

WHERE MUSIC SOOTHES WHILE LOBSTERS BROIL

No Restaurant Is Now Complete Without an Orchestra to Serve Wagner, Bach or Chopin to Tempt the Appetite—Noted Musicians Draw Big Crowd.

If music be the food of love, play on: Give me excess of it, that surfeits me. The appetite may sicken, and so die.

UNFORTUNATELY all of us are not lovers. So we would just as soon our appetites didn't sicken and so die. They do, however, very often as things go nowadays. And hence these tears.

For these are the days when music, whether you will or not, is part of nearly every menu. Duke Orsino, were he a Broadway habitué, would have his wish. He would not have to sigh for an excess of sweet strains. The gods, sipping their nectar and ambrosia to the music of the spheres—first record, by the way, of a mechanical outpouring of sweet harmonic sounds—were no less obliged to listen wistfully than the tired business-



At a Fashionable Hostelry.

man trying to close an important deal, under the softening influences of a good dinner, or seeking to forget his cares in pleasant after-luncheon chat.

Music hath charms, no doubt, to soothe the savage breast; but does it improve a jest, your friend's best jest, or your most neatly turned epigram launched at table in hope that the point will land? It seldom does, alas!

Your vis-à-vis hears all the preliminaries of your good story—the foreground and the middle ground, so to speak, and then the best of it escapes him in the clatter of the band. You miss the response that's due you, and like the disappointed comedian sigh at the thought that something has intruded to balk you of your well-earned laugh. You long for a quiet place uninhabited by man, unexpurgated by these demons of the reed and catgut, arch enemies of digestion and of wit.

Does this sound like a lament? Does it lie in the face of general opinion? It would seem so. For almost no restaurant of any pretense to popularity is without its orchestra nowadays—its noonday concert, its afternoon recital, its programme during dinner and supper, and late into the night.

You need not, if you are of my opinion, look for modest, unpretentious places, off the beaten highway—to the east or west of the big arteries of trade and travel, or far south of Twenty-third Street, if we would have a quiet after-dinner chat.

Are New Yorkers as a class a music-loving people? And are you looking for an uplift? The pessimist may tilt us on our unresponsiveness to the appeal of higher things, but the caterers to the inner man know better.

No need to go to the opera houses, to Carnegie or Mendelssohn Hall, to get the inspiration of sweet sounds. Wander into any hotel or restaurant between the hours of 12 and 2, when the inner man is yearning for more fuel, and you will find that it is not the material side alone that these public benefactors cater to.

New Yorkers are reputed to be large eaters. The idea has been largely fostered no doubt by the fact that they are seen dining early and often and supping very late. But how many of the visitors to town who remark the fact know that it is not the grosser appetite alone that makes the New Yorker a wanderer from his own fireside and the dubious delight of real home cooking?

He goes to eat 'tis true, but that is secondary. For the congregations that throng the Broadway restaurants by day and night, that filter into the dim-decorated German places, or plunge down below the surface of life into the underground café, there is always the lure of music and of art.

The restaurant proprietors have amended an old phrase, for "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach" now reads, "The way to a man's pocket is through his love for higher things."

This is the golden age of culture; we must all talk ART, know MUSIC, and these are busy times. "Get rich quick" was once the cry, now we yell for culture while we eat. We must be learning as we rush along.

As you walk into the hotel or restaurant your feet sink into rich carpets, your eyes glide nimbly over noble frescoes and masterpieces on the walls, your ears are assailed with strains of Wagner, Beethoven, Chopin, Bach, and Haydn. You get a liberal education in the classics while you dine or have your modest little luncheon.

Why Not the Poet, Too?

As things are going nowadays our restaurants will take the place of universities, perhaps. To the hotel staff hereafter, in addition to the chef and maitre d'hotel and leader of the orchestra, why not the house poet, composing sonnets on the salad, and drawing an humble poetic lesson from the turkey and the duck. Consider the rooster, oh, you man, then think of the fall of proud Chantecler, and be properly cast down. Or something of that sort. Why not a dainty villanelle with the hors d'oeuvre, an ode with the entrée or the roast? Why not, indeed, since you already get a sonata with your fish and a symphony with the cheese and the salad?

There should be progression in our culture. Why give the musicians all the best of it? A little of Debussy, of Strauss,

of Puccini—very well. But why not Shakespeare and Molière, too, to while away the time between the courses.

There are a lot of bad actors who might make excellent waiters and who might be spouting while they ambled to and fro bringing the change of plates.

If the pale, ascetic-looking fellow over yonder should rise and spout in iambs or choice Alexandrines, why not receive these literary ministrations gratefully and with much applause? It only needs a few brave souls to start the custom. For these things go by habit.

