

The Arkansas Gazette, Little Rock
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MAUDE [sic] POWELL ON MUSICAL CLUBS

Citing Little Rock Coterie as an Example, She Tells of Work Women's Clubs Are Doing for Art.

Miss Maude [sic] Powell, who has achieved an international reputation as the greatest violinist of her sex in the world and who is pronounced the greatest violinist that America has produced, arrived in the city yesterday and is a guest of the Hotel Marion. She talked interestingly to a Gazette newspaper representative on the influence the women's clubs of America have had on musical advancement, citing the Little Rock Musical Coterie as an example, and also of the struggles endured by ambitious artists while awaiting the recognition which their talents and the time and money spent in cultivating them warranted. This is Miss Powell's first visit to the South.

Notable Advance of Late Years

Asked about the progress of cultivation in musical taste in this country, Miss Powell said:

"There has been a most notable advance in the last 10 or 15 years, and I am satisfied that the women's musical clubs have been the greatest factor in this advance. This is my first tour in recital work. I have been en tour with Theodore Thomas' orchestra, in quartets and in concert, but never before in recital with only my accompanist. I am therefore in a position to judge. It is easy for the performer to recognize the exact appreciation of an audience; to know when your audience is really en rapport or only applauding perfunctorily just to be polite or because it is the proper thing to do. Our American men are practical, busy, energetic, money makers. Their wives are full of energy, too, and their club work is one exposition of it. Their work is all for good, all for the betterment, not only of woman, but of man, through woman, for the spiritual as well as the physical uplifting of the race, and music, as one of the most important factors, has not been neglected. I have been amazed at what the musical clubs have effected, not only among their own members, but in cultivating the musical taste of the community. I have just come from Texas. I found there women familiar with and able to discuss intelligently the most difficult works of the great composers, works which only a real musician can fully understand. You know that means a great deal. It means not a superficial love for good music, but an understanding grasp of its meaning which is highly gratifying.

"I have heard of your Coterie Club here. I understand that in addition to its regular meetings it has brought here at its own risk great artists like [Lillian] Nordica and [David] Bispham, impresaries [sic] like [Walter] Damrosch and other notables, whom your city would not have had the advantage of hearing otherwise. The people of Little Rock, owe such a club a

debt of gratitude, and it is just such work that the clubs are doing throughout the country that is responsible for the higher cultivation in music that is so apparent.

Experience in Europe

Talking of her experiences abroad Miss Powell said:

“I was fortunate in obtaining recognition in London and that is half the battle. Yes, more than half. I have seen so many great musicians struggle for a hearing; such genius go unrecognized and unrewarded. The trouble is in the surplus of talent. The great capital of England draws everybody who is ambitious and there is a surplus of professional talent just as in the large cities there is an excess of clerical and almost every other kind of help, skilled and unskilled. Every London musician, who aspires to shine, does not go to Berlin, but every Berlin artist goes to London. There are so many real musicians there who cannot get the recognition their talents deserve. They must have influence.

“It is not necessary to say that influence, alone, however potent, will make a career. The influence must be brought to bear to gain a public hearing under such auspices that will insure a proper review and criticism by the musical critics on the influential newspapers and magazines. They are exacting critics, too, naturally more so where great artists are to be heard almost every night than where such visitors constitute a rare occasion to be remembered. Until that time comes the aspirant for fame must be content to appear when and where he can in the less important concerts where, although their genius may be recognized by competent musicians, the latter have not the entree to the influential journals. I have seen very pitiful instances of this soul-wearing waiting. Some day by an accident they may be heard by some famous impresario or critic and then comes their opportunity.

“I had the advantage of letters of introduction to Hans Richter, the successor to the late Sir Charles Halle, who organized and directed the Halle orchestra, the most famous musical organization in England. I played for him with the Halle orchestra in Manchester and the coveted London debut was made possible. Afterward I played at Windsor castle before King Edward, before the czar of Russia and I have been treated in the most kindly spirit by the critics everywhere.”

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