

The Daily Post, Peru, Illinois
Wednesday, February 18, 1908

ALL ENRAPTURED BY MAUD POWELL

Recital in Her native City a Happy Event.

ARTISTRY DAZZLES PUBLIC

Peru Woman Who Returns to Birthplace and Affords Rare Treat to Her Townspeople

Storm-driven but resolute, about four hundred persons braved the blizzard and came to Turn Hall last night to hear Peru's own daughter and one of the world's greatest violinists play her magnificent Guadagnini with the hand of genius. Her appearance in Peru was in the nature of a home-coming, as Superintendent Hart of the public schools pointed out in a few introductory remarks at the beginning of the recital. Her welcome by the audience was most cordial, and a feeling of direct, personal attachment to the dark, slender, sympathetic, wonderful woman to whom the whole musical world pays homage, took possession of everyone present.

In response to the warm greeting extended her, Mme. Powell played "Home, Sweet Home" to express her feeling toward this city and its inhabitants. This tender melody and its particular significance on this occasion at once put the artist and her audience into perfect accord. Those present felt that the graceful way Mme. Powell had chosen of showing her love for Peru made the affair not so much a formal musical recital as a glad reunion of old friends long separated.

The number of out of town persons in attendance was not large on account of the heavy snowfall. Perhaps twenty-five were present from La Salle, but from other points along the interurban none attended, as the entire system was blockaded, though tickets had been sold to crowd the hall, but as it was there were many empty chairs.

The following was Mme. Powell's program selected for her Peru appearance.

Program

Grieg, Sonata, G Major, Opus 12
Lento Doloroso
Allegro

[NOTE: NEWS CLIPPING IS CUT OFF HERE]

Great Musical Event.

Maud Powell's playing transported the audience. She who has won the plaudits of music-lovers, as well as the enthusiastic appreciation of the keenest knowers of the best in violin music everywhere in the world, threw a spell of witchery and power over those who heard her last night. Everything the critics have praised her for – her wonderful rendition of harmonic passages, her breadth of bowing, her flawless intonation even in the most difficult passages, her soulful tonal quality, her clearness of double stopping, her remarkable strength and delicacy — all the riches of her genius that have won her distinction and fame, were poured with a glad heart into the laps of her entranced listeners.

Her playing of Schuman's delicate "Traumerei" touched the audience most. Her rendition was so superbly masterful and seemed to express in music so completely the bond of sympathy between the player and her hearers that she repeated the piece in appreciation of the applause she received. She also responded to two other encores.

Thanks to the devotion of Mme. Powell to Peru and the efforts of the Symphony club, those who hear her last night spent some of the most delightful moments of their lives and the event will not readily be effaced from memory.

After the completion of the program, Mme. Powell met many of those present in the hall who had signified a wish to speak a few words with her. Her graciousness of nature further endeared her to the hearts of those Peru people who were fortunate enough to meet her.

Talks of Violins.

Some one asked the artist as to her Guadagnini violin, when, she exclaimed joyously, "You simply can't appreciate how beautiful an instrument this is. Look at its big, broad chest under the bridge. No hollow, caved-in, consumptive lines there. Then listen," rapping the wood with her knuckles, "do you hear that strong healthy ring? This fellow never knows what it means to be frozen, husky and hoarse; he's a big, lusty boy, whom I do love to thrash and beat black and blue, so different from the other violin in the box there, which is best likened to one of those gentle, many-mooded women of the world, who become stubborn, and, for sake of peace, must be cajoled and continually wooed.

"Do you know," she said, her voice, deepening and slowing down, "That the fine 'Strads' and 'Amatis' of the world have almost reached tone bottom, and that the Guadagninis and Bergonzis are about the only instruments of today that have good, solid bodies? Not long since I was playing one of the most famous of all the Strads. It had cost its owner \$15,000 and he was insanely proud of it. As I started to bow gently, its tones startled me with their strange, weird beauty. Then they excited my nerves and I began to draw heavily across the low strings, when to my positive shock, tone, power and beauty suddenly vanished. The quality had gone, Heaven knows where, and I was scraping bottom."

How Concert Was Arranged.

When Maud Powell was in Peru last November, she stated to the members of the Symphony club, "Now, I am a very businesslike woman and I want to have this matter arranged just as quickly as possible." She referred to the musicale of last evening. "So have your secretary correspond with mine in New York."

Were it not for this capacity for business details, Madame Powell would never be able to fill her appointments, which are so numerous as to occupy almost all her time.

While here last year, the single afternoon which she spent was crowded with many social appointments which she wished to fill, a duty she felt she owed to the many residents of Peru who knew her parents while they had their home here. On that afternoon she also met members of the Symphony club.

Woman of High Ideals.

"Her motto," said Mrs. Walter Maze, "is 'Not only to do well whatever I do, but to do better than the best.'" Madame Powell not only obeys her motto, but through her reverence for it, she instills the same devotion to her ideal among the persons who come in contact with her.

She does nothing but what comes from the dictates of her heart and neither will she do anything unless she is in absolute control of her powers, in order that she may be true to the mandates of her life's motto.

A Charming Personality.

