Review

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MANCINELLI'S "ERO E LEANDRO" IN MADRID.

SIGNOR LUIGI MANCINELLI'S opera "Ero e Leandro" achieved a most brilliant success on its first stage representation, on November 30, at the Teatro Real, of Madrid. The work had been most carefully mounted and the performance, with Madame Darclee and Signor De Marchi as excellent representatives of the principal parts, was a most satisfactory one, under the composer's direction. Nor was there any lack of enthusiastic appreciation of the work on the part of the numerous and distinguished audience present, which included the Queen of Spain and the Royal Princesses. Number after number had to be repeated, and at the conclusion of the performance the composer and leading interpreters were recalled again and again. Similarly appreciative and even enthusiastic are the notices contained in the leading journals of Madrid:—

La Epoca thus graphically describes the attitude of the audience: "Upon the first appearance of Luigi Mancinelli to take his seat in front of the orchestra, but little notice was taken of his arrival. The public seemed indifferent and some opposition even mingled with the first demonstrations of applause. Soon, however, the plaudits became general and there came moments when, as in the first duet between the lovers, the audience rose *en masse* to break out into perfectly frantic applause, interrupting for the moment the progress of the scene with vociferous acclamations. And these manifestations were repeated many times during the evening."

La Correspondencia says: "'Ero e Leandro' is without question an important work, appertaining to the true modern Italian school as represented by the great Verdi, and infinitely superior, both as regards its artistic and technical merits, to all other works by the younger generation of Italian composers which we have heard here. All honour to the Maestro Mancinelli. May he continue to produce works of true art such as the present."

The *Heraldo de Madrid* says: "There can be no doubt that the score of 'Ero e Leandro' is the work of a composer possessing great imaginative powers. It embodies, moreover, not a few novel harmonic and surprising sonorous effects. The composer is an adept in the utilisation of the characteristic *timbre* of every instrument in the orchestra, which enables him to obtain dazzling combinations and a variety of colour which it would be difficult to surpass."

El Diario Ilustrado says: "The triumph achieved by 'Ero e Leandro' could not have been more complete nor yet more justly deserved. There are great beauties contained in this work, much genuine inspiration, charm of melody, passages of true sublimity, and, withal, perfect marvels of instrumentation. Boito's verses also include many beautiful lines, which were greatly appreciated."

REVIEWS.

The Waxwork Carnival. A Humorous Operetta. The words written by Bernard Page. The music composed by Arthur Richards. (Novello's School Music.) [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE argument of this amusing operetta is set forth as follows: "Julius Cæsar and Mary, Queen of Scots, are engaged, and arrange with the waxworks to be married and hold high carnival in their room. Unfortunately, some nineteen hundred years previously, Julius Cæsar had plighted troth with the proud English Queen, Boadicea, who, hearing of his faithlessness, stops the ceremony by announcing an action for breach of promise. This rouses the indignation of the chorus, who, in the second part, give vent to their woes. Julius Cæsar comforts them by the assurance that Henry VIII. has looked favourably on Boadicea, and that it is highly probable some agreement may be made. Eventually two marriages take place instead of one, and Henry and Boadicea, Julius Cæsar and Mary, are united amid great rejoicings, which, however, are brought to an abrupt close by the clock announcing daybreak, and the waxworks go to sleep as the curtain falls." The quaint humour of this plot has been tersely developed in a series of lyrics and short speaking parts that would not only

supply a diverting entertainment for children, but would also provide amusement for their elders. The music is extremely simple, but possesses distinctive attractiveness by its assimilation of folk-song characteristics, and vivacity is imparted to the solos by the interjectional remarks of the chorus. The annexation of the Bridal chorus from Wagner's "Lohengrin" for the marriage festivities increases the humour of the work. It should be added that, in addition to the characters mentioned in the argument, there are speaking parts for *King Cole* and *Little Red Riding-Hood*. Unlimited diversity of dress and any number of assistants can, of course, be introduced in the chorus.

The Bispham Album of Classical Songs. Selected and edited by David Bispham.

An April Shower. Cantata for Treble Voices. Words by Bernard Page. Music by Arthur Page.

A Waif and Stray. Song. Words by Edward Oxenford. Music by Henry J. Wood.

The Mermaid. Song. Words by J. Gatey. Music by Edwin Stephenson.

[Forsyth Brothers.]

MR. BISPHAM has selected two songs by Schubert—namely, "An die Musik" (To Music) and "Der Zwerg" (The Dwarf)—and eight well-known lyrics by Schumann, the whole forming a convenient selection for baritone singers, to suit the compass of whose voices several of the examples have been transposed. Mr. Bispham's editorial work comprises breath and accent marks, which will be helpful to the imperfectly trained singer, and in "The Dwarf" attention is called to the necessity of alteration of tone colour in certain passages, a matter much overlooked by vocalists.

Mr. Page's cantata is melodious and simple and well adapted for use in schools. The choruses are written in two parts, and the vocal solos only call for very moderate abilities. Speaking parts are also provided and opportunities afforded for variety of costume.

"A Waif and Stray" follows the path of Gounod's "Worker" and meets a like reward. The vocal part is well laid out for the voice and the accompaniment is tasteful and musicianly.

Mr. Stephenson's "Mermaid" sings an attractive song, although she is much given to say "Ah-lee," the meaning of which is not quite clear, but it rhymes beautifully with "me" and "sea," which may account for its frequent repetition. The music is melodious and the pianoforte part effective. "But never a voice from the ship" replies, and one feels rather sorry for the siren who is left alone perpetually singing "Ah-lee."

Three Dances from the Music to F. M. Barrie's "The Little Minister." Arranged for the Pianoforte. By A. C. Mackenzie. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

It has widely been admitted that the requirements of incidental music to the drama have never been better met than by Sir Alexander Mackenzie in his score for Mr. Barrie's fascinating comedy "The Little Minister," produced at the Haymarket Theatre on November 6 last. The "Three Dances" comprise the "Lilt," which, with one of the composer's pieces "From the North," forms the introduction to the second act, and the "Pastoral" Dance and the stirring "Eccossaise" which constitute the subsequent *entr'actes*. Many pianists who have witnessed the performance will doubtless be glad of the opportunity thus afforded to renew at will acquaintance with this music; but apart from the pleasant memories which may be linked with the strains, the dances are bright and vivacious pieces. They demand a decisive and crisp touch, but are by no means difficult either to read or play. The "Lilt" is rendered peculiarly distinctive by the unexpected strong accentuation occasionally thrown on the second beat of the bar and by the deft use of Scotch musical idiom. The latter attribute is still more noticeable in the "Eccossaise," which seems to have come direct to the composer's brain from the wild and breezy Highlands. These features must be thoroughly appreciated by the pianist in order to do justice to this music, which in spirit and style is essentially Scotch.