

VICTOR KOLAR (1888–1957): A CZECH MUSICIAN  
IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

by

David A. Catchpole, B.A.

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Committee Members:

John Schmidt, Chair

Kay Lipton

Kevin Mooney

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my wife, Rachel.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	vii
ABSTRACT .....	viii
CHAPTER	
I.    INTRODUCTION .....	1
II.   EARLY LIFE AND IMMIGRATION (1888-1908) .....	4
III.  NEW YORK CITY (1908-1919).....	18
IV.   DETROIT AND RETIREMENT (1919-1957) .....	29
V.    CONCLUSION.....	99
APPENDIX SECTION.....	103
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	110

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration	Page
1. Victor Kolar (1908).....	13
2. Pittsburgh Orchestra program for <i>Hiawatha</i> .....	15
3. Victor and Franziska “Inka” Kolar (1918).....	20
4. Programs from 1924-1924 Young People’s Concerts .....	41
5. Kolar rehearsing the DSO at Belle Isle (1930).....	46
6. Brochure from Ford Century of Progress Exhibit.....	55
7. Kolar and DSO at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition .....	57
8. Program from the first Ford Sunday Evening Hour broadcast .....	61
9. Article on Kolar’s refusal to conduct the <i>Pathétique</i> .....	70
10. Program from Tómas Masaryk memorial concert .....	75
11. Album booklet for <i>Scheherazade</i> recording .....	80
12. Advertisement from Sam’s Cut Rate broadcasts .....	90
13. Dedication from manuscript for <i>Chatterbox</i> .....	94

## ABSTRACT

The early twentieth-century composer, conductor, and violinist, Victor Kolar (1888–1957) has largely been left out of modern music history. To date, no modern scholarship has been written on Kolar’s life, professional career, or position in the American music scene during the first half of the twentieth century. Through an examination of contemporary newspaper accounts, government documents, and archival material both in the United States and in the Czech Republic I present the first in-depth study of Kolar’s life and career to place him within the larger American orchestral culture and the development of classical music radio broadcasts.

The role of immigrant musicians in the United States is often underrepresented in the study of early twentieth-century American music, which typically focuses on the life and work of “indigenous” American composers and musicians. This focus discounts the influence of immigrant musicians who served as working musicians in American orchestras and concert halls. Using Kolar’s life and professional output as an example, I examine his role as an immigrant musician in American musical life and his formation of a Czech-American identity.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The role of immigrant musicians in the United States is often underrepresented in the study of early twentieth-century American music, which typically focuses on the life and work of “indigenous” American composers and musicians. Kyle Gann suggests that “American Music is whatever is written by American composers” is a definition that “refus[es] to impose essentialist criteria that would separate ‘real’ American composers from less authentic ones.”<sup>1</sup> In practice, however, this truism still allows wide latitude to use and perpetuate definitions of “American” that select or exclude composers/musicians based on how they fit into the desired narrative. The prevailing narrative for American concert music shifts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from a Euro-centric view, with a majority of prominent composers/musicians from or trained in Europe, to a focus on American-born composers/musicians. This perspective is apparent in even a cursory perusal of American music textbooks, such as Gann’s *American Music in the Twentieth Century*, H. Wiley Hitchcock’s *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, or Richard Crawford’s *An Introduction to America’s Music*. All to varying degrees reflect this perspective. In their discussion of “classical” music in the United States, these authors begin with the second New England school, most of whom trained in Europe, and quickly move to composers such as Cowell and Copland who are seen as rejecting much of the European tradition or creating new American musical languages. This narrative arc leaves out a wide swath of the composers and musicians who were

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<sup>1</sup> Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer, 1997), xiii. Gann does not quibble about the imposition of essentialist views; instead he argues that it puts American music in an untenable situation by preventing it from developing an independent identity—American music can be anything or everything without any unique characteristics of its own.

active in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century, because they are immigrants or their musical languages are not experimental enough to fit into the post-war narrative.

This focus discounts the influence of immigrant musicians who served as working musicians in American orchestras and concert halls. The contributions of immigrant musicians set the stage for the incredible growth and developments of American musical culture and to ignore their contributions leaves an incomplete picture of musical culture in the United States. One such musician, who has been largely forgotten in modern scholarship, is Victor Kolar. Though just one of many immigrant musicians who came to the United States, he held increasingly more prominent positions within American orchestras and his works were performed by many of the major ensembles in the United States—Kolar’s life and professional output is one example of the role of immigrant musicians in American musical life.

In addition to better understanding the role of immigrant musicians, Kolar’s life and work provide a unique window into the formation of Czech-American identity in the early twentieth century. Questions of national identity run deeply in Kolar’s compositions and biography. As a child of the great nineteenth-century multi-national empire, Kolar felt very comfortable with the hybrid identities that began to emerge during his lifetime. He utilized a wide range of culturally laden musical materials, such as Native American tunes in his tone-poem *Hiawatha*, Czech and Slavic folk melodies in his *Symphony in D* and *Slovakia: A Rhapsody for Orchestra*, American minstrel songs in his *Americana* symphonic suite, and wrote a number of hyphenated marches, such as the *Viennese-American* and *British-American*, that reflect a cosmopolitan and multi-cultural view of

national identity. These works provide a window into how Kolar navigated questions of nationality and identity from the turn of the century until his death in 1957.

To date, there is no modern scholarship on Kolar. Period reference literature on music, such as the 1922 *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians: American Supplement*, include an entry on Kolar; however, most modern editions do not. The ninth edition of *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* includes a short, single paragraph entry on Kolar; however, *Oxford Music Online* and the most recent edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001) do not. Since there is no modern scholarship on Kolar, I have had to rely on primary source materials to patch together a coherent picture of Kolar's life and career. A majority of these sources are the contemporary newspaper accounts and concert reviews, which provide a detailed accounting of his professional activities, but very little information about his personality. I have also drawn from the archives of the ensembles (Pittsburgh Orchestra, New York Symphony Society, Detroit Symphony Orchestra) and persons (Walter Damrosch, Ossip Gabrilowitsch) that were associated with Kolar during his life. This material provides a more personal window into Kolar as a human being.

## 2. EARLY LIFE AND IMMIGRATION (1888–1908)

Victor Kolar was born in Budapest, Hungary on February 12, 1888, to Czech parents, Frank and Frances, née Gura, Kolar.<sup>2</sup> His father was a regimental musician (oboist and drum major) in the Imperial army and was at some point, around the time of Kolar's birth or soon thereafter, stationed in Klausenberg, Transylvania (today, Cluj-Napoca, Romania), the regional capital, as a member of the band for the 51<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division.<sup>3</sup> Although there is very little information about Kolar's early life, we can draw some conclusions about his family background from his father's position as a military musician. As a drum major and oboist, Franz Kolar would have likely received a rigorous musical education, either through an apprenticeship with a regimental band or, more likely, at the Prague School for Military Music.<sup>4</sup> Though an enlisted member of the Austrian military, Franz Kolar's position as an oboist and drum major was a position of musical authority that engendered respect—in the *Kaiserlich und Königlich* army the

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<sup>2</sup> Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867–1952, Michigan Department of Community Health, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics. The names of Kolar's parents are likely Americanized. There are no known primary source records available from Kolar's early childhood before his enrollment in the Prague conservatory. However, a number of later sources include statements about his early life; though these are sometimes contradictory. The information included in these later sources allow me to create a general narrative for Kolar's early life prior to his emigration to the United States.

<sup>3</sup> Jason S. Heilman, "O du mein Österreich: Patriotic Music and Multinational Identity in the Austro-Hungarian Empire" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2009), 5, and Emil Ramies, *Die Österreichische Militärmusik von ihren Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1918* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1976), 158; and Jiri Dostál, *Otakar Ševčík : sborník statí a vzpomíneke*, (Prague: Statní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, 1953), 149, and Peggy Eileen Rose, "Interview With Victor Kolar," *Manuscripts* 11/3 (1943): Article 19. As Jason Heilman indicates, military musicians played a unique role within the multi-linguistic multi-cultural fabric of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as both transmitters of patriotic nationalist music and ethnic/regional music from across the empire. In an attempt to alleviate potential conflicts of interest associated with an ethnic group self-policing, the standard practice in the Austrian Imperial army was to station companies in locations outside of their ethnic homeland with most of the officers and high-ranking musicians drawn from the ethnically German or Bohemian portions of the empire.

<sup>4</sup> Ramies, 51.

*Hautboisten banda* was traditionally a select group of musicians within the larger regimental band.<sup>5</sup> In conjunction with his position in the military, Kolar's father was also a member of the local theater orchestra, which often drew on members of the local military bands to fill out the wind and brass sections of the orchestra.<sup>6</sup>

The Kolars likely remained in Klausenberg during Victor's early childhood, where he possibly received his initial musical training. As a young child Kolar's abilities as a violinist were brought to the attention of the Czech violin virtuoso Jan Kubilek, who taught him prior to his enrolment in the Prague Conservatory.<sup>7</sup> Around 1900, he entered the Prague conservatory to study violin with Kubilek's teacher, Otakar Ševčík, and composition with Antonin Dvořák, in whose funeral he acted as a pall bearer.<sup>8</sup> It is clear that Kolar was an active performer during his time as a student in the Conservatory concerts; he appeared regularly in both solo and chamber settings in the Conservatory's 1903-1904 public concerts. His student performances culminated in an appearance as the soloist in Dvořák's *Violin Concerto* with Ševčík's orchestra in 1904.<sup>9</sup>

During his time at the conservatory, Kolar met a number of musicians with whom he had an ongoing relationship once he emigrated to the United States: the cellist Alois Reiser, the pianist and Kolar's future wife Franziska Schmidt, and the French horn player

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<sup>5</sup> Ramies, 158.

<sup>6</sup> "Victor Kolar Man of Action," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 15, 1908, 32. This was common well into the early twentieth century. For example, the orchestra at the theater in Brno was augmented by the winds from the local military band for the premiere of Janacek's *Jenufa*.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Remy, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 3rd ed. (New York: G. Schirmer, 1919), 476 and Thomas Capek, *The Čechs (Bohemians) in America; A Study of their National, Cultural, Political, Social, Economic, and Religious Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), 227. The duration of the study with Kubilek is unclear and some sources indicate that Kubilek provided Kolar with financial support during his study at the Prague conservatory under Ševčík.

<sup>8</sup> "Celebrations Will Honor Dvorak," *Detroit Free Press*, June 22, 1941, 47.

<sup>9</sup> Dostál, 38 and "Auszug aus dem Generalsammlungs-Protokolle," Vereines zur beförderug der Tonkunst in Böhmen, Prague Conservatory Archives, Prague, CZ.

Joseph Francel, all of whom also immigrated to the United States and performed with Kolar in various ensembles during his career in America.<sup>10</sup>

The Prague conservatory rolls do not indicate whether Kolar officially graduated; however, it was common for talented students to start working professionally before graduation and to not finish their degree.<sup>11</sup> This may have been the case with Kolar, as in 1904 he immigrated to the United States and took on progressively more important roles in the American musical scene.

Kolar arrived to the United States on November 1, 1904 at the age of sixteen as the violinist in a trio with Reiser and the pianist, Margaret Volavy.<sup>12</sup> The trio performed at private engagements and parties for wealthy patrons in New York.<sup>13</sup> Kolar characterized the trio's manager, the Czech immigrant and architect, Joseph F. Krčil, as an "unscrupulous bum" who, if Kolar is to be believed, took advantage of the musicians by keeping most of the profits from their performances.<sup>14</sup> Frustrated with the situation, Kolar first attempted to leave the trio to join the New York Symphony Society Orchestra

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<sup>10</sup> "Auszug aus dem Generalsammlungs-Protokolle," and Capek, 226.

<sup>11</sup> Conversation between author and Miloslav Richter, Deputy Head of the Prague Conservatory Archives, Sept. 2016. Richter indicated it was not uncommon for the more talented students to start performing professionally before graduation and not complete their degree. He mentioned a famous violinist who was on faculty at the Prague Conservatory started playing professionally in the Czech Philharmonic and did not finish a degree, though he later taught at the conservatory.

<sup>12</sup> Passenger Manifest, Kaiser Wilhelm II, Bremen – New York (November 1, 1904). In addition to the trio, the passenger manifest also indicates that Franziska (Inka) Schmidt and her mother, Fanni Schmidt, traveled to New York on the same voyage.

<sup>13</sup> Capek, 341 and "Victor Kolar Man of Action."

<sup>14</sup> "Victor Kolar Man of Action" and Joseph Krčil to George H. Wilson, February 7, 1907, Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh. Krčil indicated in his letter that he provided financial assistance to Kolar and Reiser including payment for their fare from Europe; however, he indicates that they have not repaid him for the funds and refuse to do so despite his legal claim because Kolar and Reiser argue the contracts are invalid as they were minors at the time they entered into the arrangement.

directed by Walter Damrosch, but was not successful because he lacked the funds to purchase a union card.<sup>15</sup>

Later in 1904/1905 Kolar moved to Chicago and joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for their west coast tour. This ensemble was a traveling orchestra founded and directed by the violinist Adolph Rosenbecker, previously the concertmaster of the Theodore Thomas Orchestra.<sup>16</sup> The orchestra toured widely in the Midwest and western United States, with concerts in Texas, Colorado, and California.<sup>17</sup> The orchestra was considered one of the best traveling ensembles active in the United States during the first years of the twentieth century. Frequent soloists included such luminaries as the violinist Theodore Sperring and the soprano Lillian Nordica. The complete tour schedule for the summer of 1905 is unknown; however, newspaper accounts from a festival in Des Moines, Iowa, at Drake University from May 18-20, 1905 list Kolar as one of the headline soloists.<sup>18</sup> Kolar performed at two concerts in the festival—a scheduled performance on May 19 and an additional one the following day.<sup>19</sup> The repertory is not listed, but the newspaper accounts indicate that one of the encores was the “Intermezzo” from Mascagni’s *Cavalleria Rusticana*. His performance was well received and both the

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<sup>15</sup> “Victor Kolar Man of Action.”

<sup>16</sup> Waldo Seldon Pratt and Charles N. Boyd, eds. “Kolar, Victor” *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians: American Supplement* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser Company, 1922); 6:263-264.

<sup>17</sup> “Adolph Rosenbecker,” *The Violinist*, 14/15 (1912), 31-32.

<sup>18</sup> “Drake Music Festival,” *Des Moines Register*, May 14, 1905, 23. The soloist list is a mix of local artists, mostly faculty at Drake University. The festival included both the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and choirs from the University and local community.

<sup>19</sup> “Deafening Applause Greets the Artists,” *Des Moines Register*, May 20, 1905, 6. Kolar was initially scheduled to perform as a soloist only on the May 19 concert; however, his performance was so popular that he was scheduled for an additional appearance on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

local music critic and a letter to the editor indicate that Kolar's performances were the highlight of the festival.<sup>20</sup>

After his tour with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Kolar joined the Pittsburgh Orchestra (PO) as a member of the first violin section for the 1905-1906 season under the direction of the Austrian conductor Emil Paur.<sup>21</sup> He was accompanied by Reiser and Francel, who joined an already sizeable contingent of Czech musicians in the orchestra.<sup>22</sup> Records from the Pittsburgh Orchestra archives suggest that that all three were hired at the same time in late summer 1905.<sup>23</sup> As a member of the first violin section with the PO, Kolar would have received a salary of \$32/week for a thirty-week season from October 20, 1905 through March 17, 1906.<sup>24</sup> The season included twenty-eight concerts and three tours and featured works by Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Wagner, the Pittsburgh premiere of Brahms's *Symphony No. 4*, and solo performances by Amy Beach, among others.<sup>25</sup> In addition to his work with the PO, Kolar also performed as a recitalist with the Pittsburgh Tuesday Musical Club.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "The Great God Pan" and "To the Music Editor," *Des Moines Register*, May 21, 1905, 29. The music editor praises Kolar's performance but indicates that he had an awkward stage presence. The anonymous letter is effusive in its praise of Kolar's performance. It is unclear how much his young age (only 17 at the time) contributed to the reception.

<sup>21</sup> Richard James Wolfe, "A Short History of the Pittsburgh Orchestra: 1896 to 1910" (Master's Thesis, Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1954), 459.

<sup>22</sup> Anton Blaha to Director of the Prague Conservatory, November 1905, Prague Conservatory Library, Prague. This list includes the violinist, Anton Blaha, and the bassist, Vaclav Jiskra, who was later principal bass of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, along with Reiser, Kolar, and Francel.

<sup>23</sup> PO Personnel Records, Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, PA. The list of potential applicants dates from the summer of 1905, which is likely after Kolar was hired, and references "Paur's Prague group."

<sup>24</sup> Wilson to Luigi von Kunitz, November 1905, and Wilson to Litke, September 1905, Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence, and Wolfe, 461-493. The contracts were for a twenty-week guarantee, with additional nonguaranteed weeks from touring and extra concerts.

<sup>25</sup> Wolfe, 461-467. The first tour from November 20 – 29, 1905 included stops in Youngstown, Akron, Canton, Cleveland, Toledo, and Columbus, Ohio, Ann Arbor and Detroit, Michigan, and Indianapolis, Indiana; and the second in Geneva, Ithaca (at Cornell), Auburn, and Buffalo, New York.

<sup>26</sup> "Social Events," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, March 21, 1906, 7. Kolar was the featured performer on a recital of French music organized by the Tuesday Musical Club.



After the 1905-1906 season ended, it is unclear if Kolar remained in the United States or if he returned to Europe for the summer; however, Kolar's contract with the PO was renewed for the 1906-1907 season on similar terms to the previous season. Kolar took on increased roles as both a performer with the orchestra and in the community, as well as a composer. The PO schedule was similar in length and scope to its previous season, with the addition of a notable collaboration with the Pittsburgh Mozart Club to perform Verdi's *Messe da Requiem* and the premiere of Arthur Nevin's opera *Poia* (based on the legends of the Blackfoot Indians), and performances by the contralto Ernestine Schumann-Heink and the soprano Nellie Melba. Kolar was also featured as a soloist on the January 19, 1907 "Downtown Popular Concert," along with the orchestra's harpist Marguerite Wunderle, where he performed works by the Czech composer Zdenek Fibich and Reiser.<sup>27</sup> Kolar may have conducted the PO, possibly for the first time, on the January 8, 1907 concert in Cleveland with the pianist Olga Samaroff as the soloist.<sup>28</sup>

Besides of his orchestral duties, Kolar's performances increased within the Pittsburgh community as the first violin in the Cotton Quartet and performances with the Pittsburgh Arts Society.<sup>29</sup> On the Arts Society recital on Tuesday, December 18, 1906 Kolar was the featured soloist with the bass Herbert Witherspoon. On the recital Kolar

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<sup>27</sup> Wolfe, 513 and Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence. Both a letter from Wilson to Paur and the published program for the concert list Kolar as the soloist on Albert Zabel's *Fantasie Russe*; however, this work was likely the harp solo as Zabel was a well-known German harp virtuoso. Kolar was paid an additional \$25 for the appearance as a soloist, almost the equivalent of Kolar's salary for a week.

<sup>28</sup> Paur to Wilson, Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence, No Date, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, PA. This letter is only dated "Friday;" however, we can place the date of the letter as January 4, 1907 based on the PO schedule as Olga Samaroff performed Liszt's first Piano Concerto in Cleveland on Tuesday, January 8, 1907. The letter indicates Kolar was to rehearse and conduct the concert; however, there is no mention of Kolar conducting in the small number of newspaper accounts.

<sup>29</sup> The Cotton Quartet was a group formed by Walter Cotton, a member of the Pittsburgh Orchestra first violin section, and during this iteration Kolar was principal violin, Cotton as second, Reiser on cello, and Herman Ruhoff on viola.

performed two movements of Dvořák's *Violin Concerto, Quasi baliata* by Reiser, and his own *Indian Scherzo*, op. 14, which is dedicated to Jan Kubelik and published by the Czech imprint for Breitkopf and Härtel, F.A. Urbánek, in 1907.<sup>30</sup> In the scherzo Kolar exploits *moto perpetuo* melodic writing for the violin line as well as many of the characteristics that, according to Micheal Pissani, reflected the contemporary Anglo-European conception of Native American music—modal/pentatonic melodies and driving percussive rhythms.<sup>31</sup> The performance of the *Indian Scherzo* was well received by the press and the work was taken up by the PO concert master, Luigi von Kunitz.<sup>32</sup>

Though there is little information on Kolar's personal life, in March 1906 Kolar applied for and became a naturalized citizen of the United States.<sup>33</sup>

After the 1906-1907 season Kolar traveled to Europe for the summer and returned to the United States in early October 1907.<sup>34</sup> The 1907-1908 season was tumultuous: the orchestra's longtime, George H. Wilson, left the organization at the end of the 1906-1907 season because of personality conflicts with Paur and was replaced by William T. Mossman.<sup>35</sup> The change in management was further exacerbated by the departure of the

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<sup>30</sup> "Soloists for Art Recital." *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, December 15, 1906, 4. This performance is likely not the premiere for the *Indian Scherzo*. Unlike the Reiser, the newspaper announcements do not indicate that the performance was a premiere, world or Pittsburgh.

<sup>31</sup> Micheal Pissani, *Imagining Native American Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 187.

<sup>32</sup> "Art Society Recital: Music is Enjoyable," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, December 19, 1906, 6 and "To Give a Popular Concert" *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, April 19, 1907, 14. Von Kunitz would perform the work regularly throughout his career, including once he returned to Vienna (1910). The newspaper accounts also indicate that the work was subsequently performed by Fritz Kreisler, though I cannot find evidence to corroborate this claim.

<sup>33</sup> Naturalization Declaration, Western District of Pennsylvania Court, March 19, 1906, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

<sup>34</sup> Passenger Manifest, Graf Waldensee, Hamburg – New York, October 1907. Kolar is accompanied by Reiser and the passenger manifest indicates he stayed/worked at the National Theater in Prague or Hungary.

<sup>35</sup> Wilson to James I. Buchanan, Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence, December 23, 1906, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh. The simmering tensions between Wilson and Paur came to a head over an out-of-town concert in Boston and Wilson's objections to Paur's desire to perform as a piano soloist on the February 13, 1907 concert in New York. After extended correspondence with the orchestra committee, Wilson decided that since Paur was to be retained for the 1907-1908 season he would resign from the position as

concertmaster, Luigi von Kunitz, and conflicts with the musicians' union over the importation of European musicians, which led to a number of changes in the makeup of the ensemble.<sup>36</sup> Despite these headwinds the PO season was musically just as successful as the previous ones and featured a number of prestigious soloists, such as Ignace Paderewski, Fritz Keisler, and Lillian Nordica, and tours through the Midwest, New York, and Canada.<sup>37</sup> Kolar renewed his contract with the PO for the 1907-1908 season and took on a greater role than before, as temporary concert master and as the assistant to Emil Paur. He also maintained an active schedule within the wider Pittsburgh music community, and he conducted the premiere of his tone poem, *Hiawatha*, in early 1908.

Upon Von Kunitz's departure from the orchestra, just before the start of the season, it was announced in the local newspapers that Kolar was appointed concertmaster; however, it is possible that this position was intended as a temporary one until another suitable concertmaster could be found as Kolar had, by that point, taken on the role of Paur's assistant.<sup>38</sup> Although there was not an official announcement for Kolar's appointment to the position of assistant to the conductor, Paur writes a letter to Mossman in August 1907 in which he asks the orchestra committee to authorize Kolar, who he finds a "very capable and conscientious man," to audition and hire musicians for

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orchestra manager. Wilson died less than a year after his departure from the orchestra on March 18, 1908 of book poisoning.

<sup>36</sup> Wolfe 535-536. Von Kunitz was asked to take a \$10/week reduction in pay, which he did not accept and instead resigned. He remained in Pittsburgh until 1910, formed his own orchestra and regularly performed in the area.

<sup>37</sup> Wolfe, 538-539.

<sup>38</sup> "Kolar is Chosen as Concertmeister," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, September 29, 1907, 1 and "Brilliant and Appreciative," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, November 2, 1907, 1 and 5. By the start of the concert season in early November Wladislaw Wyganowsky was announced as Von Kunitz's permanent replacement. The records for the orchestra under Mossman's management are, unfortunately, rather spotty. Wolfe lists Wyganowsky as the concertmaster for the season and has Kolar as the third chair first violin.

the remaining unfilled positions in the orchestra.<sup>39</sup> Kolar's first opportunity as conductor came on December 14 when he conducted Max Bruch's *Kol nidrei* on an extra concert performed by the principal cellist, Henri Merck.<sup>40</sup> Despite a number of technical difficulties with the hall and inclement weather, the concert was well received and Kolar's conducting was positively reviewed. He was described as having "a fairly firm beat and an authoritative control" over the orchestra, though the reviewer felt that the work did not place great demands on the conductor.<sup>41</sup> Kolar's next chance to conduct was the January 23 concert in Buffalo, New York, with contralto Louise Homer as soloist.<sup>42</sup> Though the newspaper accounts do not state that Kolar conducted the concert, Paur and Mossman's correspondence indicate that Kolar conducted Homer's performance of an aria from Meyerbeer's *Le prophète*.<sup>43</sup> Kolar also conducted the tenor Dan Beddoe's performance of the "Winterstrürme wichen dem Wonne[n]mond" (Spring Song) from Wagner's *Die Walküre* on an additional January 24 concert; Kolar's conducting was, again, well received, though Beddoe's performance was seen as lacking in character.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Paur to Mossman, Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence, August 16, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh. The date on the letter does not give the year; however, the discussion of whether Von Kunitz will renew his contract for the season dates the letter in 1907.

<sup>40</sup> "Brave Rain to Hear Concert," *The Pittsburgh Press*, December 15, 1907, 6 and "Young Victor Kolar Will Conduct One Number in the Place of Paur," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 13, 1907, 3.

<sup>41</sup> "Music Lovers Plod in Slush," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 15, 1907, 15. During the concert the hall lights went out and the final work on the concert was performed in the dark.

<sup>42</sup> Paur to Mossman, Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence, no date, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, and Mossman to Wolfson, Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence, January 20, 1908, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh.

<sup>43</sup> "Pittsburgh Orchestra," *The Buffalo Enquirer*, January 24, 1908, 5.

<sup>44</sup> "Enthusiasm Aroused by Orchestra's Work," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, January 26, 1908, 4.



Figure 1 – Victor Kolar (1908). Private Collection

Kolar's most important opportunity as both conductor and composer was the premiere performance of his symphonic poem, *Hiawatha*, op.15, on January 31 and February 1, 1908, as part of the PO's regular concert series.<sup>45</sup> Both the work and Kolar's abilities as a conductor were enthusiastically received by the Pittsburgh press and by the audience. *Hiawatha* is scored for a large orchestra with a large battery of percussion, including Indian drum and tam-tam. The symphonic poem, based on the eponymous poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, was likely written in the summer of 1907.<sup>46</sup> The program for the premiere indicates that three themes in the work are modified Native American melodies that Kolar derived from "a thorough study of Indian and Negro melodies."<sup>47</sup> The most likely sources are Alice Fletcher's *Indian Story and Song from North America* (1900), one of the earliest ethnographic works to receive wide circulation, Fletcher's 1893 *Study of Omaha Indian Music*, which was given to Dvořák in 1893, and Theodore Baker's 1882 dissertation *Über die Musik der Nordamerikanischen Wilden*.<sup>48</sup> Although none of the melodies mentioned in the program notes borrow directly from examples of Native American music included in these studies, there are similarities between Kolar's themes and those described in Fletcher and Baker. It is clear their works provided the models used by Kolar to create an aura of "Indian-ness" in *Hiawatha*.

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<sup>45</sup> "World-Famous Virtuosi to Play With Orchestra To-night, Novelty in Store," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, January 31, 1908, 4. In addition to Kolar's *Hiawatha* the concert include Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, Mendelssohn's *Violin concerto*, Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, Dvořák's *Scherzo Capriccioso*, and works for solo violin by Mozart, Debussy and Leclair, with Maud Powell as the featured soloist.

