THE Musical Times

ESTABLISHED IN 1844

Heinrich Hofmann (Concluded)

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Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 23, No. 471 (May 1, 1882), pp. 253-256

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3358337>

Accessed: 23/12/2014 01:03

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combine to make up an unsurpassable picture of solemn dread. *Hagen* has gloomily stalked away over the hills, and the men now follow him with the dead hero's body; the moon shines down upon the retreating funeral procession as the orchestra breaks into the sublime Funeral March, as it is called. This is merely a string of phrases connected with *Siegfried*, welded into one whole by the aid of our last quotation (65) in Wagner's own inimitable manner. During this piece the scene changes to the Hall of the Gibichungs, as in Act I. *Gudrun* is waiting by night for the return of the hunting party. Presently *Hagen* comes in, rousing up all the house with wild hysterical glee to welcome home the hunters. The people come in with torches and lanterns, to meet only the funeral procession of *Siegfried*. Woe and terror prevail. *Hagen* boldly defends his deed, and asserts his "booty-right" on the dead man by endeavouring to seize the fatal ring. *Gunther* struggles with him for it and is killed. The confusion is only quelled by the solemn entry of *Brynhildr*, who has been down to the river and taken counsel of the Rhine-nymphs. She says:—

Children I heard
crying to their mother
to say that milk has been spilled;
but nought I marked
a fitting lament
for the highest hero's fate.

She bids the men to build a funeral pyre by the river's brink (No. 61), and meanwhile sings a noble funeral song, in the course of which all the principal motives of the four dramas appear, No. 35 forming the exalted climax. It may here be noticed that some thirty lines of the libretto have been judiciously cut out by the composer in setting to the music, on account of too great length. Yet these are some of the best lines in the whole poem. *Brynhildr* mounts her horse *Grani*, and leaps him (at least the stage direction says so) into the fire, where she is consumed with her lover. The Rhine swells up, and washes over the fire embers; the nymphs, floating on it, regain their Ring at last; and *Hagen*, wildly attempting its rescue, is pulled down into the flood and drowned. During this the brass instruments intone the Valhalla theme (8) against the undulating Rhine arpeggios of the strings, while the Rhine-nymphs' motive (3) and *Brynhildr's* blessing (35) soar above. Louder swells the Valhalla march as a red glow appears on the distant horizon, and in the sky is seen a vision of the gods sitting round their hall, and being burnt up by *Loki's* fire. The connection between the destruction of *Siegfried* and *Brynhildr* and that of Valhalla is by no means clear, but it rounds off the tragedy by leaving no one of the characters alive, except perhaps *Gudrun*.

The exigences of space have prevented us from doing more than give an account of the incidents, and a list of the principal motives of this remarkable work. We can only advise those interested in it to read through the vocal scores, and disentangle for themselves, by the light of our remarks, the mazes of the music, of which no verbal description, however full, can give much idea. The "Nibelung's Ring" differs from "Tristan" and the "Mastersingers" in the fact that while nearly all the motives or component musical phrases are diatonic, their treatment is chromatic. On the first production of the work many critics, both German and English, while admitting its great beauties, found so much to repro-

bate in both music and libretto, that their summing-up was: "This work is a magnificent mistake." But what avails the voice of the critic when it contradicts the public judgment? The "Nibelung's Ring" is now being played at every German opera-house which can afford to mount it, and the success is invariable and overwhelming. In the face of this the critic has only to hold his peace.

HEINRICH HOFMANN

By JOSEPH BENNETT.

(Concluded from page 185.)

As a composer of instrumental music Hofmann is most widely known through his works for the pianoforte, which have attained great popularity on account of reasons not less legitimate than obvious. Hofmann is no pretender to a position in advance of his time, nor does he aim to satisfy his ambition by figuring as the god of a small sect. He writes for the masses, without descending to the level of common taste. The character of his pieces, their scope and form of expression, even the very designations they bear, bespeak a desire for "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." Yet there is no attempt to win the suffrages of the "many-headed" by appeals to vulgar fancies. However broadly laid out to catch votes, Hofmann's pianoforte pieces are invariably those of a refined as well as an accomplished musician. The composer is, therefore, doing a specially good work in art. It is all very well for gifted men to labour in the upper spheres. There can be no higher aim than the creation of music which exemplifies the sublimest powers of the human mind, and no higher reward than its acceptance by those who comprehend all the greatness of such an achievement. But if nothing more were done than this what would become of the art? We need men that, like Hofmann and others, are willing to take upon themselves a less lofty though not less useful mission, and, by appealing to the people in language understood of them, to cultivate their tastes to a perception of higher and higher good.

