

French School's Founders

Two musicians who reside and pursue their art in Plainfield, are Mlle. Yvonne Combe and Mlle. Helene Pfeiffer, founders of the French School of Music. Both have had colorful careers.

Yvonne Combe was born in Paris. Her grandmother (La Caiva) was a famous prima donna, who sang dramatic soprano leading roles for twenty-five years at the Paris Opera House before going on concert tours in all the great cities of France and other European countries. Yvonne's father died when she was a year old and she traveled with her grandmother for six or seven years, imbibing the tradition and atmosphere that surround a noted artist. She received her musical foundation through the teaching of her mother (the late Madame Louise H. Combe), a well-known vocal instructor. Madame Combe was an authoritative writer upon musical subjects. Her latest book, "Method of Vocal Education," was presented at the Beaux-Arts Institute of Paris and the manuscript of it was exhibited in the summer of 1937 at the International Exposition in Paris.

At the age of nine, Yvonne Combe entered the National Conservatory of Paris and continued her musical education there under the direction of Theodore Dubois (director of the Conservatoire) and Gabriel Faure. She advanced far in piano-virtuoso work with Marguerite Long, Paul Brop and Roger Ducasse.

Concert Artist at 13

She graduated with honors from the Conservatory of Paris when she was thirteen years old and appeared as piano soloist in a series of professional concerts. A serious accident to her wrist closed this career to her but, undaunted, she turned her talents to the more altruistic profession of teaching. Before she was twenty she had composed, with unusual originality, short works for organ, piano and voice as well as piano and violin pieces. Early in her career she met Helene Pfeiffer, who was equally interested in musical education and they formed a partnership.

Helene Pfeiffer was born in

Switzerland on Lake Geneva, the daughter of a well-known writer whose pen name was Georges Sylvain. Both her parents fostered in their children a love of the arts of painting, music and literature but Helene's predilection was for music. She became a pupil of Mlle. Combe and studied both piano and solfege very seriously. She graduated from one of the music schools which had been founded by Mlle. Combe in Switzerland and became an associate teacher with her.

Trained 30 Teachers

These two ambitious and talented women trained thirty teachers in an original method of teaching devised by them and before the war supervised seven separate music schools in France,

Switzerland and England. Five of their graduates have become professional artists, successful in concert work in European cities.

Mesdemoiselles Combe and Pfeiffer came to Plainfield twenty-three years ago to launch their original method of musical instruction and in December, 1927, founded the French School of Music at 514 Park avenue, of which Mlle. Combe is principal.

About ten years ago, due to the increasing number of their pupils, they moved to a larger place at 210 West Eighth street, where they now reside.

Activities of French School

During their many years of teaching, both abroad and in this country, Milles. Combe and Pfeiffer have been keenly interested in developing young talent and

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Mmes. Yvonne Combe and Helene Pfeiffer in their studio.

