

# AN INVISIBLE RIVAL FOR THE HURDY GURDY

Sicilians in the Street Awed by  
the Telharmonium.

## LISTENERS BATHED IN MUSIC

Prominent New Yorkers Witness a  
Demonstration of the Invention,  
Now Almost Perfected.

Two swart Italians, man and wife, dragged their hand piano out of the tangle of Broadway traffic and swung it east into Thirty-ninth Street, yesterday afternoon. The artist in corduroys dropped the strap with which he had helped pull his instrument to this new position, grabbed the handle, and began grinding out a syncopated air. The wife's keener ears caught a rival sound.

"Cut it out!" she said to her husband, placing her hand on his well-muscled arm and using the fair English one picks up after mixing with a polyglot population. "Somebody in dis-a place ees playing da bigga org'." She pointed to the building at the northeast corner. It sounded like the music of a great cathedral organ, and the Sicilians were awed. They realized that against the massive tones that came from the building their instrument offered a thin and hopelessly unentertaining substitute for such rival music—although theirs had the merit of being real.

In the building at the corner many persons interested in the swift movement of electrical invention in this day were gathered to witness the demonstration of the Cahill invention, the telharmonium. The new device was playing "The Rosary," and the music from the street piano was annoying. Manager Carl Herbert, who was directing the demonstration within, pointed to an arc light in the room; it flashed and quivered at his order, and began emitting in fine measure and tone Schumann's "Traumerl." "That will about put an end to the hand organ, I guess," said Mr. Herbert.

The hurdy-gurdy operators did not know that the "bigga org'" in the building was a new invention of the new land of wonders, nor did they know that the telharmonium was at that very time sending music through tiny wires to guests in the Hotel Normandie, the Waldorf-Astoria, the Café Martin, and other places, nor that in the apartments of O. T. Crosby, the President of the company which is launching the invention, this music was emanating from vases, electric bulbs, jars of flowers, and bric-à-brac.

The demonstration caused the greatest wonderment among the many invited guests. It was so practical and yet so strange that women sat closer to each other, and the men looked about for a tangible clue to the source of the music. The various tones of the electric music came from graceful ferns, flowering syringas, and hydrangeas, and from stately vases and urns. Even the lights, as they flickered with the increase and decrease of current force, sang their share in the song.

The only vehicle for the conveyance of the music was the air itself. The vases, urns, and flora were grouped as a housewife might have directed her servant to place them. The sweet syringas showed their soft tones against a bank of green ferns and the urns were on pedestals of a soft gray stone. From all of these and from a swinging basket of ivy overhead came the music. There was no locating any one tone anywhere.

The whole body of the music, whether it was Mendelssohn's Spring Song or Czibulka's "Love's Dream," just steeped the air, and the auditors had the peculiar sensation of being bathed in the music. It was round about and all over them, in their ears, against their lips, and, it seemed at times, in their very hearts.

So near perfection has the invention been brought that the storage batteries which give the currents necessary for the creation and management of air waves yesterday responded to the demands of all the wood instruments, and also the blare of the English horn. Flute, piccolo, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, and the powerful note of the saxophone were all produced. Together they gave a melodious organ effect that was beyond criticism.

Many society folk and prominent New Yorkers were there yesterday to behold the new marvel, which is to put on tap in every household into which runs an electric light wire or telephone the beat that music offers. After the demonstration a luncheon was served at the Café Martin, where more music poured forth from the flowers and ornaments which decorated the room.