From the first, Hofmann has shown himself awake to the favour enjoyed by national and characteristic music, with which the catalogue of his pieces for the pianoforte abounds. It is interesting to observe how almost exclusively he has confined himself, in the gratification of this taste, to nationalities—as Russia and Hungary—the music of which is chiefly remarkable for strangeness of rhythm, or—as Scandinavia—for strongly marked and erratic forms of melody. This preference may be either the result of inclination or policy, but in any case it illustrates one of the tendencies of the present musical age, which, in its restless search after novelty, leaves no hole unexplored, no corner unswept. The great masters of eighty years ago were satisfied to introduce a national melody once or twice in a lifetime, by way of compliment—as Beethoven—or for the indulgence of a whim—as Haydn. But now we have symphonies and concertos named after a half-dozen countries, while in the lower walks of Art classic themes and rhythms are being elbowed out by strong and uncouth barbarians. There is nothing in all this to excite alarm, but rather hope. The ancient hero who, struck to the earth, sprang up with renewed strength gained from the Great Mother, is a type of many things, and every form of Art would become effete were it not invigorated at intervals by inoculation with the sap of nature in its untutored naturalness. Thus it is emphatically with music, and when, in course of time, culture has taken off the roughness of

the crude forms now so plentifully used, our art will find itself in possession of fresh, vigorous and healthy means. Hofmann has turned national music to very good account, showing, indeed, a special aptitude for its treatment from a classic point of view. In proof, we need only cite his Hungarian Dances, originally written for orchestra, but best known, in this country at least, by the composer's own arrangement for four hands. In these compositions—so they may be called, noting what is made out of the primitive material—Hofmann has secured the most picturesque effects, into the exact truth of which we do not care to inquire, seeing how enjoyable they are. At the same time he has preserved the spirit of the original. Too often the manipulators of national melodies rob them of their wild fragrance, and give them over to us as undistinguishable as the odour of a wood violet in a drawing-room crowded with exotics. Hofmann shows his good sense by avoiding this, even when he has an orchestra at command, and is naturally tempted to use it with more regard for the effect of his score than the claims of his theme. In the "Steppenbilder" ("Prairie Pictures") we have another exemplification of the composer's aptitude. These pieces are avowedly based upon Russian melodies, and it is interesting to observe the clever way in which, without sacrificing characteristics, the themes are handled. Here is the motive of No. 2—a Lento in A major—

—nothing more, yet out of this Hofmann makes two pages of refined and charming music, noteworthy for the richness of its harmonic treatment. A set of "Norwegian Songs and Dances," in three books, for pianoforte (solo or duet), also deserves attention on the same grounds. The wild and plaintive melodies of the far north have a fitting expositor in Hofmann, who deals with them as though he loved them. Who would not love them? Take these two, which the German composer has used in association for a "Spring Dance":—

Subjects so naïve and virginal might well tempt any man to expend upon them his best art, and Hofmann has done so, investing them with a harmonic dress that does not conceal, but rather sets off their beauty. In another example we have a "Tanzlied," founded upon a two-bar rhythm—

and expanded into a charming pianoforte study. With reference to Hofmann's treatment of national or people's music, mention is certainly deserved here by his "Ländler" pieces, and his transcription of eight popular British airs, which transcription he has dedicated to Sir Julius Benedict. These trifles

are interesting, not because the themes are handled in an elaborate manner, but for the reason that the composer dealt with them in the absence of any knowledge of the family to which they belong. The result of having our wild flowers of melody removed to a German soil, and cultivated by a German gardener, is curious, but withal attractive as showing in what measure such things are affected by transplantation, and how oddly they present themselves.

