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## MUSIC IN ROCHESTER: A Century of Musical Progress: 1825-1925

By ERNESTINE M. KLINZING

### Early Period

Various factors have influenced the musical development of Rochester. From the beginning of its history interested citizens made repeated attempts to cultivate music. As early as March, 1825, an organization called the Rochester Band announced a "grand concert" in which "a liberal program of twenty-six numbers, besides encores," was offered! In October, 1835, the Rochester Academy of Sacred Music was organized—its object, the cultivation of sacred music. One of its directors was Nathaniel T. Rochester. In 1837 a society called the Mechanics Musical Association was established.

These and other organizations indicated a growing appreciation of the value of music in the cultural life of the young city. None of them lasted very long, for the community's musical taste was not fully developed. Most of the organizations of these early years concentrated on choral or band music. In May 1844,

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a vocal concert began with a piece called *The Grave of Bonaparte*, and closed with *The Dutchman's Account of his Intemperate Son*. On another occasion a local paper advertised a "moral concert at the Morton House, July 3, 1844, music by Miss Clara Jane, violinist, and Miss Emma Loraine, violoncellist, accompanied by their voices. Nothing in song, word, or dress can be objectional to the visits of the most fastidious of any religious denomination."

Since, prior to 1824, there were no concert halls or regular places of amusement, entertainments were held in the assembly rooms of churches or hotels. The Rochester City Garden was built in 1841, on the present McCurdy site; it was connected with the Palmer Block and offered entertainments that often consisted of fireworks and music, such as the concert by "William's Light Infantry Band and three pieces of fireworks. Tickets 12½ cents, for which a refreshment will be served."

An unusual concert was given by the Swiss Bell Ringers in the early 1840's. Others like it followed in the next few years. Negro minstrel shows also came into vogue with the first appearance, on September 17, 1845, of a minstrel group in the assembly room of the Eagle Tavern. Similar groups came to Rochester in succeeding years. Choral and vocal music received a new impetus in 1843, when Lowell Mason and George Webb came from Boston to conduct a series of classes for a week at the First Presbyterian Church. They started music festivals in Rochester, which were repeated annually for several years.

Visits by European artists played a part in the musical education of Rochesterians. Henry Russell, an English ballad singer, who gave his first concert in 1843 at the Eagle Tavern, was apparently the first of these visitors. Ole Bull, a famous Norwegian violinist, appeared here for the first time in 1844. Leopold de Meyer, Viennese pianist, played here in 1846, and the next year Henri Herz, French pianist, gave a recital, assisted

by Camille Savori, violinist, who was reputed to be Paganini's favorite pupil. In 1848 Master Theodore Thomas, violin prodigy, made the first of his visits to Rochester; he returned again and again in later years in solo performances and also with his orchestra, until he located permanently in Chicago. These concerts and others that now followed showed a marked improvement in taste over the earlier ones.

One important factor that made artists eager to appear in Rochester was the erection in 1848 of Corinthian Hall with its fine acoustics. William F. Peck, in the *Semi-Centennial History of the City of Rochester*, says it was "remarkable for being the most perfectly constructed for acoustic effects of any in this country, and it has been visited by architects from Boston and other cities specially to get its proportions for perfect sound." An advertisement of Corinthian Hall, which appeared in the Rochester city directories during the 1850's and following decades, reads as follows:

This commodious hall is centrally located, easy of access, thoroughly ventilated, warmed by Furnaces, and lighted with Gas, and will be rented at all times for

Concerts, Lectures, Panoramas, etc.

It was used by M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Lind for her concerts, and was pronounced by her as superior in all the requisites for a

**Musical Hall**

and the best she had seen in America.

Corinthian Hall, at the corner of Corinthian and Mill Streets, was used for the better classes of entertainment and concerts until 1880, when it was changed into a theatre and used as a place of amusement until the Lyceum Theatre was built.

The steady succession of visiting artists reached a climax in 1851 with the appearance, in the single month of July, of several of world-wide fame. Early in the month the first of these singers, Madame Anna Bishop, arrived in great pomp and was met at the train ("at the cars," as the old accounts express it) by the Mayor and escorted to her hotel. The following week

came Madame Teresa Parodi from London, assisted by Amalia Patti. This concert was under the management of Maurice Strakosch, the husband of Amalia Patti, who was an impresario of considerable fame. He is mentioned in connection with many of the artists who came to Rochester, and also played piano solos at some of the concerts.<sup>1</sup> The third week of that July provided the most glamorous occasion of Rochester's early music history—the appearance on July 22nd and 24th of Jenny Lind, the “Swedish Nightingale,” assisted by Signor Belletti, pianist, Dr. Otto Goldschmidt, piano accompanist, and Joseph Burke, violonist.