Madame Powell is one of the most unassuming women one could meet – void of that overbearing attitude which some persons who have achieved greatness are too prone to assume. She speaks little of her successes, and is without the slightest trace of vanity. She is, in fact, a woman of the people, whose quiet modesty, coupled none the less with tremendous power to perform, wins her devoted friends and admirers.

Her association with Peru as the city of her birth and the home of her early childhood, fills even many of the humblest in this city with a justifiable pride. The respect and love of Peruvians for this world-famed violinist who honored her native city last night is profound and sincere.

There are two things that she feels proud of: the first of these is our common country, the United States being among all nations her accepted country; and the second is Peru, because it was her birthplace – the place where the forces of life that later were to elevate her to the very pinnacle of musical fame first played in and about her.

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education

The Daily News-Herald,
Peru, Illinois
February 24, 1908

FROM MAUD POWELL

Expresses Warm Appreciation of Her Reception in Peru.

Feb. 20, 1908

To the Editor of the Twin City News-Herald:

Dear Sir: – May I, through the columns of your esteemed paper, give greeting to the citizens of Peru, and express to them and to Mr. Simon, the florist, my deep gratitude for the magnificent floral tribute in form of a music stand which so symbolically awaited me on the stage of Turn Hall last Tuesday evening. Never, in all my artistic career, have I been the recipient of a gift more superb, nor of one that has touched a more responsive heart-chord, than did the beautiful presentation from the citizens of Peru, the picturesque homelike little city on the banks of the Illinois, – my birthplace.

The return to the city of my birth, the warm reception given me by the people of Peru, and of LaSalle and other neighboring towns, will live with me always as one of the most tender of memories. Many, many old friends of my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Paul, and of my dear father and mother, by coming to the concert through that terrible snow storm, showed a loyalty to them and to me, which touched me inexpressibly.

I only wish my father, who always loved Peru, could have felt the hand pressures and have seen the loyal glances of the eye that greeted his daughter after the program was played. It was very beautiful and sweet to hear Professor Hart's tribute to my father's memory, and to hear the same affectionate remembrance voiced by my friends whom I met afterwards.

I wish my little mother could have been strong enough to come with me – how the occasion would have warmed her heart! Now, I want to return to Peru some day when I am "off duty" and when I may have more opportunity of getting acquainted with all the old, and new friends.

With apologies, Mr. Editor, for taking so much of your space, and with a thousand thanks to the people of Peru for their kindnesses and loyalty, and again with warmest greeting, believe me,

Yours very sincerely
and gratefully,
MAUD POWELL

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education

The Oregon Daily Journal, Portland
 Wednesday Evening, November 25, 1908

GREAT LOG HUT INSPIRES

THE BEST FROM HER BOW

by G. I. W.

Nature's cathedral – that is what it is named. For though the logs have been hewn and brought together and reared into place to form a building after “man's plan,” though the branches above have been severed from their trunks and an echoing floor has been laid among the denuded trees, there is still the smell of the earth; still the majestic atmosphere of a forest of giants. And one had but to close one's eyes and open one's inner ears to hear the rustling of the branches; to hear the great silent voices of the forest.

Such, evidently, was the spell that was cast over Maud Powell, that poet . . . [illegible], when she first visited the Forestry building Monday. And when her breath came back, her first words were, “Oh, if only I had my violin; I want to play, play, play. And yesterday, she repeated the trip just to feel that inspiration again and to play her beloved violin among those silent remnants of aboriginal forests.

“I can't describe the feeling that came over me,” she said. “It is the same as when I first went into Westminster abbey. I felt that I must play then or I would never be happy again.”

Pours Out Soul Longings.

And with her I say, “I can't describe the feeling that came over me,” when I heard her play. It was a soul speaking to a soul – the soul of the woods. A few friends, a mere dozen admirers had followed her out there. But it was not to them she played. She was playing to those majestic elements of nature and to them she was pouring out all the longing of her soul; all the heartaches and the joys, all the ambitions of the artist's life. And as she played she proceeded to lay bare the beauty of her artistry and to explain the power of her art. And standing there in the farthest . . . [illegible], silhouetted against the subdued light of the translucent windows, it seemed a weird spirit hardly of this earth – more like one of the spiritual monks of old who would go into the vast house of God to pour out the struggle between his earthly desires and his . . . [illegible] aspirations.

She spoke to us through Fiorillo first in a study doubtless suggested by the cathedral tone of the place. Then a Vieuxtemps allegro was played and finally the “Traumerei,” which cannot altogether lose its beautiful charm even though heard every day of the week, and which acquires

a new charm under the magic bow of Maud Powell. And the laborers in the galleries ceased their work and came and leaned over the railing spellbound, their rough clothes more in keeping with the surroundings than were those of the other listeners. For in nature's haunts the humblest has his place. And as the last subdued tone rose to the ceiling and slowly died away there was a pause, and a long concerted sigh before the listeners came back to earth. I thought of the bereaved widower who heard her play when she was last out west and who wrote her after that, bowed down with grief as he had been, unable to reconcile the ways of God, he had first seen the light when she played "Traumerei" and it was the first gladness he had felt. That, Madame Powell prizes as the dearest reward ever given her, though she has been honored by crowned heads all through Europe.

