

# HANDS THAT MAKE MUSIC

They Have Characteristics and Individuality as Well as Their Owners



Joseph Lhevinne's Hand  
Carl Compass of Historical Keys  
J. Lhevinne

Dr. Otto Neitzel  
This is rather rare  
of Dr. Otto Neitzel

Ossip Gabrilowitsch  
Fingers of  
Ossip Gabrilowitsch

Vladimir de Pachmann  
The short fingers of  
Vladimir de Pachmann

Hand of Fannie  
Bloomfield Zeisler  
Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler

SUPPOSE the hands of all the great pianists of the world were held up before you, do you fancy one would look much unlike another? Would you believe that each pair would possess distinctive characteristics of their own, differing from any other pair, just as their owners differ in temperament or physical appearance?

You attend a concert or recital by some famous virtuoso. Almost carelessly the great pianist walks upon the stage and seats himself—or herself—at the waiting instrument, strikes an attitude and plunges into the program.

You listen, with the rest of the great audience, and are enthralled by the melody that sweeps out like a storm, or floats dreamily like a summer zephyr. You see the hands of the famous performer flying over the keys, or seeming to rest upon them with caressing touch.

It is the virtuoso and his wonderful art that fix and hold your attention. You think of his marvelous gift; you know that you will remember his features, his shock of hair, his personal peculiarities. How unlike any other he is.

But those hands that are moving in so mysterious a way their wonders to perform have an individuality, characteristics of their own as well.

WAY back in the past, palmists were studying the human hand in the endeavor to read character or discover signs forecasting the future. A great many persons are studying hands today, but few have derived as much pleasure from the task as has G. Mark Wilson, a young musician of note, who has collected the photographs, hand sketches and autographs of every prominent American and European pianist.

It has interested him to study the configuration of various hands and to point out their physical resemblances or differences. To start with, take the hand of Josef Lhevinne as an example. It is a remarkable musician's hand, as well as the remarkable hand of a musician. Its excessive width, as well as great finger length, enables this virtuoso to compass fourteen natural keys with one hand; in other words, with the thumb resting on one white key it is possible for him to strike five whole tones above an octave with the fifth finger of the same hand, without releasing the thumb from its original position.

This great span is accomplished with no apparent effort. The space between the tip of the thumb and that of the second finger measures nine and one-quarter inches when the fingers are extended. Wrist development is particularly large and the forearm proportionately moulded; a combination as powerful as it is remarkable.

Some pianists hold that very long fingers, unless sustained by prodigious muscular power over which the performer at all times exercises the most delicate and absolute control, are apt to be a hindrance rather than an aid to proper tone, color and technique. Vladimir de Pachmann has a small hand. This wonderful Chopin interpreter, who claims the Russian city of Odessa as his home, exhibits a powerful wrist, but the body of the hand is too long and the fingers

cautious from continual work on her chosen instrument. Her fingers display a muscular development of almost steel-like hardness. It will be noticed in nearly all the sketches shown here that there is great muscular development between the knuckles and first joints of the fingers of great pianists. It is not so in Madame Zeisler's case, yet this lack of size in no way lessens her ability for magnificent interpretation. Olga Samaroff, an American-born artist, has a beautifully artistic hand, perfectly proportioned and of snowy whiteness. The fingers have the so-called square tips which indicate the mature pianist. It may be mentioned that constant practice seems to make little difference in the size of the biceps, yet it does enlarge the forearm, though this enlargement is not as marked in the woman as in the man, even when due allowance is made for the proportionate measurement of the sexes. That of Dr. Otto Neitzel, composer, conductor, pianist and editor of the Cologne (Germany) Gazette, is a rather thick hand, but interesting. It will be observed that the body of the hand is very broad, a peculiarity rarely found in the hands of virtuosos. The curvature of the upper finger muscles is quite noticeable in this sketch, and it is to this and the thickness of the hand, coupled with the large wrist and large forearm, that Dr. Neitzel's excellent octave work may be attributed.

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American concertgoers remember the Russian pianist, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, who played here last season. His hand shows a very pronounced indentation of the thumb above the second joint. The third finger is long and the slant of the webs (where the fingers join the hand) from the second to the fifth fingers is very marked. This accounts in part for the seemingly great length of the fifth finger and the comparative shortness of the second. A remarkable hand is that of William Struthers. Besides being a poet and critic, Struthers is a pianist of rare ability. His thumb is extremely large and square. Furthermore, there is an extra long stretch between it and the forefinger. The tips of the fingers are unusually wide—spatulate, so-called—yet while the hand, generally speaking, seems to be large and thick,

the fingers appear thin between the knuckles and first joints, a condition in common with Madame Zeisler. Maurice Leffson, composer, pianist, teacher and conductor, possesses a small and graceful hand; while the muscles are much hardened, they are not of a nature that change the outline of the hand when in repose. The muscles are evenly developed. There is little or no web between the fingers—the advantage of which condition becomes apparent when it is known that large webs limit the stretching ability and hamper the performer in the acquisition of that muscular firmness on each side of the knuckles so necessary in tonal shading and contrast, as well as accurate and rapid execution. Leffson, like Pachmann, argues that, all things being equal, more perfect technique is secured and greater tonal command had, under these circumstances, than would be possible if the hand were large. Leffson has a most artistic temperament, and is, moreover, what the world would call a practical man—two traits seldom found in one individual. The hand of Arthur Rubenstein, a youthful Russian, who has already made a name for himself as large, strong, with prominent veins marking the back and bearing the imprint of constant practice. However, it is not regarded as being so distinctive as those of some others.