What does it matter if you and I propose a quiet mealtime. These gentlemen in the smartest and newest cut of afternoon attire and these feather-crowned ladies at their table must have an uplift all the time. Emotion is the thing they live on. Our appetites are more ordinary—we are thinking of our Little Marys or equally unimportant mundane things. Their souls are in the clouds.

A Dream.

Perhaps you still had illusion when you

glance around. All is very restful. You sit in all first class, no bustle and no noise, no clatter of dishes, no loud talking. The gowns over there are chic, the hats the latest modes, the faces underneath them well worth a second glance. Really you are glad you found this place.

You raise your fork to attack the delicious brook trout in the dish before you, and the fork remains poised in the air. Your face grows pale. Your appetite is suddenly put to rout and fear grows strong upon you. What is that awful din? What catastrophe has happened? Oh! no need to be alarmed—it is only the orchestra playing "William Tell" with an orchestration arrangement to give the music greater volume. And that haughty deceiving minion has placed you directly



Talking It Over Quietly.

wandered in. Few of the tables were occupied, and if you were known, or if it wasn't one of the most popular rooms in town, the waiter allowed you to sit down.

Elsewhere, though few patrons were in sight, your way was barred. Had you a table engaged? If not, this was no place for you—the other rooms, perhaps; but the waiter really does not know. It is a foreign land to him—that other dining room.

You are insistent on your rights, believe in the rule first come first served, and with a proper tip he believes it, too. And so you and your friend are finally allowed to enter.

You sit down at a table. And all is

very peaceful. The waiter silently passes the carte de jour, while he and the others quietly wander to and fro. This looks good to you—it promises an hour of rest and comfort. Good food, a good glass of wine, maybe, and an agreeable dining and after-luncheon chat with a sympathetic companion. What more does any man desire? For a few minutes the menu absorbs your attention. Then cocktail and the

just the right consistency of soup to precede the right kind of fish, and the salad and the cheese may be chosen with epicurean taste, but it's a mixed grill every day where the music is concerned, with a little slice of Chopin, maybe, a morsel of Wagner, and a few trimmings of Victor Herbert to garnish up the matter.

When you come to think of it, it is really surprising to what trouble and expense these restaurateurs go to supply this musical fare that you and I don't want. Perhaps the explanation, not very flattering, is that we, as individuals, don't amount to much. See how the crowds flock to the rooms where the music may be—MUST BE HEARD.

Then admit that you and I are the exceptions to the rule. Of course it must be so, or the bands would go. For they cost money for the upkeep, and in these days, when necessities are high, when every penny has to be considered, the resultant profit must be in sight, or the extra inducement would not be retained.

One hotel employs a musical director whose annual salary is said to be \$50,000 a year. Another has a conductor recently imported from a popular London eating place, since his arrival he has been almost at a premium in the dining room where he plays. For people who like music with their meals there is a reason. The man has a well-balanced orchestra, he conducts with spirit, and as a violinist he is no mean performer, though he has a habit of getting down near the bridge at times, when vibrations that sound like the waving of a banister or the squeaking of a rusty hinge.

He is a short, pompous, well-fed looking individual, with a Napoleonic manner, yet a gracious way of taking his applause that endears him to the tables.

And he is liberal with selections. There is nothing miserly about the length of the programme. From the time the first guest orders his cocktail and oysters to the last puff of smoke from the last diner's cigar, the orchestra plays on, with very brief intermissions.

The conductor occasionally withdraws, leaving the waiting of his own sweet pleasure, but when he returns, he is the hardest working man of the entire outfit.

In these big important places the musicians disdain any sort of distinguishing uniform, of course. For color and picture sequences or ornate costumes are not to get off the main streets into the cafés where Tziganes play languorous waltzes or strange crashing cardas to the accompaniment of cheers and songs by the assembled guests.

In such places the luncheon hour is generally a quiet one, with no band and an assemblage made up of staid citizens from the near-by business places.

At night the would-be Bohemians wander in, order the table d'hôte, and prepare to be gay dogs when the wine has loosened their tongues and warmed them up for fun.

Here, too, the rule of noise prevails with a clanging, clashing, instrument of wire strings presided over by a restless individual who pounds it at every opportunity. Occasionally the programme is varied by a vocal solo, usually delivered by a soprano, who may have seen better days, but who still has a voice of enough penetrating power to be heard above the general din.

Although the music is pretty good of its kind, that really doesn't matter much, for the crowd is here to enjoy itself, and so long as there is spirit and dash and go to the selections they will be merry.

Your fine stickler for the proprieties might prefer his "coon" song as an accompaniment to "possum and sweet potatoes, objecting strenuously on the ground of taste to taking it with goulash and gedemite rinderrust, but, after all, the epicurean and musical incoherence are no greater here than in the more pretentious places. To one who is sensitive to such things they are strikingly apparent everywhere.

