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Once-A-Week, 1929-03-07

Ithaca Conservatory and Affiliated Schools

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ONCE-A-WEEK

Published by the Students of The Ithaca Conservatory and Affiliated Schools

Vol. III No. 22

MARCH 7, 1929

Westminster Choir Week In Ithaca

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Published every Thursday morning by students in the Ithaca Conservatory and Affiliated Schools

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THE GENIUS OF DR. WILLIAMSON

To understand the reason for the increasing demand for the Westminster Choir and for church leaders trained in the Westminster Choir School one must know John Finley Williamson—the man who conceived the idea and whose genius is carrying it on.

Slight of build, with penetrating blue eyes and slightly thin and graying hair, a complexion more ruddy than is that of most professional men, a quick and springy step and a voice decidedly pleasing and well modulated, this man who is devoting his life to raising the standards of church music affects no "bohemian" mannerisms or eccentricities in dress or habits that would set him apart from other business men.

Dr. Williamson—the son of a minister—was born in the parsonage of a United Brethren Church in a little town in Ohio and grew up in the very shadow of the church. Although a man of deep spiritual life and with such background and up bringing there is nothing of the austere of sanctimonious about him.

A plain home loving man with wife and children and a career dedicated to the uplift of church music, is the leader of America's famous church choir. He craves no other eulogy.

After his graduation from Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio, Dr. Williamson became a teacher of public speech and church music in the Central Reformed Theological Seminary in Dayton. It was while in this work he organized and directed several choirs in various Dayton churches which finally led to the organization of the present nationally famed singing organization.

Studying voice at times under David Bispham, Herbert Witherspoon, Herbert Wilbur Greene and others, he culled from them what to him seemed best and produced a voice teaching

method of his own. Choral music appealed most to him. He experimented with several methods in his various choirs and then went to Europe where he spent some months studying their choral methods in church music.

Through the organization of his remarkable Westminster Choir, his seasonal tours with his famous singing group and through the establishment of the Dayton Westminster Choir School—all in the interest of teaching the ministry of church music, truly Dr. Williamson may be called a pioneer in this far reaching field of music and religious endeavor.

HUMAN VOICES PRODUCE BEST MUSIC

Dr. Williamson whose famous Westminster Choir sings always without accompaniment, believes we must approach music from the vocal standard and not the instrumental—the standard being the human voice. "The human voice," says he, "finds its greatest joy in praise and thanksgiving. The organ is a wonderful instrument and has its own place in the service of worship but human voices blended in harmony produce an instrument that cannot be equaled—an instrument that needs no other aid.

PRAISE IS NATION WIDE

The Dayton Westminster Choir—a singing organization of 60 voices—young men and women—under the direction of John Finley Williamson—has won through its annual tours which have come to be a feature of the Choir's work, the acclaim of leading critics the nation over.

Some praise it for its beauty of tone and intonation, others for its precise diction, enunciation and clear organ-like tones, some for its unanimity of attack and with never any evidence of pitch being given. But for whatever of the elements that go to make for artistry in choral singing they praise it, all are agreed that it has become a national figure in church music in America.

ERNEST BLOCH SPEAKS

Ernest Bloch whose settings of the Ancient Hebrew melodies and compositions along those tragic and impressioned themes in which the prophets of old proclaimed their faith, says, in speaking of the Westminster Choir:

"If there were twenty such organizations led with the same purpose and thorough honesty in this country I would feel perfectly safe as to the future of art in the United States. This great Choir and the school behind it seem ready to serve the cause of the greatest art, the interpretation of the great polyphonists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—Palestrina, Orlandi di Lasso, Jasquin de Pres, Vittoria and the English and French Madrigalists.

JOHN FINLEY WILLIAMSON DEFENDS PURPOSE OF CHURCH MUSIC

That the Dayton Westminster Choir during the few years of its existence has achieved results such as to make it a national figure in church life, in the opinion of Dr. John Finley Williamson—its organizer and director—is due to the fact that the vital and definite purpose for which it was organized, has been consistently kept before it.

Organized for the purpose of teaching the ministry of church music through the rendition of worshipful music with highest artistry the Dayton Westminster Choir, according to Dr. Williamson, in trying to preach a gospel of feeling and intelligence. "We are attempting," said he, "to recreate an interest in the art of hymnology—the very source from which our Old Reformers—Hus, Knox, Calvin, Luther, Wesley and the rest received their inspiration.

