

MR. AND MRS. ADAMS'
SUMMER CLASS
IN CHICAGO

Reviewed by
CHARLES E. WATT
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MRS. CROSBY ADAMS

MRS. CROSBY ADAMS, as has been her custom for several years, held her Chicago Class for Piano Teachers at the Loring School at Ellis and Forty-sixth and here, in a delightfully cool classroom, with every facility at hand, she has again demonstrated the fact that her presentation of the subject of Teaching Material for Piano Teachers is one which cannot be duplicated anywhere else than in her Classes.

For into the work she puts not only the experience of years of practical teaching but also her personality and her pedagogical deductions, such indeed as could come only through so full and disinterested a life of teaching as she has herself led.

On one of the very early days of the session this writer was privileged to be present and to listen to Mrs. Adams' exposition of material for the early grades.

Particularly fine was it to thus have opportunity to hear Mrs. Adams' talk of her own Graded Studies for these books, published by Summy, have long seemed by this writer to contain the very essence of what is essential in such a compilation.

And such indeed did they prove to be, as elucidated by the maker.

Each exercise has its very definite place in the order of progression, and each has its own charm.

It would be difficult indeed to think of any essential items which have been slighted and not alone once in each question and difficulty treated by Mrs. Adams—but, over and over again, and always and persistently—progressively.

Most interesting was it to be shown the list of Examination Questions which is given to each pupil as he finishes each book in regular order and, there is no doubt whatever but that any pupil who can answer all these questions satisfactorily has indeed mastered and assimilated all the ideas in the book.

Mrs. Adams did not confine herself to her own Books, however, and during the course of the morning she gave definite instructions in the manner of using many other works and—always seated at the piano, she gave also a running fire of practical illustrations which could not fail to carry entire conviction to all the Class and to afford practical working models.

Mrs. Adams believes implicitly in the value of Ensemble and uses therefore a great variety and amount of duet work in her Classes. This too she explains graphically and plays to advantage.

Not to schedule all the works propounded and elucidated, which

is not necessary in this article, it must yet be added that Mrs. Adams, herself a mistress of diction, gives her pupils many sound lessons other than those pertaining directly to piano playing.

She believes that the teacher must be of broad culture and thinks that in no other way is this more conclusively proven than in the use of good English.

"We should each of us allow ourselves the privilege of using one entirely new word each day," she said, "and if this pops out unexpectedly we may feel certain that we are not stagnating."

Illustrative of the paucity of the diction of some people, Mrs. Adams gave a caustic illustration of the prevalent uses of such phrases as "Isn't it funny?" and "Isn't it pretty?"—the first named having been applied by a supposedly well educated young woman who was referring to an oddly built organ and the latter being used by some one who was talking about a sublime Chorus number in "The Messiah."

The Difficulty of Simplicity was another well worked out theme of Mrs. Adams, who believes, implicitly, that no one but a real Genius could possibly write really worth while music entirely regardless of technical considerations.

The occasional use of Hymns in her own Graded Course was explained by Mrs. Adams on the ground that now-a-days there is so little of religious feeling anywhere and such a paucity of really good Choral playing that it becomes a privilege for the earnest teacher of piano to inculcate these things in the minds and fingers of her pupils.

During the morning Mrs. Adams introduced to her Class, Kathryn Kahn, a serious little maid who formerly studied with her in Oak Park but who is now a pupil of the Columbia School of Music.

This little girl, who is bright and musical and who certainly is a fine reflection of careful and discriminating teaching, played, in good style and with rich tonal qualities, the Clementi Sonata No. 6, Mrs. Adams supplying the second piano part written by Timm, a one-time pupil of Clementi.

Godard's "Pan" was also well played, and several other standard works.

Illustrative of what Miss Kahn did as a very small Child and showing too what sort of work she thinks beginners should have, Mrs. Adams showed the class a program which was given by the little girl in 1913, while she was still a pupil of the Adams studio.