Here, in an uptown place, you find Irish waiters serving German beer to American diners-out, while a polyglot orchestra, dressed in Spanish costume, plays a negro ragtime, or wants to know in voices that rise above the sound of their instruments has anybody here seen Kelly, which, you may be sure, they haven't, as it is a Teutonic assemblage. However, by the time the second or third chorus is reached the diners are all yelling the same question to each other.

A minute later in response to an encore "Carmen" is trotted forth, and by and by a stentorian tenor breaks "Pagliacetto" into fragments, while the guests of the establishment shout themselves hoarse with delight.

The Disease Spreading.

It is amazing to what an extent this desire for restaurant music has prevailed. Not far from Thirty-third Street there is a family hotel which for many years has been known as one of the quiet places of the city. Out-of-town visitors of the quiet, unobtrusive type are its chief guests for the few rooms not regularly occupied by permanents. And for years its dining room was among the most restful in the city. Now they have added a grill, where from 10 o'clock on until well toward the beginning of a to-morrow a band of negro players and singers supply the entertainment. "Rastus tells how he 'lost his gal," while Rufus wants to know in a mournful minor "Ain't she never comin' back?"

Wherever you go, whether the orchestra is a three-piece one, consisting of piano, reeds and strings, or a waltz and mandolin quartet, "The Chocolate Soldier," "The Arcadians," the song from "The Climax," "Kelly," and half a dozen other popular tunes are sure to greet you some time in the course or an hour at the tables.

Sometimes they are wafted to you lan-

guorously from a moonlit balcony, where the conductor's head is alone visible, while his assistants scrape and brush unseen as the diners break into applause. Some time, try as you will, you cannot escape a position in the dining room where all the notes sound like rapid-fire musketry in your ears.

The larger establishments, fortunately, offer a choice of dining with or without the music, but the rooms with the big orchestras are the ones where you will generally see the most interesting people in town.

At one of the best-known hotels a group of opera stars has been lunching every day, and famous virtuosos, too, have lent their approval to the soloist's contributions. With Mischa Ellman to lead the applause, no wonder that the virtuoso grows chummy and cares little for the plaudits of the ordinary small fry. This man is an artist with an artist's soul, even though his present occupation is to play while others eat, which brings us to the comment of the bromides.

How often does one hear: "It must be dreadful to come to this after a great ambition." For every musician is supposed to have had a great ambition at some time to be zipped by the frosts of disappointment and lack of appreciation. And to be playing in a restaurant instead of on the concert stage, or at least with some great orchestra, suggests a dreadful fall.

Well, on the practical side, there is the reassuring thought that but for the music craze any number of these violinists, flutists, cellists, and what not couldn't earn their salt. Here, at least, is a sure competency at a fixed scale. The musical unions see to that, and see to it, also, that the musicians are not over-worked.

Do Musicians Ever Eat?

But one is naturally led to wonder if these restaurant artists ever have an inclination for dinners and suppers of their own. Or are they like the girls in the candy shop, who, having been allowed all they could eat on the day of their arrival, never have the slightest inclination to purloin bonbons after that? With food to the right of them, food to the left of them, it would be surprising if these men ever had a natural craving for nourishment.

One advantage they probably do en-

joy, however. They cannot eat and play at the same time. So luncheon, dinner, and supper with them may be times of comparative rest and quiet.

While a formal programme is printed and distributed to the guests at one or two of the prominent restaurants, most of the leaders prefer to make their selections in accordance with the temper of the audience of the moment. And this is variable, of course. At the Plaza there is a set programme, however, for both the afternoon tea concerts and during the dinner hour, of which the following is a sample:

"Butterfly's Enjoyment".....Gungl
Norwegian Dances.....Grieg
Waltz—"Wine, Women, and Song".....Strauss
Fantasia—"La Bohème".....Puccini
Hymne St. Cecilia.....Gounod
Valse Lent—"Songs d'Automne".....Joyce
Selection—"Our Miss Gibbs".....Monckton
"Salut à l'Amour".....Elmer

During the intervals between the selections yesterday Nahan Franko, leader of the Plaza orchestra, had this to say of the musical taste of guests while dining:

"My requests show me that the public want the very best music while dining, though the people like a sprinkling of popular music and light selections from up-to-date musical pieces. They do not want noisy numbers. My requests are only for the highest order of music, and, principally, grand opera. Toward the end of dinner I usually give them lively music, as by that time the guests are in a mood for that sort of thing. I am convinced that the music is a stimulus to conver-

the next moment I get a card asking for 'Tannhäuser. A restaurant orchestra certainly must have a large repertoire. Slow music I seldom play. One person may like it, but it makes most people sad. And our object is to keep them in good humor."

