

## *From the Pages of New York Irish History*

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# At the Sign of the Harp

BY "CEOL"

Josephine Smith, the young Irish pianist who is so popular with concert-goers and radio listeners, was educated at the Notre Dame College, Manchester, England. She began her musical training under the famous Austrian teacher, Sister Emmanuel. Since coming to America Miss Smith has studied with Dorsey Whitting, one of the leading pianists of today. She was one of the winners at the New York Music Week Association's annual competition held in 1921. The following year she won a scholarship at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and since then has become a popular figure at Irish concerts and radio recitals.

Among her many activities Miss Smith is the musical director of the Gaelic artists who were pioneers in bringing to the radio audience the best of Irish music and literature. She has also appeared as soloist at Station WEAF and other Metropolitan radio stations.

Having devoted a good deal of her time to the restoration and arranging of Irish folk songs, she now has become recognized as one of the foremost authorities on Gaelic music in America.

Looking over a list of Columbia records, I find Miss Smith has arranged a number of them, notably, "Pearse to Ireland" and the "Cuckoo's Call." She has also played the piano accompaniments on "The Pride of Tipperary" and "The Stuttering Lovers," but it is in her interpretations of Hardebeck's soul-stirring Gaelic songs, "Una Waun," "Sal Oge Ruad" and "Drimin Dhon Dheelish," that she displays her sympathetic understanding of the beauties of Gaelic songs. She is an accompanist who is never intrusive, and furnishes a delightful background for the singer.

When we see her listed as the arranger of Irish folk songs, we know that they are genuine indeed, for this young artist is associated only with the best of Irish music.

Many articles on Gaelic music have been written by her, and some of these have appeared from time to time in the columns of The Irish World, and have gone round the world, being copied by Australian, Canadian and English newspapers.

Many of the Metropolitan critics have given her the highest praise for her work on the radio, and one critic in particular said: "So outstanding is the work of this young Irish pian-

ist that I can tell her touch over the radio without her name being announced."

Miss Smith has a diploma from the Royal Academy of Music, and has traveled extensively on concert tours in Ireland and England. While in the Gaelic-speaking districts of the West of Ireland she took down old airs from the singing of the peasantry, some of which she has arranged and others she is at present working on.

It is always a pleasure to be able to say a word or two in praise of those who are doing something really worth while for the advancement of Irish art and culture. Miss Josephine Smith, in making a careful and specialized study of Irish music, is doing something that will redound to the benefit of all of us.

There need be no doubt that there is not only plenty to learn regarding Irish music, literature and art, but that there is a fruitful field in the study of these subjects for all who care to take them up seriously. Consider the vogue of Italian music and

art, German music and art, and then bear in mind the fact that Irish music and art are in no way inferior. The trouble has been that, thanks to anti-Irish propaganda and our own slave-mindedness, many of us have long since come to the conclusion that Irish art does not exist, and that Irish music consists of a few old comeallyes and the modern product of the London music halls.

Let us, then, when we find those who are devoting their time and their talents to the development of the things that are going to uplift the race and assist in giving it again the place rightfully its own, let us do our share in encouraging them. Let it not be said that when our young people gave their time and talents to the development of the things that are going to uplift the race and assist in giving it again the place rightfully its own, let us do our share in encouraging them. Let it not be said that when our young people gave their time and talents to the study of Irish music, art, literature and language, we ignored and neglected them.



MISS JOSEPHINE SMITH