<sup>46</sup> Charles N. Boyd, *The Pittsburgh Orchestra: Program of the Ninth Evening and Afternoon Concerts* (Pittsburgh: The Art Society of Pittsburgh, 1908). Boyd also states that the work had been accepted for performance by the Bohemian Philharmonic Society in Prague, predecessor to the Czech Philharmonic; however, I have not been able to find information about whether the performance took place.

<sup>47</sup> Boyd, 14.

<sup>48</sup> Pisani, 187. All of these sources are not viable scholarly examples of Native American Music; however, they do reflect how American and European audiences and composers perceived Native American music around the turn of the century.

**Symphonic Poem, "Hiawatha," op. 15 . . . Victor Kolar**  
Born at Budapest, Hungary, Feb. 12, 1888.

This composition, dedicated to Emil Paur, is a musical expression of Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha." The three principal themes are modifications of Indian melodies; they are as follows:



Figure 2 – Pittsburgh Orchestra program for *Hiawatha*. (Carnegie Library, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.)

Outside his work for the PO, Kolar remained active in the Pittsburgh community as a violinist, both as a soloist and violinist with the Kolar/Cotton Quartet, with many performances taking place after the PO season ended.<sup>49</sup> The quartet, under the name the Kolar Quartet, performed the first movement, "Adagio," from the *String Quartet in C major*, op. 14, by the Italian-American composer Chevalier Giuseppe Ferrate, a professor of music at Beaver College and Musical Institute (now Arcadia College), on the January 14 Tuesday Musical Club concert in his honor.<sup>50</sup> The quartet also accompanied a performance of the 1907 Sydney Olcott film *Ben Hur* at the Alvin Theater on Sunday,

<sup>49</sup> The makeup of the two quartets was identical with only the change in name differentiating between the ensembles.

<sup>50</sup> "Chevalier Giuseppe Ferrate will be the honor guest," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 5, 1908, 27 and Edward Eanes, "Giuseppe Ferrata: Émigré Pianist and Composer," (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1995), 87-89.

February 16, 1908.<sup>51</sup> After the close of the PO season at the end of March, Kolar continued to perform regularly with his quartet, which accompanied members of the Smith College Club for a March 28 benefit concert, and a concert by the local choral society, the Teutonia Männerchor, on May 4 in which the quartet played Beethoven's *String Quartet No. 2 in G Major*, op. 18 no. 2, and Dvořák's *Deux Valses*.<sup>52</sup> As a soloist, Kolar also performed on a number of Tuesday Musical Club concerts as a featured artist; these included a performance of Brahms's *Violin Sonata No. 1*, op. 78, and Joseph Suk's *Appassionata* for solo violin on May 5, 1908.<sup>53</sup>

At the end of the 1907-1908 season, Kolar took a position as co-concertmaster with the Pittsburgh Festival Orchestra, a summer ensemble primarily made up of musicians from the PO that performed outdoor concerts throughout the community under the direction of the PO pianist, Carl Bernthaler.<sup>54</sup> Kolar was both the concertmaster for the ensemble and a soloist; he performed the orchestral arrangement of his *Indian Scherzo* on April 22 at a concert in Indiana, Pennsylvania and on April 25 in Pittsburgh.<sup>55</sup>

Kolar likely anticipated that he would renew his contract with the PO for the subsequent season; however, during the summer there were additional upheavals within the PO management, which included the departure of a majority of the board and renewed conflict with the musicians' union. This led to difficulties in hiring musicians to

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<sup>51</sup> "Noted Instrumentalists at Alvin Services," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, February 15, 1908, 7. Also includes photograph of the quartet with Kolar, Walter Cotton (vln), Herman Ruhoff (vla), and Reiser (vcl).

<sup>52</sup> "For College Library Fund," *Pittsburgh Press*, March 21, 1908, 7 and "Crowd Hears Teutonia," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 5, 1908, 5.

<sup>53</sup> "The Tuesday Musical Club," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, May 10, 1908, 25.

<sup>54</sup> "Subscription Concert" *Pittsburgh Press*, April 19, 1908, 40 and "Orchestra Season Opens," *Pittsburgh Press*, April 26, 1908, 47. The co-concertmaster with Kolar was Franz Kohler, who was also the assistant concert master of the PO; however, because of illness Kolar took on the role of concertmaster for most of the festival season.

<sup>55</sup> "Choral Society Scored a Triumph," *Indiana Gazette*, April 22, 1908, 9 and "Festival Orchestra Makes A Good Start," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 26, 1908, 14.



fill vacancies, which included principal cellist and concertmaster.<sup>56</sup> In the light of these uncertainties in Pittsburgh, Damrosch hired a number of musicians from the PO, most notably Kolar and the principal oboe, Albert du Busscher.<sup>57</sup> After he accepted an offer from Damrosch and the New York Symphony Society Orchestra, Kolar left Pittsburgh and took a temporary position with a hotel orchestra in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, that performed light classical works. He also performed with the Damrosch Orchestra on a six-week summer tour to Chicago and around the Midwest.<sup>58</sup>

The move from Pittsburgh to New York is a moment of significant change for Kolar. Now three years older and with three years' experience as a professional musician, Kolar took a position in the ensemble that he had previously sought to join. Now a young man of nineteen, Kolar would no longer be among the best musicians in the small, though talented, musical community of Pittsburgh. Instead, he sought to succeed as a violinist, composer, and conductor in the largest and most vibrant city in the United States, New York City.

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<sup>56</sup> "Name New Committee to Manage Orchestra," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 23, 1908, 1 and "Great Season is Assured for the Orchestra," *Pittsburgh Press*, July 23, 1908, 2. The Pittsburgh Orchestra Correspondence also includes multiple letters and documents germane to the conflict with the musicians' union.

<sup>57</sup> "Raid Pittsburg Orchestra," *New York Times*, July 23, 1908, 7. There was significant legal wrangling over du Busscher as after he signed his contract with Damrosch he sought to have it annulled and return to Pittsburgh. This was finally resolved once du Busscher and the PO realized that he had a binding legal contract and that he could not return to Pittsburgh.

<sup>58</sup> "Dinner in the Italian Garden," *The Courier*, May 24, 1908, 1, "Mr. Victor Kolar," *Harrisburg Daily Independent*, August 5, 1908, 3, and Walter Damrosch to Margaret Blaine Damrosch, Damrosch-Blaine Collection, June 2, 1907, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

### 3. NEW YORK CITY (1908–1919)

Among the best musicians in the small, though talented, musical community in Pittsburgh, through his move to New York Kolar placed himself in the center of the most vibrant musical community in the United States. As a first violinist with the New York Symphony Society Orchestra (SSO) Kolar accepted a lower paying position in a more prestigious ensemble that would offer him more opportunities and a wider audience as a violinist, composer, and conductor.<sup>59</sup> In this chapter I will examine Kolar's career in New York from 1909 to 1919, with a focus on his work as a composer and conductor. During this time a number of trends in Kolar's compositions and work as a conductor become clear, including his changing conception of national identity in his compositions, and, especially towards the end of the period, his interest in popular and educational concerts. Kolar's initial appearance with the Damrosch Orchestra, the traveling name of the SSO, was in the summer of 1908 on a six-week summer tour to Chicago and around the Midwest, including a residency at Ravinia, the summer home of the Chicago Symphony.<sup>60</sup> Kolar's initial few years in the SSO were relatively uneventful and, outside of performances with the orchestra, he intermittently appeared as a violinist and pianist in New York.<sup>61</sup> During this period, however, there was a significant personal development when on June 3, 1911 he married Franziska "Inka" Schmidt.<sup>62</sup> The couple lived on the

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<sup>59</sup> Walter Damrosch to Margaret Blaine Damrosch, June 2, 1908, Damrosch-Blaine Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Damrosch writes to his wife that though they cannot match the \$40/week counter-offer from the PO, he believes the musicians will accept the \$35/week offered.

<sup>60</sup> "Dinner in the Italian Garden," *The Courier*, May 24, 1908, 1, "Mr. Victor Kolar," *Harrisburg Daily Independent*, August 5, 1908, 3, and Walter Damrosch to Margaret Blaine Damrosch, Damrosch-Blaine Collection, June 2, 1907, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>61</sup> "David Hochstein will give a violin recital," *New York Tribune*, January 24, 1909, 24 and "Concerts of the Week," *New York Times*, March 27, 1910, 53.

<sup>62</sup> Victor Kolar and Franziska Schmidt, June 3, 1911, Certificate of Marriage, Bureau of Vital Statistics, State of New Jersey.

upper east side on East 67<sup>th</sup> Street, where they remained until at least 1915, when they moved to East 77<sup>th</sup> street. By 1920 Inka's mother, Fanni Schmidt, also lived with the couple.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> United States Census 1920, Manhattan Assembly District 14, New York, New York, T625\_1212, 19A, 1042, 241.



*Figure 3 - Victor and Franziska "Inka" Kolar (1918). Author's private collection*

Kolar continued to perform in the SSO as a member of the first violin section until 1914, when he was appointed as the Assistant Conductor.<sup>64</sup> As the assistant to Damrosch, Kolar had significant administrative duties, conducted orchestra rehearsals, and occasionally conducted Young People's Concerts and popular concerts, which included notable collaborations with the dancers Isadore Duncan and Vernon and Irene Castle.<sup>65</sup> This work set a trend that continued into his tenure in Detroit, where Kolar elevated the popular concerts to a level on par with the subscription concerts in terms of both popularity and musical excellence and continued to regularly collaborate with modern dancers. In addition to conducting the SSO, Kolar conducted a number of other notable performances in New York and the surrounding region. Most significant were Pablo Casals's 1916 New York performances and the 1917 Red Cross Pageant and benefit concerts.<sup>66</sup>

In New York Kolar first presented himself as a composer with his tone poem, *Hiawatha*, at a concert of the SSO on Sunday, March 12, 1911 under Damrosch's direction.<sup>67</sup> The work was well received by critics and audiences. Most critics felt the work lacked formal clarity and some questioned both the value of using Native American themes and the verisimilitude to the source material, suggesting that both Kolar and

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<sup>64</sup> "The Symphony Society," *New York Tribune*, September 10, 1914, 19. Kolar continued to perform as a member of the orchestra both on violin and as a keyboardist, depending on the ensemble's needs.

<sup>65</sup> Victor Kolar to Walter Damrosch, February 13, 1937, Walter Damrosch Papers, New York Public Library, New York, New York, and "Damrosch to Lead Large Orchestra," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 23, 1916, 24, and "Old Dances Get Most Applause," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 22, 1914, 20, and "Feast of Three Concerts," *New York Herald*, March 10, 1918, 10.

<sup>66</sup> "Pablo Casals will Appear in Triple Role," *The Sun*, January 2, 1916, 42, and "Red Cross Pageant Brilliant Success," *The Sun*, October 26, 1917, 9, and "Sousa Plays for Red Cross," *New York Times*, October 7, 1917, 7.

<sup>67</sup> Symphony Society Bulletin, Symphony Society of New York, IX/VII (March 1911). The program notes indicate that other works by Kolar were performed by the SSO while on tour, though it does not specify the works or details of the performance.

Puccini in *La fanciulla del West* sourced their themes from the “Hungarian-Italian Indians;” though, all agreed that the colorful orchestration and tuneful and well-developed melodies were indicative of a composer from whom great things were expected.<sup>68</sup>

Kolar did not appear as a composer with the SSO in 1912; however, the ensemble did perform Zdenk Fibich’s piano *Miniatures* in an arrangement by Kolar.<sup>69</sup> This was the first of a number of arrangements or orchestrations by Kolar’s that were performed on SSO concerts, including orchestrations of Mussorgsky’s *Songs and Dances of Death* (1916), Brahms’s *Zigeunerlieder* (1917), and Wagner’s “Schmerzen” from the *Wesendock Lieder* (1918), among other works.<sup>70</sup>

Kolar’s next appearance as a composer was in 1913 with the performances of his *Fairytale Suite*, op. 19. The score is not extant, but the work served to further establish Kolar as a composer of note. The *Fairytale Suite* was first given by the SSO on Sunday, February 16, 1913 under Kolar’s direction. Kolar indicated in the program notes that though intended to be absolute music, that the work expresses ideas of “Youth” and “Love,” which cannot be conveyed by words.<sup>71</sup> The work was very well received by the New York critics, who applauded Kolar’s “abundant substance” and “skill and power” of development.<sup>72</sup> Written in a more modern, Debussyesque harmonic idiom, the work was

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<sup>68</sup> “New Music by a Young Orchestra Player,” *The Sun*, March 13, 1911, 7, and “New Composer,” *The New York Times*, March 13, 1911, 9.

<sup>69</sup> “The New York Symphony,” *New York Times*, January 1, 1912.

<sup>70</sup> “Symphony Gives Novelties,” *New York Times*, November 25, 1916, 11, and “Musical Art’s Lenten Concert; ‘America’ First,” *The Evening World*, March 21, 1917, 15 and Daniel Gregory Mason, *Symphony Society Bulletin* (February 1918), XI/x, 1. Sophie Braslau, who premiered Kolar’s Mussorgsky orchestrations, continued to sing Kolar’s version in her concert appearances around the United States, included performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

<sup>71</sup> *Symphony Society Bulletin*, *Symphony Society of New York*, IX/VII (March 1911). It is unclear if the work was performed again, by the SSO or any other orchestra.

<sup>72</sup> “The New York Symphony,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1913, 11.

perceived as clearer in terms of form, while retaining the accomplished orchestration and clear thematic development shown in *Hiawatha*.<sup>73</sup>

The next of Kolar's compositions to be performed in New York was his four-movement *Americana Suite*, op. 20. For the premiere (January 25, 1914) the title was given as *Symphonic Suite* and, again, Kolar stated the work was absolute music.

However, the program notes include the subtitle "Americana," which is how it was published in 1914. Kolar later indicated that the movements could be titled: North, West, South, and East, respectively.<sup>74</sup> In some ways, the work was similar in spirit to Dvořák's *New World* though the use of diverse "American" musical themes, such as the minstrel tunes "Massa's in de Cold Cold Ground" and "Old Folks at Home" by Stephen Foster and ragtime syncopations in the third movement, and an Irish jig that integrates snippets of "Yankee Doodle" in the fourth movement.<sup>75</sup> The reviews of the work were positive and described it as "built on a large scale, and has broad, big effect" and "full of engaging melody, rich in orchestral color and device."<sup>76</sup> This piece was one of his most widely performed compositions and considered one of the highlights of the 1913-1914 concert season, as well as winning the 1915 Illinois Music Teachers' Association Orchestral Prize Contest.<sup>77</sup> After the premiere the work became part of the repertoire with

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<sup>73</sup> "The New York Symphony" and "The Symphony Concert," *The Sun*, February 17, 1913, 7. Reviews of the performance were also syndicated nationally, appearing in both the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* and the Chicago *Inter Ocean*, among other newspapers.

<sup>74</sup> Symphony Society Bulletin, Symphony Society of New York, VII/VI (January 1914), 4 and "Music," *Star Tribune*, January 30, 1916, 32.

<sup>75</sup> "Three Novelties Damrosch Offer," *The Sun*, January 26, 1914, 7 and "Music," *Star Tribune*, November 25, 1918, 6. The first two movements are based on folk and, possibly in the second movement "West," Native American tunes.

<sup>76</sup> "The Symphony Society Concert," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 26, 1914, 7 and "Three Novelties Damrosch Offer."

<sup>77</sup> "There have not been, apparently, any epoch making new orchestral works," *The New York Times*, April 5, 1914, 96 and "Illinois Music Teachers' Association," *The Musical Monitor* 4/8 (April, 1915), 290. In addition to Kolar's *Symphonic Suite*, Florent Schmitt's *Tragedie de Salome*, Henry F. Gilbert's *Negro Rhapsody*, and Rubin Goldmark's *Samson* where the only new works of real consequence performed

performances by the Chicago Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Rochester Orchestra, Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, and others.<sup>78</sup>

Kolar's first and only symphony was one of the featured premieres of the 1915-1916 season alongside works by Schoenberg, Florent Schmitt, and Daniel Gregory Mason.<sup>79</sup> First performed on January 28, 1916 by the New York Symphony Society, Kolar's *Symphony in D* is in three movements and draws on Czech medieval tunes.<sup>80</sup> Though the score is not extant, there are a number of contemporary sources that describe the work to a sufficient degree and provide insight about how Kolar constructed the symphony and sought to musically represent his Czech identity. In the SSO program notes to the 1918 performance, Kolar provides a detailed description of each movement:

- The first movement, *Molto moderato sostenuto: Allegro*, begins with a brass chorale in B major followed by a contrasting string theme in Eb major. After a development section the trumpets enter with a statement of one of the Czech medieval tunes and the opening brass theme is restated. The *Allegro* begins with solo horn intoning a variant on the medieval tune and, after a lyrical second theme and a development section, the medieval theme returns in the recapitulation.

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during the 1913-1914 season. The author also mentions the premieres of works by Elgar, Strauss, Reger, and Debussy, but dismisses them as either earlier works that had not yet been performed in New York or lacking in some capacity.

<sup>78</sup> "The Second American series of concerts," *Chicago Tribune*, March 7, 1915, 55 and "Work Performance History – Victor Kolar," Email to Author from Detroit Symphony Orchestra Librarian, "Convention Hall," *Democrat and Chronicle*, April 7, 1918, 31, and "Music," *Star Tribune*. The work was also performed at the 1917 Chautauqua Festival by Modest Altschuler and the Russian Symphony Orchestra of New York, which Kolar also performed with as a first violin.

<sup>79</sup> "Plans of the Musicians," *New York Times*, November 19, 1915.

<sup>80</sup> New York Philharmonic Leon Levy Digital Archives, NY SSO Concert Bulletin IX/VI, ID 8413.



- The Second movement, Adagio ma non tanto, begins with a repeated passage for divided strings, suggesting “the lifting of a curtain,” followed by a trumpet fanfare in B minor, repeated in the horns. The clarinets then announce a hymn tune in B major followed by a contrasting theme and then develops the initial tune from the first movement, moving through the keys of B minor, G major, and E major. The trumpet theme, now in B major, returns and the movements and with the return of the opening divisi strings.
- Opening with a brass fanfare, the final movement, Allegro Moderato, followed by the opening theme, which is used as a fugato subject later in the work, enters the woodwinds. This is followed by a lyrical second theme in the strings and the third theme, which is a development of the initial theme. All the themes from the work then return and the work closes in a triumphant Coda in D Major.<sup>81</sup>

The Czech and Slavic nature of the work must have been clear to audiences at the premiere. In The New York Times review of the concert, the author explicitly mentioned both Kolar’s Bohemian heritage and his studies with Dvořák as musically apparent and states that Kolar used the “tune from the Hussite religious wars” that was quoted in Dvořák’s *Husitzka overture*.<sup>82</sup> It is likely then that Kolar quoted the Hussite choral, "Ktož jsú boží bojovníci" (Ye who are warriors of God), which Dvořák used in his Hussite Overture.<sup>83</sup> Quoted in works as diverse as Smetana’s *Má Vlast* and Husa’s *Music for*

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<sup>81</sup> Daniel Gregory Mason, Symphony Society Bulletin IX/vi (January 13, 1916), 1-2.

<sup>82</sup> “A New Symphony by Victor Kolar,” *New York Times*, January 29, 1916, 7.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Beckerman, “In Search of Czechness in Music.” *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 10/1 (Summer 1986), 68.

*Prague: 1968*, "Ktož jsú boží bojovníci" is strongly associated with Czech nationalism and the Czech nation, both politically and ethnically.<sup>84</sup> The timing of Kolar's turn to Czech musical themes is also likely tied to political developments, both in Europe and in the United States. With the fall of the Habsburg empire looming, representatives from the Czech and Slovak expatriate communities signed an agreement on October 22, 1915 calling for the creation of the Czech-Slovak state.<sup>85</sup> Though Kolar wrote the *Symphony in D* during the summer of 1915, his use of this hymn in his symphony was likely influenced by the increase in Czech nationalistic political activity in the United States.<sup>86</sup> In addition to the Czech elements, contemporary critics noted the "fondness for clearly defined melody" with "beauty and expressiveness [that are used] in the true symphonic style, through skillful and logical development to musically expressive, even eloquent ends."<sup>87</sup> After the New York premiere, Kolar regularly conducted this symphony when he appeared as a guest conductor, as in Cleveland and Toronto, and Fredrick Stock announced that the Chicago Symphony would perform it during the 1917-1918 season.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to his appearances as a composer on SSO concerts, Kolar's compositions were regularly featured in recital and chamber settings throughout his time in New York. The first significant performance was the premiere of Kolar's *String Quartet No. 2 in E major* (February 2, 1913) by the Saslavsky Quartet, with whom Kolar

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<sup>84</sup> Beckerman, 67-70.

<sup>85</sup> June Granatir Alexander, *Slovaks And Other New Immigrants* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 48 and Gerald Sabo, "Slovaks" in *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* John J. Grabowski, ed. (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 2017), accessed October 10, 2017, <http://case.edu/ech/articles/s/slovaks/>.

<sup>86</sup> Victor Kolar to Harry Harkness Flagger, August 26, 1915, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, New York.

<sup>87</sup> "A New Symphony by Victor Kolar"

<sup>88</sup> "Stock's American Composers," *New York Times*, November 9, 1917, 102. The CSO Rosenthal Archives do not have any record of whether the announced performance ever took place.

had been performing as the second violinist since at least 1910.<sup>89</sup> Described by reviewers as “ingenious, fascinating and expressive,” in the quartet Kolar continues to mix various national elements, such as a waltz in the second movement and a dumka for the third movement, as he had done in his contemporaneous orchestral works.<sup>90</sup> The quartet remained in the repertoire and continued to be performed by the Saslavsky quartet after Kolar left the ensemble, was championed by the Flonzaley Quartet one of the preeminent ensembles of the era, and was performed by the Lichstein Quartet, led by Arthur Lichstein who replaced Saslavsky as concertmaster of the SSO, on the 1916-1917 Tonkünstler Society concert series.<sup>91</sup> In addition to his quartet, a number of significant musicians also performed Kolar’s compositions for solo violin. His *Three Humoresques* were performed in recitals by Maximilian Pilzer, concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic, the violinist and conductor Alexander Bloch, and Lucian Cole (Philadelphia Orchestra). Kolar’s *Indian Scherzo* also continued to be performed during this period, often by students of Von Kunitz such as Vera Barstow.<sup>92</sup>

Though Kolar had been the assistant conductor of the SSO since 1914, he only appeared as the conductor on the SSO subscription, popular, or Young People’s Concert

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<sup>89</sup> “McCormack in Irish Songs,” *New York Times*, February 3, 1913, 11, and “Saslavsky String Quartet,” *New York Times*, November 9, 1912, 11, and “Miss Lincoln Charmed Audience,” *Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, February 5, 1910, 4.

<sup>90</sup> “Forthcoming events,” *International Music and Drama*, February 26, 1916, 11.

<sup>91</sup> “The Saslavsky Quartet,” *New York Times*, February 29, 1916, and Frederick H. Martens, *Violin Mastery: Talks with Master Violinists and Teachers* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1919), 138, and Programs Names of Members and Officers of the Tonkünstler Society October, 1915 to May, 1917, 17. Adolpho Betti, second violinist in the Flonzaley, singles out the second (waltz) and third (dumka) movements as exceptionally excellent.

<sup>92</sup> “Maximilian Pilzer,” *The Sun*, November 22, 1914, 30, and “Alexander Bloch,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 17, 1915, 51 and “Vera Barstow,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 11, 1914, 48. Both Pilzer and Barlow performed Kolar’s works regularly on their US tours, including concerts in Ithaca, New York (Cornell) and on the west coast.

seven times in his five years as Assistant Conductor.<sup>93</sup> Kolar's specific reasons for departing New York are not known, but it is clear that he was dissatisfied with his position with the SSO, likely because of the dearth of conducting opportunities.<sup>94</sup> At the end of the 1918-1919 season Kolar applied for and was offered the position of Assistant Conductor with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.<sup>95</sup> Again, with the move to the Detroit Symphony Kolar accepted a lower paying position that had conditions favorable to his artistic development—moving from Pittsburgh to New York expanded Kolar's audiences and the move from New York to Detroit provided more opportunities for him to conduct. In my next chapter, I will examine Kolar's career in Detroit (1919 – 1957), including his rise within the Detroit Symphony to principal conductor and place on the national stage as the conductor of a nationally syndicated radio broadcast.

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<sup>93</sup> New York Philharmonic Leon Levy Digital Archives, access February 12, 2018, [https://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/search?search-type=singleFilter&search-text=Kolar&search-dates-from&search-dates-to&npp:WorksConductorNames\\_facet\[0\]=Kolar%2C%20Victor](https://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/search?search-type=singleFilter&search-text=Kolar&search-dates-from&search-dates-to&npp:WorksConductorNames_facet[0]=Kolar%2C%20Victor).

<sup>94</sup> Kolar to Cyphers, April 15, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit. Kolar writes that he intends to resign from his position with the SSO and would entertain any reasonable offers from Detroit.

<sup>95</sup> Victor Kolar Application for Employment, April 15, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

#### 4. DETROIT AND RETIREMENT (1919–1957)

With his move to Detroit, Kolar began the longest and most prominent period of his professional life. Though less prestigious an ensemble than the New York Symphony Society Orchestra (SSO), the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) was an up and coming ensemble in a vibrant, wealthy, growing city. During his time in Detroit, Kolar rose in prominence to be one of the most well-known conductors active in the United States through his radio work, was promoted to principal conductor of the DSO, and developed a reputation for being one of the most sensitive orchestra accompanists to lead a major American orchestra. Through an examination of the contemporary newspaper accounts and archival materials, in this chapter, I will examine Kolar's life and work from 1919 until his death in 1957, with a special focus on his radio work and role as a stabilizing force within the DSO organization, to situate Kolar within the mid-century Detroit musical scene and national radio culture.

Like his previous positions, in Detroit Kolar both performed (as first violinist) and served as the assistant conductor.<sup>96</sup> Though his position did not pay as well as expected, Kolar accepted the position with the understanding that he would have more opportunities to further his career as a conductor and composer.<sup>97</sup> In his correspondence during summer 1919 with Ossip Gabrilowitsch, the principal conductor for the DSO, Kolar emphasizes his desire for more opportunities to appear as a conductor and a

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<sup>96</sup> Gabrilowitsch to Kolar, telegram, April 26, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers and Gabrilowitsch to Kolar, April 28, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers and Memorandum of Agreement, April 28, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. Kolar was hired as assistant conductor by Gabrilowitsch, not the DSO, and his salary was paid directly by Gabrilowitsch. He received \$50/week from Gabrilowitsch for his work as assistant conductor and \$50/week from the DSO for performing as a member of the first violin section.

<sup>97</sup> Kolar to Gabrilowitsch, April 27, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

composer, not a violinist.<sup>98</sup> He later writes “contrary to many other instrumentalists I have probably never told you of my lack of love for playing the violin; someday I hope I shall not have to do so and instead dedicating all of my time to conducting and composing.”<sup>99</sup>

During the summer of 1919 Kolar’s reputation as a composer grew with the world premiere of his *Lyric Suite, No. 2* at the Norfolk Festival, performances of his *Humoresque* on a national tour by Ilya Schkolnik, who was just hired as the concertmaster of the DSO, a performance of the movement “In the South” from his *Americana Suite* in Philadelphia by the Victor Herbert Orchestra, and the publication of a *String Quintet* in the monthly literary magazine, *Pagan*.<sup>100</sup> The most significant was the performance of the *Lyric Suite, No. 2*, by the New York Philharmonic on June 3, 1919 under Kolar’s direction at the Norfolk Music Festival.<sup>101</sup> The *Lyric Suite* was the headline composition for the opening concert of what was advertised as “The festival of the allies” and included works by noted American, English and Italian composers.<sup>102</sup> The *Lyric Suite* is in three movements: Pastorale, Cortège, and Finale, with the slow middle

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<sup>98</sup> Correspondence between Kolar and Gabrilowitsch, April to September 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

<sup>99</sup> Kolar to Gabrilowitsch, September 16, 1920, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

<sup>100</sup> “Allied Festival in Music at Norfolk Concerts,” *Hartford Courant*, May 18, 1919, 13, and “Noted Artists on Church Programs,” *The Houston Post*, April 2, 1919, 8, and “American Composers Have a Field Day,” *Evening Public Ledger*, June 27, 1919, 11, and “Pagan Publishes Kolar Composition,” *Musical America*, 31/2 (November 8, 1919), 11. Kolar’s *String Quintet* was published as a photo-engraved facsimile of the manuscript score in a supplement with issue 4/2 (October 1919) of *Pagan: A magazine for eudaemonists*, a New York based modernist literary magazine. Schkolnik toured with Constance Alexandre (Soprano) and Imogen Peay (Piano). The tour included large portions of the central and Eastern United States, including concerts in Iowa, Kansas, Texas, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

<sup>101</sup> Kolar to Gabrilowitsch, May 1, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers and Arthur Mees programs, Unpublished, 15 (1915-1921).

