

## Appendix 2: Philadelphia Orchestra Percussionists

### Appendix A. Oscar Schwar

#### *Pizzicato Portraits*

By GERARD GAGHAN

#### OSCAR SCHWAR

Orchestra seasons may come and go, but Oscar Schwar goes on forever. The steady progression of the years has changed the roll call of the Philadelphia Orchestra many times, but it has never dimmed the lucent artistry of Schwar and it has left unchallenged his position as the leading timpanist in America.

When the Philadelphia Orchestra was a fledgling two years old, Fritz Scheel, the first conductor, brought Schwar here to head the battery section. The timpanist at the time was playing with the Royal Opera Orchestra, in St. Petersburg, Russia. Scheel had heard reports about him and promptly bid for his services.



Although young in years, Schwar was rich in musical experience and had played the length and breadth of the Continent. He began his career as a violinist and was proficient on the instrument before he was 10 years old. At the Royal Conservatory in Dresden, Schwar switched to the timpani and trained under Heinemann. Engagements soon followed with orchestras in Coblenz, Hanover and Karlsruhe.

From Germany, the young timpanist went to Finland to play under Jarnefelt with the Wiberg Orchestra. This was followed by an engagement in Paris, where he was a member of the personnel of the famous "Concerts Colonne" directed by Edouard Colonne. Finally, he went to Russia, where he worked under Rimsky-Korsakoff, Glazunoff and Nicolas Balkin.

Skill on the timpani is no small accomplishment. In addition to requiring perfect pitch and a natural sense of rhythm, it also entails enormous dexterity and muscular control. Oscar Schwar's first appearance with the Philadelphia Orchestra was a prognostic of things to come. From the moment he played the difficult timpani roll in the "Romeo and Juliet" Overture, Conductor Scheel and the men of the Orchestra knew that the head battery post was filled. Schwar has remained the mainstay of that section in the 44 seasons that have since rolled by.

#### Worth-While Philadelphians



TYMPANIST

It is not often that the tympanist of an orchestra, or the kettle drummer, to use the common parlance, rises to such heights that his performance is given special comment; but Oskar Schwar's mastery of rhythm is such that he is placed in the front rank of his art thruout the world.

North American, 8 February 1919.  
Courtesy of the  
Philadelphia Orchestra Association Archives.

Philadelphia Orchestra Program, 1-2 March 1946.  
Courtesy of the  
Philadelphia Orchestra Association Archives.

## Philadelphia Orchestra Has Many Noted Players

Few Know What Varied Talents Go to Make Up Ensemble Which Has Been Praised as "The Stradivarius Orchestra."

By HARRY GOLDBERG

When Arturo Toscanini, one of the greatest of living orchestral conductors, recently referred to the Philadelphia Orchestra as a "Stradivarius Orchestra," and Ottorino Respighi, indorsing this view, added that it was "unbelievably excellent," these famous Italian musicians focused attention on the fact that Philadelphia knows little about the brilliant personnel of its foremost musical organization.

While the eminence of the ensemble is accepted and enjoyed by music lovers, it is not generally known that it numbers so many conspicuous individual talents. The composition of the men of the orchestra with Stradivarius violins was not only made, for the contracts accepted by members of the orchestra require each of them to do solo work when called upon. Among the membership is a surprisingly large percentage of men of American birth; there are men who rank with the best performers on their special instruments and men whose skill so surpassed all others that they are Caruso and Chaliapin to their brother artists.

Brief sketches of the leaders of the respective sections will indicate the quality and variety of the experiences and talent which has been assembled to make the orchestra a superlative musical instrument.

### Gusikoff a New Yorker.

Michel Gusikoff, the new concertmaster, was born into a musical family in New York. His grandfather and father were musicians; one of his names invented the xylophone and a violin was first placed in his hands when he was 5. He studied with Franz Kneisel and at the age of 19 became a professional and the concertmaster with Modest Altschuler's famous Russian Symphony Orchestra. When this organization disbanded he was appointed to the same post with the St. Louis Symphony and nine years later—this season—came to the Philadelphia Orchestra. The concertmaster does more solo work than any other member of the orchestra. Symphonic literature offers him constant opportunities for the display of his skill, and whenever you see the orchestra at ease and waiting, and hear a beautiful and impressive utterance of a single violin soaring through the Academy, it is Gusikoff playing a solo theme.