The concert was in Corinthian Hall, and tickets sold for two, three, and five dollars each. When the singer arrived she left the train at the foot of Goodman Street, then on the outskirts of the city, and drove in a carriage on a roundabout route to the Eagle Hotel to escape the crowds. She did appear later, however, on the balcony of her hotel room, to greet and acknowledge the applause of the crowd gathered in the street below. The house was sold out for both concerts and many people had to be turned away. Her voice is said to have been very powerful, and according to the legend, when she sang her famous Echo Song, it could be heard as far away as Elm Street. Some residents gathered along Court Street Bridge to hear the concert. Richard Lansing, in his *Historical Sketch: Music in Rochester 1819-1909*, adds the comment that these stories may well have been true, for there were no tall buildings in Rochester, and no noisy streetcars to interfere with the sound!

Ole Bull made his second appearance in Rochester on November 13, 1852, this time under Strakosch, and the assisting artist at this concert was the nine year old Adelina Patti. This seems to have been an era of youthful prodigies, for in 1853 the

<sup>1</sup>Maurice Strakosch had studied at the Vienna Conservatory. He became active in New York as a teacher and pianist, helped train his young sister-in-law, Adelina Patti, and became her European manager.

eleven year old French violin prodigy, Paul Julien, appeared here in concert. He, too, was very gifted, having won first prize at the Paris Conservatory at the age of eight.

In 1852 Madame Emma Bostwick appeared in Rochester, assisted by Henri Appy, a Belgian violinist. Appy had come to this country with Jenny Lind and had played in many of her concerts. He made his home in Rochester from 1866 on, making a major contribution to our musical development.

In the meantime, several local Rochester groups continued to flourish. In August 1852, a new choral society was organized, called The Harmonic. It had a chorus of one hundred and an orchestra of twenty. Among its members were Henry Schenck and G. Hermann Haass. The Society produced such works as Haydn's *Creation* and Handel's *Messiah*—quite different programs from those of a decade earlier.

An important influence on the growth of musical culture in this country was the influx of German refugees, political and economic, following the revolutionary years of 1848-1849 in Germany. The story of musical developments in Rochester during the second half of the nineteenth century would be quite incomplete without mention of the names of Schenck, Schaich, Haass, Dossenbach, Meyering, Kalbfleisch, Kuichling, and Zeitler. Henry Schenck played the flute, was a pupil of Boehm, and claimed to have brought the first Boehm flute to this country. His two sons, Ludwig and Emil, played stringed instruments, Ludwig the violin, and Emil the 'cello. Both sons played for a time under Dr. Leopold Damrosch in New York, and also studied in Germany. Emil became a concert 'cellist and a member of the New York Philharmonic. Ludwig became a member of the Theodore Thomas Orchestra; after it went to Chicago he returned to Rochester and in 1901 organized an orchestra called The Rochester Symphony Orchestra, an amateur organization that presented free concerts.

Another cultured German family was that of Dr. Kuichling, a refugee who had been imprisoned for participation in revolutionary activities. Mrs. Kuichling was an accomplished pianist, a pupil of Ignatz Lachner, a well-known German pianist. Visiting artists were often entertained in their home, and Rochester musicians held weekly soirees and played chamber music there. In a letter written by the writer's great-uncle, G. Hermann Haass, to her grandfather, then in Germany, in June 1853, on a business trip, he says: "Someone sent three tickets to me for the concert of Miss Stephenone, Strakosch and Madame, and Paul Julien, eleven-year old violin virtuoso, to which I took Mrs. Kuichling, and she was completely enchanted with it. It was the first concert in America which she attended."

G. Hermann Haass, a lover of music and amateur musician, played the French horn in the early Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, organized on October 3, 1865, just over a hundred years ago. He was also the vice-president of the orchestra. The president was M. D. Edmonds, and its first conductor was John H. Kalbfleisch. At a time when the general level of musical taste throughout the country was still rather low, programs presented by this orchestra compare favorably with those of later times. A concert given on November 20, 1879, included a Schubert symphony, overtures by Mozart and Gade, soprano arias from Handel's *Messiah*, and a solo on the French horn by Mr. Haass. In 1866 Henri Appy was engaged as conductor of the orchestra.

This orchestra became inactive sometime in the early 1880's, probably for lack of public support. In an article in the *Union and Advertiser*, December 14, 1867, the writer says of the orchestra:

**Our citizens have a duty to do in this matter. They should by their presence and patronage encourage the exertions of the gentlemen who have been, and are, doing so much to elevate the art of music among our people. They give their**

time, often at a great sacrifice, to the practice necessary to such an organization; and we understand that they have difficulties at times in meeting the expenses of the organization unless by individual assessment and loss. This is not as it should be, and we feel confident that the Society will not appeal in vain to a generous public for support.

Almost a half century later, when our present Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra gave a concert in New York under the leadership of Albert Coates, there appeared in a New York newspaper's editorial column an amusing letter headed "Rochester Philharmonic comes to Town," which read:

The announcement that the Rochester Philharmonic is to give a concert in Carnegie Hall brings back memories of the Rochester I knew as a boy in the late 60's and 70's.