Violin Sensitive to Dampness.

Well, then the practical minded one, for managers must be practical whether they wish or no, suggested that the place was too damp for longer exposure of her splendid Cremona violin and the concert came to an end. A short program, true, but never was there one better appreciated. And the silence would have been a speaking lesson to 999 out of 1000 modern audiences.

And as the violinist walked out she spoke of the wonder of such a place in the midst of our city – a place which she had heard a sordid minded conductor say, in answer to a stranger's inquiry, was "just a lot o' logs. Nothin' there to see." And we heard of some wonderful falls in South Africa where a lesson taken from our Niagara has caused a law to be passed forbidding any building of any kind, or even the laying out of a wagon road within a mile. The power is utilized at night only, there is no sign of machinery or mills near by, and after riding to a certain distance one must get out and climb by a trail. But that is in far off Africa, and not in practical, money making America.

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education

San Diego, California
Friday, December 11, 1908

Visit of Three Girls.

Tuesday afternoon three girls were taken to Coronado by two of the prominent musicians in this city. The girls were just simple women, real “outdoor people” prepared to enjoy everything, from a scramble for seats on the car to the glorious sunshine. Sunshine should come first, for they had to be in it every minute possible. For two of these girls are from England, where they have much fog, and one of them said wistfully, “We don’t have as much sun as you do and we like it.”

To hear their exclamations over the beauty of the trees, the sky and ocean one would not have known that they were queens. Yet they reign absolutely in the hearts of their audiences. The three were Miss Maud Powell (Mrs. Godfrey Turner), Miss May Mukle and Miss Anne Ford. Miss Ford and Miss Mukle are sisters [actually mother and daughter], but the two are not much alike in public. Mukle is a lovely child, with big dreamy brown eyes, and dark hair. She seldom laughs, but has a queer little smile, tight at the corners. She is charmingly naive and simple. Ford is more of the eagle type. Someone in Tuesday evening’s audience said that Ford’s profile was startlingly like that of the late Sir Henry Irving. Her hair is gray, her nose prominent, her lips firmly compressed and her eyes pierce through one. Sarcastic, almost, sardonic at times, so say some people who know her well. She is a woman who has lived and suffered and knows her world thoroughly. There is a peculiar grace in her movements, while Mukle has the soft awkwardness of the half-grown child.

Miss Powell.

Powell is the queen. If she had not been the queen of violinists she would have been the queen of something else, because she was born that way. She couldn’t help it. She would be at home in any position. Her manner is gracious, and her warm handclasp and sparkling smile win all hearts.

They viewed the court of the hotel, the blue ocean, the gorgeous sunset from the ferryboat and returned to the city to buy Mexican drawn work waists, these three real women.

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education

Musical Observer
February 1908

Maud Powell
(Title Page.)

Certainly the composer can thank his stars that it was Miss Powell who introduced this work to America; no other living violinist, unless it be Fritz Kreisler, could have made so much of it. It was admirable violin playing, from every point of view — why dwell on details? When Maud Powell plays, one thinks not of bowing and fingering, of staccato or legato, of harmonics or double stops, of trills — though they be, as hers are, Melba-like in their perfection; one thinks only of the music. Like a great actor, she makes one forget the player in the art. (Henry T. Finck in the N.Y. Evening Post after her performance of the new Sibelius Violin Concerto.)

It is with unusual pleasure that we present a picture of Miss Maud Powell to the readers of our present issue. It would hardly be possible to crowd all the vast amount of praise which has been showered upon this artist into one short article, particularly when we consider that such critics like W. J. Henderson declare her as *“Easily the first player among women and pretty near the top among men,”* while others proclaim her *“Queen of Violinists,”* *“The finest Violinist America has produced,”* *“The Leading Woman Violinist of the Day,”* *“One of the world’s greatest Violinists,”* *“The Wonder Woman of the Violin,”* *“The Sembrich of the Violin,”* *“Die Geigenfee,”* *“The Lady Paganini.”*

Mr. Gustav Kobbé, the eminent writer, has written a splendid sketch of Miss Powell’s career, which we take pleasure in reproducing herewith:

Miss Powell is famous because she is a great violinist, and she is great because she measures up to the standard of violin playing established by virtuosos of the highest rank, without any allowance being made for the fact that she is a woman. “She is a blood descendent of Spohr,” wrote a distinguished critic [W. J. Henderson] of her last winter, “and when she tucks her fiddle under her chin, she makes a solemn reverence before the altar of music and officiates as a priestess in the temple.”

She was born in Peru, Illinois. Her father was Welsh and his knowledge of music was limited to singing hymn tunes in sections as they were “lined out” in the old style from the pulpit, the minister reading a line and the congregation then singing it, and on through to the end of the hymn. “My mother, however,” say Miss Powell, in telling of her own early years, “is musical, but her talent, whatever it might have been with cultivation remained undeveloped. She often says to me, “I have achieved through you what I was never able to do myself. It was my mother who, so to speak, first tried music on me, to find out if I was musical.”

