Review

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Five Romances for Violin and Pianoforte. By G. A. Macfarren, R.A.M. [Edwin Ashdown.]

THE facility with which the late Principal of the Royal Academy could write in any school of music is shown in these pleasant little pieces for violin. The Andante Cantabile in G, the Allegro in E minor, the Andante in F, the Allegretto in D, and the Andante con moto contain characteristics of style which are to be found in English, German, French, and Italian writers for the violin. All the pieces are good and might be studied by players with considerable advantage to themselves.

Three Part-Songs for four voices (S.A.T.B.) 1, *Heralds of Spring*; 2, *The Month of May*. 3, *Merrily row we*. Written and composed by John Greig, Mus. Bac. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THESE three unpretentious little compositions—all in the key of A major—will, we think, be acceptable to choirs in search of novelty. They are melodious, clearly written, and easy to sing. No contrapuntal effects are attempted, the words being merely smoothly set and carefully harmonised. The third is, we think, the best of the three.

FOREIGN NOTES.

WEBER'S posthumous opera fragment "Die drei Pintos," repeatedly referred to of late in these columns, was produced for the first time, in the completed form given it by Herr Mahler, on January 20, at the Leipzig Stadt-Theater, and was exceedingly well received. "Seldom in modern days," says a competent critic in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, "has it fallen to my lot to witness such genuine, unmistakable enthusiasm as was the case on this occasion." The performance has since been several times repeated and the interesting novelty will now doubtless make the round of German operatic stages, being already in course of preparation at several of the leading theatres in the Fatherland.

A music festival extending over three days is to take place in June next at Stuttgart, when the performances will include Handel's "Joshua," Schumann's "Paradise and the Peri," Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, and Wagner's "Parsifal" Prelude. Among the artists contributing solo performances are mentioned Johannes Brahms, Dr. Joachim, and Eugene d'Albert. Dr. Faisst, of Stuttgart, will be the Conductor.

An important and highly interesting collection of antique musical instruments, formerly in the possession of Herr Paul de Witt, of Leipzig, has just been purchased by the Prussian Government, and will be permanently exhibited at the Berlin Royal Academy of Music (Hochschule).

The excellent Choral Society "Liederkranz," of Frankfurt, celebrated last month the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Mozart Institution, originated by the above Society. At the Concert performance in connection with the celebration, the programme consisted chiefly of works by former stipendiaries of the institution, among the most distinguished of whom may be mentioned Joseph Brambach and Max Bruch.

The Leipzig "Liszt-Verein," under direction of Herren Nikisch and Siloti, has undertaken to give a series of orchestral Concerts during the present month at St. Petersburg and Warsaw, when they will introduce such works by the late pianist-composer as are, as yet, little known in Russia.

We read in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*: "The recent performance at the Vatican chapel of a Mass by Palestrina, in connection with the Papal Jubilee celebration, has served to demonstrate the decided decline of the once so justly famous choir, the intonation being faulty, and the attack, too, leaving much to be desired. This falling off has been noticeable ever since the death of Baini, the choirmaster under Gregory XVI. and Pius IX."

The first performance at the Munich Hof-Theater of Verdi's "Otello" took place on the 5th ult., and was a brilliant success. The theatre was crowded by an enthusiastic audience, and after the fourth act, which produced the greatest effect, the principal interpreters were recalled seven times—an occurrence altogether unprecedented here, except in Wagnerian opera. Herr Vogl gave the *title-rôle*, Herr Gura the *Iago*, and Frau Schöller the ill-starred heroine, the work generally having been placed on the stage in excellent style.

Theodore Gouvy's new choral work "Electra" (with a German translation of the libretto by Dr. Langhans) was

most successfully produced last month at Duisburg under direction of Musik-director Grüter, and in the presence of the highly gratified composer.

M. Camille Saint-Saëns has gone to Algiers for the benefit of his health, and has taken with him the libretto of his new opera "Benvenuto Cellini," destined to become the great novelty at the Paris Grand Opéra during the approaching Exhibition year.

Extremely successful first performances of Wagner's "Lohengrin" have recently taken place at the Verdi Theatre of Padua, and at the Royal Opera of Madrid, the latter under the direction of Signor Mancinelli.

In the course of an interesting discourse on Beethoven, recently delivered by Herr Hanslick in the Austrian capital, the eminent critic of the *Neue Freie Presse* played to his audience three, it is said, hitherto unknown dances emanating from the master's most mature period—viz., that in which the Ninth Symphony was written.

A music festival is being organised at Copenhagen, which will be devoted entirely to compositions by Scandinavian masters; those, *inter alia*, by Kuhlau, Gade, Grieg, Svendsen, Emil Hartmann, Lindblad, Josefson, and Kjerulf.

Out of a total number of fifty-three new operas by German composers submitted to the Royal Opera of Berlin during the past year, only four have been accepted for performance during the present season. These are: "Der Haideschacht," by Herr Holstein; "Turandot," by Herr Rehbaum; "Lorelei," by Herr E. Naumann; and "Irrungen," by Professor Lorenz.

Wagner's entire "Nibelungen" tetralogy was performed last month at the theatre of Carlsruhe, under the energetic direction of Herr Felix Mottl. There was a numerous and enthusiastic audience, including many foreign musicians and art-lovers.

Richard Wagner's pre-Wagnerian opera (*sit venia verbo!*) "Die Feen," emanating from the earliest period of the master, will be produced for the first time on any stage in May next at the Munich Hof-Theater.

A monument, wrought in marble, the work of an Italian artist, has just been erected over the grave of Leopold Damrosch, the late genial and energetic Conductor of the New York German Opera.

Wagner's "Götterdämmerung," the final part of the famous tetralogy, met with a most enthusiastic reception on its first performance (January 25) at the Metropolitan Theatre of New York, under the direction of Herr Anton Seidl.

Under the title of "Het Proefschot" (The Trial-shot), Weber's evergreen "Freischütz" has just been performed for the first time with a Dutch version of the libretto at Amsterdam, previous performances of the work in Holland having been either given in French or in the original German.

Rubinstein's "Biblical opera," "Sulamith," is shortly to be produced in concert-form at the Royal Opera of Berlin. This melodious and picturesque work was first produced in 1883 at the Hamburg Stadt-Theater, under the composer's direction, and has since been unaccountably neglected.

Mr. Frederic Lamond, the gifted Scottish pianist, is just now engaged upon a Concert tour in Germany, and has recently met with a most gratifying reception, both at Hanover and Hamburg. At the present moment Mr. Lamond is at Berlin, where he was announced to play three Concertos by Brahms, Henselt, and Saint-Saëns, besides giving a Concert of chamber music, in which he was to introduce two new compositions of his own—viz., a Pianoforte Trio and a Sonata for pianoforte and violoncello. We shall continue to follow the progress of this remarkable young artist with much interest.

At an interesting Concert recently given by the Paris Société des Compositeurs de Musique, a number of pianoforte compositions by old masters were performed on instruments appertaining to the period in which they were written, among those used on the occasion having been an excellently preserved clavecin by Jaskin (1775). Other instruments of the clavier kind exhibited at the same time included a clavecin by Zell (1736), an Italian spinet by Abel Adam, of Turin (1714), a clavecin inscribed "F. Debbonis Cortonensis fecit Roma, 1677," a clavichord of the seventeenth century, and several instruments by