There was a Rochester Philharmonic Society in those days and I have no doubt this organization is its historical successor. I am sure the old Rochester Philharmonic never would have dared to face a New York audience, much as they were admired and respected at home.

The conductor was Henri Appy, a dapper little man who wore a long spade beard and would have been taken for a Frenchman in Paris, though I believe he was Belgian by birth. He was a competent leader and a rare violinist, and he certainly did wonders with the poor material he had—the orchestra being largely amateur and made up of local business and professional men. . . .

There were, however, mingled with the amateurs some able local professionals, the families of Schenck, Schaich, and Meyering particularly. A lawyer named Lansing, who is said to have played on occasion every instrument in the band, I recall, and also the names of Copeland, Hadley, Haas, Rebasz, and Edmonds. . . The programs were fairly well chosen. Appy kept good musical company, but he knew the limitation of his players and the incredible ignorance of his audiences, and he gave the former the simplest of good pieces only, and the latter such pabulum as they could digest easily. . . .

Appy was almost always the violin soloist, but he discovered and frequently used a prodigy in one Otto Dossenbach, who was considered to be a marvel of youthful genius. . . .

Livingston Park

New York, March 21, 1924

Besides being the conductor of the Philharmonic, Henri Appy was active as a teacher of violin. One of his pupils who

showed great promise was Otto Dossenbach, son of Matthias Dossenbach who had come to this country around the middle of the century and settled in Niagara Falls. An interesting sidelight is thrown upon this German family, which made important contributions to music in Rochester, in the following letter to Hermann Dossenbach:

Peoria, Ill. 4/20/22

Dear Sir:

While reading the Christian Science Monitor, I came across an article telling of you being one of the founders of the Institute of Musical Art in Rochester. I am naturally curious to know if you should happen to be related to the Dossenbach Family that lived at Suspension Bridge about fifty years ago.

Mr. Dossenbach was a very fine musician and gave lessons on the violin when not engaged in making combs, in which his entire family helped. I was about eight years old when I used to trudge up to his home at night to take lessons on the violin. Mrs. Dossenbach played the bass viol, her sister the 'cello, and the two daughters played first, and the little boy (about six years old) and I tried to play second. The lad was so small he had trouble holding his violin while playing.

After taking lessons about six months I went with my parents out West, and lost all trace of the Dossenbach family since. If not too much trouble would like to hear from you.

Respectfully,  
E. C. Theilig.

The story is told that Henri Appy was walking along a street in Niagara Falls one day when he heard violin playing that sounded very good to him. He knocked on the door of the house, made inquiry, and learned that the player was young Otto Dossenbach. The result of this visit was his promise to train the young lad if the family would move to Rochester. In succeeding years Otto played in many concerts in the area and would have made a great name for himself had not his career been cut short by illness. Mr. Appy also taught the other Dossenbach sons: Adolph, Hermann, and Theodore, who became prominent in Rochester's musical life.



Stewart Sabin, well-known music critic and writer, says in  
"A Retrospect of Music in Rochester:"

There is much evidence to indicate that Mr. Appy as a conductor, teacher, and citizen, exerted as much influence for musical progress in Rochester as any musician who has made it his home. He found Otto Dossenbach as a lad and brought him to solo capacity; it was in his studio, and with his Philharmonic, that Hermann and Theodore Dossenbach gained early experience. . . . The foundation was here laid upon which, later there were built the Rochester Orchestra, Hermann Dossenbach, conductor, and the Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Ludwig Schenck, conductor, both of which, by educating the city's public to knowledge of fine orchestral music, prepared the way for support of Rochester's orchestras of today.

After a period of quiescence during the Civil War, Rochester enjoyed renewed activity in music. A brilliant succession of artists from many countries appeared here in the post-war years. They included:

Richard Hoffman (father of the noted sculptress Malvina Hoffman), Thalberg, Mollenhauer, Piccolomini, Madame Parodi, Christina Nilssohn, Anna Louise Cary, Brignoli, Theodore Thomas, Sarasate, Henri Vieutemps, Theodore Wachtel, Anton Rubenstein, Madame Parepa, Emil Sauret, Wilhelmj, Wieniawski, Remenye, Adelina Patti, and Louis Moreau Gottschalk.

A recent article by Harvey Southgate, Music Editor of the *Democrat and Chronicle* mentions a piano recital given by Gottschalk, the American virtuoso pianist and composer, born and brought up in New Orleans. Gottschalk, who had made a name for himself in Europe before he toured his own country, gave a piano recital in Rochester in 1864. He seemed to like to play in Rochester, as indicated in the following lines quoted by Mr. Southgate: "Charming town; one of the neatest, most animated, and most civilized of the West. My concerts here are always profitable and my audiences always well disposed."

A number of singing societies flourished in Rochester after

the Civil War, especially among the German-Americans. These included the Maennerchor, Liederkranz, Liedertafel, and others. There were larger groups such as the Oratorio Society, established in 1882, which grew to have four hundred members. There were also several bands, the best known of which were the 54th Regiment Band, later the official musical organization of the National Guard, whose leader was Fred Zeitler, and the Park Band, an excellent organization under the leadership of Theodore Dossenbach.