Leaving the field of national music, which no one "exploits" more industriously than Hofmann, our composer is found engaged with equal eagerness and industry in that which yields "characteristic" music. For the art which is perfectly "pure," using the word in its mathematical sense as the opposite of "applied," he seems to cherish no great affection. Hence, in going through a catalogue of Hofmann's instrumental works, we meet with twenty pieces bearing some fanciful or suggestive title for one which is simply described by the musical term most applicable. This may be the result of policy, and if so, who will sternly blame a composer for meeting a public want which, after all, is harmless? We may rail at the desire of the public to have their pianoforte pieces associated with some incident, scene, or feeling, as the offspring of artistic weakness, but the thing is too universal and too powerful to be set aside with lofty disdain. Nor is it altogether a weakness. Granted that the man who prefers his music without a label, and derives from it greater enjoyment when free to make his own interpretation—granted that he is musically more robust than another who cannot thus stand on his own legs, yet the craving for a poetic designation or application has its roots somewhere in poetic instinct. At any rate, composers and publishers must reckon with it, and, within due bounds, may not only gratify it, but use it as a means for popularising art. Beethoven's Sonata in C sharp minor, had it never found another name, would have ranked among the choicest gems of music, but when Cranz of Hamburg called it the "Moonlight" he gave an impetus to the work which, even now, carries it easily where access would otherwise have been difficult. The title—we will not stop to discuss its propriety—invests the music with a poetic significance, and arrests the attention in thousands of cases where, without it, neither the one result nor the other would have been possible. At the same time this characterisation of music may be carried too far, and easily becomes exaggerated and contemptible. The noblest and purest music is always that which appeals directly and unaided to fancy and feeling, moving both without stimulus from, or guidance by exterior things. Among the writers of characteristic music, Hofmann, as we have said, is a very industrious and comprehensive labourer, dividing his attention, like Schumann, almost equally between objective and subjective themes. Schumann, we cannot but fancy, has had considerable influence over him in this respect—not, perhaps, as materially affecting his method, but as determining the nature of his work. Some recognition of the fact may have been made by Hofmann himself, when he dedicated the twelve pieces entitled "From my Diary" to the widow of the illustrious man. The very names of these pieces suggest Schumann: "Discourse," "Hunting Scene," "The Nightingale sings," "The last Farewell," "Snowflakes"—these all come to us like Schumann echoes. Let us add that they are not unworthy of the connection. Schumann could never have written them, it is true, any more than Hofmann could write the dead master's "Carnival" scenes; but, in their way, the twelve pages from the "Diary" are as charming in fancy and as graceful in style as heart can wish. We take these as fairly

representative of the composer's highest gifts, and invite our readers to obtain them in order to base thereupon a correct estimate of the author. At the very outset a favourable impression is made by the charming Allegretto called "Over the Waters," with its graceful undulations and its expansive open-air effect. The subject has employed many pens, but rarely received greater justice than in Hofmann's case. A sadder and deeper note is struck in "The last Farewell," but its solemn vibrations merge into the simple, unaffected gaiety of the Allegro non troppo, "By the Brook," which runs a brief yet sparkling course, and carries with it all who listen. "Under the village Linden-tree" is an allegro non troppo of more elaborate structure, and more truly characteristic of the composer by reason of its freer harmonic treatment. Hofmann is an ardent lover, we will not say of modulation—because, as a matter of fact, modulation *secundum artem* is fading out of practice—but of transitions. He often springs them upon us in a manner as startling as unexpected, and under circumstances which half persuade us to believe that he is perpetrating a joke. No example of this occurs in the piece under notice, which only shows the composer's disdain for such commonplaces as dominant and sub-dominant, and his preference for excursion farther afield. Hofmann is at his best in an Andante, "The Nightingale sings," a perfect little idyl of the moonlit woods, with their mysterious harmonies; and, yet again, in the Allegro, "Snowflakes," which might just as well have been called a "Fairy Dance," so lightly and jocundly do the tinkling notes crowd upon each other. A Moderato, "Roving Bird," is another gem, as illustrative as the others we have named of the peculiar refinement and delicacy which characterise Hofmann's more poetical effusions. The composer, no doubt, lays himself open, at times, to the charge of over-elaboration. Occasionally he tends to obscure his outline by a crowd of details, but it cannot be denied that all his touches are those of a pencil guided by an innate perception of the beautiful and artistic. In these pieces, for example, we seldom or never catch him tripping. The pages are free from vulgarity, even when they are most conventional, and at no time is it possible for a cultured taste to turn away in just disdain.

Hofmann is further represented to the same effect in a set of "Reminiscences," which for the most part are hardier in character than the "Diary" music, and take a bolder flight. These works form a musical commentary upon certain quotations from the poets, with which they are prefaced, after a mode now common. The selections have evidently been made with a keen eye for musical fitness. Here is one, for example:—

Am schimmernden See im Mondenschein,
Ein Elfenkind sass trauernd allein.

And here another:—

Hat eine Zither geangen
An der Thür unbracht,
Der Wind est gegangen
Durch die Saiten bei Nacht.

