Review

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Twelve Salon Duets. For Violin and Pianoforte. By L. Spohr. Two Books.
Six Slow Movements. From the Violin Concertos of L. Spohr.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE term *salon* is frequently applied to music in a depreciatory sense. Yet, strictly speaking, *salon* music means merely music suitable to a drawing-room; the latter, with regard to those who frequent it, may be of a high class, and so may the former. Louis Spohr often played the violin at public concerts, though still more frequently at private ones; and he wrote much elegant, showy music for such occasions. In the two books now under notice, we have the set of six pieces forming Op. 127, and another similar set marked Op. 135. The pieces are real duets, not violin solos with pianoforte accompaniment. They were most probably written for himself and his first wife, Dorette Scheidler, a clever performer both on the harp and the pianoforte. Book 1 contains three pieces in slow, and three in quick time. The Larghetto in G opens with a smooth, flowing theme, and the middle section, both in key and character, offers effective contrast. The Adagio in A has a theme of great calm and dignity; the light, soft chords on the pianoforte support the melody, which is to be played, as indicated, *sopra la 4^{ta}*. Of the quick pieces, the Rondo Vivace is sure to attract players of both instruments. In the second set (Op. 135) are to be found the engaging Barcarolle in G and the light-tripping Scherzo in D, both so thoroughly characteristic of the master; also the Air Varié in F, of which the variations are clever and showy.

Spohr's Concertos are favourites with all violinists, and the six Slow Movements from them will, therefore, in this convenient form—i.e., with pianoforte accompaniment—prove most acceptable. They have been taken from Nos. 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 15. Of music so well known there is no occasion to speak.

Christmas Scenes. Cantata for Female Voices. By F. H. Cowen.

Twelve New Christmas Carols. By Robin H. Legge.

Twelve Christmas Carols. Compiled by Mrs. Carey Brock and M. A. Sidebotham.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MUSIC for the genial season of Noël will shortly be in request, and the practice of carol singing has happily again become general in this country. Mr. Cowen's cantata, however, is of course intended for the School and Concert-room. The libretto, by Mr. Clifton Bingham, is of the simplest possible character, dealing in what may be termed impersonal fashion with the appearances of Father Christmas, Carollers, and Santa Claus, together with scenes in which Christmas bells, church music, and social festivities are introduced. The music is appropriately bright and cheerful in character, but certainly not trivial. Mr. Cowen could not be otherwise than artistic even in unpretentious efforts, and in this instance he has put together some very tuneful and piquant strains written for soprano solo, trio for mezzo-sopranos or contraltos, and two-part chorus. It is a charming and not by any means difficult little work, and should be greatly in request from season to season. The carols by Mr. Robin H. Legge have quaintly written words by Mr. A. E. Alston, and the music, for voices in unison, with accompaniment, is equally simple and pleasantly old-world in style. The other collection named above is scarcely more pretentious, though the tunes are for voices in four-part harmony. Among the composers are Dr. G. C. Martin, the late Henry Smart, the Rev. Charles Erskine, and Mr. Berthold Tours. Both carol books are issued in small and convenient form, equally suitable for church or chapel, open-air singing, or the family circle.

THE German Mendelssohn Scholarship, amounting to 1,500 marks a year, for executive skill, has just been awarded to Miss Elsie Hall—of English parentage and a native of Australia—after a severe competition, in which a large number of German candidates took part. The adjudicators were Professor Joachim, Herr Woldemar Bargiel, and Dr. Riemann. No award has been made this year for composition.

FOREIGN NOTES.

ALTAMURA (ITALY).—The birth-centenary of Francesco Saverio Mercadante, the composer of "La Vestale," "Il Bravo," and of many other operas once greatly in vogue, was celebrated on September 17, at this, his native town, by a special performance of "La Vestale," at the Municipal Theatre, which has been re-named Teatro Mercadante and was adorned with a commemorative tablet on the occasion.

BERGEN.—A statue of Ole Bull, the famous violin virtuoso and founder of the leading Norwegian theatre, is shortly to be erected in this, his native town; the necessary funds, some fifty thousand kroner, having already been subscribed, partly in the United States, which became a second fatherland to him. When he fell dangerously ill he was carried to Norway, and expired in Bergen, in 1880.

BERLIN.—Signor Sonzogno's season of Italian opera at the Theater unter den Linden, and afterwards at the Neues Theater here, has not proved very successful. One of the principal novelties produced—viz., Mascagni's "Silvano"—attracted some popular attention, but is considered by critics but a weak reproduction of "Cavalleria Rusticana," both as regards the score and the libretto.

—A young Russian violinist, M. Alexander Petchnikoff, caused quite a sensation at a Concert given by him at the Bechstein Hall last month, he being equally admired as an interpreter of classical and modern music. The enthusiasm displayed by the audience is shared by the press, who predict a most brilliant future for the young virtuoso. M. Petchnikoff, who is the son of a humble soldier, and only twenty years of age, plays on a magnificent Stradivarius, the gift of the Emperor of Russia. —Herr Arthur Nikisch conducted the first Philharmonic Concert of the season last month with much success, Beethoven's "Leonora" Overture (No. 3), Tschaiakowsky's Fifth Symphony, and the Overture to "Tannhäuser" being the principal pieces, while Josef Hofmann was the much-applauded pianist. —After being closed for four months the Royal Opera House was re-opened on the 23rd ult., when an excellent performance of Beethoven's "Fidelio" was given in the presence of the Emperor and Empress. During the interim many improvements have been effected, not the least of which is the enlargement of the orchestra, which is now capable of holding 100 executants. It has also been lowered and provided with a double floor with a view to increased resonance. The new organ by Sauer will doubtless often add to the enjoyment of the audiences and the increased facilities of ingress and egress will also add to their comfort. Both the theatre and the large concert-hall have profited by the brushes of the cleaner and painter.

BRUSSELS.—Dr. Hans Richter will conduct one of the "Concerts Populaires" during the present season, in the course of which the pianist, Signor Ferruccio Busoni, and Herr Willy Burmester will appear amongst other solo performers. Herr Edgar Tinel's new oratorio, "Godeleva," will also be produced, for the first time, at one of these Concerts. —M. Franz Servais has completed the score of a grand opera, entitled "L'Appollonide," portions of which have already been performed with considerable success in Belgian concert-rooms. The work is to be first brought out during the present season at the Cassel Hof-Theater, under Herr Mottl's direction.

CASSEL.—Auber's "Cheval de Bronze" has just been revived at the Court Theatre here with some success. The performance derives some added interest from the fact of Herr Humperdinck's version of the score having been used on this occasion, consisting chiefly in an amplified orchestration, which Herr Humperdinck supplied some years since for a performance at the Frankfort Stadt-Theater, long before his present happy association with Fairland.

CHRISTIANIA.—The first Concert of the season of the Philharmonic Society was given here last month, under the direction of Herr Grieg. The programme contained some interesting pieces—viz., a new "Legende" for orchestra, by the Conductor; variations on a popular theme, by Herr F. Duë, the ambassador of Sweden and Norway in Paris, an excellent musician; and another orchestral composition, entitled "Zovahayda," by Johann Svendsen. The latter, it may be incidentally mentioned, after thirteen years of unproductiveness, has just published a new orchestral