### **Developments in the Orchestral Field**

We have seen how the early attempt to establish a symphony orchestra in Rochester in the years 1866 to 1880 failed. Either the time was not ripe, the Rochester public not ready for it, or the conductor not a practical businessman. The real developments in orchestral music in this city began around the turn of the century, and the person most concerned was Hermann Dossenbach. One might say that the story of his life was the story of the development of orchestral music in Rochester.

Young Dossenbach's ambition, awakened as a youth when he heard Theodore Thomas conduct his orchestra in Rochester, was to be the conductor of a symphony orchestra. From small beginnings with a dance orchestra, his ambition began to take tangible shape. In 1900 he organized a small orchestra, which gave concerts first in the Powers Hotel and Baker Theater, then in the Lyceum Theater, and still later in Convention Hall. From the start there was the problem of raising funds to meet necessary expenses, and it is known that he often had to supply some of the money from his own pocket. As time went on he secured financial help from leading citizens interested in promoting the cause of good music.

Beginning with twenty-seven members, the orchestra grew in size, and ten years later, with the addition of players secured

from New York, Utica, and other cities, it had practically doubled. The story of his struggles to get the orchestra started is told in an article that appeared on July 25, 1926 in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* under the title: "How Hermann Dossenbach built the Rochester Orchestra." The record is available too in the newspaper criticisms and programs of all the concerts he conducted, which he assembled into three scrap-books. After his death these were presented to the Rochester Public Library by his daughter, Mrs. Paul James Smith. Valuable personal letters pertaining to this whole story of orchestral developments have also been presented by Mrs. Smith to the University of Rochester Library and are available in its archives for research.

In the early years of the orchestra the Rochester public had to be educated to appreciate fine music. There were criticisms when some of the numbers played were too heavy, and the programs show that at first only one movement of a symphony could be played at one time. This lack of appreciation was the same handicap from which Henri Appy had suffered two decades earlier. Hermann Dossenbach overcame this difficulty by his untiring efforts and persistence in holding to a high standard. The great interest shown by many people in the orchestra, and their personal regard for Mr. Dossenbach, is apparent in the letters now in the University archives, a few of which appear below.

January 28, 1904

My dear Mr. Dossenbach:

Will you give me the privilege of expressing to you my warm appreciation of the work of your orchestra at your concert on January 18th? I may frankly say that I was surprised at the smoothness and vigor of your renderings; and greatly delighted, though not surprised, by the sensitiveness of your interpretations. Rochester is to be congratulated on your success in giving to her orchestral work of unusually high quality. I personally experienced great delight in listen-

ing to you. I sincerely trust that you will find in the city the financial support that your efforts richly deserve.

Very truly,  
Rush Rhees

(From Walter Hubbell to Hermann Dossenbach)

October 8, 1909

My dear Mr. Dossenbach:

I enclose herewith my check to your order for \$100.00, being our contribution towards the expenses of the orchestra for the coming season. We have greatly appreciated your work and that of the orchestra. While you are probably not making anything out of it, so far as money goes, you are doing a great work for the people of this city, the effect of which will be felt more and more as the years go by. . . .

Ten years after the orchestra was established, we find Dr. Rhees writing to Hermann Dossenbach on June 25th, 1910, as follows:

I cannot adequately express to you how highly I appreciate the work which you and your orchestra have done during the years since the orchestra was organized, to advance the interests of music and give pleasure to the lovers of music in Rochester.

When I came to Rochester ten years ago I was surprised by the apparent apathy of our citizens with reference to music. During the past decade that apathy has disappeared and a lively and increasingly intelligent interest has taken its place. In working the change you and your colleagues have had a most important part, and I desire personally and as a citizen to express to them and to you my heartiest appreciation.

The work of your orchestra has been noteworthy for its steady development in confidence and accuracy of rendering, and for the intelligence and sensitiveness of your interpretations, and for the range as well as the high character of your programmes. As a citizen I have had increasing pride in the fact that Rochester is able to present as its own so creditable an orchestra in concerts of the high character which you have maintained. To you and your associated musicians as well as to the generous friends of musical culture who have lent you their support, all Rochesterians are largely in debt.

Hoping that the future may realize the promise of the past years in steadily increasing strength and established security for your organization, I am

Sincerely yours,  
Rush Rhees

The climax to the steady development of orchestral music came in 1911, when a group of prominent Rochester citizens and friends of Hermann Dossenbach made it possible for him, with family, to spend a year in study in Germany. It was a touching proof of the warmth of their feeling for the man himself, as well as their desire to promote the cause for which he was striving. The following letter was written to him by Dr. Rhees just prior to departure:

July Ten, 1911

My dear Mr. Dossenbach:

I hand to you herewith a memorandum of the deposit to your credit at the Merchants Bank of \$4500.00 to be applied on the expenses of your contemplated trip to Germany.

