

Commentary on and Corrections to:

Timbrell, Charles. "Isidore Philipp, his Life and Legacy." *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 40 (July-December 1996): 48-83.

by Richard Spalding

This report serves to place in the public domain archivist Richard Spalding's views about the following biography of Isidor Philipp; to correct errors therein; and to update reference numbers.

The publication of *Isidor Philipp: His Life and Legacy* by Charles Timbell in the *Journal of the American Liszt Society*, Volume 40, p 48 - 83 (July – December 1996) was important for the world of music and pianism in particular. While not all inclusive, it covers in detail the student years, the early performance and teaching career, the 31-year tenure of the *maître* at the Paris Conservatory, Philipp's work as head of the piano section of the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau from 1921 – 1933, and finally Philipp, the composer, the inventor of technical exercises and studies, the editor, writer and lecturer on world pianism. In the final two sections, *Travels and Teaching* (1934 – 1958) and *An Appreciation*, Dr. Timbrell recounts interviews of some of Philipp's prominent students. He utilizes effectively the extensive collection of correspondence in the University of Louisville Isidor Philipp Archive. The author includes vivid, factual evidence of Philipp's voyages and work, his relations with colleagues, students and friends until his death in Paris, a life reflecting a century of French and international culture and history.

Notes are in the order of appearance in *Isidor Philipp: His Life and Legacy* by Charles Timbrell:

1. Page 63, paragraph 4: Beveridge Webster is cited as "Philipp's first and apparently only American student at the Conservatoire." In IPA UL Series 8:D:15 is a letter to Dwight Anderson from Basil Gauntlett, Director, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, July 3, 1942. Gauntlett writes: "I had the privilege of working – from 1903 to 1908, with Mr. Philipp at the Paris Conservatory."
2. Page 68, paragraph 1: pianist Rosa Eiseen is cited as playing with Philipp and Emma Boynet. In IPA UL Series 8:A:76b Philipp spells the name Eisen.
3. Page 69, paragraph 1: due to corrected references in the IPA UL archive, line 3 should read: Series 8:A:4,5,8,9 and Ba:2.
4. Page 69, paragraph 3: "By January 1941 Philipp and his sister had moved into the Hotel Woodward." It is documented in Philipp's hand that he arrived in the United States May 22, 1941. See: IPA UL Series 8:A:48, Philipp to Helen Moore, Hotel Woodward, Monday, 22 May [1943, by references] ... "*Il y a 2 ans que nous sommes arrivés ici le 22 Mai '41. Deux années d'inquiétude, de tristesse, d'exile et nous ne voyons pas d'issue à notre situation.*" Translation by Richard Spalding and Cécile Jeunet Spalding: "We arrived here two years ago the 22 of May 1941. Two years of anxiety, of sadness, of exile and we do not see any end to our condition."
5. Page 69, paragraph 4: a portion of a letter "in English" stated to have been sent by Philipp to Helen Moore "in May 1941." Of the more than 171 items Philipp sent to Moore, none

are in English. This item has been previously misdated. Denine M. LeBlanc, in her D.M.A. dissertation, *The Life and Work of Isidor Philipp*, University of Cincinnati, 1989, (cited as a reference in this biography) identified the recipient of this letter, Philipp's former pupil and friend, William Meldrum, Head of Jameson Conservatory of Music, William Woods College, Fulton, Missouri. Dr. LeBlanc interpreted the date, at the top of Philipp's original letter, as October 5, 1941. Philipp wrote to Meldrum: "10 – 5 – 41," the usual order for Frenchmen, the day of the month, the month and the year. That would normally stand for the 10th of May 1941. However, Philipp did not arrive in the USA until the 22nd of May 1941 (see number 4 above). There is a photocopy of an envelope, sent the Archive by Meldrum's widow, addressed to Meldrum, bearing the usual *I. Philipp* autograph, the Hotel Woodward letterhead, and dated June 10, 1941 by the US post office. There are no other letters in the IPA UL from Philipp to Meldrum around that time. It is logical to assume that the newly arrived Philipp, the refugee in exile, wrote 10 – 5 – 41 in place of 10 – 6 – 41. IPA UL has recorded the letter as having been written June 10, 1941.

[Footnote (75) following the above letter excerpt identifies William Meldrum as the recipient, (corrected reference – Series 8: Bb:12)].