Miss Powell began taking violin lessons in this country when she was eight years old. Her first teacher was William Lewis of Chicago, who, doubtless because of her very evident earnestness, took great interest in her. She describes him as an “unfettered” player, without much refinement of technique, but extremely vigorous and “rugged.” Within artistic limits Miss Powell puts a splendid energy into her own playing and there seems little doubt but that some of this energy can be attributed to her early lessons with this “unfettered” player.

Miss Powell studied with Lewis four years. When she returned from Europe and made her preliminary debut in the Theodore Thomas a summer concerts in Chicago, her old teacher was in the audience. She played the Max Bruch Concerto, and when he heard the artiste, who, as a slip of a girl, had left him to go abroad, playing this concerto with complete mastery of its difficulties and a full understanding of its depth and beauty – playing it as he could not have done himself – “the dear man,” to quote Miss Powell, “sat there dissolved in tears.” Soon afterwards she had the “joy,” as she expresses it, of playing for his violin class, and it always has been a source of satisfaction to her that she had the opportunity of doing this because, before another similar chance would have presented itself, he had died.

When Maud Powell went abroad, a girl of twelve, she studied first with Schradieck in Leipsic and then with Dancla in Paris. Afterward Joachim heard her play in London and offered to take her into his classes in Berlin without obliging her to go through any further preliminary studies. The great advantage of being with Joachim was to hear him illustrate. He would be listening to a pupil, stop him in the middle of a phrase and say, “Play it this way,” then pick up the violin and play it for him. And the sincerity of the man was so great and his personality in music so powerful that he made every example of this kind a “shining example.”

I heard Miss Powell when she made her debut with the New York Philharmonic in . . . [1885] in the Bruch G minor concerto. She played even then with a large, solid tone and a technique that was finished without being finicky. Classical repose, romantic tenderness, grace, esprit and great technical nerve – all of these are points in her style and can be brought into play by her when called for by the composition she is interpreting. She is sufficiently modern to re-create through her own individuality whatever she interprets without, however, turning a piece inside out so far as perverting its composer’s meaning is concerned. Practically everything that is worthy in violin literature is in her repertoire and she is constantly seeking to add to it by trying over new music. Like all distinguished violinists she finds the music for the instrument limited in quantity and she is now going back and making re-discovery of some of the very old Italian violin compositions – works by Tartini, Corelli and Vivaldi, who were masters of the instrument in their day and composed many pieces which can, she finds, with slight modernizing, be made to serve in the repertoire of the twentieth century.

Miss Powell’s present season has been one of unusual activity and success. Her season commenced at the Worcester Festival on October 3d, followed up by concert appearances in the following widely distant cities: Aurora, Ill.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Danville, Ill.; Helena, Mont.; Missoula, Wash.; Spokane, Wash.; Pullman, Wash.; Seattle, Wash.; Frederick, Md.; Tacoma, Wash.; Portland, Ore.; Chicago, Ill.; Palo Alto, Cal.; Fresno, Cal.; Los Angeles, Cal.; Claremont, Cal.; San Diego, Cal.; Painesville, Ohio;; Denver, Col.; Pueblo, Col.; Ogden, Utah; Salt Lake

City, Utah; Oberlin, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; Allentown, Pa.; Baltimore, Md.; Toledo, Ohio, etc. This was followed by a tour through the extreme Southwest during which Dallas and San Antonio, Tex. were visited. She returned towards the end of December and on January 3d took part in Miss May Mukle's concert at Mendelssohn Hall, mentioned in another column of this issue. It is reported that on this most recent Western tour, Miss Powell created a deeper impression than any left by any of her predecessors. The press throughout the land have insisted that she has created a new standard of violin playing. Miss Powell has also been most fortunate in the selection of her accompanist — Mr. Maurice Eisner — a pianist of rare qualities, admirably fitted for the delicate and as everyone knows, most artistic duties of a real accompanist.

In conclusion, we quote a few words from the pen of Mr. J. A. Hoffman of the "Cincinnati Enquirer," which to our mind, describe the real secrets of Miss Powell's great success most fittingly:

"Among the great violinists of the present day, irrespective of sex, there is not one that appeals more directly to the heart than Maud Powell. It is not only sincere art but deeply absorbed feeling that carries the audience away with her. The difficulties of the concerto (and it abounds with them) were played with such ease and repose that they did not seem to exist at all. The clarity of her tone was marvelous at all times, even in the most pronounced bravura passages. With this repose so utterly free from the suspicion of mannerisms it is wonderful how much genuine passion and sentiment she can put into her interpretations."

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education

Excerpt from clipping with no title
New York Evening Post, February 19, 1910

FRITZ KREISLER ON MAUD POWELL

Fritz Kreisler, in an interview printed in last Sunday's *Sun*, spoke of the great physical endurance necessary to become a distinguished violinist as one of the reasons why feminine musicians of this class are in such a "terrifically sad minority." "I have heard but two women," he declares, "whom I consider masters of the bow. One of these is Maud Powell, the other Lady Hallé (Norman Neruda). There may be others, but I do not happen to have heard of them or had personal evidence of their skill."