Other items brought up were Memorizing, which elicited a very full comment from the Class for, as Mrs. Adams says, "the intelligence and experience of any Class, if exchanged, would solve almost any moot question."

Rhythms were deftly treated and such topics as color blindness and other unusual things were talked of interestingly.

At a second visit to the Class, a more advanced stage of discussions had been reached and Mrs. Adams gave most interesting information and illustration of rather difficult Duos and Duets.

The Gothique Suite (Boellman) was played by her and Miss Marion Lychenheim very deftly and her introduction of "The Pictures" (Heinrich Hoffman) in the form of duets, with Miss Lychenheim assisting, was most grateful.

The items of this set are "Snowflakes," "Birdling in the Brook" and they are indeed charming, reminding Mrs. Adams, she said, of her beautiful home at Montreat, N. C., a place of peace and restful naturalness.

Miss Lychenheim, a young artist who began her work with Mrs. Adams and has studied extensively since, played and again disclosed the fact that she has technical perfection and a great charm and grace of interpretation and style.

In a Czerny Etude she showed what wonderful results can be made with the (sometimes) supposedly "dry" material of a mediocre writer—material, however, which is invaluable from the standpoint of the student.

And, in fact—it proved to be scarcely less interesting than the wonderful prelude by Arthur Whiting which is played so seldom so well as it was done at this time by Miss Lychenheim.

The Schumann-Liszt "Widmung" and the Wagner "Fire" were intelligently and musically wrought out with a busby and MacDowell also were given good readings in examples from these pens chosen by Miss Lychenheim to please the audience.

For—this young lady has many gifts and accomplishments and one of them is the ability to retain a very great repertoire.

She—also by request, gave some remarkable exhibitions of Improvising and of Ear Training, according to formulas taught her long ago by Mrs. Adams, accomplishing results which few in the audience could approximate.

Lenore Davis, a former pupil of Mrs. Adams, played for the Class the D Minor Concerto of Mendelssohn and easily proved herself a very talented and brilliantly schooled youngster.

Miss Lyehenheim played—absolutely at sight, a remarkably sympathetic second piano accompaniment to this Concerto.

Carol Rosenfeld, another young player, at present studying special subjects with Mrs. Adams altho she has been heretofore, exclusively, a student of her mother—showed dainty musical feeling and exceedingly accurate musicianship in a set of contrapuntal studies for two pianos by Arensky, Mrs. Adams supplying a fine companion part.

Mrs. Adams distributed to the class some of the programs of a recital given by little Miss Davis "on the first anniversary of her first music lesson"—said program having been given in Oak Park some years ago. It is most interesting and thoroughly representative of the remarkable work done by Mrs. Adams. This program is divided into sections and the headings of these read as follows: Technical Exercises, Three Artistic Etudes, The Formal in Music, How to Study a Hymn Tune, Solos,—For the Duff, Ensemble Numbers. The definite material under each head was of a variety and value very remarkable.

At one of the last lessons given the Class this writer was privileged to be present for the third time and heard Mrs. Adams explain the Seventh Book of her Graded Studies to such excellent advantage as to solidify all the good impressions gained from the earlier lessons and to prove that the material selected in these Books is absolutely fine.

An Arioso by Loeschhorn, as played and explained by Mrs. Adams most unexpectedly showed this composer to have much of the Bach flavor in his work. "Indeed," said Mrs. Adams, "if this were heard without the Composer being named most connoisseurs would exclaim, 'This is Bach at his very best.'"

Carol Rosenfeld was again introduced and played in duet form with Mrs. Adams the "Kuhreigen" (Cow Keeper's Tune), a work by Grieg, seldom heard but very much worth while.