6. Page 70, paragraph 6: reference is made to Philipp's niece being "betrayed as a Jew," her deportation and death at the hands of the Germans. It is of more than casual interest to note that the term "Jew", cited four times in the biography, does not appear even once in the entirety of the vast correspondence in the Archive, nor does there exist in the correspondence any reference to his national or ethnic origin. His niece, Ernestine Wellhoff-Pront (1893 - 1943), may well have been denounced and deported for other reasons. (Philipp himself simply did not say.) His nephew, the brother and only sibling of Ernestine, Edmond Wellhoff, was an officer in the *F.F.I.*-the French Resistance - (IPA UL Series 8:A:75). It was not unusual for persons serving in the French underground to solicit help from family members. An inscription under Ernestine's name on the family crypt in Père Lachaise reads; "*Morte pour la France en deportation en 1943.*" "Died for France as a deportée in 1943." There is perhaps implied here that her deportation was due to serving her country by working against the enemy. This inscription is located above that of her uncle, Isidor Philipp. Moreover, there is but one entry in all the Archive on the subject of Philipp's religious beliefs: in his correspondence with Moore, Philipp writes, with regard to the death of his sister, Emilie: "*On voudrait avoir la certitude que l'âme d'un être perdu et tant aimé est autour de vous - - mais il faudrait être croyant et je ne le suis pas.*" Translation by Richard and Cécile Spalding: "One would like to be certain that the soul of the person you have lost, and so beloved, is around you still - - but one must be a believer, and that I am not." (IPA UL Series 8:A:121) (24 December 1950).
7. Page 71, paragraph 2, footnote (82): about Philipp's memoirs. A former pupil and friend, Ellen Gilberg, from Copenhagen, told Joy Stephens in 2000 that she believed Samuel Dushkin had a copy of the memoirs.
8. Page 73, paragraph 3: clarity might be gained by identifying the celebrated American composer John Corigliano, jr. directly in the text. [He is correctly named in footnote (93)]
9. Page 74, paragraph 3: in view of interest in the D.M.A. dissertation of Dr. Leblanc, we note here that Dr. LeBlanc listed February 21, 1958 as the date of Philipp's death. Dr. Timbrell procured a copy of Philipp's death-certificate for the IPA UL, bearing the date noted in the Timbrell biography, February 20, 1958.

Some of the following corrections for *Notes* beginning on page 78 are necessary due to redaction errors. Others are revisions by the University of Louisville archivist to place additions and changes.

10. Page 78, *Notes*, 1: the coordinates of the music library UL are, The Dwight Anderson Music Library, School of Music, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292. The contact person is Karen Little, Librarian. Email: music.library@louisville.edu.
11. Page 79, *Notes*, 27: the correct reference for *Le Ménestrel should be* April 14, 1889, p. 119.
12. Page 81, *Notes*, 59: the correct reference for *Musical Quarterly* should be October 1943: 418.
13. Page 81, *Notes*, 69: the corrected reference is Series 8:Bb:7.
14. Page 81, *Notes*, 75: the corrected reference is Series 8:Bb:12.
15. Page 81, *Notes*, 76: the corrected reference is Series 8:A:17.
16. Page 81, *Notes*, 78: the corrected reference is Series 8:A:51, 66.
17. Page 81, *Notes*, 79: the corrected reference is Series 8:A:45.
18. Page 82, *Notes*, 82: the corrected reference is Series 8:A:37, 58.
19. Page 82, *Notes*, 93: add: “and also a tape recording of the May 10, 1952 performance at New York’s Town Hall of the same artists’ performance of the Saint-Saëns First Violin Sonata.”
20. Page 82, *Notes*, 94: John Corigliano, *jr.*
21. Page 82, *Notes*, 95: the corrected reference is Series 8:A:153.
22. Page 82, *Notes*, 97: the corrected reference is Series 8:A:156-158.
23. Page 82, *Notes*, 105: the publisher of the 1989 D.M.A. dissertation by Denine M. LeBlanc, *The Life and Work of Isidor Philipp*, is the University of Cincinnati, not the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Dr. Timbrell adds: “See also her article, “The Teaching Philosophy of Isidor Philipp,” *Clavier*, February 1996, p. 14 - 17. The following statement in paragraph 1 of this article is an editorial misprint: “Philipp began studying the piano at the age of three with George Mathias at the Paris Conservatoire.” See Dr. LeBlanc’s account, in the D.M.A.dissertation, Chapter I, p.1, of Philipp’s admittance to the Paris Conservatoire “at age sixteen.”

Since the publication of the above biography, there have been additions to the University of Louisville Isidor Philipp Archive. Notable are the letters received by Richard Spalding from Ivan Tcherepnin concerning his father Alexander and Philipp, from Lee Luvisi regarding his lessons with Philipp in New York in the 1950s and the Philipp legacy as passed to him by Dwight Anderson, and the discovery of a Philipp archive, held by the J. B. Speed Art Museum of Louisville. The museum’s Philipp items have been copied and are among the catalogued documents held in the University of Louisville Philipp Archive.