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education

Musical Observer
 March 1920

Maud Powell as I Knew Her — A Tribute

By Edith L. Winn

The greatest American woman violinist has passed away. She was the idol of the American girl violinist, and the model. Indeed, she was responsible for inspiring more girls to enter the profession, or at least to study the violin seriously, than any other woman in the country.

I had not the privilege of hearing Lady Halle (Norman Neruda) in my girlhood, although the memory of Camilla Urso still lingers in my mind. But she was not an American. Maud Powell was vitally an American. There was something unusual in her handclasp. I have felt the same thing in grasping the hand of a very celebrated novelist, and once in the case of a world-famed painter, a woman also. I should say it was more than a firm, warm greeting. Rather was it energy, genius, if you will call it so, vitalized by character.

Miss Powell's career was devoid of the sensational element. An inheritance of fine mentality, uprightness, integrity, and love of the beautiful in art, poetry and literature, was hers. She was not robust, but she had the will of ten women, and she worked to the limit of her strength, as her sudden death proved. Undoubtedly her unconquerable determination to succeed went far toward success. But she was also unusually gifted.

I first met Miss Powell in the early nineties. She was tall, graceful, thin, lithe, with dark eyes that looked straight into mine, with rare enthusiasm. Her fine brown hair waved back from a low forehead. Her smile was like that of one who has boundless optimism. Up to the time of her death, her bearing was as erect and her presence as youthful and vivacious as in early life, with the exception of the inevitable marks of passing years that no amount of enthusiasm nor ambition can quench. What was the secret of this youthfulness? I answer – unquenchable faith in her mission toward art. Her spirit kept her fresh for her work and that spirit was born of lofty patriotism.

At the time I first heard Miss Powell play in a college town near Pittsburg everything seemed very vague to me. I had little money for a career and less health. Miss Powell inspired me to high endeavor. I whispered my eager desire to go to Berlin to study, and dared mention the name of Joachim as a possible teacher.

“Don't think of him,” said Miss Powell, as she caught up the train of her bright red dress (she wore brilliant colors in those days). “Joachim is too busy to teach you. Go to [Heinrich] Jacobsen. He is careful of details. But do not narrow yourself down to a mere school. Study in various schools, and get the viewpoint of many good teachers.”

I pondered on this talk that night, as I lay feverishly tossing in my bed. Could I really go to Berlin to study? Maud Powell would certainly not have encouraged me to do so, had she not had some faith in me.

In two years' time my dream came true. I knocked at the door of the great Joachim and was admitted. Then I learned how Maud Powell had worked, and how proud the teachers at the Hochschule were of her achievements. I was assigned to Jacobsen and wended my way out to Lichterfelde [a locality in the borough of Steglitz-Zehlendorf in Berlin]. The strange thing was that I thought Berlin was the only place in the world where one could pursue art in the truest way. I have, like Miss Powell, departed from the creed long ago. No musician can grow and thrive on one kind of diet. Yet I shall always feel that Joachim was the greatest artist I have ever known.

Many persons educated abroad become in some degree ex-patriated. It is not so with strong natures. Maud Powell became more and more American as the time went on. I do not doubt that her life in England was very satisfactory and stimulating. But she came back to do her part in our musical life, and she did it well.

Some time ago I said to her, "What a world of good you are doing by playing at so many schools and colleges all over the country." "I must carry a message as long as I am able," she answered. Her husband, Mr. Turner, who was her manager, put it thus: "She accepts engagements at small colleges or for Women's Clubs, because she wishes to carry inspiration to the people who do not ordinarily hear artists of her rank. It is a sacred trust with her. And she will continue to do it as long as she can."

"Why do you play so many American works?" I asked of Miss Powell.

"I have been criticised for this," she answered, "but I invariably say that American artists owe it to their country to play the best examples of American music. How can we expect to have any national music, if someone does not play these works publicly? Foreign artists come over here and take enormous sums of money out of the country. They have not really served us vitally. They are not in sympathy with our institutions. They rarely play works by American composers. On the contrary they belittle our composers. I must try to do what I can for American music."

There have been those who wondered if the well-springs of Miss Powell's life were deep, she was one time so eminently a classicist. Those of us who have followed her career closely found in her great tenderness, but no false and affected emotionalism; also a restrained and pure conception of classic literature, and a deep and abiding faith in men and women, enabling her to touch life at all points and reflect it in her music. She had not the sensuous tone, the chameleon-like caprice of some artists before the public, nor had she the charm of a Slav. We will admit that she was essentially American. But we will also affirm that when she played the works of

Sibelius, Tschaikowsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff, she showed imagination, fire and vigor of style not to be belittled by the continental player.

In the Concerto by Sibelius, which, by the way, she played first in America, she showed in a marked degree that she understood nationalism as revealed in music. She was a great traveler, very cosmopolitan, an excellent linguist, and a woman of fine and acute perceptions. Her imagination and humanitarian sympathy gave vitality to her conceptions of all works of all periods, but she always felt that influences of achievements in war, science, philosophy, invention, political aspects too, as closely affiliated with music.