"The art of hymnology has been too long neglected. Martin Luther of whom it was said by his enemies that he converted more with the hymnal than the Bible, made the statement that next to theology church music is the greatest of the arts. Ruskin who once defined architecture as 'frozen music' did not miss it far.

"In our musical training we have wandered too far away from the church. Our great musicians of the past—Bach, Schubert, Haydn, Mendelssohn and the rest were trained in the church. Music as a child of the church must be brought back to the church—to work for it and not against it.

"We should never lose sight of the fact that the one and only purpose of church music is worship. Music in itself is not religious but if it is to serve its purpose in the church it must arouse emotions that are religious.

"In most churches today music occupies two fifths of the service yet often it has little to do with it. Too often it is for mere entertainment—for the purpose of drawing a crowd. Jazz music will draw a crowd in church just as it does in the theatre but that is not its purpose."

Dr. Williamson is convinced that if music is to take its proper place in church life, greater attention must be given to the personnel of the choir. "When we consider the fact," he says, "that the majority of our musicians in the United States today make their living in church choirs, it is time we are taking into consideration just who these people are who constitute our choirs. Too often our choir leader and their singers are those who have failed to make the mark for Grand Opera, and too often this feature of their training is encouraged by churches who advertise their choir score.

"If music in the church is to accomplish its real purpose, our choirs must be composed

of people of deep spiritual life and who feel the responsibility of the task that is theirs. We must demand that our church musicians take up their work with the training and spiritual background such as we demand of our ministers. Not until this is done can we have ideal co-operation between pulpit and choir.

"As to musicianship in the choir, no one will deny its importance. Let it be for all, however, and not confined to a few. Education in musical life as well as in many of our other endeavors has been too much toward exploiting the star rather than toward culture for the whole.

"It was Richard Wagner who said, 'The standard of all music is set by the human voice and no matter how bold the combinations of the composer or how brilliant the execution of the virtuose they must all return in the end to the standard set by the human voice'."

Beauty of worship is another feature Dr. Williamson would emphasize in the training of church choirs. "Real worship", he says, "has a deep and spiritual beauty. It was Vogt who said, 'We must worship God not only in the beauty of holiness but in the holiness of beauty'."

"We must train our young people so they can worship more beautifully. Training in church music must not stop in the adult choirs. It must go into the church schools and include

the children. We must not lose sight of the fact that children have emotional lives. They demand rhythmic expression. We can give them this expression through worshipful music. Instead of feeding them the things of the slums we must give them cathedrals of sound.

"Any people to be really great must have appreciation of the beautiful. In order to fully appreciate beauty one must help accomplish create it. The easiest and most satisfactory way this can be accomplished through the art of music is through singing. Church choirs offer this opportunity."

A UNIQUE ORGANIZATION

The Dayton Westminster Choir, whose pioneering achievements make it unique among the choirs of the world, with its European Tour to be made in the spring, adds to its list another, and one it is, which in addition to being an unprecedented feature among choirs on these shores, promises to be an epochal event in the music life of America.

Leaving New York in March, this singing organization of 60 voices—young men and women under the direction of John Finley Williamson will go to Europe for a three months' singing tour of England, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, Scandinavia and other countries and with con-

certs scheduled in the very home towns and cities of the Old World masters of music.

Among those sponsoring this American Choir Tour of Europe are Herbert Hoover and Mrs. Hoover; Chief Justice Taft and Mrs. Taft; Alanson B. Houghton, United States Ambassador to London and Mrs. Houghton; Myron T. Herrick, United States Ambassador at Paris, and his daughter-in-law Mrs. Herrick; Sir Esme Howard, English Ambassador to America, and Lady Isabella Howard.

WHAT DR. DAMROSCH SAYS

Among those who had been loud in their praises of the Westminster Choir is no less an authority than Walter Damrosch—the great American orchestral director. "I think", says Mr. Damrosch, "this Choir should be taken to Europe so that the people of European countries may see the United States is leading in this field of accomplishment. I feel it would carry off the palm of victory.

Wife (discovering typist on her husband's lap)—So, at last I've found you out!

"Sh-h-h-h-h! Be calm now, wife dear. This little girl is just a trifle hard of hearing, that's all."