Samuel Lifschey is also a New York boy. He received his musical training there, and yet he is a pioneer. He impressed the viola on the musical consciousness of the country it was not recognized as a solo instrument. In the family of flutes the viola is next to the violin in size. It requires a longer arm than the violin to hold it extended. It cannot be supported on the floor like the elder brother, the cello, and demands much more strength than the violin to make it sing. It has a contralto voice as compared to the tenor or soprano of the violin. Composers have written little for it, so much must be made of its capacity for sombre coloring, tenderness or brilliant heroics, and Mr. Lifschey has succeeded so well that he is the only viola player who has been a soloist with four American symphony orchestras. He had won a scholarship to the Cornell Engineering School, but elected to go to Cooper Institute, in New York, so that his music lessons would not be interrupted. Graduating with a C. E. degree, he was so competent a musician that Damrosch engaged him for the New York Symphony. He became

trumpet he was applauded with a spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm by his colleagues—a rare and unusual tribute. His eminence has been unquestioned since that time, 24 years ago, and his work is also conspicuous in the Tchaikovsky "1812 Overture" and the ninth Beethoven Symphonies.

### A Philadelphia Master.

Mozart once wrote to his sister when he was busy working on a composition: "Please remind me later on to do something handsome for the French horns—they have such a beautiful tone." And of all the golden tones that come from the French horns nothing is more rich and luscious than the tones produced by Anton Horner, who was born in Bohemia, but given a musical education in Leipzig. He played the violin at the age of 8. At 22 he did his first symphonic work as first horn player for Victor Herbert's Pittsburgh Symphony. In 1901 Fritz Scheel, then leader of the Philadelphia Orchestra, traveled to Chicago just to hear the man recommended as "the best horn player in America." Anton Horner's services were obtained and this year he is rounding out a quarter of a century of achievement here.

His brother, Joseph Horner, is also in the horn section and the Horners, together with the others, make up a group unequalled anywhere for beauty of tone and expression. Mozart was not the only composer to recognize the color in the horn notes, for in the Tchaikovsky Fifth, the "Mid-Summer Night's Dream," "Nocturne" and in the heroic Siegfried call in the "Ring," music its utterance is heard at the peak.

Gardell Simons, who leads the trombone division, is another virtuoso among artists. He began to play when he was 9; studied the piano and the cello, but at 18 was already a soloist on the brass instrument. In the days of the great expositions he was in the orchestra at Omaha, St. Louis and Buffalo. His art of largely self-taught. He had little formal education on the trombone, but perfected himself by attending recitals and listening to the human voice at its best. The band trombone is a baritone and the orchestra instrument a tenor and Mr. Simons, in developing his talent, has striven to obtain the color of the human voice. Near the end of the Tannhauser Overture there is a soaring exultant note, which sings above the combined instruments of the musician; that is Simons playing the trombone, and in the Cocher Overture, of Rimsky-Korsakov and in the Ride of the Valkyries, the trombone is a dominant instrument. Musicians say he has made a considerable contribution to the use of the trombone in symphonic music. He developed the present style of trombone playing. The light touch, the solo work, an improved mouthpiece are his products and nearly every first-rate man among the present generation of trombone players has been his pupil.

### Many Noted Players.

The trumpet section, the soprano of the brasses, is headed by Sol Cohen, a nephew of the concertmaster, a New York boy who began to play when he was 11. At 10, following graduation from De Witt Clinton High School, he became a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra. This was nine years ago. The trumpet tone is part of the orchestral background. Composers use it frequently to herald a change in the march of the instrument. Its range is so limited that its use as a solo instrument is rare. It is heard to the best advantage in the

allowing demobilization, he appeared in recitals, played chamber music for three years, was connected with the Detroit and Cleveland Symphony Orchestras, and last year joined the Philadelphia Orchestra. If you have heard a deep rich solo in an appealing Slavic wail while listening to the Caucasian sketches of Ippolitow-Ivanov it is Mr. Lifschey's grown-up fiddle that is caroling. He introduced Ives's Theme Varié to American music lovers when he played it with the orchestra last year and the Handel Concerto in B minor for viola and orchestra was also heard for the first time in this country when he played it recently.