I do not think Miss Powell liked to regard herself as the distinct product of the Berlin school, or of any school in particular. She emancipated herself very early in her career from strict creeds. The classics were to her very sacred, yet I doubt if she ever followed letter-by-letter, precept-by-precept, the dominating influence of any one teacher. There are those today who would assert that the Berlin school has been the best, greatest, and most inspired school. Joachim was a great artist, but his great pupils – where are they?

From the first Miss Powell followed her unerring instinct, and while well-taught, she reasoned out her own conclusions.

Many women violinists, some American by birth, have come and gone. Maud Powell distanced them all, mainly because she allowed nothing to interfere with her conception of great works, no not even a creed or a school. Others played as taught, and were mere reflections of some great teacher. She used her brain in working out principles, and when away from the master's hand was able to make her future sure and successful by her own intelligence and superior musicianship. No one worked harder to perfect and add to an extensive repertoire. While others were content to be mere virtuosi, she was bent on being a broad musician and a truly educated woman. There were books on her table; there were thoughts in her mind of woman's work in all lines of activity; she felt the world's needs in the larger sense.

I have never known Maud Powell to cheapen her art, nor to play badly. She played in her concerts in the South and West the same programs as in New York and Boston. The public did not know her by a few miniatures, some little gems good enough in themselves, but misleading to students who realize little concerning the great amount of solid material to be studied. She had a large and varied repertoire, constantly changing as it were. She played in Oklahoma as in New York – the great literature of the violin. That was to her a mission. And thousands heard her, while many young women awoke to earnestness in the art she loved. She, more than anyone in America, has created, abetted and inspired the American girl violinist.

HER VIEWS OF AN AMERICAN SCHOOL OF VIOLIN

“The best points of all schools should be assimilated. It is clearly a case of Zangwill's idea of the melting pot. What sort of school will be boiled down ultimately, only time will tell. We are critical and analytical, and it is to be hoped, synthetic. Why should we not built up a school of our own? I mean a school of playing, not composition, though I also believe we may

and should have a school of composition. That may not take rank with the Russian, German, French or Italian conviction of expression, but shall be a lower form, reaching all degrees of people and culture. The greatest good for the greatest number. Valuable in a larger artistic sense to the race in general than to the small cultured musical world.”

“What do you think of the general education necessary for violinists?” I once asked.

Miss Powell reflected a moment. Then she replied very seriously, “The more education in all fields the better it is for the musician. But the musical education and especially the acrobatic, physical (technical) part of that education must begin very young indeed and take first place. The first object of education, viz., discipline of mind and self, can be achieved through specialized training quite as well as through school training. Then, as the pupil grows older and stronger, information should be acquired to the utmost extent commensurate with health and strength.”

I would call attention to the number of works Miss Powell played for the first time in America:

Harry Rowe Shelly, Concerto G Minor; Henry Holden Huss, Concerto D Minor, Polonaise, Romanza, Trio for Pianoforte, Violin and Cello; Mrs. H. H. A. Beach, Romance (played by Miss Powell with the composer at the piano at the Women’s Congress World’s Fair, Chicago, in 1893.) Smaller pieces by Marion Bauer, Edwin Grasse, Walter Kramer, Ernest Lent, Cecil Burleigh, Harry M. Gilbert, Arthur Bergh, and many others.

Among important works by European composers which Miss Powell gave initial performances of in the United States, may be mentioned the concertos by Tschaiakowsky, Dvorak, Lalo (Concerto a la Russe), Sibelius, Saint-Saëns (C Minor), S. Coleridge-Taylor, (G Minor) and Rimsky-Korsakoff’s “Fantaisie.”

One way in which Miss Powell reached the people as she wished to do was through the Victor records, which contain examples of her best work. She never played trifles if unworthy trifles. There were movements of concertos on the list, and many short classic works. She composed very little, being quite satisfied with the transcriptions she introduced in her repertoire.

In her last years Miss Powell appeared less and less with the great Symphony Orchestras. This fact was not due to her waning powers but to a very strong desire to visit schools, colleges, and smaller cities remote from the musical life of great cities. She wished to educate the great American public as she could by going to the public. To touch life at all points was her idea. Sometime before her death, she wrote me from a Southern city:

“A student of the violin, seventeen years old, who has studied five years, and who has plenty of talent, producing a pleasing tone, played to me yesterday, and what do you think she played? A Serenade by Drdla! And then she asked me if I thought she could some day become a player like Maud Powell if she went on working!

“There is that deplorable tendency in America to study amateurishly and yet have artistic aspirations. Teachers and parents have no high standards. The great aim seems to be to play something pleasing. This girl, like many others, was striving to play rubato and badly imitating artistic subtleties before she had learned to enunciate clearly a simple line of melody. Training on the Handel Sonatas, David or De Bériot Concertos, Kreutzer and Rode Concertos, and others, was what she ought to have had. If we could only institute an educational branch in the talking machines, it might help some. These young players think that because our artists do short encore numbers for the machines, – like *Traumerei*, Dvořák’s *Humoreske*, or Saint-Saëns’ *Le Cygne*, that they must make these their life study or at least daily food. If they could but realize that these trifles are but as tiny petals of small flowers that grow in season on the musical tree, and that this tree of musical knowledge takes a long time to grow and must be watched and nurtured and trained for years before it reaches dignified stature, we might hope for better things artistically.”