<sup>102</sup> “Allied Festival in Music at Norfolk Concerts.” In addition to Kolar’s *Lyric Suite No. 2*, the three-day festival included works by Robbins Batteil, Samuel Coleridge Taylor, Eduard Kremser, Nicola Laucelin, Charles Villiers Stanford, Edgar Stillman Kelley, and John Powell.

movement described as funerary in character, to “be taken to represent the feelings of the composer in connection with the awful slaughter of the recent war.”<sup>103</sup>

Kolar’s introduction to Detroit audiences as both a composer and a conductor took place on the first popular concert of the season, with a performance of Kolar’s *Americana Suite*, op. 20, under his direction.<sup>104</sup> Kolar conducted six of the DSO’s popular concerts in his first season; he also appeared on subscription concerts as an accompanist when Gabrilowitsch performed.<sup>105</sup> In addition to scheduled performances, Kolar also had the opportunity to conduct during the orchestra’s Ohio tour because Gabrilowitsch fell ill with the flu.<sup>106</sup> The high point of his work during the 1919-1920 season with the performance of the *Lyric Suite* on the Presidents’ Day popular concert, which was reprised later in the season.<sup>107</sup> In each of these appearances Kolar was lauded both for his skills as a composer and a conductor; the critics noted that his “music grips the ear and the imagination” and that his conducting showed “in every gesture and move his intuitive appreciation of melody, his familiarity with color and his remarkable sense of proportion.”<sup>108</sup> In addition to conducting and accompanying, Kolar was also

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<sup>103</sup> “Allied Festival in Music at Norfolk Concerts.” The score/parts for the Lyric Suite No. 2 are in the possession of Luck’s Music Library in manuscript form; however, at this time they are not available for rental because of their poor condition.

<sup>104</sup> “Kolar Symphony Assistant. Scores,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 3, 1919, 3. The review of Kolar’s initial appearance with the DSO mentions that the “West” movement uses “Indian Cadenzas” and “themes which call up the motley life on which the great stretches which now have been brought to civilization: its elusive measures which convey subtly the impression of grandeur of the mountain ranges and the peace and beauty of the open.”

<sup>105</sup> Gabrilowitsch to Kolar, August 31, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

<sup>106</sup> “Detroit Orchestra Makes Hit Minus Noted Leader,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, February 7, 1920, 6. In addition to the concert in Akron, Kolar conducted the performances in Zanesville, Ohio.

<sup>107</sup> “Great Audience Acclaims Kolar,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 23, 1920, 8, and “Caruso is heard by 5,000 Persons,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 19, 1920, 3. The review notes that though he was listed as American because Kolar is a naturalized citizen, the work “reflects [Kolar’s] heritage which was through his foreign birth and environment.”

<sup>108</sup> “Kolar Symphony Assistant. Scores,” and “Great Audience Acclaims Kolar,” and “2 Works New Here on Third ‘Pop’ Program,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1919, 68, and “Director and the Soloist are both Ill with the Flu,” *The Times Recorder*, February 4, 1920, 1.

responsible for the preparation, rehearsal, and personnel of the DSO. He conducted most of the orchestra rehearsals for both his Sunday concerts and works to be conducted by Gabrilowitsch. He also made requested cuts and re-orchestrations for works under Gabrilowitsch's direction, and he was empowered to audition and hire musicians, as necessary.<sup>109</sup>

Outside of his work with the DSO, Kolar accepted a position with the Detroit Institute of Musical Arts as an instructor of orchestration and composition.<sup>110</sup> It is unclear how long he remained on their faculty.

During summer 1920 Kolar returned to his Long Branch, New Jersey, home for his vacation, as he had during his tenure in New York.<sup>111</sup> He also established a new series of summer popular concerts by the DSO. These were held in the Arena Gardens and were intended to extend the DSO season for an additional twelve weeks, which provided ongoing employment for the musicians. This allowed the DSO to compete with other major ensembles for talent, and to provide light entertainment for the orchestra's patrons.<sup>112</sup> The concerts included a wide variety of light classical pieces, many extracted from larger works, as well as solo performances.<sup>113</sup> The summer concerts did not catch on because of a lack of interest.<sup>114</sup> The 1919-1920 season in Detroit was very successful and, it seems, Kolar was happy with the prospects offered by the DSO. He had more

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<sup>109</sup> Kolar to Gabrilowitsch, Jan 2, 1920, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers, and Memorandum for Mr. Kolar, March 27, 1920, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers, and Gabrilowitsch to Kolar, July 12, 1920, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

<sup>110</sup> "Members of the Symphony Join Local Faculty," *Detroit Free Press*, October 19, 1919, 76.

<sup>111</sup> Kolar's correspondence with Gabrilowitsch is addressed to his Long Branch home at 80 Norwood Ave.

<sup>112</sup> "Directs First Season of Summer 'Pops'," *Detroit Free Press*, April 11, 1920, 74.

<sup>113</sup> "Summer Concert Season is Opened," *Detroit Free Press*, May 4, 1920, 10.

<sup>114</sup> Gabrilowitsch to Kolar, July 13, 1920, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. In his letter Gabrilowitsch suggests the problem was a lack of community interest, but that the concerts themselves were well produced and enjoyed by the audience that did attend.



opportunities to conduct, he was able to perform his compositions, and he made the first attempts at establishing a summer concert series in Detroit.

The next two seasons (1920-1921, 1921-1922) were markedly similar to the first. Although he was approached by movie theaters about a position as a theater orchestra conductor, which would pay substantially more and likely not require him to perform as a violinist, Kolar decided to remain with the DSO.<sup>115</sup> Kolar re-signed with the DSO for a two-year contract, again split between his work as assistant to Gabrilowitsch and as a violinist.<sup>116</sup> During the 1920-1921 season his duties were expanded; he conducted half of the fourteen scheduled programs for the Sunday Popular concerts, led the Young People's Concerts, accompanied Gabrilowitsch when he appeared as a piano soloist, and conducted the orchestra for the first United Singers of Detroit Festival, with his former teacher, Jan Kubilek, as a guest soloist.<sup>117</sup> Kolar also conducted the Detroit premiere of his *Symphony in D*.<sup>118</sup>

The 1920-1921 summer concert program continued in a modified form; instead of the popular concerts that Kolar had previously conducted, he collaborated with a local

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<sup>115</sup> Kolar to Gabrilowitsch, September 16, 1920, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. Though Kolar does not name the theaters, he indicates he was offered \$15,000/year to conduct their orchestra. This was more than triple what he made with the DSO as both the assistant conductor and first violin.

<sup>116</sup> Memorandum of Agreement, April 24, 1920, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. The Memorandum between Kolar and Gabrilowitsch indicates that he still received his conducting salary (\$50/week) from Gabrilowitsch and their correspondence indicates he continued to perform as a violinist; however, the budget report from the 1920-21 winter season includes a line item for Assistant Conductor (\$2520.00/season). It is unclear if this allocation is in addition to the remuneration he received from Gabrilowitsch, but it does suggest that his position as Assistant Conductor had become officially supported by the DSO management.

<sup>117</sup> Winter Season Sunday Soloists 1920-1921, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers and "Singing Societies to Give First Festival," *Detroit Free Press*, April 3, 1921, 17m and "Homage Rendered to Gabrilowitsch," *Detroit Free Press*, April 23, 1921, 3, and "May Arrange Extra Series Next Season," *Detroit Free Press*, April 3, 1921, 17.

<sup>118</sup> "Kolar Presents His Own Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, February 26, 1921, 3. The work performed on the February 25, 1921 subscription concert and was very well received. Viewed as conservative with the reviewer commenting on the more traditional tonal and structural attributes that "the symphony is sane, sound, without the least attempt to be eccentric....[it does] not impress through bizarre effects as much of the modern music does."

actor and director, Sam Hume, on a series of plays that made use of incidental music by Mendelssohn, Verdi, Nicolai, and Edgar Stillman Kelley.<sup>119</sup> The group staged Maeterlink's *Pelléas and Mélisande*, and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.<sup>120</sup> Kolar and the DSO's contribution to the productions were lauded by the critics as "a source of pure delight;" however, the reception of the performances as a whole was mixed, because of poor acting.<sup>121</sup>

Kolar's duties for the 1921-1922 season were unchanged from previous seasons; he conducted a number of the Sunday Popular Concerts, as well as all of the Educational and Young People's Concerts.<sup>122</sup> His compositions were also frequently programmed, with performances of his *Americana Suite*, op. 20, *Lyric Suite, No. 2* and the premiere of his *Scherzo for strings*.<sup>123</sup> The most significant performance of one of Kolar's works that season did not take place in Detroit; instead, he was invited back to the Norfolk Festival where he conducted the world premiere of his *Slovakian Rhapsody* (June 7, 1922).<sup>124</sup> On

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<sup>119</sup> "Detroit Symphony Orchestra Play Season," *The Detroit Educational Bulletin*, 5/1 (September, 1921), 14, and "Drama and Music Joined by Hume," *Detroit Free Press*, October 13, 1921, 5, and "Detroit Symphony Plans Drama Series," *Musical America* 33/3 (May 14, 1921), 39.

<sup>120</sup> "Detroit Symphony Orchestra Play Season." The theater troupe also produced Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*, Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*; however, these did not include incidental music provided by the DSO. The productions included a combination of professional actors in the lead roles and local, amateurs for all other characters/roles.

<sup>121</sup> "Drama and Music Joined by Hume." The reviewer writes of the acting "the lines...are of delicate tissue, deserving a lyric reading. What they got was less than their desserts..."

<sup>122</sup> "Concerts in Schools Begin November 10," *Detroit Free Press*, October 30, 1921, 75, and "Kolar, Abbas Win Concert Honors," *Detroit Free Press*, October 31, 1921, 5, and "De Bruce Explains Symphony Themes," *Detroit Free Press*, November 18, 1921, 3.

<sup>123</sup> "Repose is Found in 'Pop' Program," *Detroit Free Press*, November 12, 1921, 8, and "Violin, Viola Solos Given with Charm," *Detroit Free Press*, March 20, 1922, 5 and "Scenic Melodies Feature Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, January 23, 1922, 4. Kolar's *Lyric Suite, No. 2* was performed on March 19, 1922 and his *Scherzo for strings* on January 22, 1922. It is unclear if the performance of the *Scherzo* is a world premiere, or only the Detroit premiere; however, I have not found any records that indicate Kolar conducted the work with any other ensembles prior to this performance.

<sup>124</sup> "Norfolk Festival Offers Many Artists," *The Musical Leader* 43/25 (Jan-June, 1922), 682. The title for the work is given as *Slovakian Rhapsody* in the contemporary newspaper accounts; however, the score submitted to the Library of Congress for copyright protection in 1936 is titled *Slovakia: A Rhapsody for Orchestra*, which is also used in subsequent performances. It is clear, however, that these are the same

the concert Kolar shared a billing with Ralph Vaughan Williams, who conducted the United States premiere of his *Symphony No. 3, "Pastoral Symphony,"* and with George Whitefield Chadwick, who conducted the world premiere of his *Anniversary Overture*.<sup>125</sup>

The *Slovakian Rhapsody* is modeled after Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*; again, Kolar draws on folk melodies as the primary themes for the work. His use of folk melodies shows Kolar's continued engagement with questions of national identity and its musical representation, which was noted in the reception by the contemporary critics. In the program notes for a November 1922 performance in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the author writes:

Kolar is not Hungarian, nor even Bohemian, but a Slovak. Akin to the Czechs, yet separated as the mountaineer is always separated from his kinsfolk of the plain. The line of demarcation is very slender, but it is there, as this composition proves. Slovak history may emphasize it, but the discovery of Kolar sufficiently pursues Slovakia back to the twilight where dwells ever Russia, half of the East and half of the West, half Asiatic, half European....Mr. Kolar, examining a collection of folk-songs in the possession of a friend, found a number of Slovakian folk-songs, and among them the two he utilizes in the Rhapsody. He was profoundly impressed and intrigued to discover in them not the familiar Slavic atmosphere but a strain of Orientalism, an Orientalism so clearly marked, so unmistakable that it admitted no question.<sup>126</sup>

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works as the reviews/program notes for the post-1936 performances indicate the work was had its premiere at the 1922 Norfolk Festival.

<sup>125</sup> "Finest Musical Treat since 1917 Promised," *Hartford Courant*, June 2, 1922, 2.

<sup>126</sup> Program Notes for Kolar *Slovakian Rhapsody*, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Victor Kolar, Ann Arbor, Hill Auditorium, November 20, 1922.

Kolar's work was widely praised in both the general and musical press, who took note of both Lisztian and national influences. The reviewer from *Musical America* described the work as "utilize[ing] Slovakian melodies and not scornful of Lisztian models" and stated "this young composer...has utilized his powers of brilliant orchestration and skillful building of climaxes and contrasts to elaborate a serious work that has all the rhythmic fascination of jazz."<sup>127</sup> The reviewer for the *Hartford Courant* went further and described Kolar as "one of the best artists whose work has ever been given before them" and that the work reflects "[Kolar's] perfect sense of musical form, his utterly intimate knowledge of the instruments of his orchestra and—added to these—unmistakable inspiration."<sup>128</sup>

Shortly after the premiere of his *Slovakian Rhapsody*, Kolar was invited to be a guest conductor with the Philadelphia Orchestra at their then summer home, the Lemon Hill pavilion in Fairmount Park. This three-week program was the first of three annual engagements (summer 1922 to 1924) in Philadelphia.<sup>129</sup> For these concerts Kolar conducted daily programs for large outdoor audiences (approx. 4000 persons/night). The selections were similar to those on the Detroit Sunday Popular concerts, and included works by Beethoven, Wagner, Dvořák, and his own compositions, among others.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Quoted in "His 'Slovakian' Rhapsody Praised," *Detroit Free Press*, June 5, 1922, 72.

<sup>128</sup> "Finest Musical Treat since 1917 Promised," and "Williams' Symphony Wins Musical World," *Hartford Courant*, June 6, 1922, 2.

<sup>129</sup> "Free City Concerts to Begin Tomorrow," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 16, 1922, 3, and "Park Symphonies to Begin July 9," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 1, 1923, 15, and "Park Musicians Open Season Soon," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 29, 1924, 61.

<sup>130</sup> "Hadley Bids Adieu to Park Symphony," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 22, 1923, 5, and "Directs Own Composition," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 29, 1923, 11. One notable difference is on each Friday of the summer festival the orchestra would perform a more elevated concert, similar to a subscription series, that featured an entire symphony.

Kolar also conducted the DSO residency at the Chautauqua Festival.<sup>131</sup> The DSO residency at the Chautauqua Festival in Chautauqua, New York, began on August 9 and ran for three weeks, with a total of fifteen concerts.<sup>132</sup> Kolar conducted all of the Chautauqua concerts, which included Schubert's *Symphony No. 8, "Unfinished,"* Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9, "From the New World,"* Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4,* and Arthur Goring Thomas's cantata, *The Swan and the Skylark,* in addition to movements from Kolar's *America Suite* and excerpts from Wagner's operas.<sup>133</sup> Chautauqua audiences responded positively to both the orchestra and to Kolar, and declared "there could be no possible doubt as to the superlative excellence of the Detroit Orchestra...under the masterly direction of Kolar."<sup>134</sup>

During 1922-1923, Kolar took on additional responsibilities, which included an expansion of the Sunday concert series, the Young People's Concerts, and a majority of the rehearsals. The most notable of Kolar's responsibilities was the training and preparation of the Detroit Symphony Choir for the Detroit premiere of Mahler's *Symphony No. 2.* The additional responsibility as the director of the DSO chorus allowed him to stop performing as violinist in the ensemble and dedicate himself to conducting.<sup>135</sup> For this Kolar received a commensurate increase in salary.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> "Kolar to Direct Summer Concerts," *Detroit Free Press*, July 16, 1922, 64, and "Free City Concerts to Begin Tomorrow," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 16, 1922, 3, and "Music at Chautauqua, N.Y.," *Music News* 14/39 (September 29, 1922), 25. In addition to Kolar, the other conductors invited during the years he conducted were Henry Hadley, Thaddeus Rich, Willem von Hoogstraten, Nathan Franko, Richard Hageman, and Alexander Smallons.

<sup>132</sup> "Music at Chautauqua, N.Y."

<sup>133</sup> "Music at Chautauqua, N.Y."

<sup>134</sup> "Music at Chautauqua, N.Y."

<sup>135</sup> "'Resurrection' Offers Fine Musical Treat," *Detroit Free Press*, April 5, 1923, 7, and Detroit Symphony Orchestra Board Meeting Minutes, March 9, 1923, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. Gabrilowitsch recommended to the orchestra board that they no longer have Kolar perform as a violinist in the ensemble and, instead, have him direct the Detroit Symphony Choir.

<sup>136</sup> "Symphony to Play 20 Sunday Matinee Concerts Next Year," *Detroit Free Press*, May 28, 1922, 72, and Budget Report 1922-1923, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. Kolar's salary for his work as assistant

Kolar spent the majority of the summer in Long Branch at his summer house, where he rested and spent most of his time gardening and fishing.<sup>137</sup> Because of a nervous disorder, his doctor ordered that he get “plenty of sunshine, no music, [and] no ‘shop’” during the summer of 1923.<sup>138</sup> His only work as a conductor that summer was a two-week appearance with the Fairmount Park concerts in Philadelphia (July 23 – August 5). He was invited to return and conduct the final concert of the season, with Olga Samafoff as soloist.<sup>139</sup> His duties for the DSO consisted only of auditioning a handful of musicians in New York City and orchestrating “Wie bist, du meine Königin” from Brahms’s *9 Lieder*, op. 32, for a performance by Clare Gabrilowitsch (née Clemens).<sup>140</sup>

For the 1923-1924 and 1924-1925 seasons, Kolar continued to conduct the Sunday Popular concerts, Educational and Young People’s concerts, remained as the director of the Detroit Symphony Choir, and conducted Mischa Elman and Igor Stravinsky’s appearances on the subscription series.<sup>141</sup> Now firmly established as the primary conductor of the Sunday Popular concerts, he elevated the quality of programming to include works such as Strauss’s *Death and Transfiguration*, *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, and Stravinsky’s *The Firebird*, which previously would have been performed

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conductor was increased \$2,000.00 to \$6,680.00 for the season, in addition to his weekly salary (\$50/week) for services as a violinist.

<sup>137</sup> Kolar to Gabrilowitsch, May 15, 1923, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

<sup>138</sup> Kolar to Claire Shover, April 29, 1923, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. Kolar sought help and was examined by a Dr. Cambell in Long Branch for eye issues. The nervous condition manifested itself as an eye problem.

<sup>139</sup> Kolar to Claire Shover, April 29, 1923 and Kolar to Gabrilowitsch, May 15, 1923, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers and “Hadley Bids Adieu to Park Symphony,” and “Chicago Conductor for Concerts Here,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 5, 1923, 17 and “Olga Samaroff Farewell Soloist,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 2, 1923, 72.

<sup>140</sup> Shover to Kolar, April 25, 1923, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

<sup>141</sup> “News of the Orchestra,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1923, 78, and “Symphony Choir,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 28, 1923, 17, and Victor Kolar Detroit Symphony Complete Performance History, Unpublished, and Charlotte M. Tarsney, “Igor Stravinsky Appears Tuesday,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 1, 1925, 14. Kolar conducted all but one of the Sunday Popular concerts for the 1923-24 season when Gabrilowitsch conducted a concert on Sunday, November 19, 1923.

on a subscription concert. Under Kolar's direction the ensemble achieved an extremely high level of musical performance.<sup>142</sup> Eugene Leuchtmann, critic for the Detroit Free Press, wrote of the popular concerts, "To Kolar, then, a thousand thanks....music sometimes less than mediocre was raised to the plane of the masterful, and where the masterful was near sublime."<sup>143</sup> In addition to programming works of greater substance, Kolar also regularly led programs dedicated to composers of various ethnicities/nationalities, such as Italian, Russian, or Bohemian composers, or music from a specific genre, such as dance or symphony.<sup>144</sup>

As the director of the Detroit Symphony Choir, Kolar was responsible for preparing the chorus for two concert performances a season; typically a concert in December, often a performance of Handel's *Messiah*, and another choral masterwork in late March or early April.<sup>145</sup> Kolar was also responsible for rehearsing and preparing the choir for concert programs that included works such as Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* (1925), Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* (1923), Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (1923), and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1926), among others.<sup>146</sup> These performances were typically

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<sup>142</sup> Detroit Symphony Orchestra Report by the Manager for the Year 1923-1924, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers and William Walter to Ossip Gabrilowitsch, December 14, 1923, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers and Victor Kolar Detroit Symphony Complete Performance History. Walter, the Orchestra Manager, writes to Gabrilowitsch with concerns that by programming works of more substance, instead of the standard light, popular fare, Kolar could be inadvertently creating competition for the subscription series. Gabrilowitsch, however, supported Kolar's program choices.

<sup>143</sup> Eugene Leuchtmann, "Dance Captures Symphony Hearers," *Detroit Free Press*, November 26, 1923, 4. On the program were selections from dance related works by Johann Strauss Jr., Massenet, Beethoven, Grieg, Dvořák, Herbert, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Borodin.

<sup>144</sup> Charlotte M. Tarsney, "Some Modern Italians," *Detroit Free Press*, March 16, 1924, 61, and Ella H. McCormick, "Symphony Plays Bohemian Music," *Detroit Free Press*, March 31, 1924, 5, and Eugene Leuchtmann, "Dance Captures Symphony Hearers."

<sup>145</sup> "Noted Artists to be Invited," *Detroit Free Press*, September 14, 1924, 34, and "'Messiah' Ticket Sale," *Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 1924, 65.

<sup>146</sup> "News of the Orchestra," *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1923, 78 and Charlotte M. Tarsney, "Beethoven Choral Symphony is Given," *Detroit Free Press*, November 28, 1923, 4, and Charlotte M. Tarsney, "The Symphony Begins Its 12<sup>th</sup> Season This Week," *Detroit Free Press*, October 11, 1925, 115, and "Victor Kolar to Conduct Next Orchestral Concerts," *Detroit Free Press*, March 8, 1925, 74.

conducted by Gabrilowitsch and were often highlights of the orchestral season.<sup>147</sup> Kolar continued to conduct the Detroit Symphony Choir until at least 1932, after which it is likely that the chorus was disbanded because of financial difficulties.<sup>148</sup>

Although Kolar had conducted the Young People's and Educational concerts for the DSO during the 1921-1922 season, the following season the educational programs were greatly expanded with the hiring of Edith M. Rhettts as the Educational Director for the DSO.<sup>149</sup> This began a nearly- twenty-year collaboration between Kolar and Rhettts, who presented an annual series of ten concert/lectures free to students in the Detroit and Wayne County public schools, along with five Young People's Concerts.<sup>150</sup> The school concerts were designed to be integrated into the music curriculum and tickets were offered to schools who had or initiated a music education program.<sup>151</sup> For both the school and Young People's concerts Kolar and Rhettts selected works to be performed based partially on what could be "mechanically reproduced" so the students could familiarize themselves with the works prior to the concert and foster the musical

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<sup>147</sup> Harris and Ganson, 71-74 and Charlotte M. Tarsney, "Triumph Is Scored By Gabrilowitsch," *Detroit Free Press*, March 31, 1926, 3. According to Clara Gabrilowitsch, née Clemens, the performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* was Gabrilowitsch's greatest artistic achievement.

<sup>148</sup> "Handel's 'Alexander's Feast' Will Have Premiere Here," *Detroit Free Press*, November 20, 1932, 42. The financial impact of the depression of the DSO was profound. For the 1933-1934 season, both Kolar and Gabrilowitsch conducted the ensemble without pay and many of the musicians worked on partial salaries to keep the orchestra afloat and have some form of income.

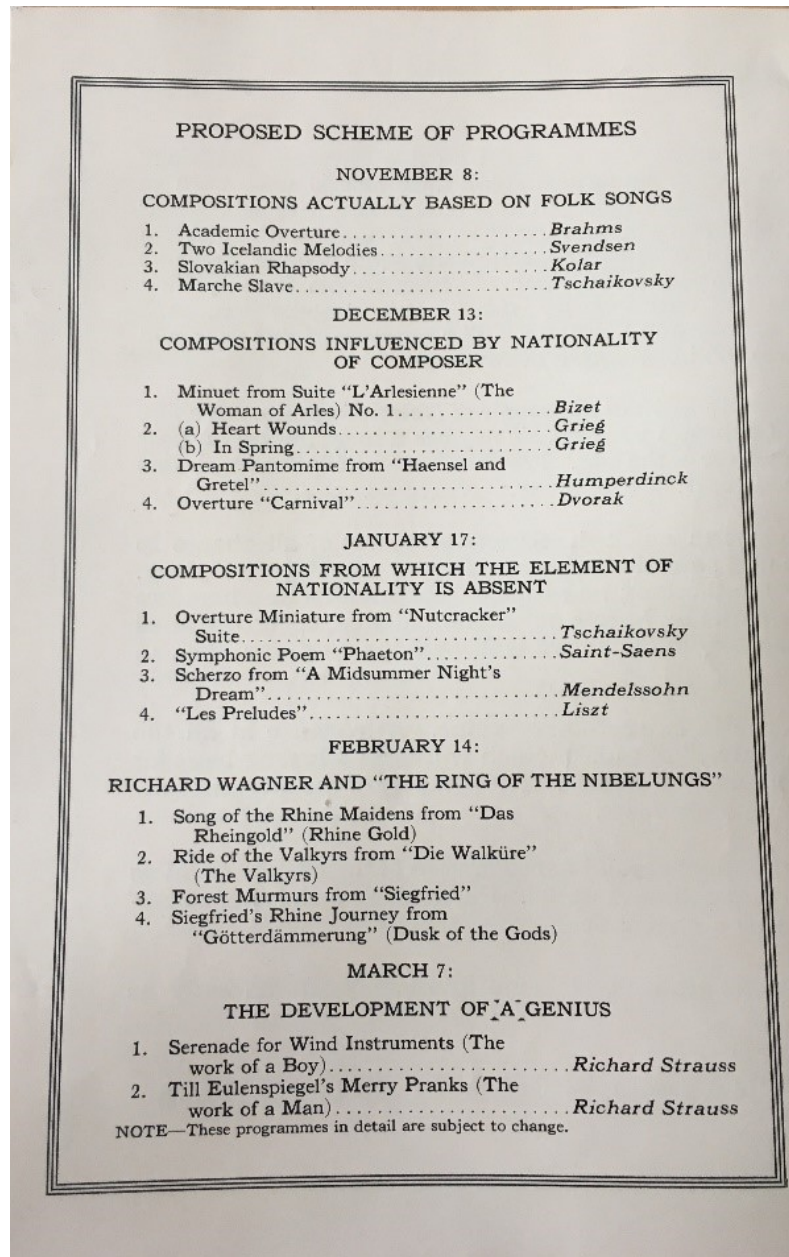
<sup>149</sup> "50,000 Children Heard Concerts in the Schools," *Detroit Free Press*, April 15, 1923, 56, and "Will Continue Free Concerts," *Detroit Free Press*, September 7, 1924, 64, and Detroit Symphony Orchestra Report by the Manager for the Year 1923-1924, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers and Laurie Lanzen Harris and Paul Ganson, *The Detroit Symphony Orchestra: Grace, Grit, and Glory* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2016), 8. Rhettts was hired on Gabrilowitsch's recommendation and was the first educational director for any of the major American orchestras.