S. Busoni, who has supervision of the music at Sherry's, Delmonico's, and the Hotel Astor, does not provide a set programme, like the others getting better results from the other plan. The programmes at these places show a variety of the better popular selections, with a representation of the best classical music. And Mr. Jacobs, who was brought from the Trocadero in London to conduct the orchestra at the Knickerbocker also varies his selections to meet the demands of the patrons of the dining rooms.

Here is another typical programme of the sort said to appeal.

March, "Tannhäuser".....Wagner
Overture, "Marta".....Piotrow
Suite, "Peer Gynt".....Grieg
Piano solo, (with orchestra) Tarantelle
Is it off-chalk
Descriptive, "The Night Alarm".....Reeves
Selection, "Pagliacetto".....Leucavalle
Gaieté herique, "Awakening of the Lion".....Kontsky

Other countries other customs, but here

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The Poses of Nahan Franko.

In New York one does not have to wander far to find some representation of every foreign fad or peculiarity.

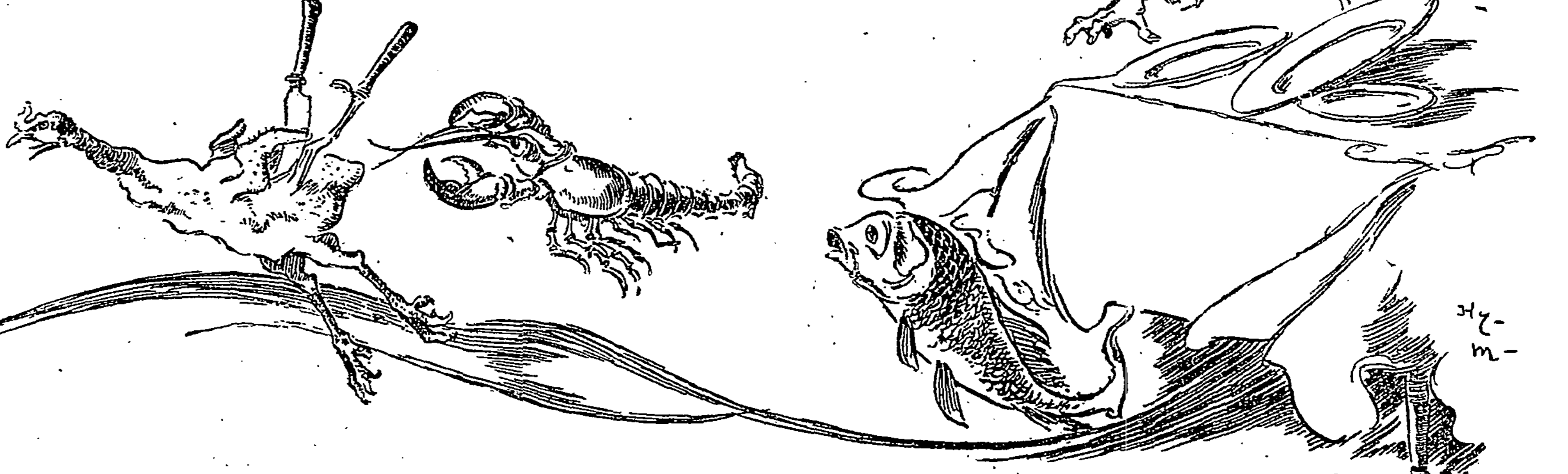
In Hungary, for instance, it is said to be regarded a delicate compliment if the violinist or the vocal soloist edges close to your table and pours his harmonies right into your ear.

And the wandering American tourist visiting St. Cloud and during the priceless menu at the Café Bleu has found much the same custom in vogue in that popular French resort. There the leader of the orchestra, if you appear prosperous enough, or if a woman seems a susceptible subject for that kind of flattery, draws nearer and nearer the table as she scrapes his fiddle, making you or your companion the centre of all eyes. Her doubtless pleasing your sense of ego first son.

But one does not need to go to France for the same sensation. A lady vocalist pours her songs down your back or into your ear in one of the cafés which in her name at least tries to suggest the sort of Bohemian spirit that prevails in a well-known Paris all-night resort.

In other places the quartet of Neapolitan or the troupe of negro minstrels are depended on to add variety to the orchestral programme.

After all, is it not a natural outgrowth of the desire on the part of people to get something that they have not paid for—the something for nothing that makes any free show, no matter how tiresome or stupid, draw a crowd? You pay for the food, and the music, presumably, is thrown in without any extra charge. That alone is enough to make it attractive to a lot of people.



The Orpheus of the Restaurant.