The last words I heard from the inspired lips of Phillips Brooks lingered long in my memory.

“A woman may not be beautiful at twenty-five,” said he, “but it is her own fault if she is not beautiful at fifty.”

Miss Powell was a beautiful woman at fifty, especially as looked upon by her friends in and out of the profession. There was a poise that came with the years, a softening influence felt in her presence and in her low clear voice, that reflected the expansion of a noble soul.

NOTE: Although this article does not give in detail the facts concerning Miss Powell’s study with Schradieck and Dancla, we must not forget that until the close of her life she was deeply indebted to both artists in a very great degree. Her devotion to Schradieck, who always attended her concerts in New York and vicinity, was touchingly beautiful. See “Violin Mastery” by Frederick H. Martens.)

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education

Musical America, New York,
Saturday, 9 October 1926, p. 32

Painter Finds Musicians Ideal Subjects for His Canvas

By *HELEN MILLER CUTLER*

Nicholas Brewer Tells of Doing Powell and Paderewski Portraits, of the Peculiar Inspiration Gleaned from Musical Models

Of the types that are a joy to the painter who is looking for a good subject, musicians rank high among the preferables. Their deeply emotional lives, their sensitiveness, the great intellectuality of the of the best specimens of the musically gifted—all these qualities are limned in their features, reflected in their movements and manner. And such subtleties, with the challenge they fling at the painter who would catch them upon the canvas, are enticements that the true artist looks for. They call upon the utmost responsiveness of his skill.

Nicholas Brewer, American portrait painter, whom I met in Texas, is just such a painter. In his rooms in Beaumont, I caught him in a reminiscing mood, and soon he was talking about some musicians he had painted.

“It was after Maud Powell came home from her great tour of South Africa in 1905, giving forty concerts in a couple of months, that I met her in New York and decided to paint her,” he said. “For years I had been following accounts of her career with great interest, because next to art I love music. But I had never dreamed of her as the subject of a fine canvas—not until I saw her strong face with its distinctive features, her fine silky hair piled high, and her stately figure. There was something very queenly about Maud Powell. Perhaps it was the result of her playing for all of the crowned heads of Europe, from Edward of England to the Czar of Russia. Everywhere she went she had been entertained by the nobility, and it had undoubtedly left its marks of super-refinement upon her.

Artistic Modesty

“When I told her what an honor I considered it to paint so fine a violinist, she laughed and said sincerely, ‘I am surprised to find you as ignorant as the rest. Why, my dear Mr. Brewer, I am so far from perfect that it is appalling to me.’ And that was when she was at the height of her career, following her great successes in Leipzig, Paris, New York, London and every great city of the world. She had been modest about her genius since her childhood and that modesty remained with her until her death a few years back. No matter how gloriously the critics praised her, her head was never turned.

“And one could see modesty in her face. I have tried to paint it into the portrait. Maud Powell was very easy to paint because her features were so distinctive and she had such perfect poise that she could sit without moving for an hour. She lacked utterly the nervous temperament of so many artists. In order to get the full vitality of her eyes, I would ask her questions about people

whom she liked and watch her eyes glow and scintillate. Once I asked her to tell me about her old master, Joachim.

“‘I shall always remember his quiet, staunch and upright ways,’ she replied. ‘He was so kind and sincere and frank. Oh, how I hate the superficial diplomacy and insincerity and gruffness of so many apparently well bred people of the Twentieth Century! It is that sincerity which impressed me so upon my recent trip through South Africa. Oh, Mr. Brewer, you would love to have painted some of the those people. There is so much character in their faces.’ ”

Speaking of the South Africans, Maud Powell became quite philosophical in her talk to Mr. Brewer.

“ ‘They gave me a new view of life, which I think brought a new note into my playing. A musician must study humanity before he can accomplish big things. All master musicians must be first of all psychologists, just as Shakespeare was in literature. First it is necessary to retire into ourselves and test our knowledge by the experiences of our own soul. Would it were possible for all of us, before we attempt to sound the depths of inspired beings, to retire into solitude and study music by studying ourselves.’ ”

Studied Human Nature

Maud Powell’s father was a literary man, and that undoubtedly accounts for the fact that she spent all her spare time reading and studying human nature. Her death in 1920 from a nervous breakdown was a shock to Mr. Brewer, inasmuch as he had found her so calm and lacking in nerves fifteen years earlier.

When Mr. Brewer painted Ignace Jan Paderewski, it was following the pianist’s long absence from the concert stage and immediately after his return to this country to prepare himself for another tour. The artist visited him at his home in Paso Robles, Cal., where he posed in a white suit on a late summer Sunday. His mind was at that time filled with little but thoughts of his struggle in Poland, and he told Mr. Brewer many interesting things about the conditions there.

“‘But they would not be of interest now,” said Mr. Brewer, “for everybody, including Mr. Paderewski, prefers to forget the war. There were just one of two things about which the pianist could laugh, however. He was telling me, for instance, about his struggle in Paris at the Conference when he was Premier. He felt like a boy whose mother told him to do one thing and whose father advised the opposite.