Nellie Gordon, another old-time pupil of Mrs. Adams, and the possessor of clear style and clean technic, helped (duet form) with some very charming illustrations of the Reinecke "Nut-Cracker and the Mouse-King." After years of research as to the origin and the meaning of the Fairy Tale used as the basis of this work by Reinecke, Mrs. Adams finally found a very full and minute description and explanation and these she has incorporated in an edition of the work which she prepared for the Schirmer's. It contains explanatory text to be read and a continuous flow of duet playing at the piano. The excerpts given, both as to story and music, were so altogether charming as to make it certain that each teacher in the Class will be eager to try the program with her own pupils next Christmas, "which," said Mrs. Adams, "is the ideal time to give it."

Marion Lyehenheim, who played so admirably at the earlier lessons, illustrating all sorts of musical and analytical points was introduced in this lesson in the E Major Concerto by Moszkowski and gave, in her performance, an illustration of technical proficiency which could be equalled by but few young artists of the city.

Miss Lyehenheim has poise and surety in her work and she has also a very clear and deft idea of music valuations.

The Moszkowski Opus is like one big Crescendo from beginning to end and its gradual and logical working up by this pianist was a piece of splendid good judgement and musical taste.

The second piano part was played by Miss Rose Lyon, who—although she had but a day or two in which to learn the difficult score was entirely sympathetic, musically, with the first piano and whose tone throughout was of beautiful quality.

Indeed, the work of the two young ladies was at a point of excellence which is very rarely attained in the playing of a Concerto with Second Piano accompaniment and approached much more nearly to an orchestral performance than is usually the case.

"We always sing our farewell song on the next to the last day," said Mrs. Adams in closing the morning session, "because we want to part from each other all smiles—and so, we will sing together today (instead of tomorrow, which is the closing day of the session), the beautiful part song by Peter C. Lutkin which is printed on the last page of the Graded Studies."

This Anthem is called "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" and is a piece of work well worthy of the pen which produced it.

At this time, of course, there was not a full allotment of voices for the "parts" but, sung even thus partially, it proved to be beautiful and effective.

Other Letters of Appreciation

My work has been so much easier the past year, and I have been able to get results as never before. I give all the credit to my work and association with you and the Class last year.

MRS. JESSIE E. DURNELL, Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

I am frequently asked: "What has it done for you?" and I answer: "It has raised my standards." My self-imposed task this year is to begin the Course from the ground up, studying it and its meaning from my new viewpoint in order that I may give it intelligently.

MRS. MARTHA COLLOM, Western Springs, Ills.

The entire Teachers' Course has been a wonderful help to me already. Sometimes I can hardly believe it is me teaching, having changed so in the way I present things. So you see what a great benefit the Course has been both practically and artistically.

EDWARD M. BETTS, Elon College, N. C.

I do want you to know, if mere words would express it, of the vast amount of good I, for one, gained during the Course. One sees music with a broader vision and forms the determination to spread the gospel of a higher standard of music.

MISS ESTELLE WALZ, Joliet, Illinois.

Much pleasure comes to me in the opportunity to express my full appreciation of the help derived from my work under Mr. and Mrs. Adams, two years ago. The material has proved invaluable to me and the many ideas I gained both from Mr. and Mrs. Adams and my associates in the Class have been a great benefit to me ever since.

MRS. LUCIA MACKENZIE HENDLEY, Washington, D. C.
HENDLEY SCHOOL OF MUSICAL EDUCATION.

I could not if I tried, express to you the constant help and inspiration my work and contact with you has been to me. I am sure all our Class feel a life-time indebtedness to you for the instruction and also for the helpful spirit with which you inspired each member of the Class, making it possible for us to derive double benefit from our summer's work.

MISS FLORENCE HUNT, Greensboro, N. C.

I felt when I left your class in Chicago in 1909 that I had experienced the most beautiful, uplifting, helpful period of my musical teaching life. I came home full of enthusiasm, sure that my teaching would be better, and it was. In 1913 and again in 1915 I was a member of the Class, gaining even more help from you and Mr. Adams in more ways than I can make you know or put into words. The wealth of Teaching Material you have made known to me has greatly enriched the life of both myself and pupils.

MRS. LORENE W. DICKINSON, Coldwater, Michigan.