities of the greater artists in review and there will be seen an amazingly human assembly, with all the weaknesses, foibles and enthusiasms of less fortunately endowed mortals.

Many an artist comes off the concert stage at the end of a performance in a state of complete exhaustion. Then, instead of the rest and privacy that he craves at the moment, he must go to the greenroom and greet as cordially as possible the hordes of people who make a practice of shaking hands with the performer, asking him for his autograph, trying to get him to play at that and that charity.

Is it any wonder that Paderewski likes to slip into a darkened movie house, where no one can see or recognize him, and where he can enjoy a hearty laugh over a comic picture like any ordinary human being?