

**THE CONNECTION OF SUSAN METCALFE
WITH PABLO CASALS and
where Guilhermia Suggia was positioned within!**

..

..

Susan S. Metcalfe was born in 1878 in Florence, Italy. She was the daughter of Dr. Frank J. Metcalfe, a Manhattan, New York City physician, and her mother Helene, a prominent member of New Rochelle, New York society.

..

As a recitalist, Susan Metcalfe made her debut in New York in 1897 and gave a few, but very select recitals each year. In 1904 she met the cellist Pablo Casals, when she gave a recital with him (it is not generally known that Casals was a fine pianist too, and on this occasion was accompanying her at the piano!). They briefly developed a 'close' friendship, but this was sort of put aside when Casals entered an even closer relationship with Guilhermina Suggia in 1906. He had a summer job playing in a septet at a resort casino near Porto as far back as 1895, and she - Suggia - was brought to him for weekly lessons until his return to Spain at the end of the summer. In their relation, from roughly 1906 to 1913 Suggia lived in Paris with Pablo Casals. They lived out of wedlock, very surprising for the times, and she pursued her career with great determination - without formal agents she managed it mostly on her own, such as negotiating the fees, directing promotion and organising the concert schedule. A biographer of Suggia, Anita Mercier, even suggested that she may well have had an abortion in 1907. The relationship between Suggia and Casals was passionate, dynamic, and finally too volatile to hold together. Troubles in the relationship reached a tumultuous climax late in the summer of 1912; male visitors (especially handsome ones!) were warned not to pay much attention to Guilhermina on account of Casal's somewhat jealous streak. It so happened that the young Donald Tovey (promising composer, pianist, and wonderful author of musical articles) was staying with the pair near Barcelona for a few weeks. Nobody can know for sure what really happened, but somehow Tovey's presence provoked a devastating confrontation. Casals exploded in envious rage, seemingly caused by (surely falsely!?) believing that an amorous relation was developing between Tovey and Suggia. Legend says that Casals burst in on him pointing a pistol whilst Tovey was taking a bath, and that Tovey had to make an escape via the window (luckily on the ground floor) with only a sponge protecting his private parts!

..

Meanwhile, in 1908 Metcalfe was to embark on a European tour during which she sang for the British royal family. When the Casals' relationship with Suggia became strained, Metcalfe and Casals became very close anew. They had met again after Casals had given a concert in Berlin, and were soon married on 4th April, 1914, at New Rochelle. After this they moved together to Europe. During their artistic life together Casals and his wife often gave recitals together in which he accompanied her song sets at the piano and also performed cello sets in the same concert. For example, at their 'farewell' U.S. concert (their second recital of the season) in New York, April 1916, at the Aeolian Hall, 'Mme Casals' sang a group of songs by Caldera, Caccini, Gluck and Mozart, and later a set of five Scots and Irish songs arranged by Beethoven. In a 'Maennerchor Artist' Concert of January 1917 she sang a similar group in the first part, and songs by Schumann and Emanuel Moor in the second. They also gave concerts in America, Europe, England, Mexico and Cuba.

..

However, once again, being a romantic partner of Pau Casals proved to be very stormy. The marriage lasted until 1928, and I believe they were formally separated in 1929. However, they did not divorce until 1957, and this that Casals had another meaningful relationship long before he married Marta in the late 1950s. Mme. Metcalfe Casals decided to live in Paris. Her last known recital was at the École Normale de Musique there in 1951. Later she moved back to the U.S. to live with her sister, and died at New Rochelle, New York in 1959.

..



The images linked here are claimed to be used under fair use as:
the photos are only being used for informational purposes.

'documenting the cello' - www.johnstone-music.com