<sup>150</sup> Harris and Ganson, 70 and "Will Continue Free Concerts," and Detroit Symphony Orchestra Report by the Manager for the Year 1923-1924. The Young People's Concerts took place on Saturday mornings and tickets could be purchased by families for a nominal fee.

<sup>151</sup> Detroit Symphony Orchestra Report by the Manager for the Year 1923-1924. The schools were initially given the freedom to select the students to attend the concerts; however, after the 1923-1924 season the assignment of the tickets to the students was based on their scores in the "Musical Memory Contest" put on by the Federation of Women's Clubs.



education and “appreciation of good music.”<sup>152</sup> The concerts/lectures included topics on the symphony, music and folk songs, music and nationality, and Wagner’s Ring Cycle.<sup>153</sup>



4 - Programs for 1924-1925 Young People's Concerts. (Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers)

<sup>152</sup> “Will Continue Free Concerts,” and Detroit Symphony Orchestra Report by the Manager for the Year 1923-1924.

<sup>153</sup> “Will Continue Free Concerts,” and “First of School Concerts Given,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 4, 1924, 5.

After 1925-1926, those students who were not selected to attend the concerts in person were able to hear the orchestra's performance of the music they studied through local radio broadcasts of the concerts.<sup>154</sup> Initially the broadcasts were limited to the local market; however, after the first season the concerts were broadcast state-wide so that children in rural school districts could participate in the music education program developed by Rhettts and Kolar.<sup>155</sup>

The summer of 1925 was an incredibly tumultuous period in Kolar's personal life. He and his wife, Franziska, separated, and his mother, Frances, had a psychological breakdown and committed suicide.<sup>156</sup> Although he and Franziska did not finalize their divorce until December 1930, just before Kolar's marriage to Lillian Holdren on January 5, 1931, the couple had agreed to separate early in the summer of 1925, having divided their respective property.<sup>157</sup> Most of the limited information about Kolar's fourteen-year marriage to Franziska "Inka" Schmidt comes, primarily, from newspaper accounts from 1930 when he and Franziska finalized their divorce. If these accounts are to be believed, the couple separated because Franziska "nagged" him to such an extent that he was unable to work.<sup>158</sup> Regardless of the cause, it appears that the separation was not amicable, with Kolar writing to Gabrilowitsch in July 1930 "I have plenty of troubles of

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<sup>154</sup> Charlotte M. Tarsney, "Put Symphony Series on Air," *Detroit Free Press*, October 24, 1926, 62, and Harris and Ganson, 70, and "Music Contest Awards Made," *Detroit Free Press*, March 7, 1925, 13.

<sup>155</sup> Tarsney "Put Symphony Series on Air."

<sup>156</sup> "Real Estate Transfers," *Asbury Park Press*, July 9, 1925, 24, and "Crazed by War She Hangs Herself," *Asbury Park Press*, August 26, 1925, 19.

<sup>157</sup> "Real Estate Transfers," and "Divorce Granted to Victor Kolar," *Detroit Free Press*, December 17, 1930, 1, and "Victor Kolar Seeks License to Marry," *Detroit Free Press*, November 27, 1930, 1, and "Kolar is Married to Miss Holdren," *Detroit Free Press*, January 6, 1931, 4. The couple filed a separation agreement and Kolar formally released courtesy and Franziska released her dower and claim to their property in Long Branch, New Jersey. After the separation Franziska moved back to Prague to live with her family.

<sup>158</sup> "Divorce Granted to Victor Kolar," and "Victor Kolar Divorces Wife Who 'Nagged' Him," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, December 17, 1930, 2. In the divorce, Kolar agreed to pay Franziska an alimony of \$200/month, unless she remarries, in which case Kolar has to pay her mother \$100/month.

my own right now with my impending divorce case....I have been fighting for years for my future happiness and I hope that God will bless me in some of it, to which I think I am entitled.”<sup>159</sup>

Soon after his separation from Franziska, Kolar’s mother, Frances, came to the United States to visit Victor and his brother, Joseph, who was also living with Victor in Long Branch.<sup>160</sup> Accounts indicate that she had been suffering from mental illness, which was attributed to her experiences during World War I, and it was hoped that “a change might benefit her condition.” She continued to deteriorate, and arrangements were made to “send her to Trenton.”<sup>161</sup> She became aware of the plan to admit her to an institution and “worried over being separated from her family,” she took her own life on August 25, 1925.<sup>162</sup>

That same summer came the establishment of a new, six-week summer concert series known as the Belle Isle concert series. The series was sponsored by the City of Detroit and held at a specially built concert shell on Belle Isle, an island park located in the Detroit River between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario.<sup>163</sup> A personal project of the Mayor, John W. Smith, the daily concerts were paid for by the city and were free to the public and broadcast on the radio.<sup>164</sup> To commemorate the founding of the series, in

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<sup>159</sup> Kolar to Gabrilowitsch, July 25, 1930, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

<sup>160</sup> “Crazed by War She Hangs Herself.” All discussion in this section is derived from this article.

<sup>161</sup> Trenton is the location of the New Jersey State Psychiatric Hospital, where it is likely that she would have been admitted.

<sup>162</sup> It is not clear if Kolar was in Long Branch at the time, as the Belle Isle season ended on August 22 and if he were there he had only just arrived from Detroit.

<sup>163</sup> Harris and Ganson, 70 and “First Park Concert is Set for July 13,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 31, 1925, 9, and “To Dedicate Shell Sunday,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 12, 1925, 1, and “Council Contracts for Isle Concerts,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 20, 1931, 22. The concerts were modelled after the Lemon Hill/Fairmount Park concerts put on each summer by the Philadelphia Orchestra, which Kolar had conducted during the three prior summer seasons.

<sup>164</sup> “To Dedicate Shell Sunday.”

1925 Kolar composed and conducted his *Belle Isle March*, which he dedicated to Mayor John W. Smith, who was a driving force behind the founding of the series.<sup>165</sup> Kolar conducted this concert series almost every summer for nearly twenty years (1925 – 1943) and opened most seasons with a performance of his *Belle Isle March*.<sup>166</sup> During the nearly twenty-year period that Kolar conducted the Belle Isle concerts, he often used the concerts to try out his own compositions, such as the *Viennese-American March* (1925), *March of the Titans* (1931), and *Fair Land of Mine* (1931).<sup>167</sup> If successful, he often programed these works to be performed by the DSO during the following season on the popular concerts series.<sup>168</sup>

The Belle Isle concerts presented innovative and varied programing, much like Kolar’s weekly popular concerts, with a mix of light classical works and marches, programs dedicated to music from different countries/ethnic groups, and on Friday nights, complete symphonies.<sup>169</sup> The concerts were initially intended to be broadcast locally on WCX, the radio station owned by and affiliated with the Detroit Free Press; however, by the end of the season the concerts were nationally syndicated, with broadcasts on stations as far away as Santa Ana, California and Honolulu, Hawaii.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> “Mayor Hears ‘Own’ Number,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 24, 1925, 5.

<sup>166</sup> “WCX Broadcasts Belle Isle Symphony Concert Tonight,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 28, 1926, 11, and “Belle Isle Concerts To Start Tomorrow,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1927, and Frank Hedge, “Concert Draws Music Lovers to Belle Isle,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 5, 1943, 11.

<sup>167</sup> “Isle Season Nears Close,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 9, 1931, 31 and

<sup>168</sup> Leo Donovan, “Isle Favorites Are Repeated at Orchestra Hall,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1926, 4.

<sup>169</sup> “Detroit Symphony Orchestra Program,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 13, 1927, 15, and “Belle Isle Concerts to Start Tomorrow,” *Detroit Free Press*, Jun 19, 1927, 1 and “Jewish Music Radio Feature,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 5, 1926, 13, and “Radio Audience to Hear Symphony Through WCX-WJR,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 23, 1926, 4.

<sup>170</sup> “To Dediccate Shell Sunday,” and Charlotte M. Tarsney, “25,000 on Hand for Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 13, 1925, 11, and “Will Ask More Isle Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 3, 1925, 5, and “Noted Symphony On Air,” *Santa Ana Register*, July 25, 1925, 19, and “Noted Symphony On Air,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, August 29, 1925, 22. In addition to the live concert performance and at-home radio broadcast, the daily concerts were simulcast, via radio, to a number of other parks in Detroit, where loudspeaker systems were set up to play the performances to the audiences in the parks. The DSO and

These concerts allowed hundreds of thousands of Detroiters to hear the orchestra and contributed to the orchestra's reputation, also bringing acclaim to Kolar, who was now nationally recognized.<sup>171</sup> These concert broadcasts, along with the regular inclusion of the marches that he composed for them, led some to hail him as America's greatest living march composer and the heir to John Philip Sousa.<sup>172</sup>

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Kolar were preceded each night by a performance by a professional concert band conducted by Herman Schmeman.

<sup>171</sup> "Kolar's Fame Grows by Broadcasting 'Pops,'" *Detroit Free Press*, March 25, 1928, 49 and Harris and Ganson, 71.

<sup>172</sup> "New March King," *Wilmington Daily Press*, October 17, 1932, 4.



5 - Kolar rehearsing the DSO at Belle Isle (1930). Author's Private Collection.



Professionally, the period from 1925 to approximately 1930 was a high-point in Kolar's career up to that point. His contract with the DSO was extended for another two years (1925-1926 and 1926-1927 seasons) and he was promoted from Assistant Conductor to Associate Conductor. His duties remained, generally, the same, though he did take on more responsibility for the DSO's out-of-town concerts and conducted more of the subscription concerts.<sup>173</sup> His work in the Sunday popular concerts continued to be praised and as he became more established as a conductor Kolar planned more adventurous programs, including concerts of works by more modern or less well known composers, such as Florent Schmitt or Arthur Honegger, and complete symphonies, such as Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9, "From the New World;"* he also brought in more prominent soloists, such as Guy Maier (piano) and Hans Kindler (cello).<sup>174</sup>

In his new position as Associate Conductor, Kolar programed and conducted one-to-two of the Thursday/Friday night subscription series each season. Gabrilowitsch's conservative musical tastes were widely known. For his initial two appearances on the subscription series (1925-1926 and 1926-1927 seasons) Kolar conducted works that did

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<sup>173</sup> "Orchestra Retains Kolar for 2 Years," *Detroit Free Press*, February 12, 1925, 24, and Eugene Leuchtman, "Victor Kolar Paid Highest Tribute for the Orchestra's Work," *Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1925, 5, and "Thanksgiving Day Program Brings Josef Hoffmann," *Detroit Free Press*, November 22, 1925, 38, and Chartotte M. Tarsney, "All-Scandinavian Program Planned for November 12-13," *Detroit Free Press*, November 8, 1925, 63 and "City to Hear the Symphony From Detroit," *The Des Moines Register*, January 18, 1927, 2.

<sup>174</sup> Victor Kolar Paid Highest Tribute for the Orchestra's Work," and Chartotte M. Tarsney, "Florent Schmidt on First Popular Program," *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1925, 68, and Chartotte M. Tarsney, "Kolar to Play Honegger's Tone Poem "Pacific 231" at 'Pop' Concert Today," *Detroit Free Press*, January 10, 1926, 52, and "Dvorak Number to be Feature of 'Pop' Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, March 7, 1926, 62, and "Orchestra Will Present Two Eminent Soloists," *Detroit Free Press*, October 31, 1926, 56, and "Guy Maier to Be The First Soloist at Sunday Series," *Detroit Free Press*, November 1, 1925, 62. Guy Maier was a student of Arthur Schnabel and regarded as one of the leading American pianists in the first half of the twentieth century and Hans Kindler was the former principal cellist of the Philadelphia orchestra and, later, founder of the National Symphony in Washington, D.C.

not break the mold.<sup>175</sup> On these concerts, Kolar conducted Strauss's *Symphonie Domestica*, a Detroit premiere, and Sibelius's *Symphony No. 4*.<sup>176</sup> After the first two seasons, however, Kolar's programming becomes more adventurous, including works such as the Detroit premiere of John Alden Carpenter's jazz tinged ballet, *Skyscrapers* (January 5, 1928), which includes unusual instrumentation (siren, and a large percussion battery).<sup>177</sup> In July 1928 Kolar also conducted a performance of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* and the allegorical tableaux *The Knight Templar* for the triannual conclave of the Knights' Templar.<sup>178</sup>

In 1928-1929 Gabrilowitsch took a one-year leave from the DSO and Kolar, joined by a number of guest conductors, stepped in to conduct in his absence.<sup>179</sup> Kolar's duties for the subscription concerts increased and included conducting four of the sixteen subscription concerts, as well as the opening/closing concerts for the season, a majority of the popular concerts, all of the Young People's Concerts, as well as the DSO's concert

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<sup>175</sup> Harris and Ganson, 80 and Charlotte M. Tarsney, "True Symphony's Return Forecast," *Detroit Free Press*, March 26, 1928, 5. In the installment on "Modern Composers" in a lecture series on the development of music by Gabrilowitsch, he completely leaves out the discussion of any "Ultra-Modernists," such as Schoenberg, and instead focuses on the works of Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and César Franck.

<sup>176</sup> Charlotte M. Tarsney, "Kolar Will Conduct 'Domestic Symphony,'" *Detroit Free Press*, February 6, 1927, 57, and "All-Scandinavian Program Planned for November 12-13."

<sup>177</sup> "Kolar to play Carpenter's Jazz Ballet 'Skyscrapers,'" *Detroit Free Press*, December 25, 1927, 40, and Charlotte M. Tarsney, "'Skyscrapers', Jazz Ballet Music, Depicts U.S. Life," *Detroit Free Press*, January 1, 1928, 45, and Charlotte M. Tarsney, "New Music Wrecks Symphony Decorum," *Detroit Free Press*, January 6, 1928, 9.

<sup>178</sup> "Arab Patrol to Usher at Symphony Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, September 25, 1932, 44, and "Welcome Knight's Templar," *Detroit Free Press*, July 16, 1928, 5 and "City to Have Summer Opera," *Detroit Free Press*, May 13, 1928, 47 and "Municipal Opera Greeted by Crowd," *Detroit Free Press*, July 19, 1928, 3. The performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana* included Bettina Freeman (Santuzza), Giuseppe Interrante (Alfio), Fernando Bertini (Turridu), and Lucille Schwartz or Isobelle Dix (Lola). Most of the singers were members of the San Carlo Opera Company, a touring ensemble based out of New York City.

<sup>179</sup> "Gabrilowitsch To Take a Year's Leave of Absence," *Detroit Free Press*, January 8, 1928, 56. The guest conductors for the 1928-1928 season were Emil Oberhoffer, Willem Van Hoogstraten, Eugene Goosens, Leopold Stokowski, Wilhelm Mengelberg, Thomas Beecham, Bernardino Molinari, Georg Enesco, Alfred Hertz, George Schneevoight, and Nikolai Sokoloff.



tours in Michigan and New England.<sup>180</sup> With the additional subscription concerts, Kolar again had an opportunity to conduct both his own works, such as his *Symphony in D*, and other, less well known works, such as the Detroit premières of Ernst Chausson's *Symphony in Bb Major* and Dvořák's *The Water Goblin*.<sup>181</sup> Though many of the conductors who shared the podium with Kolar were world renowned, such as Mengelberg or Stokowski, the Detroit critics and audiences found Kolar's conducting to be masterful and the DSO performance under his direction as "the finest in their memory."<sup>182</sup>

The appointment of guest conductors allowed Kolar to accept engagements elsewhere. As the guest conductor for a popular concert with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra he presented Chausson's *Symphony in Bb Major*, Liszt's *Les Preludes* and the first St. Louis performance of Rimsky Korsakov's "The Musical Pictures" from *The Tsar Sultan*.<sup>183</sup> One reviewer wrote of the concert:

Kolar moves with assurance and authority and his grip on the St. Louis orchestra...was that of a director who knew its possibilities thoroughly....Discrimination and restraint marked his whole attitude toward a composition [Chausson's *Symphony in Bb*] that needed those qualities

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<sup>180</sup> Victor Kolar Detroit Symphony Complete Performance History and "The Orchestra To Go on Tour," *Detroit Free Press*, December 2, 1928, 61.

<sup>181</sup> Charlotte M. Tarsney, "2 Concert Works Introduced Here," *Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1928, 20.

<sup>182</sup> Eugene Leuchtman, "Kolar Gives Masterful Reading of Sibelius Work," *Detroit Free Press*, January 14, 1929, 4. It is likely that the critic is comparing Kolar's reading of Sibelius's *Symphony No. 1* to that of Emil Oberhoffer, who performed the work in Detroit on October 18, 1928. Charlotte Tarsney's review of Oberhoffer's performance is more positive than Leuchtman's accounting in his review of Kolar, though her review is not wholly positive.

<sup>183</sup> "Guest Conductors Will Again Lead Symphony Series," *The St. Louis Star and Times*, September 29, 1928, 14, and Thomas B. Sherman, "Kolar to Conduct Pop Today," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 10, 1929, 66.

sorely....At the same time his reading was informed by a healthy vitality, that expressed itself in a warmth of orchestral tone and vigorous climaxes.<sup>184</sup>

With Gabrilowitsch's return, Kolar resumed his role as primary director of the popular concerts, the educational/Young People's concerts, and the Detroit Symphony Choir, which performed Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, as well as two of the regular subscription concerts and a number of the DSO's performances on tour.<sup>185</sup> Similar to prior seasons, Kolar improved the quality of programming for the popular concerts, now to include complete symphonies by Sibelius, Kalinnikov, and Glazunov.<sup>186</sup> On the subscription concerts Kolar continued to program more adventurous works, which included the first performance in Detroit of Respighi's *Church Windows*. There he worked with celebrated soloists, among them, Yehudi Menuhin and Jascha Heifetz.<sup>187</sup>

There were two notable developments during the 1930-1931 season: the Popular concert moved from Sunday afternoon to Saturday evening, and, Kolar and the DSO appeared on the Graham-Paige Hour, a nationally syndicated radio show.<sup>188</sup> The change from Sunday afternoon to Saturday evening completed the transition from a distinctly popular concert series to what today might be considered a masterworks series. Many of the concerts included a large symphonic work, such as Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9*,

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<sup>184</sup> Thomas B. Sherman, "Orchestra Directed by Victor Kolar," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 11, 1929, 17.

<sup>185</sup> Charlotte M. Tarnsey, "Detroit is Assured Notable Music Season," *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1929, 62, and "Victor Kolar to Conduct When Detroit Plays Here," *Lansing State Journal*, December 21, 1929, 7, and "Orchestra Going on Eastern Tour," *Detroit Free Press*, December 1, 1929, 55.

<sup>186</sup> "Russian Symphony to be Performed," *Detroit Free Press*, October 27, 1929, 52, and "Will Present Sibelius Work," *Detroit Free Press*, December 1, 1929, 55 and "Favorite Numbers Will be Repeated," *Detroit Free Press*, February 30, 1930, 57.

<sup>187</sup> Charlotte M. Tarnsey, "Kolar Interprets 'Church Windows,'" *Detroit Free Press*, February 14, 1930, 10, and Charlotte M. Tarnsey, "13-Year-Old Boy Thrills Audience," *Detroit Free Press*, January 21, 1930, 12.

<sup>188</sup> "Public Approves Change in 'Pops,'" *Detroit Free Press*, October 5, 1930, 48, and "WQAM Broadcast Symphonies," *The Miami News*, January 4, 1931, 17.

“*From the New World*,” Mendelssohn’s *Symphony No. 3*, “*Scottish*,” or *Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 5*, as well as prominent concerti, such as Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto*.<sup>189</sup>

The performances on the Graham-Paige Hour were the first regular radio broadcasts by the DSO outside of the Belle Isle concerts.<sup>190</sup> The Graham-Paige concerts included performances of light symphonic music with a short talk by the poet Edgar A. Guest, who would either speak or recite his poetry.<sup>191</sup> The program only lasted one thirteen-week season, likely because of the Great Depression and the declining profitability of the sponsor the Graham-Paige Motor Company.<sup>192</sup> Once again, these broadcasts placed Kolar and the DSO onto the national stage, with performances broadcast both nationally and internationally, and also likely provided the orchestra with much needed income.<sup>193</sup>

In addition to his work in Detroit, Kolar was also invited by Nikolai Sokoloff to conduct the Cleveland Orchestra in a performance of his *Symphony in D*.<sup>194</sup> The performance of the symphony was well received by Cleveland audiences, who called

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<sup>189</sup> Charlotte M. Tarnsey, “Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 27, 1930, 6, and Charlotte M. Tarnsey, “Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 5, 1931, 6, and Charlotte M. Tarnsey, “Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 16, 1931, 6. An interesting addition to this standard repertory was the first Detroit performance of Jacob Weinberg’s *Palestine Overture-Rhapsody* on March 14, 1931.

<sup>190</sup> “Free Press Poet Heard Over Radio,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 5, 1931, 3.

<sup>191</sup> “Free Press Poet Heard Over Radio.”

<sup>192</sup> Michael E. Keller, *The Graham Legacy: Graham-Paige to 1932*, (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing, 1998), 188. The DSO continued to broadcast, at least locally, Sunday afternoon concerts after the end of a Graham-Paige Hour through 1934, after which the broadcasts were done under the auspices of the Ford Motor Company.

<sup>193</sup> “WQAM Broadcast Symphonies,” *The Miami News*, January 4, 1931, 17, and “Schkolnik, Violinist, Muriel Kyle, Soprano on Graham-Paige Hour” *Decatur Herald*, January 25, 1931, 8, and “Listeners in London Hear Detroit Symphony,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 18, 1929, 60. The international listeners were able to pick up the Detroit concerts by a shortwave transmission that originated from KDKA in Pittsburgh.

<sup>194</sup> James H. Rogers, “Symphony to Bring Famous Artists Here,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 15, 1929, 83-88.

Kolar back to the stage for multiple ovations.<sup>195</sup> The critical reception was similarly warm, with James Rogers writing “Mr. Kolar’s opus...is an achievement of high merit....In sum, and withal, a very enjoyable work, in which dull moments are rare indeed. I should very much like to hear it again.”<sup>196</sup> Rogers does note, however, that Kolar is “a composer who burns no incense at the modernist alters.”<sup>197</sup> This remark is likely because Kolar wrote the work almost fifteen years earlier and partially because of Kolar’s decidedly tonal and melodic compositional language.

By 1930-31 the Great Depression had taken a toll on the financial health of the DSO.<sup>198</sup> Detroit manufacturers (which included a number of DSO donors) were hit especially hard.<sup>199</sup> The financial crisis caused a precipitous decline in the revenues for the orchestra, from a budget of ~\$400,000/season for 1929-1930 to ~\$141,000 for the 1933-1934 season.<sup>200</sup> The financial strains led to a decrease in expenditures for soloists and reduced the duration of the orchestral season from twenty-eight to twenty-four weeks. As the crisis worsened, occasionally the DSO was unable to make payroll.<sup>201</sup> To keep the orchestra operating, both Kolar and Gabrilowitsch opted not take salaries and the musicians continued to work on only a partial salary.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> James H. Rogers, “Critic Finds Kolar Work is Well Done,” *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 18, 1930, 21.

<sup>196</sup> James H. Rogers, “Critic Finds Kolar Work is Well Done.”

<sup>197</sup> James H. Rogers, “Critic Finds Kolar Work is Well Done.”

<sup>198</sup> Harris and Ganson, 76. Much of the following discussion is taking from this source.

<sup>199</sup> Marijean Levering, “History on Stage: The Detroit Players, Prohibition, and the Great Depression,” *Michigan Historical Review* 33/2 (Fall 2007), 69-70.

<sup>200</sup> Harris and Ganson, 77-78.

<sup>201</sup> “Fund Assured for Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 12, 1932, 10, and Harris and Ganson, 77-78.

<sup>202</sup> “Fund Assured for Symphony,” and Harris and Ganson, 77-78, and “If Present Plans Go Through,” *Detroit Free Press*, Mar 7, 1932, 4, and “Symphony Party Held for Kolar,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 1, 1934, 9. The exact detail of when/why and how often Kolar and Gabrilowitsch refused remuneration is unknown.

To help raise funds, the orchestra would often hold a festival or fund drive in an attempt to make up any budget deficit and keep the orchestra going.<sup>203</sup> The first of the festivals was at the start of the 1932-1933 season; it received significant support from the Detroit community, among them the American Legion, the Knights of Columbus, the Masonic Lodge, as well as various businesses.<sup>204</sup> Each of these supporters sponsored a night's performance and one of Kolar's popular marches was given: *Fairland of Mine* for the American Legion sponsored concert, *March of the Titans* for the Knights of Columbus, and the world premiere of Kolar's *Moslem Temple March*, which is dedicated to the Detroit chapter of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, as well as *The Optimist*, which Kolar dedicated to Mrs. John S. Newberry, president of the Detroit Symphony Society.<sup>205</sup> Though the 1932-33 fundraiser was successful, significant financial strains meant that the ensemble had to continue to raise funds to keep the ensemble functioning and often had to rely on the largess of wealthy Detroiters to keep the doors open.<sup>206</sup>

Despite the financial difficulties, the orchestra continued to operate and tried to maintain the performance standards of the ensemble.<sup>207</sup> Kolar continued to program new works and large choral/orchestral works, including first Detroit performances of Alexandre Tansman's *Sonatine Transatlantique* (1932), Vaughan Williams's *London*

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<sup>203</sup> Herman Wise, "Drive This Week to Decide Detroit Symphony's Future," *Detroit Free Press*, September 25, 1932, 5, and "Business Leaders Indorse Symphony's Festival Week," *Detroit Free Press*, September 20, 1932, 2, and "Orchestra and Opera Groups Plan a Drive for \$100,000," *Detroit Free Press*, May 29, 1934, 5, and Harris and Ganson, 80.

<sup>204</sup> "Business Leaders Indorse Symphony's Festival Week."

<sup>205</sup> "Programs Ready for Music Festival," *Detroit Free Press*, September 11, 1932, 35, and "K. of C. Leaders to Aid Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, September 18, 1932, 30 and "Business Leaders Indorse Symphony's Festival Week," and "Music Festival's Artists Recruited," *Detroit Free Press*, September 18, 1932, 43.

<sup>206</sup> "Big Year Seen for Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, March 30, 1934, 5, and "Orchestra and Opera Groups Plan a Drive for \$100,000," and "Music Groups to Seek Funds," *Detroit Free Press*, April 29, 1935, 5, and Harris and Ganson, 79. In 1934, Mrs. Hugh Dillman made a \$100,000 donation that saved the orchestra from bankruptcy, paying the deficit and providing a nest egg for the next season.

<sup>207</sup> Harris and Ganson, 77-78.

*Symphony* (1934) and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Concerto Italiano* (1934), an appearance at the Toronto Spring Festival (1932), and Wolf-Ferrari's *Secrets of Suzanne* in collaboration with the Detroit Civic Opera (1935).<sup>208</sup> The performance of *Secrets of Suzanne* was wildly successful and a gala affair.<sup>209</sup>

The most important and high-profile performances were the DSO's appearances at the 1934 Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago. The second world's fair hosted in Chicago, the Century of Progress Exposition was initially intended only to run from May to November 1933; however, because of its incredible success, it was extended for an additional season (May–October 1934).<sup>210</sup> The number of exhibits during the 1934 season increased, and Henry Ford, who had initially declined the offer of an exhibit for the 1933 season, spent lavishly to create the largest corporate exhibition at the fair. The exhibit included a large, climate-controlled exhibit hall designed by Albert Kahn, as well as an extensive outdoor garden.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Herman Wise, "Music," *Detroit Free Press*, May 23, 1933, 11, and "Orchestra Will Give First Reading of Tansman Opus," *Detroit Free Press*, February 14, 1932, and Herman Wise, "Music," *Detroit Free Press*, March 12, 1934, 3, and Herman Wise, "Music: Pro Musica," *Detroit Free Press*, January 20, 1934, 4, and "Symphony to Participate in Toronto Spring Festival," *Detroit Free Press*, February 7, 1932, 33, and "Detroit Will Hear 2 Great Operas," *Detroit Free Press*, May 15, 1934, 5.

