

Appendix C. James Valerio

JAMES VALERIO

Like a number of others in the Philadelphia Orchestra, James Valerio, veteran member of the battery section, came from the Symphony Club. Twenty-odd years ago, Leopold Stokowski acted as guest conductor for the Symphony Club Orchestra and promptly engaged all the likelier musicians in the group.

Prior to joining the Orchestra, Valerio's career paralleled that of most professional musicians in town. He played in virtually all of the theatres, hotels and amusement parks in this area, and saw service with a number of dance units, then known euphemistically as "society orchestras."



A native of Venafro, a small town in the Abruzzi district of Italy, Valerio came to this country in 1901 at the age of 9. His father having preceded him here by several years. The elder Valerio played horn with the famous Italian Royal Marine Band, in which Creatore was first trombone and whose vocalist was the operatic tenor Ferruccio Giannini, the father of Dusolina and Vittorio Giannini.

Valerio began his musical life as a trumpeter; but his knowing parent, aware of the demands of bands at this time, made him switch to drums. One of Valerio's first jobs was with the combined Buffalo Bill Wild-West and Pawnee Bill Far-East show, an outdoor spectacle of the era. Valerio recalls it distinctly because he alternated at the drums clad in a cowboy suit for half the performance, and for the remainder of the show was dressed as a Turk.

The drummer's major concern at the moment is his son, James, Jr., a Jefferson graduate and a Captain in the Army Medical Corps. The son was in the air-borne division that was flown to France last winter to stem the German break-through at Bastogne. The boy is at present in a French rest camp.

Gerard Gaghan, 'Pizzicato portraits: James Valerio,'

Philadelphia Orchestra Program, 31 March – 2 April 1945, p. 628.

Courtesy of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association Archives.