Review

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paper appeared before the representation of the work, two letters written from Bayreuth under the fresh impression of the performance are added, the descriptions in which give a most vivid impression of this remarkable event. We cordially commend the perusal of these three articles to the many who interest themselves in the subject; for, apart from the musical significance of this performance, so minute an analysis of works avowedly embodying opinions which have so long been extensively and often most adversely criticised cannot fail to become of permanent value to the musical historian. The criticisms on the three French Operas, "Carmen," "Polyeucte," and "Le Roi de Lahore," are reprinted from the *Times*. "Carmen" has, since this article upon it was written, thoroughly taken its place in public estimation; but the analysis of Gounod's Opera will be read with much interest, as we have not had an opportunity of testing its merits in this country by a stage performance. With the author's estimate of "Le Roi de Lahore" we certainly do not coincide; nor do we believe that M. Massenet has proved in this work "competence and even mastery of workmanship in the instrumentation." There is much straining after effect throughout the Opera, and in our opinion the "nationality" aimed at in some of the melodies displays rather eccentricity than a power of "local colouring." The final article on "The Chances of English Opera" gives us many truths on this important subject. Undoubtedly, as the author says, the Operas by English composers called into life during the management of Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. Harrison have not become the "legitimate model of what, without extreme stretch of courtesy, could be called the representative school of English Opera;" but we may profit by their defects; and even now there are, no doubt, many native artists both able and ready to supply lyrical works which *shall* be a "legitimate model" for future composers as soon as ever there is a stage ready to receive them. Although we do not agree with all the opinions expressed in Mr. Hueffer's volume, it will be seen by the space we have devoted to a notice of his work how much it has interested us. The author is undoubtedly a profound thinker, an earnest critic, and an accomplished writer; and we cordially welcome his "Musical Studies" as a valuable contribution to our fast accumulating art literature.

The Choral Symphony (No. 9). Composed by Ludwig van Beethoven. The English version by Natalia Macfarren, and the pianoforte arrangement by Berthold Tours. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

"I MUST now," says Beethoven in a letter to Probst, the music-publisher at Leipzig, "speak of myself, and say that this, the greatest work I have ever written, is well worth 1,000 florins, C. M. It is a new, grand Symphony, with a finale and voice parts introduced, solo and choruses, the words being Schiller's immortal 'Ode to Joy,' in the style of my pianoforte Choral Fantasia, only of much greater breadth. The price is 600 florins, C. M." To gauge the worth of this composition in florins, or any other coin, would now be a matter of extreme difficulty; for as there is no musical creation with which it can be compared, its value is indeed priceless. And yet how few, save professional musicians and earnest lovers of the art, really know its many beauties, or could even roughly analyse its structure. Partly this may be accounted for by its comparatively rare performance in England, in consequence of its extreme difficulty, and partly by the want of any handy edition of the Symphony, by which the audience could follow it in the concert-room and reproduce it on the pianoforte at home. This want is now supplied by the new and cheap edition before us; and it comes indeed most opportunely, for at the approaching Leeds Festival the work is to be given, with a band and chorus fully equal to do the utmost justice to both its instrumental and choral portions; and not only therefore can every listener have the notes before him during its performance, but he can doubly enhance his enjoyment of the composition by studying it in his own room beforehand. It is almost needless to state that the work is printed with remarkable clearness; but we may say that the judicious marking of the salient parts of the score materially increases its value to the artistic reader. The pianoforte arrangement, too, is most skilful

throughout—being neither too simple for students nor too difficult for amateurs—and the English version of the words proves that the translator has a true reverence for Schiller's poetry, and a deep sympathy with Beethoven's music. In every respect this edition reflects the utmost credit upon a firm which has already done so much to popularise the works of the greatest composers.

Novello, Ewer and Co.'s Pianoforte Albums. No. 2. Compositions by John Sebastian Bach. Edited by Berthold Tours. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IN our notice last month of the first number of these Pianoforte Albums, we spoke at length of the high character of its contents, the excellent manner in which it was edited, and the low price at which it was issued; and have now only to say that the second number amply justifies our warm praise of the commencement of the work, and our sanguine anticipations of the future. The celebrated "Suites Françaises" and "Suites Anglaises" have been in this number largely drawn upon. Classical pianists need not be reminded of the excessive beauty of these extracts; but the many to whom they are still unknown cannot be too strongly urged to possess themselves of compositions which, both for practice and performance, are infinitely superior to the works which have hitherto absorbed their attention. Amongst the contents the Fantasia in C minor, the Bourrée in E flat major from the Fourth Sonata for violoncello (transcribed by Agnes Zimmermann), the Gigue in D major from "Partita 4," and Selections from "Partita 5," are also included; and in every respect the volume, although to be obtained at the cost of one ephemeral instrumental or vocal piece, will be found a little casket of priceless gems.

Ruhig, ruhig, warmes wildes Herz. Song. Composed by Martinus Scriblerus. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THERE is so much originality in this song, and such an evident desire to give a sympathetic musical colouring to the words, that we are disposed to pass over a few crudities which experience will doubtless some day point out to the composer himself. A characteristic symphony, commencing on the dominant of the key (A minor)—in which a good use is made of the minor supertonic—leads effectively to the passionate opening phrase for the voice, the accompaniments throughout the song showing a boldness and independence of thought which, when placed well under control, may lead to excellent results in the future. We are especially pleased with the animated phrase in D minor (after a pause upon the dominant), to which the triplet accompaniment gives much effect. It may be well to mention that a dot is omitted after the second A, in the first bar of the vocal part; and there is a doubt as to the A♯ in the accompaniment of the third bar; but these are trifles easily corrected, and the composer may see that we take interest in his career by drawing attention to them.

Nocturne für das Pianoforte. Componirt und Walter Skeen gewidmet von Oliver King.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

LIKE all the pianoforte works of this rising young composer already noticed in these columns, the Nocturne before us appeals not either to average players or to those who confine their attention to the conventional "prettinesses" of the day. There can be no doubt that our modern writers are scarcely working on the old lines; and it may be that we are in a transition age, having gradually thrown off that definite feeling of form and tonality which characterised the music of the past, and not yet fully established those less tangible features which shall distinguish the music of the future. Composers like Mr. Oliver King are able workers in the cause; and this latest addition to his fast increasing contributions to the art should receive a warm welcome from well-trained pianists in search of novelty. The theme is extremely melodious, and the harmonies—although ultra-chromatic in many parts—are clearly written and effective. In one or two passages where any doubt might exist upon the best fingering, the composer has carefully indicated the method he would himself employ.