I have noticed an inclination on your part to regard me as unduly responsible for this consummation in which I most heartily rejoice, but the responsibility is not mine. I have simply acted as an agent for warm friends of yours who have expressed to me great pleasure in being able to contribute towards a cause which they believe promises much alike for you and for the interests of music in the city.

The contributors who have so generously cooperated and whose gifts I have deposited to your credit at the Merchants Bank, are the following: Mr. George Eastman, Mr. Hiram W. Sibley, Mrs. James S. Watson, Mrs. W. S. Kimball, Mr. F. B. Mitchell, Mrs. E. R. Willard, Miss Grace Curtice, Mrs. Ralph R. Fitch, Mr. and Mrs. Granger A. Hollister, Mr. J. Sherlock Andrews, Mrs. W. S. Ely, Mrs. Edward Mulligan.

They and I alike send you forth with warmest wishes and high expectations, and for myself I desire to say that I shall most eagerly cooperate next autumn in every effort which may be put forth to place the work of your orchestra upon a more stable basis in the Fall beginning within the year after your return.

Mrs. Rhees joins me in very cordial regard.

Very sincerely yours,  
Rush Rhees

A number of letters were exchanged with Mr. Dossenbach during his year abroad, relative to future plans for music in Rochester. Some of them are of sufficient interest to quote here.

My dear Mr. Dossenbach:

I duly received yours of March 28th and I also received the letter you sent to London. I am glad to know that you have been able to do so much work this winter and hope you will find when you get home that it has all paid you.

Thursday afternoon at the last minute Mr. Paddon was reported ill with diptheria, so Mr. Fisher said he got up a rehearsal<sup>1</sup> with Theodore playing first violin. The way he sailed in and pulled off the job was amazing. We had quite an enjoyable evening.

I got back last Sunday morning from a stay of a little over two weeks at the Lodge. Everything down there is looking finely.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,  
Geo. Eastman

May 28, 1912

My dear Dossenbach:

Much obliged for your good letter of May 3rd, enclosing the program of the two big festival concerts in the Circus Schumann. I was much interested in reading the scale of prices that were charged. Certainly lovers of music could well afford them, even if they could not afford to pay for a \$2.50 seat.

Last Sunday in the Hubbell Class we had 44 visitors from a men's class in Syracuse. They came in a private car and the boys gave them a lunch at the Powers Hotel after the class. We had 411 present. The Quintette played for us and played splendidly. This was the first Sunday that Mr. Paddon had been out for some weeks. Of course, you have heard that he was confined to the house by diptheria for quite a time. Theodore has been playing first violin and you would have been proud of him.

There isn't much interesting news here. The University is booming. Mrs. James Watson is building a \$150,000 art gallery on the campus. A movement is on foot to raise \$1,000,000 for the endowment and the building of a women's building for the college girls. \$800,000 of it has been pledged by the Rockefeller Education Board and the balance by a very few citizens of Rochester, whose names cannot be disclosed quite yet. This is a personal and spontaneous tribute to Dr. Rhees. Amherst, from which he graduated, was without a president and they were looking in this direction and we were afraid they would get him. He is doing a magnificent work in the institution and has obtained a mighty strong hold on the affection and respect of the people of Rochester. We are all very proud of him. . . .

Very sincerely yours,  
Walter S. Hubbell

<sup>1</sup>Of the Dossenbach Quartet, which played at Mr. Eastman's home.

August 8, 1912

My dear Dossenbach:

I have just learned that you and your family are safe at home again after your long and interesting experience abroad. I suppose you have learned that Dr. Rhees and I had employed Guernsey Curtiss to procure the underwriting of the \$15,000 for the orchestra this year. He is to be paid a commission on all subscriptions.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Eastman saying that he will underwrite \$2000. for this year. Isn't that splendid? I have not told Guernsey Curtiss, as Mr. Eastman's letter was not received until today. My first idea was that he should have Mr. Eastman's and Mr. Sibley's subscriptions first, as they were likely to be the largest. But I was delayed in getting word from Eastman as he had gone up the river for a two weeks trip, and Mr. Sibley is in Europe (or was when I left). . . .

So much for business. How are you, anyway? Full of music and great ideas and ambitions for the musical interests and education of Rochester? Of course you are! And I envy you. . . .

Sincerely your friend,  
Walter S. Hubbell

(From J. Redfern Mason of California, former Music and Dramatic critic of the *Rochester Post Express*, to Mr. Dossenbach.)

October, 30, 1912

Dear Hermann:

It was delightful to get a line from you, even if it gave me qualms of conscience. Do you know, if I had written in the interim, it would have been so gloomily that you would have been depressed. It had been much hard work and very little encouragement. But during the last few weeks a better complexion has come over things. . . .

The announcement of the Rochester Orchestra is the most wholesome symptom of musical vitality the Flower City has yet put forth. You have got the best people in Rochester formally committed to your interest. I congratulate you and I congratulate them. The rest will follow, for nothing succeeds like success. To have Dr. Rhees as your chairman is splendid, for he is not only a man of culture, but a practical business man.

