

The Barrère Ensemble

of WIND INSTRUMENTS ::: 1 FLUTE ::: 2 OBOES ::: 2 CLARINETS
2 HORNS ::: ::: 2 BASSOONS

The Work of an Opportunist in the Regeneration of the Wind Instrument and what it is accomplishing as a Movement of National Educational Importance.



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ART, especially Musical Art, in the making is not infrequently a case of "History repeating itself"—a fashioning of the new out of the almost forgotten; a re-adjustment of old ideas to modern standards as it were. But, however old or obscured it may be, true art is never obsolete; and wherever an element of real beauty exists, it is certain at some time to be called forth again to a larger and more radiant flower, tilled by time in a field of more universal knowledge and consequent appreciation.

Such an artistic resurrection is The Barrère Ensemble of Wind Instruments, for it harks back to times a few centuries ago—times pre-Berlioz, before the orchestra of many combinations was known, to times when chamber music flourished and its production was encouraged by the better class of nobility, who were sufficiently advanced to discard the court jester for the court musician.

In this Renaissance a little "Kapelle," whether of strings, or the wind instruments, formed part of the entourage of almost every princely household, giving to it a certain distinction. In many instances the composers of the day were under the "patronage" of some prince or potentate, writing music for the court

functions all the way from a "Gavotte" to a "Te Deum." In this manner much of the rich heritage of chamber music came to be.

To-day, accustomed as we are to the stupendous effects of an "augmented" orchestra as demanded by a Wagner or a Strauss, we fail sometimes to be impressed except by the mere volume of sound, musical heroics in the full limelight so to speak. Chamber music, especially for the wind instrument, is the anti-thesis. The subordination of every instrument to the whole, the absence of any display of virtuosity (with yet each player a virtuoso), the desire to make the whole sing with one voice of many hues and colors, such was the artistic mission of those early wind ensemble players, who discoursed sweet music at the courts of old, until with the ever increasing growth of the orchestra they became submerged in the larger and more brilliant product.

From this sleep of centuries The Barrère Ensemble has emerged. It was called into being some six years ago by George Barrère, the distinguished French flute virtuoso, who, paramount and unassailable, stands as the greatest living master of this instrument; as great in his realm as the greatest of pianists or violinists are in theirs.

The Ensemble is the offspring of a similar organization founded by Barrère in Paris before his advent to this country. Indeed it was immediately upon his graduation from the Paris Conservatoire, which was accomplished as "First Medallist," at the uncommonly early age of nineteen, that he founded La Société Moderne d'Instruments à Vent (Modern Society of Wind Instruments). So emphatic was its success, and so recognized its cultural value, that it was subsidized by the French Government, while its founder was honored by a decoration. During the ten years in which Barrère conducted this organization, over one hundred new works by fifty different composers were produced. Surely a national musical stimulus.

In 1905, Mr. Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Symphony Orchestra, induced Barrère to come to this country. In his capacity of solo flautist with this organization it has become his successful mission to overturn completely, by the demonstra-

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tion of his remarkable playing, the fallacy of the supposition which prior to his coming existed, that the flute and other wind instruments were purely orchestral instruments, limited in scope. Wherever he has played throughout the country, he has brought a conception of the possibilities of the flute, an insight into its literature, a delight in its exquisite tonal beauty, and an acknowledgment of his supreme mastery of it.

Conditions everywhere pointed to an exceedingly scant understanding of the wind instrument in this country, and inspired Barrère with a keen desire to establish here an organization similar to the one he had founded abroad. By the co-operation of a number of prominent people, he was enabled to carry out this project, and in February, 1910, he introduced The Barrère Ensemble of Wind Instruments to New York, in an entire program of Twentieth Century first hearings in America, the works performed being by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Haendel and Haydn. New York had something left to learn and realized it, for this little orchestra was welcomed by both the press and the music loving public in no uncertain manner.

The support given these quaint and aristocratic concerts was both immediate and lasting and they stand to-day among the established events of the New York concert season. With each year's success the demand to hear the Barrère Ensemble at other music centers became more insistent, but it was difficult to meet owing to the various orchestral affiliations of its members. In 1912, however, its first tour was consummated, the results of which were a doubling of both time and territory the following season; while 1914-15 produced a coast to coast tour of three months' duration, the most extensive ever arranged for a chamber music attraction, with re-engagements numbering as many as five in a single week.

Artistically, it is comparable only with such an organization as the Kneisel Quartet. As a novelty it attracts even those of but slight musical sophistication; while its message of enlightenment is such that it stands unquestionably as "*The greatest educational factor on the American concert stage.*"

The Columbia Double-Disc Records by Barrère represent this distinguished artist at his best. New Records by Barrère and Barrère Ensemble now in preparation.

A Few of the Hundreds of Press Eulogies Extended to the Barrère Ensemble from Coast to Coast.

New York Sun

The concert was noteworthy for two reasons beyond the excellence of the performance. One was the large size of the audience. It seems probable that its pleasing activities may continue indefinitely, for its audiences have constantly increased in size, and that of yesterday was one of the largest it has had.

New York Tribune

Those who might complain that music played, with the exception of two horns, exclusively by a wood-wind choir, must lack color and foundation should have been compelled to hear the Barrère Ensemble play Gounod's "Little Symphony" as it gave it yesterday.

New York Evening Post

It is needless to say that this program was played as only this group of famous specialists could play it.

New York Evening Sun

These little brothers to Mozart might have been playing for archbishops and emperors, instead of the large modern audience which came in automobiles. A surprising number of people have managed to "get the Barrère habit."

New York Evening World

Despite the weather the audience was of large size and enjoyed itself thoroughly. The entertainment was one of the most delightful that could be conceived. The program was as uncommon, dainty and fascinating, as the little organization was novel.

Buffalo Commercial

It was the first appearance in Buffalo of the Barrère Ensemble and these artists made a most profound impression.

Kansas City Times

The exceptional quality of the entertainment was sustained by the flawless performance of the musicians and the finely sensitive character of its leader. Mr. Barrère has that particular French balance of temperament and intellect which is the greatness of France.

Charleston (W. Va.) Mail

The concert given by the Barrère Ensemble of New York was without a doubt the finest concert ever given in the Capital City.

Cincinnati Commercial

If a crowded house and unbounded enthusiasm are any indication of appreciation and support, the Barrère Ensemble will doubtless feel encouraged to appear again in Cincinnati. The recital was one of the most enjoyable given in this city this season.

Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph

In presenting an organization of this character, the Art Society has shown good judgement and rendered a distinct service to our musical public.

Detroit Tribune

From the point of interest, of the novelty of the recital and the excellence of the musicianship, the concert given last night by the Barrère Ensemble was one of the most enjoyable given in this city this season.

St. Paul Pioneer Press

The most distinctive musical novelty of the present season was offered by the Schubert Club last night in the Barrère Ensemble. A capacity house, the largest in the annals of the Club this year greeted the players.

Spokane Spokesman

The evening will long be memorable in the artistic annals of Spokane.

Seattle Daily News

In many respects it was the most remarkable concert ever given in Seattle. It would be useless to try and describe the playing of Mr. Barrère and his associates.

Portland (Oregon) Evening Telegram

An ensemble of wind instruments is a new thing in Portland but the finely artistic playing of the Barrère Ensemble last night did not need any spice of novelty.

San Francisco Enquirer

Not to hear the Barrère Ensemble would be as great a sin against the high aesthetic deities as it would be to miss the Boston Symphony. Their art is perfect.

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