Willem Van Den Burg, first cellist, is a native of Holland, where his father was a well-known violinist and conductor. He was apprenticed to music at 10 and played the oboe as well as the cello, and at 14 he began his solo career. He studied in Paris with Pablo Casals and has appeared in joint concerts with Corot and Thibaud. He played with the San Francisco Orchestra last year during his first season in America, and joined Stokowski's ranks this year. The cello, senior to the viola in the string division, ranks next to the violin in symphonic importance, and it is a rare composition in which it is not heard as a major instrument alone and with the orchestral chorus.

### Importance of the Drums.

Anton Torello is another who obtained his musical talents by way of inheritance. His father and grandfather were expert performers on the giant violin, known as the contrabass. Born in Barcelona, Spain, he began to study at the age of 10, at 15 was a member of the orchestra in the grand opera house; at 19 the first double bass player and at 21 professor in the conservatory. He came to the Boston Opera in 1909 and in 1914 became the head of his section in the Philadelphia Orchestra. In explaining the rank of his instrument, Benor Torello said that like the bass voice it was fundamental to music. It was the foundation upon which the lace work of the other instruments was laid. "In war," he said, "the soldiers do the work and the generals get the glory." The bass is the infantry of the orchestra.

Oscar Schwarz is acknowledged the grand master of the tympani in America. Like every musical student in Germany in the old days he learned to play several instruments. He was a performer on the violin and the trumpet at the age of 10 and 12, his father, a musician, having insisted upon a thorough education and it was not until he was 18 that he began with the percussion instruments; playing professionally at 20. He played in nearly every country of Europe and was obtained by Fritz Scheel from the Royal Opera, at St. Petersburg. The drums give beat and body to the musical rhythm and Mr. Schwarz is not only a great drummer, but a great artist as well. When he first played in rehearsal here he created a sensation among his colleagues by his performance in the Tchaikovsky "Romeo and Juliet Overture." At the conclusion of his remarkable roll on the

Chausson Symphony, which is not often played, and in Parsifal and other Wagnerian music it is repeatedly called upon to do important work.

Walter Guetter, leader of the bassoons, is a Philadelphiaian whose father, Julius Guetter, is well known to musical circles as a violin maker. He began to play when he was 8 and studied the violin and piano. But when sent to Berlin to study with his uncle, a bassoon virtuoso, he transferred his affections to the wind instrument. At 13 he played professionally in the orchestra of Johann Strauss, grandson of the waltz wizard. For seven years, until 1922, he was a member of the Chicago Symphony and then came here, having served in the navy in the interim. The bassoon is the cello of the wood-winds and its voice is heard fortissimo in Rimsky-Korsakov and practically all of the Tchaikovsky music.

The clarinet, the most resourceful of the wood-winds, which can sing deep with the bassoon or run up the scale to the height of the flute or the violin, is played in the section headed by Daniel Benade. Born in France, he began to play at 8; at 14 he was in a famous French ensemble. His first American experience was in the French band at the San Francisco Exposition; then with the Russian Ballet, coming here in 1917. The clarinet is a major symphonic instrument contributing to the main threads of the musical pattern. It is heard alone in the Scherezade cadenzas, in the finale of the ninth Beethoven, the third Brahms and in the Second Hungarian Rhapsody by Liszt.

### Each Is a Soloist.

The flutes are led by W. M. Kincaid. Born in Minneapolis, brought up in Honolulu, he started to play the flute at 8 and also studied the piano. At 12 he was living in North Carolina, where he began serious musical study. After graduation from the N. Y. Institute of Musical Arts he was for five years assistant first flutist of the N. Y. Symphony, served in the navy and after playing for two years with the New York Chamber Music Society is now in his sixth season here. He has been a soloist with the New York orchestra as well as with the Philadelphia and as the flute is the first violin of the wood-winds he is heard often, especially in the Mozart "Jupiter," the Leonora Overture and in Debussy's "Afternoon of a Faun."

Among oboe players Marcel Tabuteau is considered the foremost artist in this country. Born in France, he began to play the violin at 6. At 17 he was playing the English horn under Damrosch's baton; then he transferred to the Metropolitan, where he was Toscanini's first oboe, coming to Philadelphia in 1915 honorably discharged from the French Army as incapacitated from wounds. The oboe is the lyric voice of the wood-winds and as it is chiefly an orchestral instrument is heard throughout the range of musical literature.