TIMELY STYLE TOPICS

This spring is a gay vagabond of fashion seasons borrowing vivid colors from autumn and summer and reshaping the best styles of winter to lighter moods. The beige and brown, brilliant orange of autumn and the bright flower colors of summer appear in the smart new fashions of this spring in the soft light fabrics that interpret so beautifully the lines of the new mode. The loveliest of the spring styles have been gathered here for the early selection of our patrons.

ROTHSCHILD BROS.

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

While the coming visit of the Westminster Choir to Ithaca is primarily professional in nature, nevertheless there is a strong secondary motive in the visit. This will be the first opportunity for students in the Westminster Choir School to become acquainted with their future school home. It will also be the first opportunity for our students to become acquainted with those who will be fellow students next year.

In view of this important feature of the coming concert appearance in Ithaca of this famous organization, students and faculty has joined forces in planning a program of events as interesting and complete as the limited time and circumstances of the visit will permit.

The program planned is as follows:

Monday—

- 10:00 A. M.—The Choir will meet at the administration building where cars will be waiting to take them on a sightseeing trip in Ithaca and vicinity.
- 12:00 o'clock—Members of the Choir will be entertained at a luncheon given in their honor at the Ithaca Hotel by Sigma Alpha Iota, Mu Phi Epsilon, Phi Mu Alpha and Kappa Gamma Psi.
- 2:30 P. M.—A concert will be given in the Little Theatre in honor of the visitors. The following program will be presented:
1. Overture—The Barber of Seville *Rossini*
The Band
 2. Piano—Partita, No. 1..... *Bach*
Mary Hallenbeck
 3. Sextette from "Lucia"..... *Donizetti*
Craig McHenry Clarence Andrews
Paul Lester Walter Beeler
Philo Botsford Allen Ostrander
 4. Violin—La Folia, Variations Serieuses.... *Archangelo Corelli*
Anthony Bek
 5. Airs from "Show Boat"..... *Kern*
The Band
 6. Voice—Der Hirt dem Felsen..... *Schubert*
Margaret Daum-Nichols
Obbligato for Clarinet played by Angel Delgado
 7. Rhapsody Espana..... *Chabrier*
The Band

Students from all departments and Schools will be excused from classes in order to attend this concert at 2:30 Monday afternoon.

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Richard Spamer, music critic of St. Louis where the Westminster Choir sang recently to an audience of more than 9,000 people says:

"The Westminster Choir stands unique among organizations devoted to sacred song. I have never heard a better ensemble nor anything approaching it in pitch, shading, perfection or attack and release or unaffected devotion to the difficult art of which this Choir is the acknowledged exponent."

BEST IN AMERICA

P. A. Scholes of London, after his recent visit to America where he attended the Conference of Musicians in Chicago, said in a radio broadcast:

"The very best choral music I heard in America was in Dayton, Ohio—the home of the famous Westminster Choir which tours all America and soon will come to this country. Be prepared to give them a welcome. They deserve it, for their singing of Bach and Palestrina in beyond praise."

NOTES ON THE SCHOOL

Each student director as a part of his training in the Choir School is required to organize and direct in his church group three choirs—a children's choir, a high school choir and an adult choir. Needless to say that such effort in training the music life of the church is a quickening force in the worship in those churches fortunate enough to have such music leadership.

That this pioneer School in training choir directors has proved during the less than three years of its existence the value of such training, is evidenced by the fact that there are now some 20 young men—students of the School who direct most successful choirs in other churches in Dayton and near by towns and cities.

"This Choir shows fine musicianship and work of understanding character second to none heard in this country or elsewhere. It is doing the most important constructive work that has been done in America in the last twenty years.

S. A. I.

Epsilon chapter is most happy to announce that it has pledged Lenore Thompson as one of its members.

Nellie Sands, one of Epsilon's sisters who was here studying this summer, has accepted a position as head of Kent's Hill Seminary, Kent's Hill, Maine.

Lenore Thompson and Hazel Woodard, pianist and violinist respectively, are giving programs three times daily at the Glen Springs Hotel, Watkins.

NEWMAN NEWS

Sally Lawes spent the week-end in Elmira.

Virginia Stumm spent the week-end at Syracuse.

Mrs. Stahler has arrived and will spend a few days here.

Mrs. Lawes visited Sally on Saturday.

Mary Hallenbeck has returned from her home in Schenectady, and she has brought with her a fraternity pin! Congratulations!

Plans are being made for a sleigh-ride party to be held soon.