<sup>209</sup> Herman Wise, "Music: Detroit Symphony and Detroit Civic Opera," *Detroit Free Press*, February 22, 1935, 6, and "Secret of Suzanne' and Modern Ballets Provide Sparkling Entertainment," *Detroit Free Press*, February 22, 1935, 10.

<sup>210</sup> Robert W. Rydell, Century of Progress Exposition. (N.D.) In *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago*, Retrieved from <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/225.html>.

<sup>211</sup> Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 116 and David L. Lewis, *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 297 and Century of Progress International Exposition Publications, Crerar Ms 226, 21/14b2, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

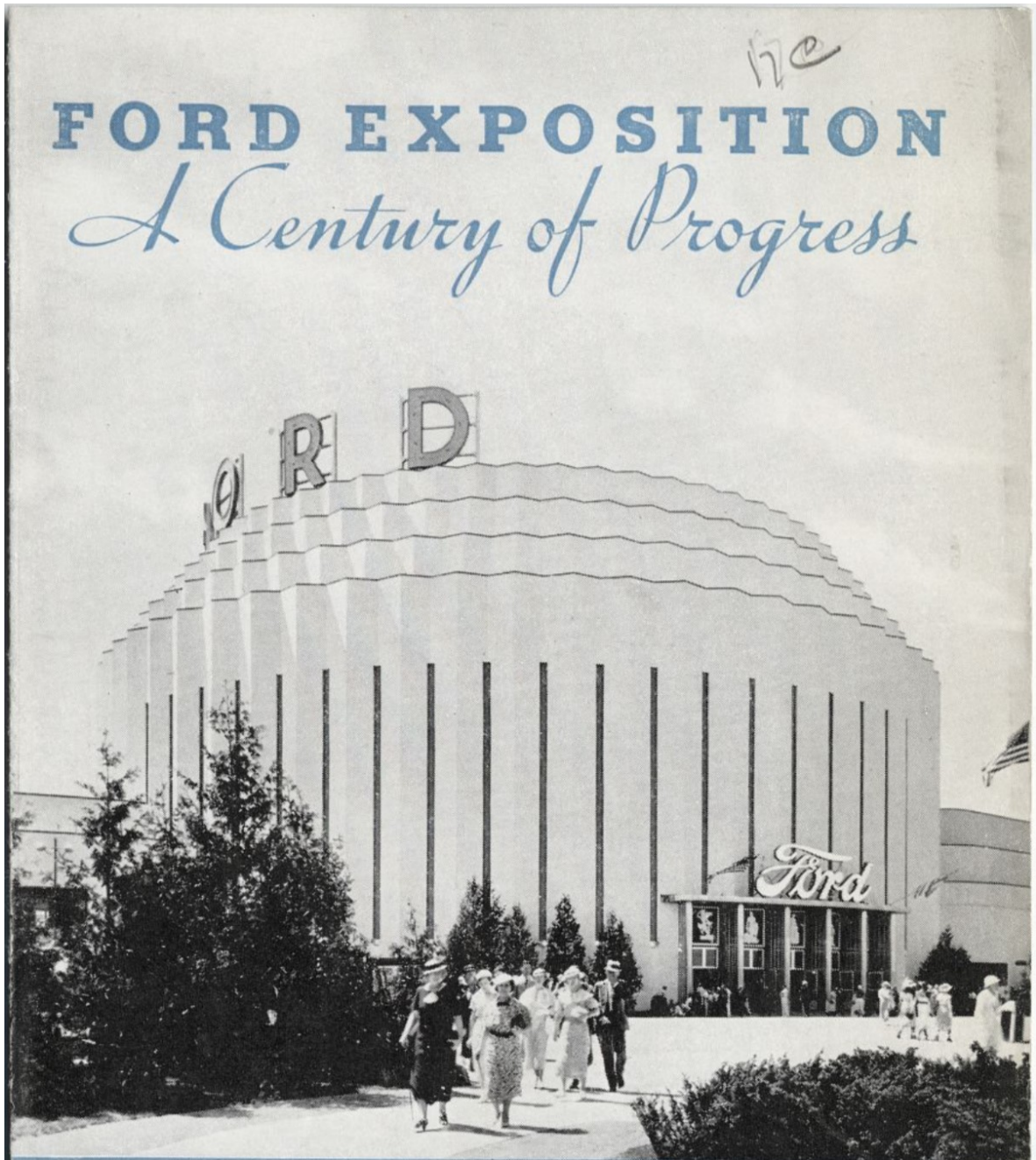


Figure 6 – Brochure from Ford Century of Progress Exhibit. (Century of Progress International Exposition Publications, Crerar Ms 226, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.)

The general focus of the exposition was technology and industry, though the arts were integral as both separate exhibits and integrated into the industrial/technological exhibits.<sup>212</sup> Music for the 1934 Exposition was provided by the DSO, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), the Chicago Women's Orchestra, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, among others.<sup>213</sup> Unlike the CSO, which was led by Eric DeLamarter, the assistant conductor, along with a number of guest conductors including Kolar, Karl Krueger, Henry Hadley and Fredrick Stock, among others, the DSO was led almost entirely by Kolar for the duration of the residency.<sup>214</sup> The invitation for the residency at the Ford Pavilion was finalized in early May and provided much needed paid work for the DSO musicians, Kolar included.<sup>215</sup> The DSO residency lasted twelve weeks (June 16 – September 9) and the ensemble performed two concerts per day (2:00-4:00 PM and 8:00-10:00 PM) at the band shell in the Ford Symphony Gardens (Figure 7).<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Century of Progress International Exposition Publications, Crerar Ms 226, 2/11-14, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library. In addition to the free-standing exhibits of graphic/visual arts, allegorical works, such as Louise Lentz Woodruff's "Science Advancing Mankind," were integrated into the Hall of Science, and other primarily technical exhibits.

<sup>213</sup> John Selby, "Orchestras Do Well at Fair," *The News Journal*, September 8, 1934, 8, and Edward Moore, "Music Galore Awaits Visitors at Fair Today," *Chicago Tribune*, May 26, 1934, 5.

<sup>214</sup> Edward Moore, "Music to Play an Important Role in World's Fair," *Chicago Tribune*, May 20, 1934, 70, and Edward Moore, "Guests Assume Batons During Present Week," *Chicago Tribune*, August 5, 1934, 60, and Frank Villella, "125 Moments: 059 A Century of Progress," From the Archives: Musings from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Rosenthal Archives, Last modified March 28, 2016, <https://csoarchives.wordpress.com/2016/03/28/125-moments-059-a-century-of-progress/>. The only other conductor, besides Kolar, to lead the DSO was Gabrilowitsch, who led two concerts.

<sup>215</sup> "Symphony Orchestra to Play 12 Weeks at Chicago Fair," *Detroit Free Press*, May 3, 1934, 7.

<sup>216</sup> Century of Progress International Exposition Publications, Crerar Ms 226, 10/24, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, and Century of Progress International Exposition Publications, Crerar Ms 226, 21/14b7, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.





Figure 7 – Kolar and DSO at Chicago Century of Progress Exposition. (Courtesy of the Detroit Historical Society)

The concerts, which were broadcast nationally, were incredibly popular and raised Kolar’s stature as a conductor, both in Detroit and elsewhere, and earned him the moniker “the iron man of music.”<sup>217</sup> On these concerts, Kolar conducted 162 performances with more than 800 different works.<sup>218</sup> These works were similar to Kolar’s previous repertory on the Saturday Popular concerts, with a mix of light classical and standard symphonic works, as well as programs dedicated to individual composers, nationalities,

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<sup>217</sup> Larry Wolters, “News of the Radio Stations,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 30, 1934, 14, and Harris and Ganson, 78.

<sup>218</sup> David Ewens, *Dictators of the Baton* (Chicago: Alliance Book Corporation, 1943), 255, and “Symphony Series at Fair Is Closed,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 10, 1934, 2. Kolar conducted 160 concerts with the DSO and two as a guest conductor of the CSO (August 30 -31, 1934).

and ethnic groups.<sup>219</sup> All told, during the course of the fair, an estimated audience of well over a half million people saw the DSO perform live under Kolar, with millions more who heard the concerts via the radio broadcasts.<sup>220</sup>

In addition to conducting the Century of Progress concerts, Kolar also composed the *Ford Victory March* for use in the rollout of the new 1935 Fords.<sup>221</sup> The work was likely commissioned by Ford for another occasion, because the score is dated September 1933—a year and a half before the first known public performance.<sup>222</sup>

The concerts at the Century of Progress were a public relations coup for Ford. Thousands of attendees and radio listeners wrote in to Ford to thank them for the concerts and suggest that the radio broadcasts be continued.<sup>223</sup> Though the broadcast of Century of Progress concerts were not financed by Ford (the networks carried them as a public service) the popular outcry for the concerts to continue led Henry and Edsel Ford to create the Ford Sunday Evening Hour.<sup>224</sup> The Sunday Evening Hour was nationally syndicated across the entire Columbia radio network and included musical selections, often with a featured soloist/guest artist, and a short, six-minute “intermission talk” by William J. Cameron, an editor at the Ford-owned Dearborn Independent, on “matters of national interest and importance” or “Mr. Ford and what he stands for.”<sup>225</sup> The musical

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<sup>219</sup> “Lithuanian Music Tonight,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 19, 1934, 57, and “Both Orchestras Will Help Celebrate Italian Day,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 15, 1934, 54 and Edward Moore, “Fight for Space at Orchestras’ Last Concerts,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 10, 1934, 15.

<sup>220</sup> Lewis, 299 and Wolters, “News of the Radio Stations,” and “Symphony Series at Fair Is Closed,” and Edward Moore, “Fight for Space at Orchestras’ Last Concerts.” The outdoor concert venue in the Ford Gardens could seat 2500 people, with many more able to sit in the surrounding gardens and, accordingly to Lewis, an audiences of 10,000,000, or more, regularly tuned in to the broadcast of the concerts.

<sup>221</sup> “Debut for 1935 Ford,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 27, 1934, 5.

<sup>222</sup> Victor Kolar, “Ford Victory March,” score, 1933, Performing Arts Library, Library of Congress.

<sup>223</sup> Lewis, 299 and 315, and Harris and Ganson, 78-79.

<sup>224</sup> Lewis, 315.

<sup>225</sup> Lewis, 315-317. The intermission talks became a subject of controversy as critics argued, despite Cameron’s protests to the contrary, that the talks served as propaganda for Ford and his ideals. The controversy regarding Cameron’s speeches caused the Canadian Broadcasting Company to ban him from

portion of the program was provided by the DSO and a chorus of twenty voices with the programs conceived as “familiar music of a definitely high quality” to be “kept within the widest range of general interest.”<sup>226</sup> In practice the format was similar to the popular concert series that Kolar had conducted with the DSO for years, with the addition of more popular pieces and a closing hymn that were designed to appeal to the elder Ford.<sup>227</sup>

For the first two seasons (1934-35 and 1935-36) Kolar was the sole conductor for the broadcast.<sup>228</sup> Over the course of the two seasons, the DSO, under the Ford Symphony name, performed thirty-nine broadcast concerts and collaborated with artists such as Jascha Heifetz, Efrem Zimbalist, Ezio Pinza, Lucrezia Bori, Lawrence Melchior, and many others.<sup>229</sup> Each of the broadcasts opened with “The Children’s Prayer” from Humperdinck’s fairy tale opera *Hänsel und Gretel*, followed by the first half of the program proper, an intermission lecture by Cameron, a short Ford commercial (approximately thirty to forty seconds), the second half of the program, and a closing hymn with a repeat of the *Hänsel und Gretel* prayer.<sup>230</sup> Most of the subsequent programs concluded with a hymn, such *God of Our Fathers*, or *Once to Every Man and Nation*, that combined patriotism and a veiled Protestant Christianity.<sup>231</sup> This mix was widely

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their airwaves and the Columbia network protested that content was in violation of their policies and threatened to censor his speeches. See Lewis 326-329 and “The Ford Sunday Evening Hour,” *Propaganda Analysis* 1/10 (July 1938), 1-4.

<sup>226</sup> Herman Wise, “Maria Jeritza Appears as the Soloist at Ford Orchestra’s First Broadcast,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 8, 1934, 3, and Lewis, 315 and Edsel Ford, quoted in “The Ford Sunday Evening Hour,” 2.

<sup>227</sup> Lewis, 315-316.

<sup>228</sup> Herman Wise, “Maria Jeritza Appears as the Soloist at Ford Orchestra’s First Broadcast,” and “Ford Symphony Orchestra to Resume Series September 29,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 15, 1925, 34, and Lewis, 316.

<sup>229</sup> Herman Wise, “Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1934, 7 and “Next Soloist Is Zimbalist,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 9, 1934, 44, and “Ezio Pinza, Basso, Ford Hour Soloist,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 16, 1934, 38, and “Ford Symphony Orchestra to Resume Series September. 29,” and Lewis, 316.

<sup>230</sup> Lewis, 315 and Ford Sunday Evening Hour Scripts, 1/1-2, The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan.

<sup>231</sup> Ford Sunday Evening Hour Scripts, 1/1-2, The Henry Ford. How the political and ideological underpinnings of the concerts relate to musical choices and reception is an area in need for further study.

acknowledged by the audiences and critics, with a number expressing concern that it was propaganda for the elder Ford's decidedly Christian, capitalist world view.<sup>232</sup> These traditional aspects of the program were often welcomed by many of the listeners who wrote to Ford in appreciation of the more conservative programming, both musically and in regards to Cameron's lectures.<sup>233</sup> A characteristic example of the sentiments expressed in these letters is:

Those good old Christian hymns...are wonderful. To get relief one day in a week from the jazz and chatter of the shallowest kind which seem[s] to be broadcast so much in these modern days...is a great blessing.<sup>234</sup>

A typical example of the type of musical program is the first broadcast on October 7, 1934, which presented the soprano Maria Jeritza as the featured soloist.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> "The Ford Sunday Evening Hour," *Propaganda Analysis* 1/10 (July 1938), 1-4 and Lewis, 326-327.

<sup>233</sup> Lewis, 327-328 and George Sievila to Ford, November 6, 1939, The Fairlane Papers, 1/165, The Henry Ford and Sofie L. Chamberlain to Ford, July 7, 1935, The Fairlane Papers, 1/165, The Henry Ford, and Emrys Hughes to Ford, November 4, 1935, The Fairlane Papers, 1/165, The Henry Ford.

<sup>234</sup> Emrys Hughes to Ford.

<sup>235</sup> Herman Wise, "Maria Jeritza Appears as the Soloist at Ford Orchestra's First Broadcast."

# Ford Sunday Evening Hour

FORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VICTOR KOLAR, *Conducting*

△

MARIA JERITZA, *Soloist*

△

MR. EDSSEL FORD

EIN FESTE BURG - - - - - BACH  
ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM—*Scherzo* - - - - - MENDELSSOHN  
ORCHESTRA

ADIEU FORET FROM JEANNE D'ARC - - - - - TSCHAIKOWSKI

ICH LIEBE DICH - - - - - GRIEG  
MME. JERITZA AND ORCHESTRA

SIEGFRIED'S RHINE JOURNEY FROM GOTTERDAMMERUNG - - WAGNER  
ORCHESTRA

MR. W. J. CAMERON

UNCLE REMUS - - - - - MacDOWELL

TO A WILD ROSE - - - - - MacDOWELL  
ORCHESTRA

COUNTESS MARITZA—*Czardas, Waltz and  
Play Gipsy, Dance Gipsy* - - - - - ROMBERG  
MME. JERITZA AND ORCHESTRA

FINLANDIA - - - - - SIBELIUS  
ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS

TRUMAN BRADLEY, *Announcer*

▽

This program is broadcast over the entire coast-to-coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System from 8 to 9 o'clock. It is the first of a series of Sunday Evening Hours presented by Mr. Henry Ford and Mr. Edsel Ford.

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ORCHESTRA HALL, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1934

Figure 8 – Program from the first Ford Sunday Evening Hour broadcast. (From the Collections of The Henry Ford.)

Though the program never reached the popularity of comedy/popular music programs, the Ford Sunday Evening Hour was the most popular and successful of the symphonic broadcasts. It had nearly double the audience of the nearest regular symphonic broadcast, the General Motors Symphonic Hour with the New York Philharmonic.<sup>236</sup> Kolar and the DSO were heard by an estimated ten-to-thirteen million people per broadcast concert, in addition to a capacity audience listening in person.<sup>237</sup> In addition to the popular appeal, the broadcasts were a critical success for Kolar/DSO and Ford.<sup>238</sup> In the 1936 *New York World Telegram* radio editors' poll, Kolar was voted fourth among conductors active on the radio, above Otto Klemperer, Eugene Ormandy, and his former mentor, Walter Damrosch.<sup>239</sup> The DSO broadcasts were also well received and ranked seventh out of all musical programs, including popular broadcasts such as the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians.<sup>240</sup>

Though a significant expense for Ford, which spent upwards of \$775,000 to \$1,000,000 per season, the broadcast concerts brought much needed revenue into the DSO in the form of an annual fee paid to the Detroit Symphony Society and provided additional income for Kolar and the orchestra.<sup>241</sup> For Kolar these concerts were very lucrative; he received a little more than \$15,000/year from Ford for the first two years, in

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<sup>236</sup> Lewis, 317.

<sup>237</sup> Lewis.

<sup>238</sup> Lewis, and Larry Wolters, "Here's Detailed Tabulation of Air Critics' Poll," *Chicago Tribune*, February 9, 1936, 38.

<sup>239</sup> Larry Wolters, "Here's Detailed Tabulation of Air Critics' Poll." The conductors rated ahead of Kolar were Leopold Stokowski, Arturo Toscanini, and Erno Rapee, who conducted the G.M. Symphony broadcasts.

<sup>240</sup> Larry Wolters, "Here's Detailed Tabulation of Air Critics' Poll."

<sup>241</sup> Lewis, 316, and Harris and Ganson, 94, and Ford Motor Company/Detroit Symphony Society, The Fairlane Papers, 1/165-6, The Henry Ford. The Symphony Society was paid \$29,250/season from the 1934-35 to 1937-38 season. This sum was reduced to \$19,500 in 1938-39 and continued to decline until the program was cancelled in 1942. The payment was in addition to paying the salaries for Kolar, the orchestra musicians, which was an additional \$75,000 to \$105,000 per season, and the fees of the guest artists, among other costs.

addition to the salary he received for his work on the DSO's regular and popular concerts.<sup>242</sup>

For the 1936-1937 season a number of prominent guest conductors, including Fritz Reiner and Eugene Ormandy, were brought in to lead some of the Ford broadcasts.<sup>243</sup> Of the thirty-nine broadcast concerts that season, Kolar was hired to conduct eight, including performances with Yehudi and Hepzibah Menuhin.<sup>244</sup> Unexpectedly, in early September 1937 Kolar tendered his resignation with the Ford Sunday Evening Hour.<sup>245</sup> The exact reason for Kolar's departure is unclear. The newspaper accounts only indicate that Kolar resigned "because he disapproved of 'a change of policy' to be instituted this season."<sup>246</sup> It is unknown what these changes were, but a likely possibility is the increased use of guest conductors, his relatively low per appearance remuneration, and his increased duties with the DSO.<sup>247</sup> His departure from the Ford Sunday Evening Hour was short-lived, however, and he returned to the podium in 1938 and continued to regularly appear as guest conductor until the program was cancelled in March 1942 and, again, during its short-lived revival after the war.<sup>248</sup>

In addition to conducting the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, Kolar's duties with the DSO increased as Gabrilowitsch's health declined. In March 1935 Gabrilowitsch was

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<sup>242</sup> Ford Motor Company/Detroit Symphony Society, The Fairlane Papers, 1/165-6, The Henry Ford.

<sup>243</sup> "Ford Sunday Evening Hour," *Ford News* 16/10 (October 1936), 187 and Herman Wise, "Fritz Reiner Arrives in City to Conduct Ford Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, September 20, 1936, 4.

<sup>244</sup> "Ford Sunday Evening Hour," and J.D. Callaghan, "Music: Yehudi Menuhin," *Detroit Free Press*, March 1, 1937, 5.

<sup>245</sup> "Kolar Resigns as Conductor of Ford Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, September 8, 1937, 1, and "Victor Kolar Quits as Radio Conductor," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 8, 1937, 9.

<sup>246</sup> "Kolar Resigns as Conductor of Ford Symphony."

<sup>247</sup> Lewis, 317 and Ford Motor Company/Detroit Symphony Society, The Fairlane Papers, 1/165-6, The Henry Ford. Kolar was paid only \$600 per performance, whereas other conductors, such as Ormandy, were paid \$1500/performance.

<sup>248</sup> Lewis, 329 and Victor Kolar Detroit Symphony Orchestra Complete Performance History and Richard B. Almy to Ford, January 20, 1942, The Fairlane Papers, 1/165, The Henry Ford.

admitted to the hospital in Detroit because of “an acute intestinal disorder,” which turned out to be stomach cancer.<sup>249</sup> Though Garbilowitsch’s wife and doctors played down the seriousness of the illness to the press, he was granted a leave of absence in June for the 1935-1936 season. For the remainder of the season Kolar and a cadre of guest conductors took his place.<sup>250</sup> The majority of the subscription and popular concerts were led by guest conductors, with Kolar conducting four sets of the subscription and Saturday popular concerts, including a much lauded appearance with the cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, the ten Young People’s concerts, and a series of adult education concerts that were put on in conjunction with Wayne State University.<sup>251</sup> In addition to the Ford broadcasts, Kolar also led the combined forces of the DSO, Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler choirs in the opening of the National Mobilization for Human Needs and the Detroit Community Fund Campaign.<sup>252</sup> The ceremony was nationally broadcast and included speeches during the intermission by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and George Swope, the president of General Electric.

Gabrilowitsch’s leave of absence was extended for the 1936-1937 season and on the morning of September 14, 1936 he passed away in his home.<sup>253</sup> For his funeral there was no eulogy; instead, the DSO under Kolar performed Schubert’s *Symphony No. 8*,

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<sup>249</sup> Haris and Ganson, 80, and “Gabrilowitsch Ill in Ford Hospital,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 27, 1935, 1.

<sup>250</sup> Herman Wise, “Gabrilowitsch Given a Leave,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 7, 1935, 4, and “Gabrilowitsch Ill in Ford Hospital,” and “Mr. Gabrilowitsch Regaining Health,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 7, 1935, 2, and “Jose Iturbi to be Director of First Symphony Concert,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 8, 1935, 36, and “Orchestra Ready for Year’s Work,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1935, 38. In addition to Kolar, Jose Iturbi, Bernardino Molinari, Fritz Reiner, and Arthur Rodzinski appear with the DSO as guest conductors during the 1935-1936 season.

<sup>251</sup> “Jose Iturbi to be Director of First Symphony Concert,” and “Orchestra Ready for Year’s Work,” and Herman Wise, “Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 14, 1936, 8. These performances were in addition to the 59 Ford Sunday Evening Hour broadcasts that Kolar led during the 1935-36 season.

<sup>252</sup> “Fund Campaign Officially Opens,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 25, 1935, 14.

<sup>253</sup> “City to Mourn Ossip Gabrilowitsch at Public Funeral Service on Wednesday,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 15, 1936, 4.



“*Unfinished*” and the “Liebestod” from Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.<sup>254</sup> Kolar also conducted Tchaikovsky’s *Andante cantabile* in the opening subscription concert in memory of Gabrilowitsch.<sup>255</sup> Similar to the previous season, Kolar and an almost identical group of guest conductors led the DSO.<sup>256</sup> The division of labor between Kolar and the guest conductors was almost unchanged, with Kolar conducting five of the fourteen subscription concerts, two of the ten Saturday popular concerts, the Young People’s and educational concerts, as well as the DSO while on tour.<sup>257</sup> Kolar’s most notable performances for the season were the February 25 subscription concert with Sergei Rachmaninoff as soloist, and the January 20 special concert with George Gershwin.<sup>258</sup> These performances provide a window into Kolar’s approach to rehearsal and views on jazz and modern music. In the accounts of the performance with Rachmaninoff, Kolar’s serious and focused approach to rehearsal and music making is apparent, with a critic present noting that “the rehearsal was more formal than most concerts...it was obvious that he would brook no deviation from the straight line of business.”<sup>259</sup> Kolar’s seriousness, an asset in front of the orchestra, mirrored his

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<sup>254</sup> Herman Wise, “Simplicity Marks Rites for Ossip Gabrilowitsch,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 17, 1936, 1. Additional musical tributes were provided by Fritz Reiner, the guest conductor for the Ford Sunday Evening Hour on Sunday, September 20, 1936, who conducted “Siegfried’s Funeral March” from Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung* in Gabrilowitsch’s memory.

<sup>255</sup> Daniel L. Wells, “Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 30, 1936, 13. Gabrilowitsch had requested that the work be performed at his funeral, but because of time constraints it was not able to be.

<sup>256</sup> “Artists Listed By Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 4, 1936, 48, and “City Concerts Open October 29,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1936, 62.

<sup>257</sup> “City Concerts Open October 29,” and “Kolar to Open City Concerts,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 25, 1936, 48.

<sup>258</sup> “Hall is Ready for Gershwin,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 17, 1937, 44, and “Rachmaninoff to Play Here,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 21, 1937, 50.

<sup>259</sup> Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda, *Sergei Rachmaninoff: A Life in Music* (New York: New York University Press, 1956), 328. Though the account implies that it is Rachmaninoff’s seriousness in approach that guided the rehearsal, it likely only supplemented Kolar’s own dedication and personality. His seriousness is apparent early in his career with Victor Herbert noting in his recommendation letter that Kolar “by way of his perfect routine, could step in at any moment to conduct anything. See Victor Herbert to Ossip Gabrilowitsch, April. 18, 1919, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers.

personality off stage. During the upheavals after Gabrilowitsch's death Kolar provided a steady and stabilizing presence, but it limited his ability to fundraise or command popular attention like his more charismatic predecessor.<sup>260</sup> This would have ramifications for the orchestra after the beginning of World War II.<sup>261</sup>

One of Gershwin's few appearances with an orchestra in 1937, he performed his *Piano Concerto in F* and *Rhapsody in Blue*, with Kolar as conductor, and Gershwin led his *Suite from Porgy and Bess*.<sup>262</sup> Though Kolar had conducted popular and dance music previously, as with the Castles while in New York, the Reveler's Quartet in the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, and jazz/dance inflected music such as John Alden Carpenter's *Skyscrapers*, the performances with Gershwin were the most prominent performance jazz/popular inspired music on a subscription concert.<sup>263</sup> In conjunction with his performance with Gershwin, Kolar discussed his views on jazz and popular music. In an interview with the Associated Press he expresses his view of new music, stating:

There is no such thing as classical and popular music. There is good music and bad music. Music, like any other art, is a reflection of the times. We reached a zenith in musical culture with Wagner. Then there was a lag, which is now picking up with such fellows as Gershwin and J[ohn] Alden Carpenter, who are recording the swift

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<sup>260</sup> Anne Mischakoff Heiles, *America's Concertmasters*, Detroit Monographs in Musicology, (Detroit: Harmonie Park Press, 2007), 219.

<sup>261</sup> Harris and Ganson, 83.

<sup>262</sup> "Hall is Ready for Gershwin," *Detroit Free Press*, January 17, 1937, 44, and "Music," *Detroit Free Press*, January 21, 1937, 2.