Upon the foundation of suggestive thoughts like these Hofmann has built some of his best musical structures, lifting them up above mere prettiness into the higher region of that beauty which is animated by the power of true art. Take for instance, the Allegro agitato in B minor, entitled "Verloren." In its restlessness, and what we may describe as hardness of structure, the very spirit of Heine's lines seems reflected, while the more tender character of the episode in G major appears to suggest that no fate lies beyond the influence of hope. A delightful Andante, "Zur Laute"—delicate as fairy gossamer

—may be found in the second book of these "Reminiscences," but amateurs will have some trouble in deciding whether this or its successor, "Am Geissbach," bears the palm for picturesque qualities. The second is certainly "a gem of purest ray serene," with which may be associated the Vivace that illustrates Puck's complacent description of himself and his deeds. For contrast, we have in "Vineta" an Andante throughout which Hofmann gives the rein to his passion for elaborate design and tonal surprises. In two pages he shakes hands with as many distantly related members of the "tone family" as can well be crowded into the space. "Five Characteristic Pieces" may here be mentioned for the sake of a slow movement called "Twilight"—another exemplification of the composer's delicate touch—and also for the opportunity afforded by a "Humoreske" in F major of questioning whether he possesses to any marked extent the gift of humour. We certainly discover no evidence of it in the piece just named, which might with more propriety be termed a caprice. Turning to No. 5 ("Carnaval") of a set of six, entitled "Italian Love Tale," we are struck by gaiety and fun rather than humour. In this respect nothing can be better: the music rushes on with many a quip and crank to keep the fancy alive and the spirit buoyant, but the subtler quality in which Beethoven, Mozart, and especially Haydn, were so rich, seems to us wanting. It must be said for Hofmann that he rarely places himself in a position to make his deficiency of humour conspicuous. His natural habitat is among the gravities and gentler graces of nature and humanity, of which he may rightly claim to rank as at once expositor and poet.

Referring again to the "Italian Love Tale," evidence that Hofmann knows how to utter the musical language of the divine passion is found in an Andante sostenuto which seeks to represent a dialogue, after the fashion of Mendelssohn's well-known "Song without Words." In essential respects this effort is a complete success. The joy and fear of love mingle in true proportion. Peace and agitation succeed each other as they should, while the music is not without the climax which seems eager, in the abundance of its feeling, to transcend the power of art. We look for this in No. 3 of six pieces designated "The Trumpeter of Säkkingen," an Andante sostenuto founded upon the lines:—

Dreamily young Werner lifted
Unto her his raptured gaze:
"Am I dying, or is doubly
My young life to me now given?"
In each other's arms they flew then,
Sought each other's lips with ardour,
And, transported, pressed upon them
Love's first kiss, so sweet and blissful.

What Wagner or Gounod would make of a text like this we can readily conceive, nor has Hofmann failed in rising to the height of the argument. The moment of doubt and indecision is happily expressed by a short Andante, throughout which a two-bar phrase rises higher and higher till its anxiety merges into the joyous passion of an Allegro vivo. The *abandon* of the music in this, the principal movement, is admirable, while its melodic and harmonic character helps to place it in the front rank of that which is consecrated to love. That Hofmann has the gift of intensity we need take no further trouble to prove, but if it were needful so to do we should point to the fifth movement of the "Liebesfrühling," an Allegro agitato in E major:—

Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen,
Er hat genommen mein Herz verwegen,
Nahm er has meine? Nahm ich das seine?
Die beiden Kamen sich entgegen.

Impetuosity and overwhelming power of feeling are here remarkably exemplified. It is the kind of music

that, to use a popular locution, carries one away, yet the means employed are perfectly legitimate, no sensational effect being gained, as is so often the case nowadays, by doing violence to true art. Beyond this movement we do not go in our investigation of Hofmann's claim. Let it stand as an answer to those who ask: "What can this man say?"

We have not included Hofmann's larger instrumental works in the scope of inquiry, for the reason that his popularity must be determined at present by compositions which are available for general use. Acquaintance with these will stimulate rather than repress a desire to know the composer's more ambitious effusions, because they cannot fail to create a conviction that in Hofmann we have, if not a mighty genius, a composer of great ability and graceful endowments—one whose sympathy with and appreciation of all that is beautiful and poetic in nature and human life have already given birth to that which is beautiful and poetic in art, and will continue to do so in increasing proportion as experience grows and years pass on.

THE GREAT COMPOSERS

By JOSEPH BENNETT.

No. XI.—CHOPIN (*continued from page 194*).

