



AMICA International

Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

Honor Roll

SIGMUND SPAETH SPEAKS OF THE AMPICO

Contributed by Emmett M. Ford

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Sigmund Spaeth, in his interesting book *Fifty Years With Music*, told of one of his many jobs in the 1912 era. It was as he wrote: "my next station turned out to be the American Piano Company, which needed first, an educational director, and then a promotion manager, for the electric player known as the Ampico. Seven years of this work not only started my habit of public talks on music (illustrated by Ampico records) and early radio appearances, but created many memorable contacts with the world of serious music and great musicians. I have unforgettable recollections of Rachmaninoff, Leopold Godowsky, Victor Herbert, Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Walter Damrosch and Henry Hadley: turning pages for Richard Strauss through a **concert** of his own works at the Philadelphia Academy of Music, **broadcasting** with "Roxy" Rothafel, playing chess with Mischa **ESman and bridge** with Amata Bodanzky and Erno Rapee.

On the lighter side there was Paul Whiteman, Vincent Lopez, John Philip Sousa, W C. Handy, Sigmund Romberg, Rudolf Friml, Rudy Vallee, eventually Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, Irving Berlin, Morton F. Gould, Meredith Wilson, Cole Porter and others." Later he states: "Several personal meetings with Richard Strauss remain in my memory ... as a promotion manager of the Ampico (electric player piano) I had occasion to use some of the record rolls made by Strauss, especially his accompaniments to such songs as *Zueignung* (Devotion), *Allerseelen* (All Souls' Day) and *Traum durch die Dämmerung* (Dream in the Twilight). At home I even sang for my own pleasure with these accompaniments, always feeling as though Strauss himself were at the piano and that the quality of my voice was of no importance."