

The CRESCENDO

Founded 1908—H. F. ODELL

Combined with FRETTS. A fretted instrument monthly

for the BANJO, MANDOLIN, GUITAR and kindred instruments



ANDRES SEGOVIA

Celebrated Guitarist

see page 5



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ANDRES SEGOVIA

Celebrated Guitarist

FIRST, let us scan the early history of the guitar and its capability of expressing the highest musical sentiment. The guitar has an aristocratic and ancient pedigree, and according to Ernst Biernath its origin dates back to 3000 B. C. During religious ceremonies it is said that the Babylonians, Egyptians and Hebrews used instruments very similarly shaped to the guitars of today, and that the chief musician was held in high regard and esteem by the entire nation.

The guitar found its way from Asia Minor into Greece and Rome, then later to Spain, Italy and Germany. Through the Medieval Ages it continued to capture the heart of the troubadour and minnesinger, king and peasant, rich and poor, reaching the height of popularity in the nineteenth century. Garulli, Carcassi, Sor and Giuliani showed to the music loving world the wonderful possibilities and beauty of the guitar. Such famous composers as Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn, also played this captivating instrument, and the great Paganini wrote many remarkable duos for the guitar and violin, and performed them in concert. Today there are but a few eminent artists who can say they have appeared before the public as celebrated guitarists.

Among them is Andres Segovia, who the past six or more

years has been exciting the music public of various European capitals by his guitar performances. His recitals in Paris have become a musical rage and his London debut last winter

evoked lavish praise from the musical critics, one of them stated that "Here is an artist who, without doubt, stands in relation to the instrument of his choice as Casals does to the cello, or Kreisler to the violin." Senor Segovia was born in 1896 in Jaen, a small village near Granada, Spain, and has been playing as a guitar soloist, professionally, ever since he was fifteen.

On January 8 in the Town Hall, New York, he made his American debut and this first appearance will scarcely be his last, for, as Lawrence Gilman of the New York *Herald* says, "we make no bones about saying that Mr. Segovia is one of the most consummate masters of any instrument now before the public. He has made the guitar a thing to be spoken of in the same breath with the harpsichord of Landowska, the cello of Casals, the violin of Heifetz, the piano of Gieseking."

In appearance Senor Segovia exactly resembles the auto-graphed portrait of him, painted by Miguel del Pino, a reproduction of which appears on the front cover of the *Crescendo*—many have suggested the likeness to Franz Schu-

PROGRAMME

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. (a) Andante et Allegretto) | Sor (1778-1839) |
| (b) Thème varié | |
| (c) Serenata | Malats |
| (d) Danza | |
| (e) Etude | Tarrega |
| 2. (a) Prélude | J. S. Bach* |
| (b) Allemande | |
| (c) Fugue | |
| (d) Courante | |
| (e) Sarabande | |
| (f) Gavotte | |
| (g) Menuet | Haydn |
| 3. (a) Sonatine (dedicated to A. SEGOVIA) | Torroba |
| Allegretto Andante Allegro | |
| (b) Danza | Granados |
| (c) Legenda | Albeniz |

*NOTE—These different pieces by J. S. Bach are not, as might be supposed, pieces for clavier or violin arbitrarily transcribed for a plucked string instrument. This point may have remained in doubt, owing to the omission of the great edition of the Bach-Gesellschaft to elucidate the problems which these compositions present; but thanks to the work of M. N. Tappert, H. D. Brugger, and E. Bachs. It is now certain that some of these pieces were destined by Bach for the lute alone and have been traced through his actual pupils, Peter Kellner and Krebs, whilst others are in Bach's own manuscript. In the case of the latter (Suites 3 and 4) it appears that manuscripts from the pen of Bach exist for other instruments, and in the case of Suite 6, this is also in Partita No. 3 for violin unaccompanied. It is not possible to establish the chronological priority of the one version or the other; both of them emanate from the composer and are equally authentic.

(Continued on Page 6)

PLEASE MENTION *The CRESCENDO* WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS

Andres Segovia—from page 5

bert. The instrument upon which he plays is the style guitar which we are acquainted with (although the painting gives the impression that it is peculiarly shaped). Seated on a high backed chair, his left foot poised on a stool, his guitar resting upon his left knee, surveying carefully his audience, and touching lightly upon the strings as though he were playing to himself, Senor Segovia waits until his audience seems ready to listen. Before a single note is heard the impression of this Spanish guitarist seated so unconcernedly on the stage is that here is truly a great artist. He bends absorbedly, almost tenderly over his guitar and from it draws forth like magic a tone that is rich in beauty, impressive and bewildering in its variety. It is said that he is able to produce as many as thirty-two different qualities of tone.

Hearing Senor Segovia, you begin by exclaiming over his astounding fineness of technique; you end by proclaiming him an artist of the highest degree. You fancied that the music he produced had a separate being of its own; that it was something living, so perfect was his execution and without the appearance of effect, which is the sign of a "consummate artist."

From the words of the well-known music critic, Lawrence Gilman, we get a good conception of the debut which Senor Segovia made in New York, and later in Boston:—

"One listens incredulously to the silvery cascades of tones, the delicate showers of notes, the glissandi and arpeggios, that flow with so magical a spontaneity from beneath his fingers. The gamut of dynamics and of timbres, the kaleidoscopic variety of effects that he secures, baffle comprehension.

"The elfin wizardry of this playing is in a musical world by itself. One thinks of Landowska's cembalo—but the tone is capable of a more aerial delicacy than the cembalo commands; yet it is capable of a remarkable sonority and a flooding richness and multiplicity of sound.

"Mr. Segovia's necromantic virtuosity is, we said, companioned and made important by the sensitiveness and fineness of his musicianship. He phrases with the subtlety, the inerrant taste, the intuitive rightness of accent and design, that we are accustomed to hear only from such sovereign artists as Landowska and Casals.

"Under his fingers the guitar has long ceased to be the sentimental vehicle of the serenade, and becomes, when its

master wills, the voice of a grave and noble loveliness. Mr. Segovia played certain of those smaller works by Bach which exist today as clavier pieces, although it is known that they were originally written for the lute (of which the guitar is for us of today the closest approximation). Among these, Mr. Segovia was particularly memorable in the Allemande and the Sarabande from the E minor clavier suite, and the Fugue of the G minor sonata for solo violin (which has come down to us in lute tablature).

"One would have thought that the long-breathed phrase that begins the Sarabande from the E minor suite would scarcely be effective on the guitar; yet Mr. Segovia delivered it with an effect of sustained legato that quite took one's breath away. It is sounded like that on the lute, one realizes afresh that Bach knew what he was about.

"But probably Mr. Segovia's most remarkable achievement is in the delivery of polyphonic passages, which sing from his guitar with the clarity and independence of movement that one looks for only in the performance of keyboard or vocal or orchestral music; and this clarity of utterance is paired with a beauty and plasticity of nuance which could not easily be overpraised."

After hearing Andres Segovia I thought it proper to put the question of the guitar to myself: Will he revive the interest for the guitar in America? We all know what Kreisler did on the violin; by virtue of his technique. Segovia has done much on the guitar, and more; he has enlarged the field of expression beyond what has been produced on it before, so that in his hands it expresses every shape of feeling conceived by music; he has overcome the obstacle offered by that throng of music lovers and critics that music from the guitar is merely "pleasant stuff". Segovia's debut is an epoch in the history of the guitar in America.

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