The Philharmonic Society's Bust

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THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY'S BUST.

THE original bust from which our illustration is taken has a specially interesting history; it was modelled by the famous Viennese sculptor, F. Schaller, in 1826, who made several drawings of Beethoven's head as preparatory studies for the work, which he executed expressly for Carl Holz, an intimate friend of Beethoven. Holz was a violinist, and very active in making the master's music familiar to the public of Vienna. He expressed himself thoroughly satisfied with the surpassing excellence of the bust, and six other intimates of Beethoven made the following declaration: "The bust is in every way unique, and the undersigned gentlemen, who were all personally acquainted with Beethoven, hereby certify that it is a remarkable and speaking likeness of the great original. Moritz Graf zu Dietrichstein—J. F. Castelli, Dr.—Freiherr von Mayenberg—Franz von Heintl, Dr.—J. Mayseder—Leopold von Sonnleithner, Dr."

The bust remained in the possession of Holz until his death in 1858, when it was purchased by Frau Linzbauer, who, as a pupil of Holz, had from her childhood frequently seen and admired it: she, a devout worshipper of Beethoven's genius, resolved that the Philharmonic Society of London, who had so generously assisted Beethoven in his last illness, were the rightful heirs of such a precious memorial of the departed composer; accordingly she made a will bequeathing it to the Society, but in 1870, on the occasion of the centenary of the composer's birth, she resolved to make the presentation at once. Mr. (now Sir William) Cusins, on behalf of the Society, went to Buda-Pesth, and, after much anxious trouble, brought the bust with him to England; the Directors of the Philharmonic Society had a few casts made, one of which is always placed in front of the orchestra at the public concerts. The original bust reposes "like a warrior taking his rest" in the chest in which it travelled from Vienna to Pesth and thence to London. It is, of course, carefully treasured as one of the most valuable effects of the Philharmonic Society.

W. H. CUMMINGS.

A TALK WITH BEETHOVEN.

TOMASCHEK.

Tomaschek. Herr van Beethoven, pray excuse me if I intrude. I am Tomaschek, of Prague, a composer in the service of Count von Bucquoy, and I have taken the liberty of coming with my brother to pay you a visit.

Beethoven. I am exceedingly pleased to make your acquaintance. You are not intruding in the least.

T. You appear to be working very hard.

B. Am I not obliged to do so? What would become otherwise of my reputation?

T. There is a new opera brought out this evening. The music is by —.* I do not feel very much inclined to put myself out of the way to go and see it.

B. Why, what is to be done? We must have composers like him as well as others. Without such composers, what would become of the masses?

T. I have heard a good deal of a young foreign artist,† who, it is said, plays the piano to perfection.

B. Aye, they have told me, too, marvellous things about his merit, but I have not had an opportunity of hearing him. Let him, however, stop in Vienna only three months and we shall see what will become of his reputation. Everything new pleases here and excites enthusiasm.

T. Do you know him personally?

B. I met him at the performance of my "Battle." Most of the composers then in Vienna were kind enough to undertake something or other in my orchestra, and the young man played the big drum. Ha! ha! ha! (a peal of laughter). I had reason not to be very well satisfied with him. He was always behindhand, and I had to give it him roundly. (New peal of laughter.) He must have felt mortified by my observations; but there is no reliance to be placed in him; he has not the courage to raise his arm at the proper moment.

On the 24th November following, the day before leaving Vienna, Tomaschek paid Beethoven another visit.

T. I have come to bid you good-bye.

B. I thought you had left before. Have you been staying in Vienna ever since your last visit?

T. Yes, except a short excursion to Aspern and Wagram. And are you quite well?

B. I am going on as usual, and always suffering from the same annoyances. There is no living here.

T. I see you are very busy with the preparations for your concert. I trust I do not interrupt you.

B. You do not; I am glad to see you. But you are right. What an amount of preliminary trouble the concert occasions!

T. I read in the papers that you had postponed the day.

B. Yes, everything was copied anyhow. I should have been obliged to hold the grand rehearsal on the very morning of the concert, so I preferred a later date.

T. All this bother is really insupportable.

B. You are right. One clashes with stupidity of all kinds. And then how much

* Seyfried.

† Meyerbeer.