“ ‘We don’t want you to keep on fighting!’ ” Lloyd George had insisted.

“ ‘Ah, we don’t want you to stop fighting!’ ” Clemenceau had then said.

“ ‘What could I do?’ Paderewski shrugged his shoulders and a smile crossed his serious face. But I did not attempt to catch the smile in my portrait, for there was so much depth in the serenity of his serious moments. But he was hard to paint, because, unlike Maud Powell, he was restless. He kept turning in his chair and looking straight at me.

“‘So the next day I asked a friend to accompany me and engage Mr. Paderewski in conversation from another part of the room. The ruse worked admirably, and from that moment on I had no further difficulties.’ ”

Mr. Brewer says that the reason he likes to paint musicians is because of the shape of their heads.

“‘One can always tell a real musician,’ he said, “by the head, the way in which it sits on the neck, its shape and its surface contour. Once, for instance, I visited an Indian reservation and was

looking about for a good subject to paint. 'Fading Glories' was presented to me. and the first thing I said to him was 'You are musical are you not?'

" 'I sing,' he replied.

"And I learned that he was the principal in a mission play which involved considerable music. He was a wonderful subject—never moved an eyelash for hours. Indians are renowned not only for their ability but their habit of standing still for endless time. Hands crossed and feet apart, they will stand gazing at the distant landscape, as if reflecting upon the nearing end of their race."

In 1857 Nicholas Brewer was born in the wilderness of Minnesota in a cabin built by his father, who was a pioneer. Near that very spot Mr. Brewer has now built himself a beautiful home and is retiring there this fall to spend the rest of his life writing his biography, his artistic principles and his philosophy of life. Of course, he will continue to paint but not as prolifically. For among his numerous portraits are those of Henry Ward Beecher, Joseph Jefferson, the actor, the Vanderbilt family, the Oelrichs, Cardinal Mundelein, Governor Sprague, noted Civil War governor of Rhode Island, Margaret Anglin, Ellen Beach Yaw, Hon. Justice Pierce Butler of the Supreme Court, and many other noted people.

"When I go to a concert," he says, "I enjoy the music if it is good, but more than that I enjoy studying the character of the musician. You may find it in his playing, but I find it in his face."

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education



Etude
n.d.
Excerpt

Side Lights on Memorizing
by Ellen Amey

In an article by Maud Powell, which appeared some years ago, she said that if a passage gave her trouble to retain in the memory, she immediately tried until she found some trick, generally through the fingering or position, that helped her fix it in the mind. Capable of any invention to meet an exigency, it would seem that she found it efficacious to make an impression upon the motor sense.

From the Archives of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education

Musical Observer
November 1912

Continued Success of Maud Powell

Maud Powell, who, without question, is the most prominent and most important lady violinist before the public to-day, is again preparing for a very active concert season.

In a recent interview with her manager, much of general interest pertaining to this remarkable violin player was discussed. Among other things, her manager spoke of noticing one remarkable thing which seems to have pursued Maud Powell during the whole of her career. Above all things, she is a pioneer, although this fact is not generally recognized. It has always been noticed, particularly in her case, wherever she has broken ground for others to follow, the late-comer invariably comes in for the credit. Almost everything she does is done in a quiet and dignified way, without the tricks of a showman. She is imitated and the imitator is credited with originality, which may be proven by the following little occurrence, caused by a program note.

Maud Powell has been in the habit of giving program notes for years, and strange to say, a musical journal only recently announced that the idea had originated with a pianist who had started it last season.

This reminds one of a rather funny little story which may be of interest to "*Musical Observer*" readers. Program notes sometimes give offense to certain musicians, but it is certain that the average concert-goer must have explanations and these notes help a great deal. The concert-goer must be told that a Sonata is chamber music and that it has so and so many movements or the chances are you will hear a remark to the effect of "Didn't she take up that encore quick."

Three years ago a critic on an important paper in a city of over 325,000 people, expressed his opinion, after hearing a Powell recital, that she was an over-rated artist and that she "even had to read from the score."

In this case, the gentleman had reference to the Sonata, so it may be seen that he, of all others, should have had an explanatory note. Madame Powell probably gives better programs in smaller places than any other artist before the public to-day. Of this there is no question. During the month of October, she played throughout Wisconsin, each night in a different city with populations varying from 18,000 to 38,000. In each of these cities she gave a different program, and each one contained a sonata and a concerto. She is one of the few great artists who never plays down to an audience anywhere, and when considering that she is now entering upon her tenth consecutive season in this country, it is obvious that her aim has been the right one.

This season Mme. Powell has the valuable assistance of Thomas Musgrove, an English pianist of large experience, and it is very gratifying to hear from Mme. Powell that he is as successful with the audience as he is with his music.

[KAS Note: Powell would usually offer a concerto (or a concerto movement) and a violin sonata on her programs, among a generous variety of other music. Although she performed most of the recital standing, she explained in some of her program notes and demonstrated in person that a sonata is chamber music which is performed with the players seated before a music stand (even though Powell always knew all of her music from memory)].

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