That ten dollar season ticket will put people of means to the proof, and the \$2.50 subscription will open the door to music lovers who have nothing to spare. I feel really that my hopes and beliefs are being realized. And you start with Mozart! I

would give anything to be at the first concert! . . .

Write and tell me about your first concert, there's a good fellow. I am ever, dear Hermann,

Your sincere friend,  
Jim

J. Redfern Mason had been an encouraging friend to Hermann Dossenbach during his most difficult years. Of interest, therefore, is the following item, which appeared in a Rochester newspaper on April 18, 1941, and was found in Mr. Dossenbach's papers after his death:

Death of J. Redfern Mason, former Rochester dramatic and music critic in San Francisco, will recall to many older residents an important period in the city's musical development. Mr. Mason, English by birth, was one of a gifted group of writers who helped to shape a genuine cultural taste in the community. His reviews in the *Post Express* 25 or more years ago had a distinction and authority that won national attention. Many of these remain as models of newspaper writing at its best.

When Mr. Dossenbach returned from Germany in the summer of 1912, the Rochester Orchestra was re-organized, with him as conductor, and with the following officers:

Dr. Rush Rhees, President,  
Mrs. E. R. Willard, Vice President,  
Mrs. Edward Mulligan, Treasurer,  
Hon. W. S. Hubbell, Secretary

The first concerts after Mr. Dossenbach's return were held in the Lyceum Theater. A note of humor is interjected in the accounts of this time in a letter written by Sherlock Andrews, a prominent resident of this city. It seems that Mr. Andrews did not like the Lyceum Theater!

To Mr. Hermann Dossenbach,

I was driven away from the very excellent concert of the Rochester Orchestra tonight by the bad air characteristic of the Lyceum Theater, and it is not the first nor the second nor the third time that I have been compelled to leave on that account.

I have repeatedly complained to Mr. Wolff about the ventilation of his theater and tonight informed him that I should



never go there again as long as he was manager. I shall give the rest of my tickets for the concerts to some people (if I can find them) who are fond enough of the excellent musick your orchestra produces to stand being suffocated, and if your future concerts are given somewhere else you may rely upon my continued support, but if they are to take place in any hall or theater under the present management of the Lyceum I shall decline to subscribe to them. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Rochester Herald.

Very truly yours,  
J. Sherlock Andrews

A more stable financial basis was now provided for the orchestra. Rush Rhees writes to Hermann Dossenbach on May 23, 1913, as follows:

My dear Hermann:

You will be glad to know that the friends of the Orchestra approved today an undertaking to underwrite the concerts for the next year for a sum of \$16,000, this being estimated to be enough to provide for the increase which you suggested last night for the Orchestra, leaving it to you to give the increase in the form of compensations. On the present scale of two concerts out of town, if you and Furlong can arrange for such concerts, this sum of \$16,000 will also provide for the expenses involved in the employment of Furlong as a business manager.

The proposed list of soloists for the concerts was approved, and very satisfactory remarks of approval of your work was manifest. Discussion was also had of the wisdom of undertaking next year to make a provision which should cover some one to five years of work of the Orchestra. I wish you to regard this last statement as confidential. I shall be glad to talk this matter over with you when I get an opportunity.

Please close the contracts for the singers, therefore the soloists, immediately. I, myself, will get in touch with Furlong with reference to the contract for the accompanist.

Very cordially yours,  
Rush Rhees

The soloists engaged for the orchestra at this time included many of the outstanding artists of the day:

Frances Alda, Eddy Burke, Anna Case, Edmund Clement, Julia Culp, Mabel Garrison, Alma Gluck, Leopold Godowski, Johanna Gadski, Emilio de Gegerza, Ossip Gabrilowich, Carl Flesch, Arthur Hartmann,

David Hochstein, Josef Hofmann, Margareta Matzenauer, Fritz Kreisler, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, Toscha Seidel, Efram Zimbalist, Clarence Whitehill, and Reinald Werrenrath.

Several years later, when Mr. Eastman made plans for the establishment of a School of Music and Theater, Mr. Dossenbach decided to withdraw. Two letters from his collection record this action:

My dear Mr. Todd:

After carefully considering our many conversations relative to the moving picture theater to be erected by Mr. Geo. Eastman, I have decided not to accept the position of conductor of the orchestra in that theater.

I assure you that you can depend upon me to aid the committee or any one interested in furthering this great project, and I hope that you will feel free to call upon me in any way that I can be of assistance—I will be glad to do anything in my power.

With best wishes for the success of Rochester's musical future, I am,

Very truly yours,  
Hermann Dossenbach

Dear Mr. Dossenbach:

I enclose the check from Mrs. Watson, which completes the payments for last season. May I take this opportunity of saying that I think, as do all your friends old and new, that you have accomplished a great mission in Rochester in the education of taste for orchestral music, and this accomplishment will not be forgotten.

