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MISS POWELL, THE FOREMOST WOMAN VIOLINIST OF AMERICA

Miss Maud Powell stands head and shoulders over her compeer violinists. Her position is unique. The question does not rise as to whether she be the foremost of women violinists. She is absolutely the leading violinist in America today. Marvelously gifted, she has disclosed the instincts of a born artist, allied to the keen, broad intelligence of a master mind.

It has been often said that Miss Powell plays like a man. It is true she has a masculine strength and power in her handling of the bow; nevertheless she possesses the tenderness and poetry of a thorough woman.

She has played in every important series of high class concerts given in this country, and when Mr. Van der Stüchen made his arrangements for the trip of the Arions, in 1891, it was requested by the committee to look about for a representative American musician, who might be taken to Europe as an example of what America could produce in the way of a player. His choice fell upon Maud Powell. The reception in the musical centers of Germany fully justified the selection. She was declared to be not only a great artist, but one of the greatest of contemporary violinists.

The memorable closing words of Miss Powell's paper, read at the Musical Congress of the World's Fair, give the keynote of her success:

"Art is long, and time is fleeting, and to achieve something of the best, one must do three things — first, work; second, still work, and third, ever work."

Miss Powell's father, Prof. Powell, is an American born, and is today one of the foremost educators in Chicago, having been connected for years with the public school system. Her mother is of German by birth, and is a woman of highly artistic temperament, and vigorous mind. Miss Powell often speaks of her mother's marvelous powers of intuition, and she ascribes her musical temperament to the maternal side of the family.

"I owe all to my mother," declares Miss Powell. "It was her persistency, her faith, her courage that inspired me. Of myself, I might have failed."

Miss Powell was born in Aurora, Illinois. At eight years of age she was an excellent pianist, when much against her will, her mother decided to have her study the violin. It was a constant struggle for the sensitive child to carry her violin case through the streets of the little town, until, upon a memorable day, she was taken to hear Camilla Urso. For the first time she realized the possibilities of the despised instrument. From that moment she worked with an

understanding of the end to be attained. “One woman,” she thought, “has mastered the violin, why should not another?”

Miss Powell was trained as a child to the habit of systematic study. There were four years of incessant drudgery under Prof. Lewis, of Chicago, the child traveling a distance of forty miles for each lesson. At the age of twelve, Prof. Lewis, foreseeing the brilliant future of his young pupil, advised her parents to send her to the Leipzig Conservatory. Not only was she admitted at once, but at the end of a few weeks she was invited to play at the conservatory concerts, and at the end of the first year she played a Gewandhaus public examination and was awarded the highest diploma offered for the contest.

From Leipzig, Miss Powell went to Paris and made an application to enter the class of Dancla, the famous violinist. There were eighty applications and only twelve vacancies, Miss Powell being unanimously awarded by the judges the first place on the list.

When the young girl had finished her studies she gave a series of concerts in London, and was about to return to America, when Joachim, the greatest living violinist, heard her play. “I expected to hear a prodigy,” he said, “but I found an artist. She has a very great talent.” He persuaded her mother to change their plans and place her daughter for a year of study under him in Berlin. Among Miss Powell’s most valued possessions is the photograph of Joachim with the inscription, “To my talented, industrious, and dear pupil, Maud Powell, in remembrance of Joseph Joachim.”

When she returned to New York she walked into one of the Thomas rehearsals and asked them to hear her play. Her playing so pleased Mr. Thomas that then and there he agreed to bring her out at the first concert of the Philharmonic Society. Thus she was launched upon her successful career.

Miss Powell’s art grows and broadens from year to year. “I have just begun to know myself,” she says. “My best work lies in the future.”

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