<sup>263</sup> Charlotte M. Tarsney, "'Skyscrapers', Jazz Ballet Music, Depicts U.S. Life," and "Old Dances Get Most Applause," and "Revelers to Sing In First Network Program in WOC," *The Daily Times*, November 9, 1935, 23.

tempo of modern life. They are writing queer music. It is new to us, but I like it. Out of it will come new genius, new art.<sup>264</sup>

Kolar, as a musician, was not drawn to the extreme dissonance and atonality of avant garde composers; in a memo to Gabrilowitsch about Arnold Schoenberg's film score, *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspiele* Kolar wrote:

According to the composer, this film-number deals with threats, danger, fear and catastrophe. According to the undersigned [Kolar] it is all that and anyone looking for excitement and a scare will get plenty from Mr. Schönberg's (sic) Opus.<sup>265</sup>

He was, however, always interested in new music that was more accessible to audiences, such as the Gershwin, Carpenter, some of the work of Franz Schreker, and Jaromir Weinberger, whose works he would champion over the next few years.<sup>266</sup>

It is during the 1936-1937 season that the first accounts of Kolar's superstition about and refusal to conduct Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique,"* appear in the press. Though Kolar had conducted the work numerous times, including a number of performances with the DSO, in a December 6, 1936 article Kolar states "since I first became associated with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, I have directed the monumental work at least 15 times and each time it has been a forerunner of tragedy."<sup>267</sup> Kolar points to the deaths of friends after each performance as the reason for his refusal to perform the

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<sup>264</sup> Associated Press, "Kolar Likes 'Good' Jazz," *The Detroit Free Press*, January 28, 1937, 4. The article incorrectly gives John Alden Carpenter's first name as James.

<sup>265</sup> Report of V.K. to O.G., March 23, 1932, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. Emphasis in original.

<sup>266</sup> Charlotte M. Tarsney, "'Skyscrapers', Jazz Ballet Music, Depicts U.S. Life," and Associated Press, "Kolar Likes 'Good' Jazz," and Report of V.K. to O.G. March 23, 1932, Ossip Gabrilowitsch Papers. Kolar does have reservations about some of Schreker's works such as the *Kammersymphonie*, which Kolar says "reminds [him] of an extremely scholastic college professor talking in a monotonous was to a bunch if disinterested students."

<sup>267</sup> "15 Friends Die After 15 Performances; Kolar Directs the 'Pathetique' No More," *Detroit Free Press*, December 6, 1936, 4.

work; however, there are two deaths in particular that likely weighed on his decision: the suicide of his mother in 1925 and the passing of Gabrilowitsch in September 1936. Each of these deaths was preceded by a performance of at least one movement from the *Pathétique*. In the case of his mother, Kolar conducted the second movement of the symphony on the August 3, 1925 concert at Belle Isle and his mother committed suicide just three weeks later. Gabrilowitsch, Kolar's longtime mentor and friend, conducted the work on his final appearance with the DSO on March 14, 1935.<sup>268</sup> Though scant attention was paid to the article when it first appeared, Kolar's refusal to perform the symphony received national notice the following season when he refused to conduct the finale of the symphony on ballet performances with Olga Flicker.<sup>269</sup> This story was taken up by newspapers across the United States, including a full-page article in *The American Weekly*, a nationally distributed Sunday newspaper supplement (Figure 9).<sup>270</sup> His refusal to perform the work is one of the most widely remembered aspects of his career, and is the only information included on his Associated Press Name Card besides his date of death. Kolar's superstitious views about this work were associated with him even decades later.<sup>271</sup> According to the interview, Kolar's aversion to the work is not musically based—in fact he describes the work as “one of the grandest compositions in the work of music”—but is based purely on the belief that if he performed the work someone close to him would die.<sup>272</sup> Kolar was a gifted Tchaikovsky conductor and is remembered by

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<sup>268</sup> “WCX Furnishes Wedding Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 4, 1925, 5 and Harris and Ganson, 80.

<sup>269</sup> “Kolar Refuses Flatly to Direct ‘Fateful’ Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 9, 1938, 5.

<sup>270</sup> “Mystery of the Famous Symphony’s ‘Fateful Music,’” *The American Weekly*, March 20, 1928, 3, and “Kolar Explains Refusal to Play The Pathétique,” *Lansing State Journal*, February 9, 1938, 6, and “Conductor Bans ‘Death Symphony,’” *The Marshall News Messenger* (Marshall, TX), February 8, 1938, 1.

<sup>271</sup> Kolar, Victor, Associated Press, Name Card Index to AP Stories, 1905, 1990 and “Ghione Challenges Jinxed Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 5, 1939, 21, and “‘Sinister Sixth’ Played: Symphony of Disaster Dared by Londoners,” *The Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 1950, 13.

<sup>272</sup> “15 Friends Die After 15 Performances; Kolar Directs the ‘Pathétique’ No More.”

Leonard B. Smith, the cornet virtuoso and principal trumpet of the DSO under Kolar, as the best Tchaikovsky conductor he ever performed under.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Leonard B. Smith, "The Band Conductor as Musician and Interpreter," *Conductors Anthology* (Northfield, IL: The Instrumental Company, 1993), 2/340.



The last concert of the season was also important for Kolar, who at least partially stepped into the large shoes left by Gabrilowitsch. Typically, the final concert of the season was a gala affair that, when Gabrilowitsch was alive, presented him as both piano soloist and conductor. The final concert of the 1936-1937 season was the first after Gabrilowitsch's passing, with Kolar as the putative leader at the helm of the DSO. At the beginning of the 1936 season, the DSO board hired the Italian opera conductor Franco Ghione as Co-Conductor with Kolar for the 1937-1938 season.<sup>274</sup> On the concert Kolar conducted Brahms' *Symphony No. 1*, Schubert's *Symphony No. 8*, "Unfinished," and Mozart's *Flute Concerto in D major*, with John Wummer as soloist.<sup>275</sup> Again, critics lauded Kolar's work, stating that "under the baton of Kolar [the DSO] soared to the heights of music expression with a virile interpretation of the powerful Brahms First Symphony in C-minor....The performance of this, the major work of the evening left little to be desired."<sup>276</sup> The elevation of Kolar's status as principal conductor was reaffirmed in a May article by Edgar A. Guest, who both lauded Kolar's work and provided a summary of his biography and career.<sup>277</sup> Guest's article attempts to address his perceived, and likely valid, concern that Kolar's ability is being taken for granted by the Detroit audiences, writing in an almost tongue-in-cheek manner:

Fine performances are a habit with Victor Kolar. We are used to receiving fine performances from him, and consequently it is no longer news. In order to attract even a modicum of attention, Kolar would have to appear at the Orchestra Hall

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<sup>274</sup> "Symphony Names Ghione as Conductor for 1937-38," *Detroit Free Press*, October 31, 1936, 1, and Harris and Ganson, 83.

<sup>275</sup> Daniel L. Wells, "Music: Detroit Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, March 19, 1937, 7.

<sup>276</sup> Daniel L. Wells, "Music: Detroit Symphony."

<sup>277</sup> Edgar A. Guest, Jr., "Fine Performances Are Habit with Kolar," *Detroit Free Press*, May 30, 1937, 35.

without his trousers and whistle “Organ Grinder’s Swing” while the rest of the orchestra played Beethoven’s Fifth.<sup>278</sup>

Guest emphasizes both the regular high quality of interpretation and performance in the orchestral hall under Kolar and his command of the skills needed to be an efficient and successful radio conductor, which requires exact control of timings and consistency of interpretation, and implies that Kolar deserves more appreciation than he has received from his home town.

After the conclusion of the season, Victor and his wife Lillian, left Detroit for a two-month vacation to Europe, where he also looked for new compositions for the DSO to perform.<sup>279</sup> Upon their return in June, Kolar was quickly engaged in preparation of the summer Belle Isle concert series that began on June 29 and ran through August 8.<sup>280</sup> Despite continuing financial difficulties, the 1937 Belle Isle season was the first to return to the large-scale programs of the pre-depression era, now with an updated amplification system and printed programs—the first since the start of the depression—and two performances of Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*, which included sufficient pyrotechnics to cause their Canadian neighbors to wonder “if the century-old peace between the United States and Canada had been broken.”<sup>281</sup> Over the course of the six-week series, the DSO

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<sup>278</sup> Edgar A. Guest, Jr., “Fine Performances Are Habit with Kolar.”

<sup>279</sup> “Victor Kolars to Sail on European Trip,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 4, 1937, 36, and “Ocean Travelers,” *The New York Times*, June 5, 1937, 15. The Kolars arrived in New York from Europe on June 5 on The President Roosevelt.

<sup>280</sup> “Summer Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1937, 6, and “Free Concerts Are Arranged,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 16, 1937, 7. There was some concern that the Belle Isle season would have to be curtailed to only four weeks, because the May fundraising drive did not meet the goal of \$200,000; however, after a special meeting of the Detroit Symphony Society Board the decision was made to proceed with the planned six-week program and hold another fund drive in the fall.

<sup>281</sup> “Isle Concert Audiences to Get Printed Programs,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 29, 1937, 8, and “Symphony Bombards Canada with All the Fervor of 1812,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 9, 1937, 1, and “Isle Programs in Final Week,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 1, 1937, 10.



performed thirty-six concerts, with performances every night of the week except Mondays and “Symphony Nights” on Wednesdays and Friday, which included complete symphonies and programing more akin to a subscription concert than a popular concert.<sup>282</sup>

During the 1937-1938 season Kolar shared the podium and planning with the newly-hired Italian conductor Franco Ghione.<sup>283</sup> Detroit society took great pains to welcome Ghione, replete with a DSO brass greeting at the train station upon his arrival, an afternoon tea organized by Lillian Kolar at their home in honor of Mrs. Ghione, and a reception at the Detroit Institute of Arts to honor both Ghione and Kolar.<sup>284</sup> Ostensibly equals, the two conductors shared duties for the season with Kolar conducting three of the fourteen subscription concerts, seven of the ten Saturday popular concerts, as well as the educational concerts, Young People’s concerts, and the new series of three Industrial concerts, which were only open to guests or employees of corporate sponsors of the DSO.<sup>285</sup> Kolar’s concerts included the first United States performances of Boris Blacher’s *Capriccioso* (acquired during his summer in Europe), and performances with Heifetz and Prokofiev.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> “Kolar to Direct Free Programs,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 27, 1937, 11.

<sup>283</sup> “Symphony Names Ghione as Conductor for 1937-38,” and “Symphonies Are Arranged,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 11, 1937, 50, and “Plans Listed by Symphony: Ghione and Kolar to Share Podium,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 3, 1937, 48.

<sup>284</sup> “Trumpet Fanfares Hail New Maestro,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1937, 7, and “Mrs. Ghione Will be Honored; Mrs. Victor Kolar Giving Tea in Home Tuesday,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 25, 1937, 6, and “Reception to Fete Symphony Conductors,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 24, 1937, 28.

<sup>285</sup> “Plans Listed by Symphony: Ghione and Kolar to Share Podium.” Ghione conducted the majority of the subscription concerts, the remaining popular concerts, and the Detroit Opera performances.

<sup>286</sup> “Kolar to Conduct U.S. Premiere,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 16, 1937, 20, and “Heifetz Guest of Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 1937, 20, and “Prokofieff to Perform,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 6, 1938, 36.

Kolar's most significant performance of the season, however, did not take place in Detroit. Tómas Masaryk, the first President and founding father of the democratic and independent Czechoslovakia, passed away on September 15, 1937.<sup>287</sup> To honor Masaryk the United American Czechoslovak Societies organized a memorial concert in Carnegie Hall on March 8, 1938 and Kolar was invited to be the conductor.<sup>288</sup> For the memorial concert Kolar conducted a program that included a diverse selection of works by Czech composers, including the "Largo" from Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9*, "From the New World," three of his *Slavonic Dances*, op. 46, two movements from Vítězslav Novák's *Slovak Suite*, op. 32, Smetana's "Dance of the Comedians," from *The Bartered Bride*, and Zdenek Fibich's *Twilight*.<sup>289</sup> In addition to the musical performance, remarks were given by John. H. Finley, David S. Muzzey, Henry Noble MacCracken, and Jindrich Starch, the Czechoslovakian Consul General to New York.<sup>290</sup> The makeup of the orchestra is unknown, but the decision to invite Kolar to conduct the memorial is a testament to his prominence as a conductor and continuing connection with the Czech and Slovak communities in the United States. As the most prominent Czech conductor active in the

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<sup>287</sup> "Masaryk, Tómas Garrigue." In *A Dictionary of Political Biography*, ed. Kavanagh, Dennis, and Christopher Riches. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordreference.com.libproxy.txstate.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780191751080.001.0001/acref-9780191751080-e-485>.

<sup>288</sup> "Notes of Musicians," *The New York Times*, February 20, 1938, and "Symphony to Be Busy," *Detroit Free Press*, February 27, 1938, 36.

<sup>289</sup> Concert Program, March 7, 1937, CH1235510-525, Carnegie Hall Archives, New York, NY. Fibich's *Twilight* was also arranged for violin and piano by Jan Kubelik.

<sup>290</sup> Concert Program, March 7, 1937 and "Notes of Musicians," and "Symphony to Be Busy."

United States, Kolar led the American memorial concert for the founder of Czechoslovakia.

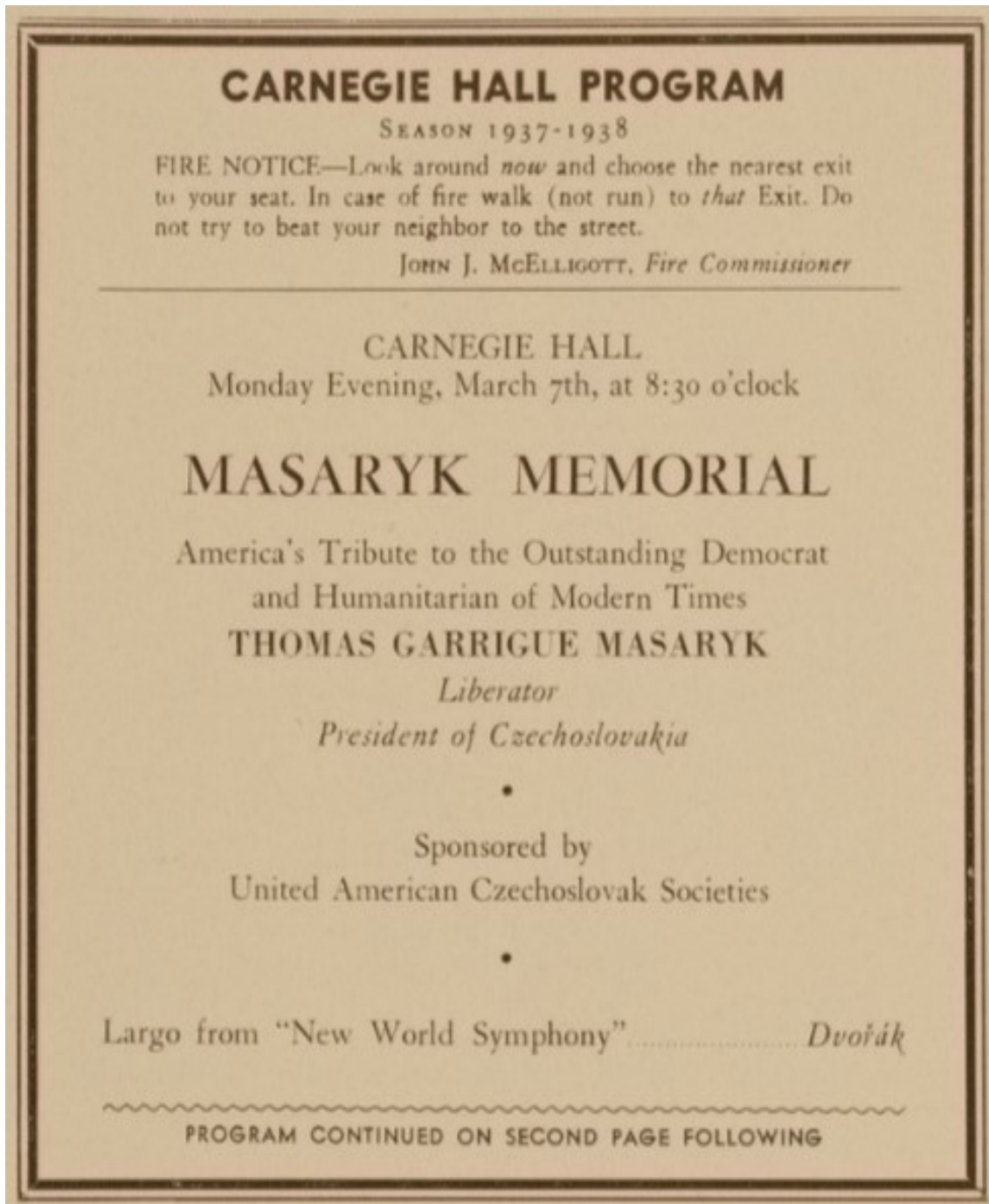


Figure 10 – Program from Tómas Masaryk memorial concert. (Courtesy of Carnegie Hall Archives)

The remainder of the 1937-1938 season was uneventful and Kolar, again, conducted the summer series at Belle Isle.<sup>291</sup> The 1938 summer season was curtailed because of budgetary constraints and only lasted three weeks.<sup>292</sup> The reduction in the length of the Detroit summer season allowed Kolar to conduct the National Symphony Orchestra's July 24 concert in their summer "Sunset Symphonies" series.<sup>293</sup>

The 1938-1939 season celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the DSO's founding; however, despite the important anniversary and a newly expanded ensemble, now with eighty-two permanent musicians, the ensemble would face significant headwinds.<sup>294</sup> Kolar and Ghione again shared the conducting duties, with Kolar conducting two of the subscription concerts, all of the Saturday concerts, Young People's Concerts, and educational concerts.<sup>295</sup> The season was initiated with a gala concert, dinner and dance under the direction of Ilya Schkolnik, which opened with a performance of Kolar's *The Optimist*.<sup>296</sup> Kolar, however, was unable to attend and conduct this performance or the first two concerts in October because he had had an emergency appendectomy on October 11.<sup>297</sup> He finally returned to the rostrum for the November 26 concert with the DSO and the General Motors Chorus.<sup>298</sup> During that season Kolar's notable performances included the first Detroit performances of the Poulenc *Concert*

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<sup>291</sup> "Symphony Opens Series of Concerts at Belle Isle," *Detroit Free Press*, June 28, 1938, 3.

<sup>292</sup> "Symphony Season Will Open on June 28," *Detroit Free Press*, June 12, 1938, 4.

<sup>293</sup> "Sunset Symphonies to Open in Capital Sunday," *The Baltimore Sun*, July 3, 1938, 29, and Ray C. B. Brown, "Postlude," *The Washington Post*, July 25, 1938, 3.

<sup>294</sup> "Symphony Is Expanding," *Detroit Free Press*, October 9, 1938, 42, and "Symphony Music Costs Millions," *Lansing State Journal*, August 7, 1938, 5.

<sup>295</sup> "Soloists Listed for Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1938, 11.

<sup>296</sup> "Buffet Dinner Dance a Gala Affair," *The Detroit Free Press*, October 29, 1938, 11.

<sup>297</sup> "Victor Kolar Recovering Following Appendectomy," *Detroit Free Press*, October 19, 1938, 3.

<sup>298</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Music: General Motors Chorus," *Detroit Free Press*, November 28, 1938, 11.

*champêtre* (harpsichord concerto), the Prokofiev *Violin Concerto No. 2* with Heifetz, and Alfred Honegger's *Concertino for Piano and Orchestra*.<sup>299</sup>

Among the most challenging problems that faced the DSO were the financial costs associated with Orchestra Hall, the ensemble's home since 1919.<sup>300</sup> The construction of Orchestra Hall was funded through a combination of stocks and bonds, which were issued to raise the approximately \$1 million required to build the facility.<sup>301</sup> Though the stocks issued were retired through donations by wealthy patrons, such as Horace Dodge and William T. Murphy, the bonds issued were still outstanding. By 1939 the hall had been foreclosed on by the Bond Holders' Protective Committee and, despite the best efforts of the DSO management, arrangements could not be made to keep the DSO in Orchestra Hall. In January 1939 the Symphony Society board accepted an offer to move to the Masonic Temple, which had a larger 2,200-person theater, which would be significantly cheaper than the rental terms offered by the Bond Holder's Protective Committee for the use of Orchestra hall.<sup>302</sup> For the final DSO concert in Orchestra Hall Kolar led an all Tchaikovsky program, including the *Symphony No. 4* and the *Violin Concerto*, with Ilya Schkolnik as the soloist.<sup>303</sup> Kolar conducted on both the first and last concerts by the DSO in the Orchestra Hall.

Despite the upheavals of the preceding season, the DSO summer concerts at Belle Isle continued as they had the previous year; Kolar conducted a three-week series from

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<sup>299</sup> F.P.G., "Music," *Detroit Free Press*, February 6, 1939, 13, and "Heifetz to Be Soloist," *Detroit Free Press*, February 19, 1939, 44, and J.D. Callaghan, "Music: Detroit Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, March 6, 1939, 11.

<sup>300</sup> Harris and Ganson, 60-67.

<sup>301</sup> Harris and Ganson, 88-91. The discussion of the loss of Orchestra Hall draws extensively from the discussion in Harris and Ganson.

<sup>302</sup> The Bond Holder's committee wanted at least \$31,000/year in rent and fees from the DSO, whereas the Masonic Temple offered to accept \$19,325 for all concerts, rehearsals, and office space.

<sup>303</sup> F.P.G., "Music," *Detroit Free Press*, March 20, 1939, 13.

June 20 to July 19.<sup>304</sup> Similar to the pre-depression arrangements, the City of Detroit allocated \$26,000 to pay for the concerts.<sup>305</sup> This shorter summer season, again, allowed Kolar to accept work as a guest conductor, this time with the Cleveland Orchestra.<sup>306</sup> In Cleveland, Kolar conducted three concerts, one with the French pianist Daniel Ericourt, another with the contralto Edwina Eustis, and another with the surgeon and violinist Jerome Gross.<sup>307</sup>

The 1939-1940 season was very similar to the previous two; Kolar again shared duties with Ghione.<sup>308</sup> Kolar led a number of first performances, including Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, with Rachmaninoff as the soloist, William Reddick's (a local, Detroit based composer) cantata, *Armistice Day*, and Jaromir Weinberger's *Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree* on a concert that included the noted contralto Marian Anderson.<sup>309</sup> The most important development during the 1939-1940 season was a recording project with the American Decca record company. Primarily known for their roster of popular, jazz, and rural musicians, such as Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong and The Mills Brothers, among others, Decca's classical catalog was relatively meager in the pre-war era.<sup>310</sup> The competition in the classical record space

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<sup>304</sup> "Concerts on Isle to Begin June 29," *Detroit Free Press*, May 21, 1939, 2.

<sup>305</sup> "Summer Concert Plans Await Council Approval," *Detroit Free Press*, June 3, 1939, 2.

<sup>306</sup> "Victor Kolar," *Detroit Free Press*, July 21, 1939, 14, and "Guests to Direct Six Pop Concerts," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, June 28, 1939, 7.

<sup>307</sup> Herbert Elwell, "Announce List of Soloists for Summer Pop Concerts," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 2, 1939, 34. Jerome Gross was an incredibly gifted amateur musician, who in addition to the performances with the Cleveland Orchestra under Kolar also performed under Szell and performed in concert with Rostropovich.

<sup>308</sup> "Symphony Opens October 26," *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1939, 48.

<sup>309</sup> "Rachmaninoff is Soloist," *Detroit Free Press*, November 12, 1939, 24, and "Changes Selection," *Detroit Free Press*, November 15, 1939, 27, and J.D. Callaghan, "Music: Detroit Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, November 13, 1939, 8, and "Noted Singer To Appear," *Detroit Free Press*, December 10, 1939, 54, and J.D. Callaghan, "Music: Detroit Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, December 15, 1939, 28.

<sup>310</sup> Michel Ruppli, *The Decca Labels: A Discography* (Santa Barbara; ABC-Clio, 1996), accessed on June 6, 2018 at <http://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/resources/detail/407>.

increased around 1940, primarily between the RCA Victor and Columbia labels, and in the spring of 1940 the America Decca Record company began a series of in-house classical recordings with Kolar and the DSO to be released as part of the Decca Personality Series.<sup>311</sup> The works recorded included Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suites, No. 1 and No. 2*, Rossini's *William Tell Overture*, Enesco's *Rumanian Rhapsody*, op. 11, no. 1, and Victor Herbert's *American Fantasy*.<sup>312</sup> All five works were recorded on June 18-19, 1940 and released as 78s in the summer and fall of 1940.<sup>313</sup> The recordings were well reviewed, especially the Herbert *American Fantasy* (Decca 29071) and the Grieg *Peer Gynt* (Decca Album 169), but the records faced significant competition from other releases by RCA Victor and Columbia of the same works, such as the Thomas Beecham/London Symphony Orchestra recording of *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*, which was released at almost the same time as Kolar's recording.<sup>314</sup> These recordings were the first electric recordings of the DSO and it would not be until 1953 when Paul Paray and the DSO began its relationship with Mercury Records that the DSO would make another commercial recording.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Pekka Gronow, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, Moseley Christopher, trans., (London: Cassel, 1998) 89-91 and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade*, with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Victor Kolar, recorded on June 19, 1940, Decca 29 M 162, 4 78s. Many of American Decca's recordings were the US releases of Deutsche Gramophone recordings from Europe, not their own recordings. They would develop their own roster of classical musicians/ensembles over time, which came to include Segovia, Heifetz, and ensembles such as the New York Pro-Musica.

<sup>312</sup> Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade*, with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Victor Kolar, recorded on June 19, 1940, Decca 29 M 162, 4 78s and Steve Abrams, The Online Discography Project, accessed June 6, 2018, <http://www.78discography.com/Dec23000.htm> and <http://www.78discography.com/Dec2900F.htm>.

<sup>313</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "New Records: Detroit Symphony Is Featured," *Detroit Free Press*, August 4, 1940, 45 and "Recorded Music," *The Philadelphia Enquirer*, September 15, 1949, 55 and Donald S. Steinfirst, "Staring The New Records," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 11, 1940, 12, and Donald S. Steinfirst, "Staring The New Records," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December, 4, 1940, 12, and Otis Chatfield-Taylor, "Records of The Week," *The Courier-Journal*, December 16, 1940, 7.

<sup>314</sup> Donald S. Steinfirst, "Staring The New Records," and Otis Chatfield-Taylor, "Records of The Week."

<sup>315</sup> Detroit Symphony Orchestra Historical Discography, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, accessed October 10, 2017, [https://www.dso.org/upload\\_files%5Ccontent\\_pdfs/res%5Cinteract%5Clisten%5CHistoricalDiscography2](https://www.dso.org/upload_files%5Ccontent_pdfs/res%5Cinteract%5Clisten%5CHistoricalDiscography2)



Figure 11 – Album booklet for *Scheherazade* recording. (Used with Permission from Universal Music Group)

[005.pdf](#). Ossip Gabriliwitsch made a series of recordings with the DSO in 1928; however, they were mechanical recordings and have very poor sound quality. Kolar's recordings, though without a doubt dated, are still very listenable with discernable instrumental timbres and adequate frequency response.



At the end of the previous season, 1940-1941 looked to be the very much the same as previous year, with Kolar preparing to conduct the Belle Isle concerts and looking to the next season as co-conductor with Ghione, who had one year left on his three-year contract with the DSO.<sup>316</sup> Ghione, however, had returned to Italy at the end of the DSO season to conduct at La Scala, then traveled Argentina to lead the operatic season at the Teatro Colón. Rumors had begun to spread that Ghione would not return to Detroit.<sup>317</sup> The rumors were finally confirmed when he wrote the DSO in June 1940 requesting that he be released from his contract with the public reason given “that his health was poor because of too many engagements last year.”<sup>318</sup> Though the DSO organization initially indicated that it would not accept his resignation, by August the DSO board acquiesced.<sup>319</sup> It is unclear what Kolar’s personal relationship was like with Ghione, but the relationship between Ghione and the orchestra was rocky. His volatile temper, almost complete lack of English speaking ability (which did not improve significantly during his tenure in Detroit), and his unfamiliarity with the symphonic repertory led to grumblings in both the ensemble and audiences.<sup>320</sup> The true reason for Ghione’s departure is for now unknown, but the result was that Kolar was now sole resident conductor of the DSO.<sup>321</sup>

The 1940-1941 season included both Kolar and a number of guest conductors, including Bruno Walter and George Szell, who shared the podium with Kolar for the

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<sup>316</sup> “Ghione Signs New Contract with the Detroit Symphony,” and “Works on Music Drive’s List to Be Played on Detroit Symphony’s 1940-41 Programs,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 7, 1940, 3, and “Symphony to Begin Belle Isle Series July 2,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 23, 1940, 54.

