

# Levant Interview Shows Interesting Sidelights

By JOHN UTLEY, Special Reporter for High Life

The virtuoso of the piano flexed his fingers, took a deep sigh, and glared . . . straight into the eyes of a local cameraman.

"Must you," he declared, "must you sneak up on me like that?" He continued as a flash bulb exploded in his face, "I'm a nice guy to get along with. Just ask me, and I will let you take a picture of me. But please, don't sneak up like that. Now take another one. Well? . . . Hurry up! Take another one!"

Another flash bulb exploded. "Now, please, let's get a cup of coffee."

This grumbling, but playful little man is Oscar Levant, the world's greatest concert pianist. Mr. Levant appeared in Greensboro at a concert at Aycock auditorium on January 30.

The tired gentleman of the piano relaxed after drinking his coffee and gave some very interesting facts on his career.

Just what inspires a man to take a tour such as Mr. Levant's? Mr. Levant will play one-night stands for the next three weeks. And, as he puts it, " . . . that can be rough. What's causing this trip? Economics . . . the quest for bread and butter. You know what they call me? A concert artist. That is a pretty phrase, but 'artists' have to eat too."

"I'm no artist," he continued, "call me a traveling salesman of music. Call it a racket, I don't care."

This great man of the concert stage has been playing the piano of and on for quite a few years. Many of his years were not spent in playing. He has done some composing. This, he said, broke the monotony of everyday playing.

Oscar Levant is known as the world's greatest interpreter of the music of George Gershwin. "I love it. I play other things, of course. Look at the record catalogues. But there never was another man like Gershwin. There never will be."

Going into music a little further, Levant commented, "America's artistic gift has been musical comedy scores. Look at Gershwin, Cole Porter, men of that type. That's our classical music. Oh yeah, include Irving Berlin in that list; he's a friend of mine."

"Modern music is heard today as it has never been heard before," Levant continued, ". . . we performers have seen to that. And once it's heard, it's up to the people. Our

Queried as to music's younger generation, he answered, "I can't keep in touch with the young people. Older folks just can't do that. If we could, we would have had a republican government twenty years ago. But seriously, though, the kids are turning out great stuff. The greats of today should listen to youth. They can learn more from them (youth) than youth can from the greats."

Have you ever thought about going to Hollywood? You know, the place where they make motion pictures.

"Hollywood? Where's that? It's so hard to remember. Oh, yes, Hollywood. Just say it's relaxing."

While on the subject of Hollywood, we commented on Levant's appearance on the screen.

"Everybody should do a motion picture. You don't know how bad you are until six months later. That is the beauty of it."

Besides being a very talented musician, Oscar Levant is also an author. Oscar wrote a book back in 1940 entitled *Smattering of Ignorance*. And, by way of mention, this book, at one time, topped the best-seller lists. Want to read it? Ask for it in the school library.

One of the high spots in Levant's career came with the honor of his recent playing with the New York Philharmonic Symphony under Dimitri Mitropoulos when he played Khatchaturian's Piano Concerto. It was recorded and has been released to the public.

"Ah, playing with an orchestra . . . that's for me . . . ten times more exciting. These recitals! They get so lonesome."

"Now, please another cup of coffee . . ."

And thus we take leave of one of America's greatest concert artists, Oscar Levant.

## Daily Doubles

By Evelyn Sink



This twosome are a couple you couldn't have missed. They have been going together for two years. They like to go to the movies and eat chocolate nut sundaes. Their favorite song is "Sentimental Me." Their pet peeve is an understanding one. She can't understand why he's always late and he can't understand why she fusses about it when he's late. But, his innocent look always convinces her. Who are they? The couple in the last issue were Johnnie Bulla and Ann Ward.

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## Clublicity

By Merle Cates

G.W.L. had a bridal shower for Joanne Dick Davidson last Thursday night at their weekly meeting time. The shower and joint meeting was held at the home of Nancy Benson. Plans were made for their annual formal dance to be held at the King Cotton Hotel ballroom in April. There are now 21 active members on the club roll. Meetings are always held on Thursday afternoon at 4 at members' homes.

The D.D.T. club won first prize for the most attractive decorations for the Valentine dance held up at the Youth Center on February 11. The prize included theatre passes for all the members. There are 20 active members. A big beach party has been planned on Ocean Drive for the last week in July.

The L.S.P. club has for its annual project the making of scrapbooks for the Red Cross. The L.S.P.'s regular meeting is on Monday afternoon at 4 at club members' homes.

10th, 11th, and 12th grade Y-Teens had a combined supper meeting on February 15. The speaker was Rev. Joseph Mundell of St. Benedict's Church. Plans were made for the Y-Teen banquet to be held March 2. Doris Hill presided over the meeting.

The Venettes held a meeting at the Youth Center February 16. Plans for the Spring Dance to be held in April were discussed. The Venettes have charge of the Youth Center radio program on March 4. A party was given recently for new members at the home of Jean Yandle.

## Edwards Participant In Safety Contest

The American Mutual Life Insurance is sponsoring a Safety Forum contest composed of six high school students. Participant from Senior High is Ann Edwards.

This contest covers a period of twelve weeks. The last program in the series will be held February 3 in Charlotte.

Ann is competing for a grand prize of \$1,000, second prize is \$500; third, \$400; fourth, \$300; fifth, \$200; the loser \$100.

Ann is a senior and is seventeen years old. She is especially interested in Mariner Scouts, music, and chemistry.

"Your wife drives like lightning, doesn't she?"

"Yes, always striking a tree."

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