These concentrated biographies show that the orchestra is composed of pioneers' prodigies, mature virtuosos and musicians continuously striving toward the perfection of their art. These separate talents have been so perfectly united into one symphonic instrument that a great musician could liken its utterance to the composite voices of the Stradivari, the greatest instrument made by craft of men. While Fritz Scheel laid the foundation for it, in its present form, the Philadelphia Orchestra is the spirit, the passion, the inspiration and the musical expression of its conductor—Leopold Stokowski.

## Winter Fashions



From Record (Philadelphia Orchestra), 4 January 1927.  
Courtesy of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association Archives.

# Oscar Schwar Dies; Virtuoso, 71

Oscar Schwar, tympanist and oldest member of the Philadelphia Orchestra, died yesterday at his home,



OSCAR SCHWAR

He played under the baton of some of the world's outstanding composers and conductors both in this country and abroad. Musicians regarded him as one of the foremost virtuosos of the kettle drums.

## HONORED BY ORMANDY

As a mark of esteem which the whole orchestra held for Mr. Schwar, the orchestra in Baltimore yesterday played Beethoven's Seventh Symphony at its afternoon rehearsal in commemoration of their late tympanist.

Eugene Ormandy, the orchestra conductor, said that "Mr. Schwar was one of the greatest tympanist virtuosos of all times and was deeply loved by everyone who worked with him. As a man and artist, he can never be replaced." Mr. Schwar was born in Bautzen, Germany. His only immediate survivor is his wife, Mrs. Rosa Schwar.

## Oscar Schwar, 71, Dies; Veteran Musician

By the Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 28.—Oscar Schwar, for 43 years tympanist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, died yesterday of pneumonia at Presbyterian Hospital. He was 71.

Senior member of the orchestra, he was known as "Papa" Schwar by his colleagues and many in the music field. A native of Bautzen, Germany, he first trained as a violinist at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Dresden.

## Oscar Schwar

Oscar "Papa" Schwar, 71, tympanist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, who frequently played in Washington, died yesterday of pneumonia in Philadelphia.

A native of Bautzen, Saxony, Mr. Schwar studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Dresden. His early training was as a violinist. He played in many countries of Europe.

It was while performing in an opera house in St. Petersburg under the direction of Rimski-Korsakov 43 years ago that Mr. Schwar was selected as a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra. That same year the orchestra began to visit Washington on its tours.

Mr. Schwar is survived by his wife.

Nov 28, 1946

## Oscar Schwar

Oscar (Papa) Schwar, tympanist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, died Wednesday in that city a few hours after the organization played a concert in Washington. He was rated by Serge Rachmaninoff as the outstanding tympanist in the world and he was well known here.

As a salute to him, the orchestra played the Beethoven "Seventh Symphony" slow movement at its rehearsal Wednesday afternoon in Baltimore.

Born in Bautzen, Saxony, July 2, 1875, he was first trained as a violinist at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Dresden.

## Noted Philadelphia Musician Dies

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 28.—(INS)—Funeral services were planned today for Oscar Schwar, 71, tympanist for the Philadelphia Orchestra for forty-three years.

Schwar, who was called "Papa" by other members of the orchestra, joined the organization when he came to the United States from his native Germany in 1903. Eugene Ormandy, conductor of the orchestra, termed him "one of the greatest tympany virtuosos of all time."

## Oscar Schwar

Tympanist of the Philadelphia Orchestra Since 1903; Lauded by Ormandy

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 27.—Oscar Schwar, seventy-one, veteran tympanist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, died today at his home.

Mr. Schwar, nicknamed Papa by members of the orchestra, had held the position of tympanist since 1903. Although suffering from a cold, he insisted on making last week's tour with the orchestra through the Middle West. He was unable to continue through a rehearsal last Thursday. He later developed pneumonia.

Eugene Ormandy, conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, paid this tribute to Mr. Schwar: "Papa Schwar was one of the greatest tympani virtuosos of all times and was deeply loved by every one who worked with him. As a man and an artist he cannot ever be replaced."

Born in Bautzen, Germany, Mr. Schwar came to this country forty-three years ago. His wife, Rosa survives.