AMARDS

Formal initiation for the new members of the Amards was held Sunday, February 17th at the Conservatory. Roland Fernand, president of the fraternity, was not able to attend, and A Lester Sission, a former president, took his place. Those initiated were: Marion Beck, Judith Cohn, Pauline Feinstein, Thelma Hanley, Edith Quackenbush, Marjorie Rockwell, and Arthur Niedeck.

At a meeting held Monday, February 25th, new pledges were considered. Those who were chosen will be announced in the near future.

REDEMPTION FOR CHURCH MUSIC

It is through the influence of such an organization as the Dayton Westminster Choir Paul Hutchinson points out in "The Christian Century" that the redemption of church music is to be brought about. He says in part:

"During the last few years the Westminster choir of Dayton, Ohio, has won wide acclaim for the concerts which it has given in many American cities. Singing nothing but sacred music this choir has brought to thousands of Americans a new conception of the richness of the material available in this field, and a new sense of the dignity and warmth which may be added to worship through proper use of the music already at hand. To the public at large, however, it is likely that the choir has been regarded simply as a concert feature, with no more significance than belongs to any first-class entertainment. A few have known it as an actual church organization, an integral part of the service of worship in a Presbyterian church in Dayton, Ohio. But there is something even more meaningful than this behind the rise of the Westminster choir to national prominence. The choir is only the outward and visible sign of an inner and still largely unknown attempt to raise the standards of church music throughout the whole country."

CHARACTER—PERSONALITY—LEADERSHIP

Entrance requirements for the Westminster Choir School is a feature which make it original and different from other schools. First among requirements for those who would enter is CHARACTER. The conviction of Dr. Williamson and those who assist him in the work is that the ministry of church music cannot be accomplished except through leaders of real moral and spiritual life. Next among qualifications comes PERSONALITY which must include the element of LEADERSHIP. One must have these qualifications plus musicianship, mental equipment and voice in order to become a member of this unusual Choir School which supplies the material from which the Westminster Choir is built.

WHERE?

"Where do they get that pitch?"—a question asked over and over by audiences everywhere who have heard the Dayton Westminster Choir. They marvel, as well they might, that a band of 60 voices sing always as they do with perfect attack and unanimity of tone and yet with never any evidence of pitch being given by the director or any member of the group. How these attacks are so perfectly placed is a sworn secret of the conductor and the Choir.

CORNELL ANTICIPATES COMING OF CHOIR SCHOOL

The Cornell Sun feels that the coming of the Choir School to Ithaca may mean a revival of interest in choral singing as a University function, which has been in abeyance since the abolition of the Sage vesper services. The Sun remarks: "We have mourned the passage of these services because they took with them student choir. The Westminster Choir School, an organization of universally acknowledged stimulative effect on choral singing in the nation, may well be expected to revive it in Cornell. Should it do so, it will be welcomed not only as a neighbor, but as a benefactor as well."

AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE MADE THE MOST OF

In putting out the Westminster Choir issue of the *Once-A-Week*, it has been our hope to arouse an even greater enthusiasm than has already made itself manifest throughout the school and the city of Ithaca as a whole, by bringing before your attention the principal features in connection with the Choir and the Choir School and such other items concerning this singing group as would be likely to interest you.

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DID YOU KNOW THAT—?

That the Westminster Choir School has a student and faculty group of about 130, which will become a part of the Conservatory next September.

That a new building will be provided to house the Choir School.

That Mr. Williamson chose Ithaca out of many of the most prominent institutions, inviting the school to join with them.

That the School is interdenominational, and its students are required to know the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish services, alike.

That Dr. Williamson plans to hold a big Choral Festival in Ithaca, bringing into the city the hundreds of singers under directors he has placed in churches near Ithaca.

That the Choir School course will be lengthened from three to four years upon coming to Ithaca.

That David Hugh Jones, F. A. G. O., well-known composer of "God Is a Spirit," which will be sung next Monday night will come with the school, as one of its foremost teachers.

That Dr. Williamson is one of the four honorary members of the American Hymn Society.

That during the past season the Westminster Choir, in a brief tour of not over one month, appeared before 110,000 paid admissions outside of Dayton, O.

That the Westminster Choir is one of the few musical organization which is able to pay its own way on its tours through the attendance that accrues upon the heralding of its coming.

That first among the qualification for entrance is character, followed by personality, leadership, and then musicianship, mental equipment, and voice.

That Dr. Williamson is the founder and promoter of the national movement known as "Better Music in the Churches."