THE story of the circumstances which led to Chopin's separation from Madame Sand is so well told by the lady in her "*Histoire de ma Vie*" that we shall neither waste the reader's time nor our own space by transcribing from it somewhat freely. Their attachment had lasted seven years, but under conditions of increasing difficulty, owing to the influence of ill-health upon the musician's nervous temperament. On this point Madame Sand observes:—

"My affection would not have been able to perform the miracle of making him even a little calm and happy, but for the help of God, Who preserved to him a measure of health. However, he declined visibly, and I knew not how to combat by remedies the growing irritation of his nerves. The death of his friend Dr. Matuszinski, followed by that of his father, gave him a terrible blow. The Catholic dogma invests death with frightful terrors, and Chopin, instead of dreaming for those pure souls a better world, had only distressing visions. I was obliged to pass many nights in a chamber adjacent to his, and be ready to get up from my work a hundred times in order to chase away the spectres of his sleep and of his sleeplessness. The idea of his own death came to him attended by all the superstitious imaginings of Slavic poetry. A Pole, he lived in a nightmare of legends. Phantoms called him, clasped him; and, instead of seeing his father and his friend smile upon him in the light of faith, he repelled their fleshless faces from his, and struggled under the embrace of their cold hands."

Upon the practice of his art this condition of mind and body had strange and startling effects:—

"His creativeness was spontaneous, miraculous. He found it without seeking, without prevision. It descended upon his piano suddenly, completely, sublimely, or it sang to itself in his head during a walk, and he made haste to hear it by rushing to the instrument. But then began the most heart-rending labour at which I have ever assisted. It was a succession of efforts, irresolutions and impatiences to repossess himself of certain details of the theme he had imagined. That which had come to him entire he analysed too much in trying to write it down, and his regret at not finding it complete according to his idea threw him into a kind of despair. He shut himself up in his room for entire days,

weeping, walking about, breaking his pens, repeating and changing a bar a hundred times, and beginning again next day with minute and desperate perseverance. He spent six weeks over a single page, only to go back and write that which he had traced at the first essay. For long I had influence enough to make him adopt the spontaneous suggestions of his inspiration. But when he was no further disposed to put faith in me, he softly reproached me for having spoiled him and with not being sufficiently severe. I tried to distract him, to make him move about. Sometimes, putting all my family into a *char-à-bancs* I forced him, despite himself, to that agony, took him to the banks of the Creuse, and in two or three days, given up to sun and rain on frightful roads, we arrived, laughing and hungry, at some magnificent site where he seemed to become reanimated. Such fatigues broke him down the first day, but—he slept! The last day he was another man in returning to Nohant, and solved the difficulties of his work without too much effort; but it was not always possible to make him leave the piano, which was more often his torment than his joy; and little by little he manifested temper when I put him out. I dared not insist. Chopin in anger was alarming, and as with me he always restrained himself, he seemed near upon suffocation and death."

Madame Sand then speaks of herself, and shows that there was no real communion of her mind and soul with the mind and soul of Chopin:—

"My life, always active and lively on the surface, was become in reality more sad than ever. I despaired of being able to give to others the happiness I had renounced for myself, for I had more than one subject of profound chagrin against which I forced myself to react. The friendship of Chopin had never been a refuge for me in sorrow. He had too many ills of his own to support."

At length came the end:—

"Following the last attacks of his malady his spirit was extremely oppressed, and Maurice, who had tenderly loved him till then, was suddenly wounded by him in a manner unexpected and for a futile purpose. They embraced a moment after, but the grain of sand had fallen into the tranquil lake, and, one by one, the pebbles followed. Chopin was often irritated without reason, and sometimes unjustly angry against good intentions. I saw the evil grow and extend to my other children; rarely to Solange, whom Chopin preferred because she alone had never spoiled him, but to Augustine with frightful bitterness, and to Lambert even, who was never able to understand why. Augustine, assuredly the sweetest and most inoffensive of us all, was in a state of alarm at his behaviour, he having been so good to her. All this, however, was endured till one day Maurice, tired of petty attacks, spoke of going away. That could not be, and ought not. Chopin did not support my legitimate and necessary intervention. He bowed his head and declared that I loved him no longer. What blasphemy, after eight years of maternal devotion. But the poor bruised heart had no consciousness of its delirium. I thought that some months passed at a distance and in solitude would cure this wound and make the friendship calm, the memory equitable. But the Revolution of February arrived, and Paris become momentarily odious to that spirit, incapable of accommodating itself to any disturbance in social forms. . . . I saw him again for an instant in March, 1848. I shook his cold and trembling hand. I wished to speak to him, but he escaped. It was my turn to say that he loved me no longer. I spared him that pain, and placed all in the hands of Providence and of the future. . . . I have been told that he invoked me, regretted me, filially loved me to the end. It was