

AMERICAN ACADEMY

OF

TEACHERS *of* SINGING

Achievement

Aspiration

1926

MEMBERS

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IN a profession where mutual personal esteem should be there was small regard for colleagues. In the place of confidence in each other there was distrust. Instead of toleration in judgment there was unwarranted severity. And why? Because, through lack of personal contact, these brother members of one profession had never learned to know each other, nor to prove by test that qualities, supposedly non-existent, were really there in liberal measure.

At some time in its history this is the condition of every body of men engaged in the same pursuit, whether professional or commercial. The remedy lies in close and frequent personal contact, in learning to know each other intimately, that conditions may arise that shall appeal to the honesty, fairness and uprightness of each, and the sure response awakens in every associate respect, confidence, toleration. That the present is a time of keen realization of this basic principle is shown in the many activities of professional men, and groups of commercial men, to foster close acquaintance, friendship, co-operation, the resultant strength of united ef-

fort and the certainty of efficient practical results.

Convinced of these facts, a group of New York Teachers of Singing met to consider the formation of an organization that should help to accomplish these results among Singing Teachers, and the American Academy of Teachers of Singing came into existence in March, 1922.

Its purpose, as declared in Article II of its Constitution, is:

1. To establish a code which will improve the ethical principles and practice of the profession.
2. To further knowledge and culture.
3. To promote co-operation and good fellowship.

The preparation of a code that fulfills the purposes of the Constitution was with much care at once undertaken and a "Code of Ethics and Practice" has been produced, setting forth in a Preamble and ten Articles the various phases of correct professional relations between teacher and pupil, and the

principles underlying proper studio practice. The code is in suitable form for display in the Studio, and a comparatively large edition was printed. So great has been the interest, and approval of it among our colleagues, and to such an extent have they asked for copies that a large edition has been printed, that it may be freely distributed upon request, thereby accomplishing in this direction the purpose that led to the formation of the Academy.

In the first year of the Academy's existence there was a movement to establish the licensing by the City of New York of all teachers of music, because the city authorities had received complaints charging certain teachers of professional incompetence bordering upon malpractice.

Hearings were held at City Hall which the Academy attended in a body, opposing the movement as dangerous and unlikely to remedy the evil; and the City dropped the plan. But the hearings made clear the need of a definite pronouncement as to the qualifications indispensable to the competent and legitimate teacher of singing, which the Academy at once prepared, in six requirements,

logical but not oppressive, and to which wide publicity has been given in the press.

“To further knowledge,” that of its own members as well as that of its colleagues and the public at large, the Academy has begun a series of discussions of the technic of singing in its various branches, with the purpose in mind of recalling and reaffirming well known scientific facts, enunciating laws, and establishing principles leading to the standardization of the physical processes of the Art, thus helping to clarify and present logically a subject that has always been vague, largely because, unlike all mechanical instruments, the musical instrument of the singer is intangible, subtle in all its functions.

The scope of the undertaking is broad, the subdivisions are many and progress will be slow, since to be successful thoroughness must dominate and haste be avoided. That a group of specialists can meet and discuss such topics quietly, with toleration, influenced alone by the earnest desire to accomplish real good for all, augers well for definite attainment of purpose.

No adequate list of the names and addresses of Teachers of Singing of the United States of America exists. To be in touch with our fellow professionals, that material of mutually beneficial interest may be sent them, that a call for united action may have immediate and wide response, is of prime importance and is made possible only by such a list, the preparation of which the Academy has already begun.

While the Academy has no thought of appointing itself arbiter of its colleagues and of their acts, it will frankly express its disapproval of habitual procedure that is unethical and therefore harmful, and of isolated unprofessionalism that calls for censure.

In large bodies activities must be delegated to committees, with resultant centralization of power in a few individuals. In small bodies a unanimous vote can be required for the transaction of business, and thus each member must necessarily do his share of the work.

The American Academy of Teachers of Singing is limited to a membership of forty, by invitation only.