I want to say also that I admire more than I can express the splendid, generous, *big* spirit you showed toward the new musical enterprise in the last interview I had with you. Mrs. Klingenberg, Mr. Eastman, Mr. Todd, and Mr. Alexander all have spoken of the same spirit in you which commands the admiration of all.

You will believe, I know, that whatever the future brings, the past will be remembered as its starting point, and that I shall always be

Your sincere friend,  
Mary D. Mulligan

Various tributes were paid to Hermann Dossenbach in succeeding years. On June 1, 1926, at a dinner given at the Roch-

ester Chamber of Commerce by the Tuesday Musicale, Hermann Dossenbach, Ludwig Schenck, and Heinrich Jacobson were cited for their pioneer work in music in Rochester. At a meeting of the Western New York Chapter of the Organist's Guild, held on January 8, 1930 in honor of Hermann Dossenbach, Ludwig Schenck, and F. Eugene Bonn, Mr. Arthur See, concert manager of the Eastman School of Music, and business manager for the Rochester Civic Orchestra, paid the following tribute to these three musicians:

Rochester owes a debt of eternal gratitude to Hermann Dossenbach, to Prof. F. Eugene Bonn, and to Ludwig Schenck, for what they have contributed through the years to the music of this city. It is often said that Rochester is a musical city. If it is, it is largely due to what has been done before the Eastman School was opened.

In June 1944, a large celebration was held in honor of Mr. Dossenbach in the Highland Park Bowl, where he had been conducting the concerts of the Rochester Park Band since the death of his brother Theodore. On this occasion many of the players donated their services as a token of their affection and esteem. The following letters were written at this time:

(Mr. Dossenbach to Mrs. James Sibley Watson)

6/16/44

Dear Mrs. Watson:

Through all the excitement of this last testimonial to what was done in the building up of music in our fair city, my thoughts go back to the early days, when without your support and generous assistance my ambitions would never have been fulfilled. My thoughts are always of you as the Mother of Music in Rochester.

Words are inadequate to express my feelings of gratitude to you, J. G.\* and the Sibley family.

Sincerely yours,

Hermann Dossenbach

(Mrs. Emily S. Watson to Hermann Dossenbach)

July 11

My dear Hermann:

I want to congratulate you on the success of your Bowl concerts. It was a pleasure to see your picture in last night's paper and to see how little you have changed. Of course we all

grow older with time and it is certainly so with me, but then I have the start of you by many years. I like to think of you and J. G. together as you were when you were nineteen and he was nine. Those were happy times for all of us. . . .

Sincerely your friend,  
Emily S. Watson

And the last tribute of all, from the *Civic Music News*, February 12, 1946.

The recent death of Hermann Dossenbach brought to a close one of the most memorable musical careers in Rochester's history. During his long and useful lifetime he was associated prominently with virtually every worthwhile project for better music in this community. Perhaps more than any other single person, he was responsible for the continued aspiration of Rochester towards the best in music.

Tribute to his memory was paid by Guy Fraser Harrison and the Civic Orchestra at the Sunday evening concert in the Eastman Theater, with the performance of Berlioz's "Andromache at the Tomb of Hector," from "The Trojans."

In the words of Stewart Sabin in "A Retrospect of Music in Rochester:"

Rochester has had few more unselfish musicians than Hermann Dossenbach. He was always most concerned with the best possible performance of music of highest worth. . . . Rochester music will always be indebted to Hermann Dossenbach.

### **The Tuesday Musicale**

An organization important in stimulating musical progress during the early years of the twentieth century was the Tuesday Musicale. Organized around 1890 by a small group meeting in homes, it was first called the *Euterpe Society*. The Society soon expanded and moved into larger quarters, meeting for a time in the Powers Hotel, and later in the Genesee Valley Club, corner of East Avenue and Gibbs Street. The first president was Miss Jessie Danforth, who was succeeded by Mrs. J. H. Stedman. Mrs. H. G. Danforth was its historian. Heinrich Jacobson conducted the chorus of the Society and Fred Meyering the

\*Mrs. Watson's son by her first marriage, James G. Averill, to whom the Memorial Art Gallery is dedicated.

orchestra. The name of the Society was changed to Tuesday Musicales, and it grew to be an organization of several hundred members.

Besides presenting its local members in recitals, it acted as a concert agency, bringing many performers of national and international reputation to Rochester. It brought the Boston Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, and the Kneisel Quartet. The first visit of the Philadelphia Orchestra, under Leopold Stokowski, took place under its auspices on November 23, 1917, with Jacques Thibaud, the famous French violinist, as soloist. At that time the Philadelphia Orchestra was not the world-renowned orchestra it later became, and this was a losing venture for the Tuesday Musicales, for only a few hundred people turned out to hear what proved to be a wonderful concert. Other well-known artists brought here by the Tuesday Musicales were:

Fanny Bloomfield Zeisler, Rudolph Ganz, Harold Bauer, Alfred Cortot, Ernest Schelling, Ethel Leginska, Germaine Schnitzer, George Copeland, the Trio de Lutece, Leo Ornstein, Guiomar Novaes, Bauer and Casals, Louise Homer, the Flonzaley Quartet, Erna Rubenstein, Henrietta Wakefield, Paul Reimers, Olive Fremstad, May Peterson, and others.