That the featured soloist in Mrs. Lillian Hodapp, who is especially praised for her work in singing spirituals.

VITAL FORCE BEHIND THE CHOIR

Back of the Dayton Westminster Choir which has achieved a world wide reputation for beauty and unanimity of tone, intonation, perfect enunciation—in fact in all the elements that go to make for artistry in the art of choral singing—is a very vital and potent force. That force is the Dayton Westminster Choir School—organized by Dr. John Finley Williamson soon after the organization of the Choir itself—another pioneering achievement in the field of church music.

In order to have an ever ready source of fresh and well trained material for his own Choir and for other communities appreciating trained choirs, this school was established. From a handful of students meeting in night classes three times a week, it has developed into a five-day-a-week school with classes in English, psychology, theory and ear training, harmony, history of music, church music literature, conducting and other related subjects, and attended by more than 100 students from 36 states of the Union. Every student studies voice and piano which are compulsory, for each must not only sing but play the piano and one orchestral instrument. The value of acquiring many related techniques, Dr. Williamson believes cannot be overestimated, in the training of choir singers and choir leaders.

BENEFIT DANCE AND GAME FRIDAY

A benefit dance and basket-ball game will be held Friday, February 8, for Jean McDowell, who fell in the gym recently fracturing his knee. The dance is being sponsored by Phi Epsilon Kappa. Preceding the dance, a basket-ball game between Phi Epsilon Kappa and the Moose will be held.

The following program will be given by the Westminster Choir, when they sing at Bailey Hall next Monday evening, March the 11th.

I

Hodie Christus natus est.... *G. P. da Palestrina*
(1526-1594)

Crucifixus..... *Antonio Lotti*
(1667-1740)

Sing Ye to the Lord..... *Johann Sebastian Bach*
a. Poco Allegro (683-1750)
b. Allegro Vivace

II

Jesus, Friend of Sinners..... *Edward Grieg*
(1843-1907)

Offer Thanksgiving..... *F. Melius Christiansen*
Psalm Fifty-one—Opus 29..... *Johannes Brahms*
(1833-1897)

III

*God is a Spirit..... *David Hugh Jones*
Alleluia! Christ is Risen!..... *Koplyoff*
Arr. by Harvey Gaul

Going Home..... *Anton Dvorak*
(1841-1904)

(From Largo of New World Symphony)

Arr. by William Arms Fisher

IV

What Christ Said..... *Peter Christian Lutkin*
In dulci júbilo.. (14th Century).....

..... *Arr. by F. Melius Christiansen*
Father Most Holy..... *F. Melius Christiansen*

*The Shepherd's Story..... *Clarence Dickinson*
*Dedicated to Mr. Williamson and the Westminster Choir

NOTICE

The Westminster Choir will be in Ithaca Sunday and Monday, March 10 and 11. Let's give them a warm welcome!

Tickets for the Monday evening concert are on sale at the Co-op, the Corner Bookstore, Morse Hall, and the Conservatory offices. Get your ticket now. Don't waste time. Tomorrow may be too late.

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 "That was *Silk Stockings*."
 "I thought so. It did have a lot of runs in it."—Blue Ox.

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 "Sir, that's my daughter!"
 "Oh, I beg your pardon; I didn't realize you were her father."
 "Father! Say, I'm her mother."—Wisconsin Octopus.

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In the village of Parson Drove, in the fen country, near Wisbech, on the borders of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, England, a wood mill is still in seasonal operation, and its processes differ little probably from those in vogue in prehistoric times. Huge cumbersome wooden rollers drawn by horses are still used to crush the plants, and the dye extracted now has its uses in newer industries. In fact, for certain purposes its value still remains superior to all modern substitutes.

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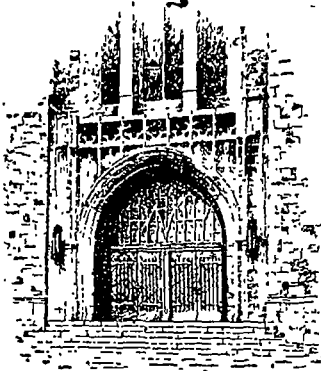
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CONCERT
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Percy Scholes, the Distinguished English Musician,
says:

"The very best music I heard in America
was in Dayton, Ohio—the home of the famous
Westminster Choir, which tours all America
and soon will come to this country. Be pre-
pared to give them a welcome. They deserve
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beyond praise."

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