

Music in Palestine

An Interview with Ossip Gabrilowitch.

"They till the soil all Day, and in the Evening they listen to Theory, Harmony and Composition."

OSSIP GABRILOWITCH, world-known Russian Jewish composer and pianist, is the Director of the Detroit Symphony, and a Symphony is a very serious attempt. It takes an immense wealth of technical knowledge as well as a large volume of inspiration to give it interest and variety.

As Mr. Gabrilowitch appeared to me an ideal subject for an article or interview, I wrote him to this effect. When his secretary informed me I would be received the following Saturday afternoon between the hours of five and six, I seized upon the privilege with delight. It meant for me a more favourable and balanced opportunity to study at close range a famous Director, and it was with some awe that I made my way to his home.

As luck would have it, my watch was a trifle fast, so I strolled along beautiful Boston Boulevard for a few blocks, and, lo and behold, I met the "Director" himself. For the moment I was stunned—you know, I had planned to say so many things, and instead, I found myself pointing my finger at him and saying rather

its fur. And how it purred, brrr. . . . But—(sotto voce)—I still don't like cats.

AFTER the cat episode, Mr. Gabrilowitch led me into the drawing room. I was immediately interested and impressed by the arrangement of the room we were in. It was spacious and very happily furnished.

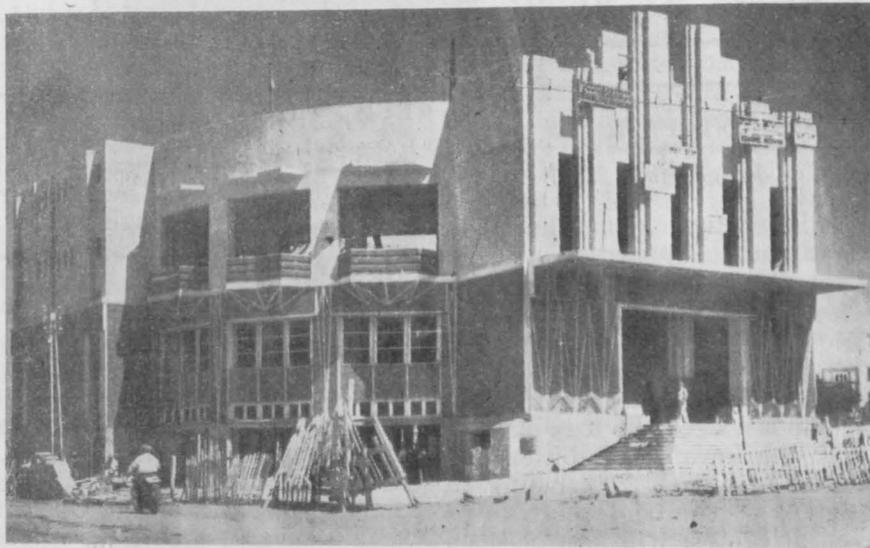
"I have a long list of questions," I announced. "I would like the remainder of the hour."

"What are they?" he asked.

"I believe you are interested in the advancement of music in Palestine; and this is not a small thing, when you take into consideration that the people are now primarily concerned with getting the bare necessities of life."

Seating himself on a small, comfortable sofa, and motioning me to sit beside him, he settled back, then just as quickly sat bolt upright and looked straight at me or through me, if you will, as if that were some cabalistic method of invoking thought.

He began to talk, and a strange thing happened. The more I looked at the famous "director" the longer



The new Opera House, in Tel Aviv, shortly before completion.

audaciously: "Why, Mr. Gabrilowitch, I have a five o'clock appointment with you." I think I detected a keen twinkle in his eye when he replied: "Yes, young lady, but you are early, and I thought I would have time to do an errand." This was said in almost schoolboy fashion, and when I suggested he go on his errand and I would continue to stroll until he returned, he politely took me by the arm and led me back to his home at Number 611.

On the way he stopped the caretaker, who was taking the dog out for an airing, patted the dog fondly, chatted for a few minutes; and then we were on our way again. He told me very enthusiastically of his Persian cat. Personally, I do not like cats, and when I told "Herr Director" this, he said: "Wait till you see my cat." By this time we had arrived at Mr. Gabrilowitch's door and sure enough the "cat" greeted us. It certainly is a beauty with an immense yellow, bushy tail and the largest green eyes.

Mr. Gabrilowitch immediately tried to tell me how like a tiger it was and held the cat in his arms, stroking

I seemed to have known him—I forgot I was interviewing for an article. I heard only the intimate conversation of a friend.

"You probably will recall that two years ago Mischa Elman and myself gave a joint recital in Carnegie Hall, New York, to provide funds for the newly-formed Society for Advancement of Music in Palestine. It was shortly after my visit there, and I had been deeply touched by the appreciation music was receiving.

"Picture, if you can, highly educated and intellectual men and women, who, with ardent spirit almost impossible to define, till the soil all day in the hot sun (and in Palestine the sun is hot!) and at the close of the day come to listen to lectures in theory, composition, harmony and fugue. To look at their intent faces is an inspiration in itself.

