

# MUSICAL CAMOUFLEURS WE ARE

By THE MUSIC EDITOR

**M**USICAL camouflageurs are of several varieties, all of which abound in any Canadian town big enough to have an opera house. They fall into two primary divisions, professional and amateur. The second of these is by far the less dangerous to society.

The professional music-camoufleur is the person who wants you to believe that he could be led blindfolded into a concert hall and tell at a glance whether it was the Boston Symphony or the Chicago Orchestra playing; whether it was Ysaye or Heifetz; Paderewski or Hoffman—and so on. This kind of confidence-man would convince you that he has been following the musical game so long that he knows these performers musically. When he despairs of being able to meet them socially at the homes of the new-rich, he consoles himself that he has learned to know them very much better. He can tell you all the subtle differences in playing or singing presented by any number of world artists. And so far as words are concerned, so he can. Because words never carry much but illusions when it comes to dealing with music. And anybody is capable of illusions.

But the real test to this camoufleur's conscience comes when he is asked to judge without words. Just put him next to a good record-machine and see if he can tell Maud Powell from Mischa Elman. Of course if he knows it is a toss-up between the two, he may make a shrewd guess and land on the right one. Or if the piece is one he has heard played by either of them he may be able to tell you without guessing. Almost anybody remembers how Mischa Elman plays the Schubert Ave Maria. But it would take an expert in musical camouflage to remember how Ysaye does a Beethoven concerto.

In this respect one is often led to wish that a test case could be carried out between a professional musician who knows all the great artists and the owner of a good record-machine who has never personally heard one of them, but has the records of most of them. Put the owner of the records up against the professional who never listens to "canned" music, and see which of them would flounder



**T**HE lady in the long gown is an expert musical camoufleur. She can moon about Debussy when she knows it isn't Bach; she can rave about Beethoven when she couldn't tell on a wager whether she was listening to either Mozart on one hand—early Beethoven you know—or Chopin on the other; for after all Beethoven is very like a lot of other composers. Aha! she also can tell you by looking at the man on the platform whether it's Ysaye or Heifetz.

most if suddenly confronted with a new piece by an artist whose name he did not know.

As a cold matter of fact, it takes a very keen and critical ear to detect the difference between any two great artists on the same instrument. Of course anybody in reason could distinguish Godowsky from Percy Grainger. And anybody without reason knows that Galli Currei isn't very much like Clara Butt. These are obvious. But when anybody sets out to assure you with a cocksure wink of the other eye that he knows precisely the difference between any two great artists on the same instrument, just make absolutely sure that he could swear on his reputation as a musician that he could be dead sure it was Pablo Casals doing a turn on his top strings and not Fritz Kreisler doing a bit on the middle register.

We are all musically wise the moment we know by the programme who is on the bill. The name of the performer clearly attached to the name of the piece and the composer leaves no room for speculation. At once, with no time wasted on appreciating either the piece or the composer we turn ourselves loose on the player—and heaven help him!

To be honest with ourselves about this genial, uplifting muddle we call music, we ought to judge everything detached. Imagine, however, the burning looks on some of our professionals' faces if they were asked to a programme by a pianist, of pieces whose names were not announced, by composers left to be guessed at. Of course in nine cases out of ten a professional of the piano could tell you that Bach did not compose a Debussy sonata. But there are times and places where he might get sadly mixed up as to places and times.

There's no use in any of us pretending we know an artist by the way he sounds when we don't even feel sure what any artist is doing for an encore or even the name of the composer whose piece it is. But, give some professional camoufleur enough rope—especially the lady in the long opera gown—and they will hang themselves black in the face over fine distinctions that don't exist and people not concerned in the performance whatever.