## A Ban on Slangy Post Office Names

NO MORE slangy names for postoffices. No more fippancy in the postal guide. No more jokes cracked at the expense of entire communities. Postmaster General Meyer believes that a town or community which is big enough to have a postoffice should possess a dignified name. He is sedate and dignified himself, and he is going to eliminate objectionable names from the list of postoffices. At present a score or so clerks are busy at work going over the postal lists and making notes of the names that savor too much of fippancy or slang. For instance, there's a town called Skiddoo in Pennsylvania, one called Brandy Keg in Kentucky and one called Mud in Texas. But there will be no more, if Mr. Meyer can help it.

What a place must be Kissimmee, in Florida, if they do it! Since prohibition became effective, no doubt Drybranch, in Georgia, carries out its name. Social Circle in the same state must be a pleasant place. Keep an eye open when you get to Lookout, in Idaho, and watch yourself at night when you are at Spirit Lake or on Lost River. Kind o' creepy those names. In Illinois they have ungainly names—Big Foot Prairie, Oblong and Stubbledick. But in Indiana, it must be Mollie for traveling bachelors and Santa Claus for visiting children. Then there is a Beau-blossom. In Oklahoma, Bob, Mazie, Sadie and Sam—all of them towns—must have a fine time courting. Ego and Leeco are a little significant of one town having so much confidence in itself that it might put the sister town, Loco, in the skiddoo class. Is Lost Nation lost? Is Smoky Hill, in Kansas, smoky? Is Lewed, in Oklahoma, immoral? Is Mud, in Texas, muddy? Is Zigzag, in the same state, built like a flash of lightning? Do they need more people in Needmore, Indiana, and is Rainstorm, in the same state, wet? Is Green-bush, in Georgia, green, and do they never make love in Lovelass, Alabama? Do they save money at Econ-omy, Arkansas, and does prosperity reign at Pros-

perity, and are they going ahead at Progress? Are there bullfrogs at Bullfrog, and do they raise rye at Ryepatch, Nevada? Do they eat beans and ham at Brenham, New Mexico? And do they live on rabbits at Rabbit Hash, Kentucky? If a man walks barefooted at Barefoot, in the same state, would he be bloody when he got to Blood? Would he ever get a bone at Big Bone if he blustered at Bluster that they did not deal fair at Fairdealing? If he made a bet at Bet that Beehive is better than Beekbone, might he not find Buzzard the best place after all? Or, might he not find himself without friends at Alone? Or, perhaps, stand in wonder at Awe and its people? Or get a sour reception at Lemon? Or, if he were diplomatic and made good, might he not find himself in good shape at O. K.? Would he feel small at Dwarf, cold at Ice, sick at Chill or shy at Coy? One wonders whether they can shoot at Atmwell, Louisiana, and what they drink at Gin, Mississippi. Do they take tonic at Tonic, Nebraska, and do they apply arnica at Arnica, Missouri? If you were hungry, where would you go to Biscuit, Nebraska; to Crabapple, Texas; to Burnt Corn, Alabama, or Eggs, Kentucky? If you were penniless, would you feel at home in Coin, Kentucky? If you wanted to marry, would you think Bridal Veil, Oregon, an appropriate place? One wonders whether they swear when chopping wood at Bad Axe, Michigan; whether flowers are raised at Blooming Prairie, Minnesota? What about those place suggested by the names of Cupid and Darling, in Mississippi; of Lovelocks, Nevada; Leggo, Miss.; Lo Lo, Mont.; Buzhill, N. C.; Blowout, Drexey and Zigzag, Texas, are names that cannot be accounted for. Like Topsy, they probably "jest growed."

POSTMASTER GENERAL MEYER lifted his hands in horror at some of the names he encountered in the postal lists. Then again he smiled, for he found many towns named after women. But others were decidedly unpleasant, and some really funny. There is a place in Alabama called Ragland. Hardly the place you'd want to visit, judging by the name. Then there are Teddy and Theodore in the same state, which might have been called, for all you know, after our President. In Arkansas you find a place called Negrohill, an Oil Trough, a Skylight, a Snowball and an Ink. A most unpleasant place in California to many people must be Dry Town, while others, no doubt,

### Curious Facts

INTERESTING particulars have been given by the Dutch papers about a telegraph messenger, living at Eindhoven, who, by self-tuition has become a master of languages. This man, now about 50 years of age, can speak and write English, French, German, Danish, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Sanskrit, and is able to decipher hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions. He has also a knowledge of cosmography, astronomy, physics, the history of art, and various other sciences, and can write Greek poems. More than 6000 women are employed in the Russian Secret Service. Some draw a salary of \$10,000 a year. What a canary cats has been the subject of research by a scientist, who weighed a canary and found it rather over one-half ounce. He also weighed all the food, and found that the bird consumed thirty-two times its weight every month, or actually more than his own weight every day. The costliest flats in London have been built on the site of the late duke of Cambridge's house at the corner of Park Lane and Piccadilly. There are six flats in the building, and it is said that the rental of each will be from \$10,000 to \$12,000. Heavy as this is, it will yield little more than a sufficient interest on the expenditure, which has been somewhat over \$600,000. The flats are unusually large, consisting of four reception rooms and ten bedrooms. There are about 600,000 people employed in Italy rearing silkworms. Every year the sacred shrine of Mecca, the "Kaaba," is re-covered with a costly carpet sent by the Sultan. A single one of these coverings has cost \$75,000. An orchid that takes a drink whenever it feels thirsty by letting down a tube into the water is a botanical curiosity which grows in south Africa. The tube, when not in use, is coiled up on top of the plant.