"If a visiting artist arrives and music is to be played or sung, a small bell is rung—immediately everything stops and people hurry to listen to the concert; and how they listen!

(Continued on next page.)

MUSIC IN PALESTINE.*(Concluded from previous page.)*

"It was during my visit that I got in touch with Dr. Rosovsky, Dr. David Schor and Harlamov and we started the Society for Advancement of Music.

"In Palestine there are now quite a number of eminent musicians. For instance, Dr. Rosovsky, who is doing very interesting research work in religious music, is very familiar with the old-time religious melodies and is also doing a great deal of research work in connection with Jewish folk lore.

"Dr. Rosovsky, who is expected in New York any day now, I knew as a distinguished composer in Russia. You may be interested to know that five years ago Dr. Rosovsky, at the age of 55, knew very little Hebrew; to-day all his lectures are given in Hebrew. His district is Jerusalem.

"In Tel-Aviv, Dr. David Schor, eminent pianist and music lecturer under the auspices of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is doing very fine work. He travels in the colonies lecturing on the history of music, and reports successful classes.

"Then there is Golenkin, formerly of the Opera in Moscow, who devotes his time and talent to developing the opera in Palestine.

"Latest reports from the Holy Land are that they have organised a Symphony Orchestra and have already given a number of concerts, and you know this is very near to my heart.

"Then, there is Harlamov, one of Russia's well-known conductors, who is now in Palestine; and Hopenko, who formerly conducted a good school of music in Russia, also migrated to Palestine."

I chided Mr. Gabrilowitch here for referring to Harlamov as a "conductor." It was front page news at the beginning of the musical season that Mr. Gabrilowitch wished to be referred to as the "director" of the Detroit Symphony and not its "conductor," he claiming that the former was the proper title.

He chuckled, and continued to tell me that Dr. Rosovsky's visit to New York was to be in connection with raising funds for the Society for Music Advancement in Palestine.

Mr. Gabrilowitch also told me he regretted not knowing Hebrew, and when in reply to his question I acknowledged a mere smattering of the language, he urged me to say what a privilege it was for Jewish youth to know and study Hebrew. He hoped young people from America would visit Palestine often, so that even those of us who were not likely to settle there might get closer understanding of what Palestine means to us Jews.

We chatted of the pros and cons of the Palestine situation at present and probably could have gone on ad infinitum; but I looked at my wrist watch. I had almost out-stayed my hour.

I felt I had received a new impetus. Would that I could convey to the Jewish Youth of America the fervour of his parting shot: "It's a privilege to know Hebrew."
D.L.

[By courtesy of Jewish Standard.]

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BETHLEHEM.

£12 5s. 3d. was the total yield from a recent Box clearance held in Bethlehem; £2 6s. 9d. was found in the Box of Mr. P. Seligson and £2 2s. 2d. in that of Mr. D. Seligson. Mrs. A. Vegelman's Box yielded £1 15s. 6d.; Mr. A. Hirschon's £1 15s., and Mr. A. Cowen's £1 3s. 3d.

KROONSTAD.

Eight amounts each over £1 and thirteen other sums were found in the 21 Boxes cleared in Kroonstad by Messrs. W. Kretzmer and M. Cohen last month.

The larger yields included £4 10s. from Mr. S. J. Kaplan, £3 15s. 6d. from the Box of Messrs Mitchell and Kaplan, £3 10s. 9d. from Mr. M. Nathanson, £2 14s. 6d. from Mr. I. Rabinowitz, £2 5s. from Mr. W. Kretzmer, £1 10s. from Kopelowitz, £1 5s. from Mr. L. Glasser and £1 2s. 6d. from Mr. Wainer.

MIDDELBURG (CAPE).

At the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Lazarow the amount of £1 15s. was collected for the Jewish National Fund.

PRETORIA.

The popular custom of transferring Jewish Colonial Trust shares to the Jewish National Fund has been followed by the Pretoria Zionist Society which, in accordance with a resolution passed at its annual general meeting on the 31st January, transferred to the Jewish National Fund 50 £1 shares in the Jewish Colonial Trust.

Through the offices of the same society, an inscription in the Golden Book was made in the name of Mr. Benjamin Gerstner by the members of the Chevra Kadisha in Pretoria, in appreciation of his services willingly rendered.

WESSELSBRON.**"Out of the Box."**

The high standard of J.N.F. Box yields set in Wesselsbron was maintained during the February Box clearance when two Boxes, those of Messrs. B. and H. Sheval and S. Swerdlow, yielded respectively £4 9s. and £2 9s. 6d.

WORCESTER.

The February Box clearance organised in Worcester by Mr. M. Rabinowitz yielded the amount of £11 18s. 6d. from a total of 33 Boxes. The highest yield in one Box was that of Mr. I. Jaffe of £1 1s. 3d., followed by Mr. J. J. Wilk's Box with £1.

At the Bris Milah of the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Berger took place on the 1st inst. After the ceremony a reception was held, Mr. J. Rabinowitz presiding. Toasts were proposed by Rev. E. Stein and Mr. Ch. Levin to which Mr. N. Berger responded. An amount of £1 1s. was collected for the Jewish National Fund.