<sup>317</sup> “Ghione Is Out of Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 4, 1940, 2

<sup>318</sup> “Board Refutes Ghione Report,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1940, 11 and “Ghione Is Out of Symphony,” and Harris and Ganson, 92-93.

<sup>319</sup> “Ghione Is Out of Symphony” and, Harris and Ganson, 92-93.

<sup>320</sup> Harris and Ganson, 92.

<sup>321</sup> Harris and Ganson, 93.

Thursday and Friday subscription concerts.<sup>322</sup> Kolar conducted seven of the twenty subscription concerts, all ten Saturday popular concerts, as well as the twelve educational and Young People's concerts, and the extra concert sponsored by the Friends of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.<sup>323</sup> During this season, Kolar's acumen in designing relevant, interesting, and more adventurous programs was apparent. He opened the season on October 17 with the first Detroit performance of *Suite d'orchestre d'après les caprices de Paganini* by the Belgian composer Michel Brusselmann, with pianist Jose Iturbi as the guest soloist.<sup>324</sup> The Detroit press viewed the Brusselman performance as a sign of solidarity with Belgium (Belgium had already been invaded by the Nazis in October 1940), and as an indication of the ability for music to bridge difference, with Kolar reportedly saying "we are of many races. Let it be our great pride that in music as nowhere else we may come together without discussion of the horror that walks the world."<sup>325</sup>

On the November 21 subscription concert Kolar also conducted the world premiere of Weinberger's *Suite for Orchestra*, "*Legend of Sleepy Hollow*," based on the Washington Irving tale, with Heifetz as guest soloist on the concert and the composer in attendance.<sup>326</sup> Weinberger, a fellow Czech émigré to the United States, achieved

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<sup>322</sup> "Here's Symphony Season," *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1940, 51 and "Symphony Pleased at Prospect," *Detroit Free Press*, September 22, 1940, 34.

<sup>323</sup> "Here's Symphony Season," and J.D. Callaghan, "Friend of Symphony to Mark Anniversary," *Detroit Free Press*, January 26, 1941, 36. Kolar was initially only scheduled to conduct five of the subscription concerts; however, Georg Enesco was unable to travel to Detroit because of the war in Europe and Kolar took over those concerts.

<sup>324</sup> "Symphony Season Opens Thursday Night," *Detroit Free Press*, October 13, 1940, 69, and J.D. Callaghan, "Symphony and Iturbi Swell Hearts of 5,000 at Opening," *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1940, 1.

<sup>325</sup> "Peace Is Motif as Musicians Begin Symphony Rehearsals," *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1940, 7, and "Symphony and Iturbi Swell Hearts of 5,000 at Opening."

<sup>326</sup> "Heifetz to Be Soloist with Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, November 17, 1940, 44.

international fame with his opera *Schwanda the Bagpiper*; however, after he emigrated to the United States in 1938 he faced difficulties in re-establishing his career.<sup>327</sup> Weinberg and Kolar had developed a friendship through correspondence before his arrival in the United States and after the success of Kolar's performance of *Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree* in 1939, Weinberger offered to give Kolar and the DSO the world premiere of his next major work.<sup>328</sup> The work was praised in the press both for the "high excitement and dramatic drive" that reflected "musical skill of the highest order, [and] the work should inevitably find pace on the programs of American musical organizations" and for Kolar and the DSOs "impeccable interpretation."<sup>329</sup>

Other important performances included the first Detroit performances of Henry Cowell's *Pastoral* and *Fiddler's Delight*, which were both well enough received that Cowell wrote to thank Kolar and suggest that additional works be planned for subsequent seasons. Also given were Prokofiev's *Suite from "The Love of Three Oranges,"* and John Alden Carpenter's *Concertino for Piano and Orchestra*, with Percy Grainger as soloist, as well as a number of Grainger's own compositions.<sup>330</sup>

The season was hailed as an artistic and financial success, with appearances by noted artists and conductors, and with important premieres of pieces, as well as a lower

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<sup>327</sup> David Z. Kushner, "Weinberger, Jaromír" *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed 7 June 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000030037>.

<sup>328</sup> "Victor Kolar to Conduct New Work," *Detroit Free Press*, October 27, 1940, 40, and "Meet in Detroit To Seal Long Friendship by Mail," *Detroit Free Press*, November 21, 1940, 5.

<sup>329</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Premiere of 'Sleepy Hollow' Features Symphony Program," *Detroit Free Press*, November 22, 1940, 33.

<sup>330</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Symphony Suits Music to Taste of Audience," *Detroit Free Press*, January 6, 1941, 2, and "Grainger to Be Soloist with Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, January 12, 1941, 42, and J.D. Callaghan, "Grainger's Piano Mastery Again Thrills Big Audience," *Detroit Free Press*, January 20, 1941, 10, and Daniel L. Wells, "Sorin on Way, Work Reveals," *Detroit Free Press*, February 3, 1941, 7, and "Young Artists on Symphony Schedule," *Detroit Free Press*, January 26, 1941, 36.

budget deficit than in previous years.<sup>331</sup> Kolar was singled out for special praise for his work with Edith Rhett's Tilton on the educational and Young People's concerts.<sup>332</sup> Over the course of their eighteen-year collaboration they had organized more than 235 free education concerts for Detroit's school children, which were attended by an estimated 400,000 students and heard by countless more via radio broadcasts.<sup>333</sup>

By summer 1941 the outdoor shell at Belle Isle, as well as the amplification system, was in desperate need of repair and modernization.<sup>334</sup> Despite the acoustical challenges, the DSO performances were well received, even with the warning that "one should sit back and center in the benches...otherwise the loudspeakers are apt to make the orchestra sound like a phonograph with a bum needle."<sup>335</sup> During the summer Kolar was also invited to conduct two concerts by the Toronto Promenade Symphony Orchestra, along with tenor James Melton and Mischa Mischakoff, the concertmaster of the NBC Symphony who would later be the concertmaster of the DSO under Paul Paray.<sup>336</sup> His performances were incredibly popular and described of as "scarcely short of miraculous," often favorably compared to those by the famed English conductor Sir Thomas Beecham.<sup>337</sup> Kolar's appearance here was the start of a fourteen-year relationship with the Toronto Promenade/Philharmonic Orchestra and each season from

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<sup>331</sup> "As We See It: A Brilliant Season," *Detroit Free Press*, March 6, 1941, 6, and J.D. Callaghan, "Symphony Figures End Eighteenth Year," *Detroit Free Press*, February 23, 1941, 44.

<sup>332</sup> "Symphony Figures End Eighteenth Year."

<sup>333</sup> "Symphony Figures End Eighteenth Year," and Harris and Ganson, 70.

<sup>334</sup> "Great Music This Summer," *Detroit Free Press*, June 22, 1941, 47 and J.D. Callaghan, "Summer Music Faces Short Rations," *Detroit Free Press*, June 1, 1941, 40.

<sup>335</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Crooning Belle Isle Audiences Hears First Symphony Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, July 2, 1941, 15, and Harris and Ganson, 118.

<sup>336</sup> "Victor Kolar Invited to Return to Toronto," *Detroit Free Press*, August 3, 1941, 45

<sup>337</sup> "Victor Kolar Invited to Return to Toronto."

1941 until 1955 he was invited to conduct at least one of the orchestra's concerts.<sup>338</sup> On these concerts Kolar worked with eminent soloists, among them Grainger, the Canadian pianist Patricia Parr, and the Austrian violinist Ossi Renardy. He also conducted a number of his own works, such as his *British-American* and *Moslem Temple* marches and the world premiere of his *Middle-East: A Dance Intermezzo* in 1955.<sup>339</sup>

Despite positive developments the DSO still faced serious hurdles, most notably the labor conflicts with the union about the length of the season and the decrease in revenue brought in by the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, which only provided the DSO \$16,500 for the 1940-41 season.<sup>340</sup> These conflicts were intertwined because the DSO management argued that the season could not be extended from twenty-one to twenty-eight weeks as requested by the musicians' union because of the orchestra's financial problems. The subscription season was to be conducted by Kolar and a group of guest conductors that included Bruno Walter and Sir Thomas Beecham, as well as a visit by the Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo.<sup>341</sup> As in previous years, Kolar conducted all other concerts, including one with a former student, Joan Field, in her first appearance with the

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<sup>338</sup> "Toronto Invites Kolar to Conduct," *Detroit Free Press*, March 29, 1942, 40, and "Kolar to Make Fourth Toronto Appearance," *Detroit Free Press*, June 6, 1943, 56, and "For the 10<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Year, Victor Kolar will be the Guest Conductor," *Detroit Free Press*, August 12, 1951, 23, and "Toronto Prom Concert," *The Ottawa Journal*, July 16, 1955, 25. The Toronto Promenade Orchestra and Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra are the same ensemble, comprised primarily of players from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. It gave an annual summer concert series from May to October and featured guest conductors such as Sir Adrian Boult, Hans Kindler, and artists such as Gregor Piatigorsky, William Primrose, and Efrem Zimbalist. (Robert W. Judge, "Promenade Symphony Concerts," In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, accessed June 8, 2018, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/promenade-symphony-concerts-emc/>).

<sup>339</sup> "Kolar to Make Fourth Toronto Appearance," and "Highlights," *The Winnipeg Tribune*, May 29, 1947, 21, and "Toronto 'Prom' Concert," *The Ottawa Journal*, May 31, 1947, 19, and "For the 10<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Year, Victor Kolar will be the Guest Conductor," and "Toronto Prom Concert," July 16, 1955.

<sup>340</sup> Harris and Ganson, 94-95.

<sup>341</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Bruno Walter Opens Symphony Season," *Detroit Free Press*, July 6, 1941, 39.

DSO.<sup>342</sup> The start of the season was disrupted by the conflict between the union and management over the length of the season; this jeopardized the opening concert under Bruno Walter, which was nearly cancelled because of the strike.<sup>343</sup> Despite the inauspicious start, the season was very successful. Kolar's programs promoted new American music/composers and American artists.<sup>344</sup> American works included *Elegy for Strings* by Clark Eastham, the Native American composer John Frederick Kilpatrick's *A Winter Day in the Ozarks* and *For Indian Children*, Charles Wakefield Cadman's "Pennsylvania" *Symphony*, the world premieres of Henry Brant's *Concerto for Alto Saxophone*, with Sigurd Rascher as the soloist, and Carl Eppert's *Suite No. 2 for Orchestra*, "Ballet of the Vitamins."<sup>345</sup> In addition, Yehudi Menuhin and Sergei Rachmaninoff both appeared under Kolar as soloists.<sup>346</sup> Though possibly apocryphal, a number of sources indicate that Rachmaninoff would only appear with the DSO if Kolar

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<sup>342</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Bruno Walter Opens Symphony Season," and "Miss Joan Field To Play at Shore," *Ashbury Park Press*, May 16, 1938, 10. Kolar discovered and taught Joan Fields when she was a child while he was summering in Long Branch. Upon Kolar's recommendation she then studied with Franz Kneisel and Albert Spalding, among other teachers.

<sup>343</sup> "Detroit Symphony Stages Strike for Extended Season," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 14, 1941, 6, and J.D. Callaghan, "Future of Symphony Periled as Union and Sponsors Row," *Detroit Free Press*, October 14, 1941, 1, and J.D. Callaghan, "Bruno Walter Leads Symphony in Brilliant Opening Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1941, 1 and Harris and Ganson 94-95. The conflict was resolved when C.W. Van Lopik, a representative of the Masonic Temple Association, offered to pay for an additional week of concerts at the end of the season.

<sup>344</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Detroit to Stress New American Music," *Detroit Free Press*, July 27, 1941, 42, and J.D. Callaghan, "Trend Toward U.S. Artists Shown by Detroit Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, November 1, 1941, 13. In addition, Kolar had planned to conduct the world premiere of Weinberger's *A Bird's Opera*, which is based on a Czech folktale about an animal wedding and uses the various instruments of the orchestra as the different characters, on the December 4, 1941 subscription concert; however, it does not appear that the performance took place (Composer Is Invited for Premiere of His Work," *Detroit Free Press*, September 14, 1941, 40).

<sup>345</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Detroit to Stress New American Music," and J.D. Callaghan, "Trend Toward U.S. Artists Shown by Detroit Symphony," and "Detroit Boy Will Appear in Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, October 26, 1941, 36, and J.D. Callaghan, "Sir Thomas Beecham to Lead Orchestra," *Detroit Free Press*, December 28, 1941, 36, and J.D. Callaghan, "Maligned Saxophone to Star in Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, January 11, 1942, 34 and J.D. Callaghan, "Detroit Symphony Introduces Two Works for First Time," *Detroit Free Press*, January 19, 1942, 4, and Paul Cohen, "The Saxophone Refined-Henry Brandt: Composing For The Saxophone," *Saxophone Journal* 24/4 (April/March 2000), 16-21.

<sup>346</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Vibrant Music of Menuhin Thrills Crowd," *Detroit Free Press*, January 9, 1942, 17, and J.D. Callaghan, "Rachmaninoff Casts a Spell of Beauty," *Detroit Free Press*, December 5, 1941, 21.

was the conductor. This claim is substantiated by Leonard B. Smith, then principal trumpet of the DSO, who recounts that Rachmaninoff thanked Kolar for providing the finest accompaniment he had ever received.<sup>347</sup>

The series of three extra concerts sponsored by the Masonic Temple at the start of the season to resolve the labor dispute took the form of a three-day “Allied Music Festival,” intended to raise funds for the DSO, with music by British, Russian, and American composers.<sup>348</sup> Kolar directed the British music concert, which included Ralph Vaughan Williams’s *Norfolk Rhapsody* and William Walton’s *Façade*; Efrem Kurtz led the Russian and Andre Kostelanetz conducted the American music concerts.<sup>349</sup> The DSO had a projected deficit of \$25,000 and the well-attended festival provided an additional \$10,000 into the DSO coffers.<sup>350</sup> This revenue was a welcome addition as Ford announced that because of the war, effective March 1, 1942, it would cease broadcasts of the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, which removed a consistent revenue stream for the DSO.<sup>351</sup>

Kolar conducted both the final subscription concerts of the 1941-1942 season and the final DSO concert, which included a concert of local composers in collaboration with

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<sup>347</sup> Leonard B. Smith, “The Band Conductor as Musician and Interpreter,” and Muriel Magerl Kyle, “Kolar’s Contribution to Music Cited,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 31, 1951, 6. Kyle also indicated that Heifetz would only appear with the DSO under Kolar’s baton. It is possible that this is an apocryphal story; however, from 1936 to 1942 neither Heifetz nor Rachmaninoff appeared on a DSO concert with someone other than Kolar conducting.

<sup>348</sup> J.D. Callaghan, “First Performances Featured by Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 15, 1942, 53, and “Extra Concerts Are Arranged by Symphony,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 25, 1942, 7.

<sup>349</sup> J.D. Callaghan, “First Performances Featured by Symphony,” and J.D. Callaghan, “Allied Festival Offers Detroit Great Feast,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 22, 1942, 34, and J.D. Callaghan, “Music Fete Features the British,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 25, 1942, 13.

<sup>350</sup> “Symphony Deficit Cut by \$10,000,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 5, 1942, 7, and J.D. Callaghan, “Symphony’s Festival Ends Before a Capacity Audience,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 2, 1942, 4.

<sup>351</sup> “Ford Will Halt Radio Hour,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 17, 1942, 4

The Bohemians, a local music club.<sup>352</sup> The final subscription concert, which included Karl Goldmark's *Violin Concerto* with Ilya Schkolnik as soloist, Beethoven's "*Leonore*" *Overture No. 3*, and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4*, was a triumph with J.D. Callaghan writing "how to recount the truly immense excitement...somehow escapes wording...the audience was left with a musical memory to cherish until the summer is past once more."<sup>353</sup>

Little did anyone know that these concerts would be the last regular season performances of the DSO until the ensemble was reformed under the direction of Karl Krueger. The DSO management had planned for Kolar, Sir Thomas Beecham, and Désiré Defauw to lead the orchestra.<sup>354</sup> During the summer before the opening of the Belle Isle season, Kolar underwent surgery at Grace Hospital.<sup>355</sup> The nature of Kolar's condition is unknown, but it was apparently serious enough to arouse concern from the DSO management and musicians.<sup>356</sup> He had, however, recovered sufficiently to travel and conduct the Toronto Promenade Orchestra on April 16, returning to conduct two additional concerts in June, and to lead the Belle Isle season during the first three weeks of July.<sup>357</sup>

Planning for the 1942-1943 season was still underway as late as September when Sam's Cut-Rate, a local chain of discount stores, agreed to sponsor a series for twenty-one weekly radio broadcasts to support the war effort and promote the sale of War Bonds

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<sup>352</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Audience Thunders Applause at Final Concert of Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, March 6, 1942, 18 and "Detroiters Featured at Last Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, March 9, 1942, 9.

<sup>353</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Four Concerts to End Symphony Season," *Detroit Free Press*, March 1, 1942, 32.

<sup>354</sup> "Two Guest Conductors," *Detroit Free Press*, May 31, 1942, 32.

<sup>355</sup> "Report Kolar Recovering," *Detroit Free Press*, May 11, 1942, 1.

<sup>356</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Here's Good News!! Symphony Carries On!" *Detroit Free Press*, May 31, 1942, 3.

<sup>357</sup> "Toronto Invites Kolar to Conduct," and J.D. Callaghan, "Here's Good News!! Symphony Carries On!," and "Series Opens on Belle Isle Under Kolar," *Detroit Free Press*, July 8, 1942, 1.



and Stamps.<sup>358</sup> Less than a week after the agreement was made public, the DSO announced that it would suspend all activities for the duration of the war.<sup>359</sup> With the cancellation of the DSO season, it appeared that all activities would cease; however, an agreement was reached between the Detroit Federation of Musicians and Sam's Cut-Rate to continue the radio broadcasts.<sup>360</sup> These concerts were led by Kolar with an ensemble made up of former members of the DSO, who now performed as the Detroit Orchestra (DO).<sup>361</sup> The broadcasts by Kolar and the DO were similar in structure to the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, with a mix of light classical works and speeches by noted public figures, such as Fiorello H. LaGuardia, and Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Herbert Gaston, to promote the sale of War Bonds and Stamps.<sup>362</sup>

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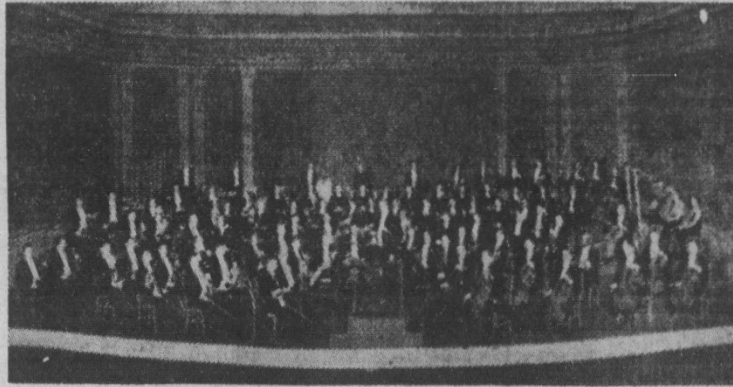
<sup>358</sup> "Symphony Radio Hour to Aid Sale of War Bonds," *Detroit Free Press*, September 24, 1942, 3.

<sup>359</sup> "Symphony's Activities Off for Duration," *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1942, 1, and Harris and Ganson, 97-98. The underlying cause of the closure was the decrease in revenue from attendance and sponsorships, likely attributable to the effects of the war, the lack of major donors who would/could give large sums to the ensemble, and the ongoing labor dispute over the duration of the season.

<sup>360</sup> "Radio Concerts Will Go On," *Detroit Free Press*, October 4, 1942, 3.

<sup>361</sup> Harris and Ganson, 99 and J.D. Callaghan, "Music Today," *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1942, 56.

<sup>362</sup> "Symphony Radio Hour to Aid Sale of War Bonds," and J.D. Callaghan, "Music Today," October 18, 1942.



SAM'S *Presents Tonight*  
*at 6 to 7 o'clock over WWJ*

# The Detroit Orchestra

VICTOR KOLAR, *conducting*

This is the first of a series of 21 radio broadcasts by Detroit's famous Symphony Orchestra, which for 28 years has delighted the music-loving people of this city.

These broadcasts are being given as an aid to the United States Treasury, in promoting the sale of War Savings Bonds and Stamps.

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Broadcast by WWJ—950 on Your Dial!

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|---|---|
| 1. Magic Flute Overture . . . Mozart  | 4. Gold and Silver Waltz . . . Lehar                                  |
| 2. Air for the G String . . . Bach  | 5. (a) Lyric Suite . . . . . Grieg<br>(b) March of the Dwarfs . Grieg |
| 3. Incidental Music from<br>Henry VIII . . . . . Saint-Saens<br>(a) Scotch Idyll<br>(b) Gigue | 6. Slavonic Dance in<br>E Minor . . . . . Anton Dvorak                |
|   | 7. Spanish<br>Caprice . . . . . Rimsky-Korsakov                       |

*Guest Speaker for the Evening*  
**Mr. HERBERT GASTON**  
 Assistant Secretary of The U. S. Treasury

Annotator . . . . . Russell McLaughlin  
 Music and Drama Critic—The Detroit News

*Tickets for each Sunday's broadcast available  
 upon written request to WWJ—  
 The Detroit News.*

Figure 12 – Advertisement from Sam's Cut Rate broadcasts. (*Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1942, 27)

Although the DO concerts for the bond drive kept Kolar and the many of the former DSO musicians working, many of the musicians took on additional work in the factories to support the war effort.<sup>363</sup> The DO continued the tradition of the summer concerts at Belle Isle with Kolar directing the first week and Valter Poole and Eduard Werner conducting the remaining two weeks.<sup>364</sup> Kolar's programs for the concerts differed slightly from the previous seasons with an increase in marches, including one of his own to start each program, and works by popular American composers, such as Stephen Foster, Jerome Kern, and Victor Herbert.<sup>365</sup>

At the conclusion of the 1943 Belle Isle season, Kolar ended his relationship with the Detroit Orchestra and took a position as the Orchestra Director and head of the Orchestra department at the Arthur Jordan Conservatory (AJC), which is now part of Butler University, in Indianapolis, Indiana.<sup>366</sup> In his capacity as Orchestra Director Kolar rehearsed the conservatory orchestra, conducting two to three performances each season, and also taught violin and conducting to advanced students.<sup>367</sup> Over the course of his five years (Fall 1943 to Spring 1948) at the AJC, Kolar raised the standard and size of the ensemble and conducted a number of large, more adventurous works, which included the world premiere of Norman Phelps's *Dramatic Overture*, Prokofiev's *Lieutenant Kijé*

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<sup>363</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Leading Detroit Musicians Working in Off Hours at War Plants," *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1942, 3.

<sup>364</sup> "Band Series Will Open on Sunday," *Detroit Free Press*, July 4, 1943, 46 and Frank Hedge, "Concert Draws Music Lovers to Belle Isle," *Detroit Free Press*, July 5, 1943, 11.

<sup>365</sup> Frank Hedge, "Concert Draws Music Lovers to Belle Isle," and "Kolar Will Conduct His Own Composition," *Detroit Free Press*, July 8, 1943, 15, and "Tchaikovsky's No. 5 to Be Played at Island," *Detroit Free Press*, July 9, 1943, 19, and "Kolar Will Conduct Concert at Belle Isle," *Detroit Free Press*, July 10, 1943, 11.

<sup>366</sup> "Jordan Orchestra To Be Conducted by Victor Kolar," *The Indianapolis Star*, September 7, 1943, 11, and "Victor Kolar Takes Post at Jordan Conservatory," *Detroit Free Press*, September 8, 1943, 14. Kolar succeeded Fabian Seivitsky, who resigned to work full-time as the conductor of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

<sup>367</sup> "Jordan Orchestra To Be Conducted by Victor Kolar."

*Suite*, Gabriel Pierne's Christmas cantata *The Children of Bethlehem*, *Alice in Wonderland* by Edgar Stillman Kelley, and his own *Slovakia Rhapsody*.<sup>368</sup> During this period Kolar only occasionally conducted outside ensembles, with continued appearances in Toronto, with the Fort Wayne Symphony Orchestra, and an appearance on the short-lived return of the Ford Sunday Evening Hour with Leonard Warren as the guest artist.<sup>369</sup>

Though Kolar taught at the AJC for five years, in his final year (1947-1948 school year) he also took a position with the Detroit Institute of Musical Art where he taught conducting, score reading, and chamber music, splitting his time between Detroit and Indianapolis.<sup>370</sup> The following year (1948-1949), he returned full-time to Detroit and took on additional duties as the director of the Institute orchestra and chorus.<sup>371</sup> In the final decade of his life, Kolar continued to teach and conduct in Detroit with a number of amateur musical organizations, the most important of which were the Detroit Women's Orchestra and the Scandinavian Symphony Orchestra.<sup>372</sup> He also appeared on various occasions as guest conductor for several area band and orchestra festivals and as a juror in music competitions.<sup>373</sup> During this period, Kolar also returned to composing and wrote

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<sup>368</sup> Walter Whitworth, "Jordan Concert Orchestra Plays," *The Indianapolis News*, December 15, 1943, 14, and Corbin Patrick, "Young Musicians Play," *The Indianapolis Star*, April 30, 1944, 12, and Walter Whitworth, "Jordan-Butler Units in Concert," *The Indianapolis News*, December 19, 1945, 25, and Corbin Patrick, "Fine Homemade Music," *The Indianapolis Star*, April 15, 1946, 11, and Walter Whitworth, "Jordan Program Hits New Peak," *The Indianapolis News*, April 15, 1946, 13, and "Jordan Conservatory Students Present Christmas Concert," *The Indianapolis News*, December 18, 1947.

<sup>369</sup> "Amusement Notes," *The Indianapolis News*, April 10, 1944, 16, and "Kolar to Appear On Ford Program," *The Indianapolis Star*, March 3, 1946, 17, and "Highlights," *The Winnipeg Tribune*, May 19, 1947, 21.

<sup>370</sup> "Kolar Joins Institute Staff," *Detroit Free Press*, September 28, 1947, 19.

<sup>371</sup> "Detroit Institute of Musical Arts," *Detroit Free Press*, September 18, 1949, 9.

<sup>372</sup> "Tuesday Musicale," *Detroit Free Press*, September 14, 1947, 19, and "Rasmussens Entertain Board," *Detroit Free Press*, October 7, 1950, 13.

<sup>373</sup> "Prize Is Offered For Composition," *Lansing State Journal*, January 27, 1952, 26, and "Top Musicians to Be at U.W. Annual Clinic," *Eau Claire Leader*, March 12, 1952, 8.

a number of works, some which were given their premieres by the ensembles with which Kolar worked.

In Fall 1948 Kolar was hired by the Detroit Tuesday Musicale, a local civic music club, to train the group's string ensemble.<sup>374</sup> This group was soon expanded to create the Detroit Women's Orchestra, which would be closely associated with Kolar for the remainder of his life.<sup>375</sup> The first concert by the Detroit Women's Orchestra took place on May 7, 1948, with the Detroit pianist Gizi Szanto as soloist.<sup>376</sup> The debut was praised for the quality of the ensemble, with special notice given to Kolar's contribution by critics who celebrated the return of Kolar to the Detroit stage.<sup>377</sup> Over the course of Kolar's nearly ten years leading the orchestra, he developed an ensemble that belied its amateur status and "was eminently satisfying," and in many instances "the equal of most professional performances."<sup>378</sup> For the Detroit Women's Orchestra, Kolar wrote and performed several of his own compositions, including the first performances of his *Dumka* and *Humoreska* for cello and orchestra, first performed by former DSO principal cellist Georges Miquelle, and his *Chatterbox: A Rondo for Small Orchestra*, which is dedicated to the ensemble.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> "Tuesday Musicale," *Detroit Free Press*, September 14, 1947, 19.