## ANOTHER R. N. W. M. P. THRILLER

**A**ERICAN playwrights still insist that the Canadian Northwest is a wild and woolly place where big revolvers and little brunettes mixed up with flannel shirts and whiskey flasks make a fine medley to "key up" their melodramas. They Northwest Mounted Police must stamp in to every scene and stride around doing dare-devil stunts while fuzzy-whiskered factors from the Hudson Bay post remind the audience that the biggest part of Canada is populated by fur-bearing animals, and that the inhabitants bark at nights. But Broadway likes that kind of stuff and Belasco knows his people. He also knows his players. Which may be why the most enormous success in New York this season is "Tiger Rose," by Willard Mack, with Leonore Ulric as the Tiger and the Rose.

"Tiger Rose" transports us to Wutchi Wum on the Loon River, Alberta, to a picturesque world of hunters, of trappers, and of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. We are taken into the living-room of the house of the "Factor" there, a Scotchman named Hector MacCollins. It is here that the Hudson Bay trappers are paid off for their pelts. The first act opens at daybreak of a bright June morning. We are introduced in rapid succession to MacCollins, the Factor, his Indian servants, and then to the heroine, Rose Bocion, a French-Canadian orphan, 18 years old, wild, profane, sinuous, an atheist because her father was one, living with an inherited contempt for the Church and its priests.

Rose is described as the prettiest girl in Northwest Alberta. To the trading-post come many men to woo her—wistful, violin-playing Pierre La Bey, a romantic young French-Canadian; Dan Cusick, the grim doctor of the post, who is also her slave; and the rollicking, boastful, mounted policeman, Michael

**DAVID BELASCO** brings out a new melodrama of the Canadian Northwest.

**Reason**—New York wants a gun and love thriller. The U. S. West, the cowboy and the claim-jumper are played out. The Mounted Police have not yet been exploited off the stage. So, Willard Mack goes at the R. N. W. M. P. Tiger Rose is the girl. The plot—what does it matter? It's all to blood-curdle the anaemic—and it goes.

Devlin. But Rose gives her heart to none. We are soon apprized of the fact that secretly she has a lover. Dr. Cusick, as he confesses to her, has discovered the girl with Wa Wa, her squaw companion, meeting an American engineer in the woods.

Presently Michael Devlin rides up to the Factor's house with the news of a murder, committed in the construction camp, "the other side of Pearl Ridge." We suspect, of course, that it is the young engineer. He has killed the company's surgeon on the latter's first official trip from Vancouver. Devlin rushes to the telephone and sends out the news of the murder. Overhearing him, Rose comes instinctively to the realization that her lover, Bruce Norton, is the guilty man.

The man-hunt begins that day. Rose's love for the young American is aroused to its deepest. With the

aid of her Indian friends and the sympathetic Doctor Cusick, she tries to help Norton in his escape.

Norton escapes to the deserted cabin in the woods. The floor is covered with dead leaves and boughs. There he waits for Rose, who presently appears with Wa Wa. She tells him that Dr. Cusick has promised his aid in getting Norton away on Little Creek that night. He is to come unobserved to the deserted cabin to give the young American directions. Suddenly a red-coated figure rises out of the upper bunk of that deserted cabin. It is Michael Devlin himself; and he covers both of them with a gun.

Devlin: "Turn around young fellow, and turn slow. Put up your hands; put them up, I say. Now, Rose, I think I'll be a little stuck on myself. Young fellow, you're under arrest."

Rose (throwing her arms around Devlin): "Oh, no, Michael Devlin. Please, please let him go! Please! Please!"

Devlin: "No, no, Rose, I can't do it. I can't, I tell you. Hold out your hands, young fellow; hold them out." (Brings out handcuffs.)

(Rose shoots the gun out of Devlin's hand.)

Devlin: "You damn little cat!"

Rose: "Put up the hands, Michael Devlin, or next time I kill you."

Although Bruce escapes, he returns later and surrenders himself to Devlin. "They'll make her pay for my freedom," was the thought that had come to them. He had gone to Father Thibault, who had told him he was right. Finally the complicated difficulties with Rose and her lover are unravelled.

Rose: "I will go to Mission School, even with damn Siwash—I will get baptized—I will do everything you wish, you do something for me."