

After which glorious prose it is a little disconcerting to read the next sentence, “But we must confess that we were not excited by his playing.”

One of the first things Herz did was to acquire a pushy young man named Bernard Ullmann as press agent. Ullmann presented himself and talked his way into a job. This kind of work was something new to Herz. He asked Ullmann what his duties would be. “Nothing,” said Ullmann, “and everything. Try me. I will take care of the announcements of your concerts. I will have your programs printed, I will see to it that everything is in order in the hall where you will give the concert, I will bring you to the attention of the newspaper editors. The papers are the nerves of artistic success, just as money is the nerves of war.” Herz agreed, and it turned out that Ullmann earned his keep.

Herz’s book goes on to give his impressions of America, its leading citizens and its institutions. He reads the Declaration of Independence (“*Quand, dans le cours des événements, il devient indispensable pour un peuple de dissoudre les liens qui l’attachent à un autre peuple . . .*”) and is struck by it. He meets Phineas T. Barnum, who offers him second billing in concerts with Jenny Lind. Herz refuses. He notes with interest some of Ullmann’s ideas. One of them was to give a concert lighted by a thousand candles—no more, no less. “This,” writes Herz, “excited such a curiosity in the Americans . . . that in less than a day the hall was sold out.” Herz plays the concert. At the end of the first piece a loud voice fills the hall, “But there are not a thousand candles!” The man had counted and decided there were eight short.

Ullmann kept dreaming up “bizarre and impossible things to excite the ardor of the music-lover.” One such vision was a political concert. On the program would be a *Hommage à Washington* (soloists, chorus, five orchestras, 1,800 singers), a *Concerto de la Constitution* (composed and played by Herz), a speech on the genius of the American people, a *Grande marche triomphal* (to be arranged by Herz for forty pianos), *Le Capitole* (a *choeur apothéosiaque*, to be composed by Herz), and a grand finale, *Hail Columbia*, played by all the military bands of Philadelphia and surrounding environs. Ullmann, it must be conceded, thought big. But here Herz put his foot down. He wrote a piece for eight instead of forty pianos. Ullmann objected. “Your refusal shows you do not understand the American character.” Herz stood firm, and the concert was a great success. In