<sup>375</sup> "Symphony Slates First Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, March 11, 1948, 38, and "Committee Named for Symphony Debut," *Detroit Free Press*, May 2, 1948, 40.

<sup>376</sup> "Symphony Slates First Concert," and "Committee Named for Symphony Debut."

<sup>377</sup> J.C. Callaghan, "Women's Symphony Gets Big Hand at Its Debut," *Detroit Free Press*, May 8, 1948, 4. The ensemble was hailed as having a strong foundation in the strings, though it lacked in traditionally male instruments (brass, bass, etc.), and that the ensemble had a brilliant future.

<sup>378</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Women's Symphony Matured," *Detroit Free Press*, April 27, 1954, 18, and J.D. Callaghan, "Critic Hails Concert By Women's Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1957, 18, and J.D. Callaghan, "Kolar, Kottler Excel with Women's Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, January 28, 1950, 12.

<sup>379</sup> "Miquelle to Feature Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, January 15, 1951, 19, and J.D. Callaghan, "Women's Symphony Makes Bow," *Detroit Free Press*, January 17, 1951, 8, and "Symphony to Do 'Chatterbox,'" *Detroit Free Press*, April 1, 1956, 41, and J.D. Callaghan, "Katja Andy Is Star With Victor Kolar," *Detroit Free Press*, April 16, 1956, 12.

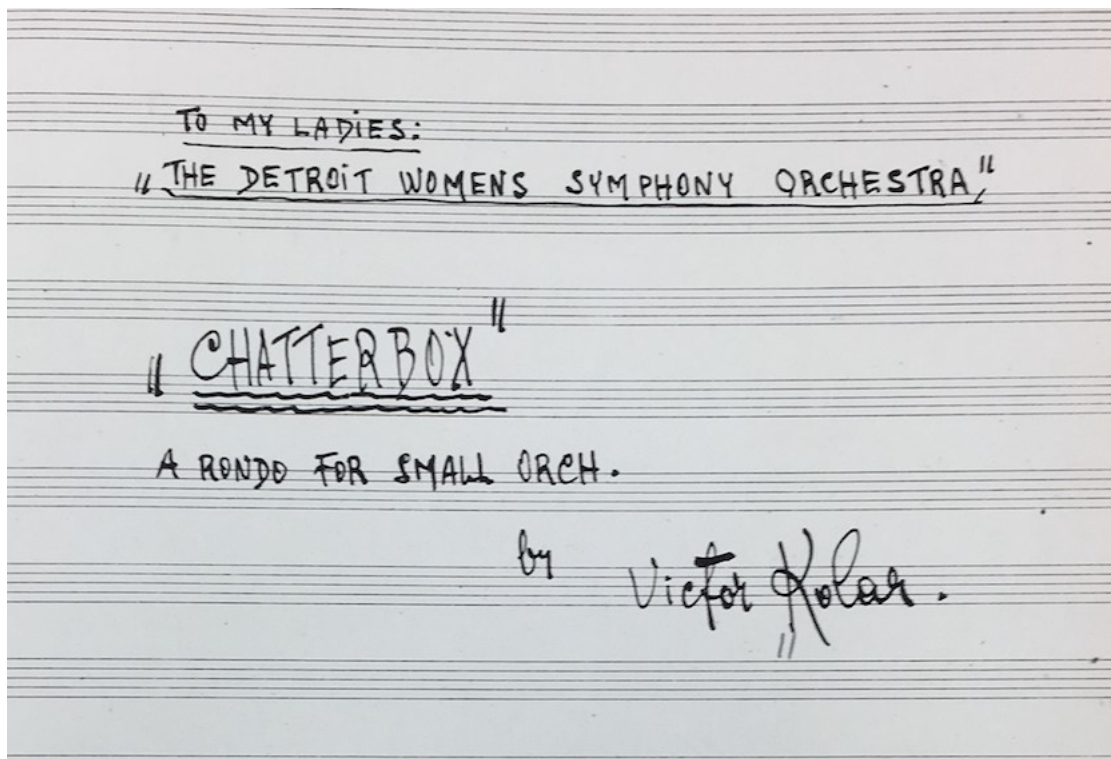


Figure 13 – Dedication from manuscript for *Chatterbox*. (Performing Arts Section, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.)

Kolar and the ensemble also performed with nationally recognized artists as soloists including the pianists Mischa Kottler and Katya Andy, who later taught at the New England Conservatory, the cellist George Miquelle, and the violinists Carroll Glenn, who later taught at Eastman and the Manhattan School of Music, and Charles Tregar, the only American ever to win the Wieniawski International Violin Competition.<sup>380</sup>

In 1950 Kolar was hired as the Musical Director and Conductor for another of Detroit's amateur orchestras, the Scandinavian Symphony Orchestra.<sup>381</sup> Kolar remained with the ensemble for three seasons. One of Detroit's longest standing ensembles, under

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<sup>380</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Kolar, Kottler Excel with Women's Symphony," and "Miquelle to Feature Concert," and "Violinist to Play with Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, January 20, 1952, 30, and "Concert to Feature Violinist," *Detroit Free Press*, November 7, 1957, 12.

<sup>381</sup> "Rasmussens Entertain Board," and J.D. Callaghan, "One Can Be Lyrical About Week's Stage Plans," *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1950, 55.

Kolar the Scandinavian Symphony Orchestra performed at a “near professional ability.”<sup>382</sup> The ensemble played primarily music by Scandinavian composers, including the first American performances of the Swedish composer Wilhelm Stenhammer’s *Piano Concerto No. 2*, and Carl Nielsen’s *Violin Concerto*, with Nielson’s son-in-law, Emil Telmányi, as soloist, as well as appearances with the Finnish bass-baritone Kim Borg on an all Sibelius concert, the Swedish baritone Siguard Bjoerling, and the violinist Daniel Majeske, who was later the concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra.<sup>383</sup> Kolar also took the Orchestra on tour for performances in Toronto.<sup>384</sup>

In addition to his work with the Detroit Women’s and Scandinavian Symphonies, Kolar appeared as the conductor of the Detroit Chorus for one season and led the chorus in Coleridge-Taylor’s *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast*.<sup>385</sup> He continued to be involved with music education through his work as a juror for the Michigan Federation of Music Clubs Composition Prize, the Grinnell Music Foundation Opera Scholarship, and as guest conductor for the 1952 Wisconsin All-State Orchestra.<sup>386</sup>

In his final period, Kolar returned in earnest to composition and wrote a dozen known compositions between 1943 and 1955 (see Appendix A for list of known

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<sup>382</sup> J.D. Callaghan, “Scandinavia Symphony Gives Artful Program,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 4, 1950, 20.

<sup>383</sup> “Pianist Is Soloist for Concert,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 28, 1951, 55, and J.D. Callaghan, “Scandinavia Symphony and Pianist Effective,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 5, 1951, 19, and J.D. Callaghan, “Emil Telmanyi Proves Self Still a Top Master,” *Detroit Free Press*, March. 26, 1951, 11, and J.D. Callaghan, “Symphony Program Honors Jean Sibelius,” *Detroit Free Press*, March. 17, 1952, 14, and Arthur W. O’Shea, “Scandinavians Blend Rare, Popular Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, April. 21, 1953, 32, and “The Scandinavian Symphony Orchestra,” *Detroit Free Press*, January. 4, 1953, 10.

<sup>384</sup> “Toronto Hears City Orchestra,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 23, 1952, 15.

<sup>385</sup> “Detroit Chorus,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 29, 1948, 17, and “Detroit Chorus,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 15, 1949, 18.

<sup>386</sup> “Prize In Offer For Composition,” *Lansing State Journal*, January 27, 1952, 26, and Pauline Sterling, “Singer Poised for ‘Grand Adventure,’” *Detroit Free Press*, November 3, 1950, 37, and “Outstanding Musicians To Conduct U.W. Clinic,” *The Sheboygan Press*, February 25, 1952, 17. Kolar’s appearance with the Wisconsin All-State Orchestra conducting Mendelssohn’s *Ruy Blass Overture* has been preserved on a 78 and is available at the University of Wisconsin Library.

compositions). All of these works are unpublished and are known only because he submitted the manuscripts to the Library of Congress for copyright protection.<sup>387</sup> Many of the works seem to be written with the Detroit Women's Symphony in mind, such as his *Portrait of a Lady* (1949), *Green Meadows and Blue Waters* (1949), *Once Upon a Time* (1950), *Csárdás* (1951), as well as *Chatterbox* (1955). He also wrote an *Alleluia* for SATB choir and organ based on a plainchant melody set to a thirteenth-century text by Joannis Tisserandi. The work was performed by the Boys' Choir of St. Vincent de Paul and the choir of the Franciscan monastery at Duns Scotus on April 5, 1953.<sup>388</sup>

The compositions from this period, as with several of his early works, make use of national, ethnic and folk materials. Like the Native American melodies used in *Hiawatha* and the Czech folk tunes used in his *Symphony in D* Kolar draws on a traditional Hungarian dance in his *Csárdás* for String Orchestra, Czech dances for the *Dumka* for Cello and Orchestra, and Middle Eastern melodies in his *Middle East: A Dance Intermezzo*. Kolar's compositional style during this period is still decidedly tonal and melody driven. The works written for the Women's Orchestra, such as *Chatterbox*, are more limited in instrumentation (avoiding low brass and extensive percussion) and make fewer technical demands on the performers. In the compositions intended for professional ensembles, such as his *Middle East: A Dance Intermezzo*, he places greater demands on the performers and is more harmonically adventurous, including the use of chromatic and modal harmonies and polyrhythms.

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<sup>387</sup> Approximately half of the compositions appear in the Library of Congress' physical card catalog, which has not been digitized, the others can be found in the respective Catalog of Copyright entries for their year of submission.

<sup>388</sup> Pauline Sterling, "Alleluia: Medieval Theme Inspires Victor Kolar to Write Easter Composition," *Detroit Free Press*, April 5, 1953, 70.



In the decade leading up to his passing, Kolar was one of the most revered figures in Detroit's music scene. In 1951 when the re-formed DSO returned under the direction of Paul Paray, many members of the community, both musicians and laypersons, wrote to express their dismay that Kolar was not part of the organization. In 1955, on his fiftieth anniversary as a professional conductor, he was presented a medal by the city for his service to music.<sup>389</sup>

On June 14, 1957, while working in his garden, Kolar suffered a stroke.<sup>390</sup> He was admitted to the Detroit Osteopathic Hospital and two days later, on June 16, 1957, he passed away at the age of 69.<sup>391</sup> Kolar had continued to compose and conduct until the very end of his life, conducting the Detroit Women's Symphony concert just two months before he passed away.<sup>392</sup> He was survived by his second wife, Lillian, a step-daughter Katherine Green (née Holdren), and three brothers, Joseph, Karl, and Gustav.<sup>393</sup> A memorial was held for him on June 19 and the Women's Symphony dedicated their subsequent concert to him.<sup>394</sup> The conductor for this performance was Kolar's student, John Sweeney, who presented the world premiere of Kolar's *Portrait of a Lady*.<sup>395</sup> A

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<sup>389</sup> E.M. Counts, "Kolar's Absence from Podium Deplored," *Detroit Free Press*, July 12, 1951, 6, and "Another Music Lover Speaks Up for Kolar," *Detroit Free Press*, July 19, 1951, 6, and "Another Wants Kolar to Direct Symphony," *Detroit Free Press*, July 26, 1951, 6, and Muriel Magerl Kyle, "Kolar's Contribution to Music Cited."

<sup>390</sup> "Maestro Victor Kolar Dies After Stroke," *Detroit Free Press*, June 17, 1957, 1 and "Ex-Conductor Is Stroke Victim" *Detroit Free Press*, June 14, 1957, 3.

<sup>391</sup> "Maestro Victor Kolar Dies After Stroke."

<sup>392</sup> J.D. Callaghan, "Katja Andy Is Star With Victor Kolar," and "Maestro Victor Kolar Dies After Stroke," and J.D. Callaghan, "Victor Kolar Honored At Concert," *Detroit Free Press*, April 30, 1955, 10.

<sup>393</sup> "Obituaries: Kolar, Victor," *Detroit Free Press*, June 18, 1957, 33.

<sup>394</sup> J.S. Callaghan, "Rites Wednesday for Victor Kolar," *Detroit Free Press*, June 18, 1957, 15, and Dorian Hyshka, "Women's Symphony Opens 11<sup>th</sup> Season," *Detroit Free Press*, December 16, 1957, 32.

<sup>395</sup> Dorian Hyshka, "Women's Symphony Opens 11<sup>th</sup> Season," and "Music Honors Victor Kolar," *Detroit Free Press*, December 8, 1957, 27.

quartet from the Women's Symphony also performed Dvořák's *String Quartet in Eb* on a Tuesday Musicale concert in Kolar's memory.<sup>396</sup>

At the time of his death, Kolar was an internationally renowned conductor and a respected composer. During the course of his career, he performed as a violinist under conductors such as Gustav Mahler and Walter Damrosch, and his compositions were performed by the New York Symphony Society, New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Rochester Symphony, and the Detroit Symphony, among others. He conducted almost every important singer and instrumentalist who appeared in the United States during the first half of the twentieth-century. He held, and may still hold, the record for the most consecutive concerts given, and he was the founding conductor for one of the most important and popular symphony radio broadcasts of the pre-World War II era. Though largely forgotten today, Kolar was considered by many musicians one of the greatest conductors of the early twentieth century, and he made a profound impact in the realm of classical music in both Detroit and in the United States as a whole.

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<sup>396</sup> "List Soloists For Musicale," *Detroit Free Press*, November 5, 1957, 23.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Victor Kolar's fifty-two year career as a professional musician in the United States encompassed almost the entire first half of the century (1905 to 1957). From his start as a soloist with a touring orchestra to the principal conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO), Kolar was a prominent figure in American music. His contributions, however, have been largely forgotten.

As the Assistant, Associate, and Principal Conductor of the DSO for twenty-three years, Kolar worked with prominent soloists and broadened the range of works that appeared on the Detroit stage. His acumen as an accompanist was widely regarded—both Heifetz and Rachmaninoff both would only appear with the DSO if Kolar was the conductor. Though often presented as a secondary to the DSO history, either in Gabrilowitsch's shadow or as Co-Conductor to Ghione, Kolar played an integral role in the administration and direction of the orchestra.<sup>397</sup> He started the summer Belle Isle concert series and the educational concert series, elevated the popular concerts to rival the subscription concerts, and led a marathon series of performances at the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago. A common characteristic among all of these is the expansion of the audiences to include those that would otherwise not otherwise have had access to orchestral music.

Kolar's work as conductor of the Ford Sunday Evening Hour also brought "classical" music to millions of American homes. This work made him a household

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<sup>397</sup> "SO Music Directors and Principal Conductors," Orchestra History, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, accessed July 3, 2018, [https://www.dso.org/page.aspx?page\\_id=242](https://www.dso.org/page.aspx?page_id=242).

name, or at least as much of a household name a conductor could be, and he achieved critical acclaim, being voted by music critics as a better conductor than Otto Klemperer and Eugene Ormandy. Despite his status as the founding conductor of the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, Kolar's contributions have largely been ignored in modern scholarship. Many of the other conductors who appeared on the program are still highly regarded. Although Kolar shared the podium with conductors such as Fritz Reiner, George Szell, and Eugene Ormandy, among the most widely remembered and highly regarded conductors of their generation, his work has largely fallen by the wayside.

The reasons for this disparity are multifaceted. Kolar was older than Szell and Ormandy and, unlike Reiner who was his almost exact contemporary, he decided to enter a state of semi-retirement after World War II. Kolar also does not have the large catalog of recordings that would have been possible had he continued to lead a first-rate professional ensemble unto the 1950s. While Reiner is primarily remembered for the recordings he made with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra between 1954 and 1963, Kolar's limited library of recordings, though very well performed, were technologically out-of-date within a decade of being made, because of the advent of tape-based recording technology.<sup>398</sup>

As a composer his works were widely performed by prominent orchestras and on the most important festivals of the era. Unlike his work as a conductor, however, as a composer the reception of his work was hindered by both his immigrant status—he was

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<sup>398</sup> Kenneth Morgan, *Fritz Reiner, Maestro and Martinet* (Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 203-204 and David Morton, *Sound Recording: The Life Story of a Technology* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 127-128. Reiner's RCA recordings are still some of the most popular and re-issued albums and are legendary in the audiophile community for the warmth and transparency of the recordings.

neither Czech nor American enough—and by his compositional style, which was too melodic, too tonal for the avant-garde and post-war musical aesthetics. His music and biography, however, provide a unique window into the formation of Czech-American identity. He utilized a wide range of culturally laden musical materials that reflect his personal negotiation with questions of national identity. Soon after his immigration to the United States Kolar used Native American subjects in his *Indian Scherzo* (1907) and *Hiawatha* (1908), which can be read as a symbolic performance, drawing upon the transformative power of the Indian, to help create his own uniquely American identity.<sup>399</sup> He turns to more typical American themes in his *Americana Suite* (1914), in which he sought to represent musically the four corners of the United States through minstrel tunes “Massa’s in de Cold Cold Ground” and “Old Folks at Home” by Stephen Foster, and ragtime syncopations in the third movement, and even an Irish jig that integrates snippets of “Yankee Doodle” in the fourth movement.<sup>400</sup>

As he becomes more established in the United States Kolar turns to Czech and Slavic folk melodies in his *Symphony in D* (1916) and *Slovakia: A Rhapsody for Orchestra* (1922). The timing of Kolar’s turn to Czech musical themes is, also, likely tied to political developments both in Europe and in the United States. With the fall of the Habsburg empire looming, on October 22, 1915 in Cleveland, Ohio, representatives of Czech and Slovak expatriate communities signed an agreement calling for the creation of the Czech-Slovak state.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> David Catchpole, “Immigrants, Indians, and Americans: Native American Imagery and the Formation of Identity in the Music of Victor Kolar (1888 – 1957),” Paper Presentation at AMS-SW Spring Meeting, McKinney, Texas, April 2018.

<sup>400</sup> Three Novelties Damrosch Offer,” *The Sun*, January 26, 1914, 7 and “Music,” *Star Tribune*, November 25, 1918, 6.

<sup>401</sup> Alexander, 48, and Sabo, “Slovaks.”

The mature manifestation of Kolar's conception of national identity is decidedly cosmopolitan and multi-cultural. He wrote works, such as the *Viennese-American* (1925) and *British-American* (1948), that reflected a hyphenated, dualist view of national identity. Kolar was firmly integrated into American culture and still connected with his Czech roots. Music, in his view, was a way to bridge differences, stating "we are of many races. Let it be our great pride that in music as nowhere else we may come together without discussion of the horror that walks the world."<sup>402</sup> These works allow a window into how Kolar as an individual navigated questions of nationality and identity from the turn of the century until his death in 1957, as well as the larger process of identity formation during the early twentieth century.

There is still much more work to be done to fully examine Kolar's compositional oeuvre, biography, and his role within twentieth-century American musical culture. As the first modern biography of Kolar the purpose of this thesis is to provide fundamental research that future scholars (myself included) can stand upon when they ask the higher-level questions beyond who, what, when, where, and how. Kolar's work with the Ford Sunday Evening Hour is ripe for additional examination that focuses on the program and aesthetic choices and a detailed study of music and propaganda. This work is the first step toward illuminating an oft forgotten and under-researched segment of American musical culture.

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<sup>402</sup> "Peace Is Motif as Musicians Begin Symphony Rehearsals," *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1940, 7, "Symphony and Iturbi Swell Hearts of 5,000 at Opening," *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1940, 1. This comment was made in the context of World War II as the Nazi offensive had just begun in Europe.

## APPENDIX SECTION

### APPENDIX A

#### Works List

<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Hiawatha, op. 15	1907	Unpub.; private collection
Indian Scherzo, op. 14	1907	Vln and piano; vln and orch.; pub. 1907 by Fr. A. Urbánek
Vor Abend/Letmi Padvécer, op. 12	1907	String orch.; unpub.; private collection
Three Songs for Medium Voice, op. 18	1912	The Sea Hath Its Pearls; Beware; Do I Love Thee; pub. 1912 by Carl Fischer
A Fairy Tale	1913	Unpub.; no extant score
String Quartet No. 2 in E major	1913	Unpub.; no extant score
Americana: Symphonic Suite in Four Movements, op. 20	1914	Original title <i>Symphonic Suite</i> ; pub. 1914 by G. Schirmer
Three Humoresques	1914	Vln and piano; pub. 1914 by G. Schirmer
Symphony in D	1916	Unpub.; no extant score

Lyric Suite	1919	Unpub.; Luck's Music Library (not available for rental); First performance at the Norfolk Festival
String Quintet	1919	Pub. as supplement in <i>Pagan: A magazine for eudaemonists</i> 4/2 (October 1919)
Scherzo for Strings	1922	Unpub.; no extant score
Slovakia: A Rhapsody for Orchestra	1922	Unpub.; Library of Congress; First performance at the Norfolk Festival
Bagatelle	1924	Flute and orch.; pub. 1948 by Belwin, Inc.
Belle Isle March	1925	Dedicated to Mayor John W. Smith; unpub.; Library of Congress;
In Memory of a Friend	1925	Dedicated to Victor Herbert; unpub.; Library of Congress
March of the Titans	1925	Dedicated to the University of Detroit; Pub. in band arr. 1934 by Carl Fischer
The Viennese-American March	1925	Unpub.; Library of Congress
Fairland of Mine	1931	Dedicated to the American Legion; voice and piano; orchestra; pub. 1931 by John S. Finck
Moslem Temple March	1932	Dedicated to the Detroit Nobles of the Mystic Shrine; unpub.; Library of Congress



The Optimist	1932	Dedicated to Mrs. John S. Newberry (president of the Detroit Symphony Society); unpub.; Library of Congress
Canzone della Sera	1933	Trumpet and orch.; pub. 1947 by Mills Music, Inc.
Ford Victory March	1933	Unpub.; Library of Congress
When Leaves are Falling	1942	Unpub.; Library of Congress
Dumka	1943	cello and piano; cello and orch.; Unpub.; Library of Congress
Humoreska	1944	cello and piano; cello and orch.; Unpub.; Library of Congress
The British-American March	1948	Unpub.; Library of Congress
Green Meadows & Blue Waters; Scherzo for Strings	1949	Unpub.; Library of Congress
Portrait of a Lady	1949	Unpub.; Library of Congress
Once Upon a Time	1950	Unpub.; Library of Congress
Csárdás	1951	String orch.; unpub.; Library of Congress

Alleluia	1952	SATB w/ organ; Unpub.; Library of Congress
Divertimento	1953	Unpub.; Library of Congress
Middle-East: A Dance Intermezzo	1954	Unpub.; Library of Congress
Chatterbox	1955	Dedicated to Detroit Women's Orchestra; Unpub.; Library of Congress

## APPENDIX B

### Discographic Essay

Kolar's recorded legacy is limited, both because the era in which he lived and worked and because the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) only embarked on one large scale recording projects during his tenure with the ensemble.<sup>403</sup> Kolar made the five commercial recordings with DSO for Decca (Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suites, No. 1 and No. 2*, Rossini's *William Tell Overture*, Enesco's *Rumanian Rhapsody, op. 11, no. 1*, and Victor Herbert's *American Fantasy*).<sup>404</sup> These recordings were all made during a two-day recording session on July 18-19, 1940, the venue is unknown, and released on 78 later that year as part of the Decca Personality Series.<sup>405</sup> These are the only commercial recordings that Kolar made during his career. Of these only his recording of the Herbert *American Fantasy* has been reissued. It was released on a limited release compilation of historical recordings by the former music directors the DSO (*First 60 Years*, Telarc 41344).<sup>406</sup> None of Kolar's other recordings have been reissued on either Long-Playing record (LP) or Compact Disc (CD).

Although he was a prolific conductor and appeared regularly on the radio from 1925 until 1942, there are only a small number of known recordings of these appearances. Most of the extant recordings are excerpts from Ford Sunday Evening Hour

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<sup>403</sup> Detroit Symphony Orchestra Historical Discography, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, accessed October 10, 2017, [https://www.dso.org/upload\\_files%5Ccontent\\_pdfs/res%5Cinteract%5Clisten%5CHistoricalDiscography2005.pdf](https://www.dso.org/upload_files%5Ccontent_pdfs/res%5Cinteract%5Clisten%5CHistoricalDiscography2005.pdf).

<sup>404</sup> Detroit Symphony Orchestra Historical Discography.

<sup>405</sup> Steve Abrams, The Online Discography Project, accessed June 6, 2018, <http://www.78discography.com/Dec23000.htm> and <http://www.78discography.com/Dec2900F.htm>, and Pekka Gronow, *An International History of the Recording Industry*, Moseley Christopher, trans., (London:, Cassel, 1998) 89-91, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade*, with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Victor Kolar, recorded on June 19, 1940, Decca 29 M 162, 4 78 rpm.

<sup>406</sup> Detroit Symphony Orchestra, *The First 60 Years*, Telarc 41344, 1974, 33 1/3 rpm.

Broadcasts. The Henry Ford Benson Ford Research Center has transcription disc recordings of many of the broadcasts; however, most contain only William J. Cameron's intermission speech, not the musical portion of the show. The Henry Ford has digitized a small number of the transcription discs to CD, including a May 24, 1936 broadcast with Kolar and Ilya Schkolnik and Georges Miquelle as soloists.<sup>407</sup>

In addition to the holdings of The Henry Ford, Kolar can be heard on various historical compilations of famous instrumentalists. The available recordings are drawn from the Ford Sunday Evening hour and include the "Rondo" from Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 5* with Joseph Hofman as soloist, Mischa Levitzki performing the "Allego scherzando" from Saint-Saëns's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor*, and Myra Hess in the first movement of Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A minor*.<sup>408</sup>

There are two other known recordings of Kolar that have never been commercially released. The first is the 1953 recording of the Wisconsin All-State Orchestra under Kolar's direction performing Mendelssohn's *Ruy Blas overture*.<sup>409</sup> Lastly, there is a black and white film recording of Kolar and the DSO performing with the pianist Paul Wittgenstein.<sup>410</sup> The recordings includes video and audio footage of Wittgenstein performing Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*.

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<sup>407</sup> Ford Symphony Orchestra, Victor Kolar, conductor, with Margaret Mannenbach, piano, Georges Miquelle, cello, Ilya Schkolnik, Violin, recorded May 24, 1936, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford, Compact Disc, 2009.

<sup>408</sup> Josef Hofman, *Chopin Piano Concerto No 1 in E minor, op. 11*, recorded 1937, International Piano Archives IPA-502, 33 1/3 rpm, and Mischa Levitzki, *Complete Recordings Vol. 3*, recorded April 28, 1935, Naxos Historical, 2004, Compact Disc, and Myra Hess, *Live Recordings from the University of Illinois Vol. 3*, recorded 1937, Appian Publications & Recordings APR 5549, 2001, Compact Disc.

<sup>409</sup> Victor Kolar, conductor, *U.W. Summer Music Clinic Orchestra Souvenir*, recorded July 25, 1953, 78 rpm.

<sup>410</sup> *Paul Wittgenstein: The First World War*, 97814, National Archives at College Park – Motion Pictures (RDSM), College Park, Maryland.

Although Kolar has is a limited recorded legacy, the materials that exist, both commercial releases and radio transcriptions, showcase him as a gifted conductor and accompanist. The recordings suffer from their age and the quality of the recorded sound is not up to a modern standard; however, the recordings provide an aural testament to Kolar's work and abilities.

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