A few years after the Eastman School of Music was founded, the Tuesday Musicales found its field of activity narrowed in scope, and it decided to disband after a very active and useful career of over thirty years.

### **Forerunners of the Eastman School**

In the early part of the twentieth century there existed a Conservatory of Music, located on South Fitzhugh Street, the directors of which were Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Spencer. Alf Klingenberg, a Norwegian pianist, was engaged by this school

to come to Rochester, in September 1912, to teach piano. An outstanding artist, trained in Germany, friend of Grieg and Sinding, he brought with him an aura of European glamor. Also on the faculty of this school was George Barlow Penny, organist, choral director, and teacher of theory, who later became a member of the Eastman School faculty.

After one year at the Conservatory, Mr. Klingenberg, together with Hermann Dossenbach, established a new School of Music at 47 Prince Street, across from the University of Rochester, which they called the Dossenbach-Klingenberg School of Music. At the beginning of the following season, 1914-1915, Oscar Gareissen joined the School, which then became known as the *Dossenbach-Klingenberg-Gareissen Institute of Musical Art*. The faculty in the years from 1913 to 1921 included names familiar to many present-day Rochesterians:

Alf Klingenberg, John Adams Warner, Mrs. George N. Cooper, Elsie McMath, Mrs. J. B. Mumford, Ernestine M. Klinzing, Mildred Brownell, Arthur M. See, Norma McKelvie, Mrs. J. C. Fuller, Mrs. Rose Griffith, Dorothy Gillette.

Hermann Dossenbach, Arthur Hartmann, Ludwig Schenck, Effie S. Knauss, James Paddon, Hazel Dossenbach, Anna Foley, Eduardo Barbieri, Andre Polah, Gerald Kunz, William Morse Rummel, David Hochstein, Samuel Belov, George Henricus, Emil Knoepke, Bedrich Vaska, Theodore Dossenbach, Gerard Maas.

George Barlow Penny, Harold Gleason, Frank Schrader, John Pfaff, Lucille Johnson, Tom Karl, L. A. Torrens, Vernon Archibald, Frederick Benson, Lucy Lee Call, Arthur Alexander, Henri Varillat, Marguerite Castellanos, Lelia Livingston Morse, Florence Belden Weeks, Genevieve See, Miguel Suarez, Clara Louise Werner, Flora Stoll, Virginia Jeffrey Smith, Guido Anselmi, Oscar

Gareissen.

Many of the musicians named above were a part of the faculty of the new Eastman School of Music in 1921.

In 1914 Oscar Gareissen organized a large choral society called the Festival Chorus. Many prominent church singers and musical amateurs belonged to this organization, and a high degree of excellence was obtained. After Mr. Gareissen's death in 1924, it continued for a time under the leadership of Richard Halliley, a member of the Eastman School Faculty.

Important also in the story of Rochester music were the concerts arranged by Manager James E. Furlong. He brought many famous artists to Rochester, including:

Alexander Bonci, Herbert Witherspoon, Madame Emma Calve, Mischa Elman, Paderewski, John McCormack, the New York Philharmonic under the leadership of the renowned German composer Gustave Mahler; Ysaye, Godowski and Gerardy in trio performance, the New York Symphony led by Walter Damrosch, the Boston Opera Company, the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.

Rochester, indeed, heard plenty of good music in both the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The musical organizations named in this paper all played their part in paving the way for later musical developments in Rochester. Space does not permit the mention of the many private teachers of music who helped to promote the cause of good music, thus making the work of the large organizations bear fruit.

### **The Eastman School of Music and the Eastman Theater**

The credit for interesting George Eastman in the establishment of a music school endowed and connected with the University, belongs in part to Mrs. Alf Klingenberg and to Mr. Dossenbach, who both worked toward this end. The author

recalls hearing Mrs. Klingenberg say that President Rhees was not very receptive to the idea, feeling that a professional school had no place in a university atmosphere. He must have changed his ideas, however, for the Eastman School of Music as a part of the University of Rochester, with George Eastman's powerful financial backing, became an established fact. The purchase of the D.K.G. Institute was consummated by 1919, the last two catalogues of the school bearing the title:

The University of Rochester  
Institute of Musical Art  
Year Book  
1919 - 1920  
1920 - 1921

The Eastman School of Music was built during these two years, and opened its doors for instruction in the Fall of 1921.

A new Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra was established after the School opened. But its story and that of developments in the Eastman School and Theater, do not belong in this short sketch of Music in Rochester. They are told in detail in the history of the Eastman School of Music after its first quarter century, by Charles Riker, and the later supplement of 1962.