

The Intimate Recital—A Means Whereby the Piano Dealer Can Link Himself Directly With the Musical Life of His Territory

ONE of the most effective means of bringing new people to the piano warerooms is through the arrangement of recitals. The smaller piano dealer in a great many cases feels that this means is beyond him, as he considers that he has not the space necessary for such a function at his disposal or else does not feel that he could obtain the artists for the use of the space, once he arranged for it. Yet neither of these difficulties is an obstacle which cannot be overcome by a little thought and an ability to go out of the beaten rut of piano salesmanship.

The recital is recognized throughout the industry as one of the most effective means for giving the piano publicity. Manufacturers of artistic grades are constantly placing their pianos before the public in this fashion, and it must be profitable else they would not continue it year after year. Such a manufacturer operates from coast to coast, and the difficulties and expenditures involved in his campaign are great; yet the publicity he receives more than compensates him for the work and money entailed in it. The smaller dealer operating in a limited territory, and being in close contact with the people of his section, can use exactly the same means, on a smaller scale of course, but just as effectively.

The solution of his problem lies in the intimate recital. There are few piano warerooms which cannot be arranged for such functions, and there are few cities or towns in which the piano dealer who has made such an arrangement will fail to discover a demand for the space. The experience of one piano dealer along this line is instructive.

This dealer, by a judicious arrangement of his stock, obtained a clear space on his wareroom floor about fifty feet by twenty-five feet. This space he flanked with artificial palms, when in use, so that it created the illusion of a music room among those who entered it. At the upper end, he had it so arranged that a small portable platform, slightly raised above the floor, could be placed. This platform was taken apart and stored when not in use, the work being done by the porter. The cost of such a platform is very small and it lasts almost indefinitely.

Once the space was arranged for, the dealer proceeded to get into touch with people who would use it. In his city, there were at least twenty piano teachers, all of whom had fairly large clienteles, but scarcely large enough to warrant the hiring of a hall for a recital of their pupils. Some of them could not afford the expense attached to this, although they realized that it was good advertising for themselves; others who were willing to go to the expense, did not like the idea of having a small audience in a large hall; for not only did this have a bad effect upon their pupils, but it also gave those who attended a mistaken idea of the importance of that particular teacher in the community. Consequently, these teachers did without recitals in a majority of cases.

The dealer lost no time in getting in touch with these people and in placing his space at their disposal, free of all charges to them. Under this system a piano teacher could give several recitals of her pupils during the course of a year at absolutely no expense to her outside of the necessary printing. Each of these recitals brought new people to the warerooms, and among each audience there was a certain percentage of live prospects.

Besides this, there was the publicity which was given the wareroom. Local recitals of this sort are always given considerable space in the press, as they partake to a considerable degree of a social nature. As it is impossible to write a story of a recital without giving the place where it was held, naturally the dealer's name made its appearance in each account.

Then, too, there must be counted in this the good will which he won among both the teachers and the pupils. Case after case has occurred in which this good will has been turned into sales.

Another use to which this space has been put, has been recitals of the player piano, in the hands of a good operator. Selected groups of people have been invited personally to hear these, and the attendance has been extraordinary. A number of people have told this dealer that they received their first idea of the artistic possibilities of the player piano through listening to a recital of player music in his warerooms.

In becoming closely connected with the teachers of his city through the utilization of his wareroom as a recital hall, this dealer has also come in contact with the school authorities. Up till two years ago the schools of his city considered music's part in education as an extra. In fact home instruction was known to be discouraged, as it was held by some of those in authority that the time devoted to this was taken from the time which should be devoted



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to preparing the ordinary lessons. Backed by the music teachers of the city, and by a small minority of the local board of education, this dealer led a fight for the establishing of music credits in school, for the musical instruction which the pupils received at home, and eventually the fight was won. The sales of musical instruments in his city since that time has increased considerably, and, through his connection won through the recital hall, he has received the major portion of the increase.

These are but two indications of the growing appreciation by the dealer of this sort of publicity. He has come to see that he is really selling something more than just a piano or a player piano, as the case may be. He is selling music, and to do that he must show his samples. He is selling pleasure and enjoyment, intangible things, it is true, but they can be shown to the prospective customer.

This is the policy which has been followed by some of the most successful manufacturers of pianos. By adaptation to the conditions existing in his territory, the dealer, through a modified form of exactly the same policy can occupy in his section the same high position which these manufacturers have won in the musical circles of the entire country.—*Musical Courier Extra.*