Music in Dresden

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which modern languages, mythology, history of music and literary history, dramatic representation, recitation, dancing, fencing, and gymnastics are being taught in the various departments of the institution, which enjoys the support of the aristocracy and of wealthy private inhabitants of the Austrian capital. Of musical performances eighty were held for orchestra, sixty for chamber-music, and twenty-five for mixed choir during the year.

During the projected historical performances of Mozart's operas, to be given this winter at Vienna, leading parts will be taken by Mesdames Pauline Lucca, Schuch-Proska, and Bianchi.

M. Alexandre Zarzycki is announced to have accepted the directorship of the Warsaw Conservatoire, in the room of Apollinaire de Kotski, whose death was noticed in our last number.

The Annual Meeting of the Allgemeine Deutsche Musiker-Verband was announced to be held from the 26th to the 28th ult., at Breslau, among the principal subjects proposed for discussion being the foundation of a publishing establishment in connection with the Society.

A monument, the work of Herr Donndorf, to be erected at the grave of Robert Schumann, will be inaugurated at Bonn during next month.

Herr Joachim Raff is said to have just completed a new Symphony, which will be the ninth of the fertile composer's similar works.

After an interruption of four years, the annual Music Festivals of the Swiss Cantons will be revived next spring, when the confederate choirs will assemble at Zurich.

We have much pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers (at the bidding of a competent correspondent) to the artistic activity displayed by the Choral Society of Turin under the able direction of a sterling musician, Signor Giulio Roberti. During the short period of its existence (it was founded in 1875 by the late Signor Tempia) the Society, it appears, has devoted itself to the performance of a number of classical masterpieces of both older and modern schools; and the concerts being much frequented and appreciated, there can be no doubt that the Society is exercising a healthy and stimulating influence upon the musical life of Turin. We shall follow Signor Roberti's artistic efforts with sincere interest.

The Maestro Usiglio's Opera "Le Donne Curiose" was performed with much success at Milan. In consequence of the favourable reception accorded to the work in Italy, the publisher of the opera, Sonzogno, has commissioned the composer to write another *opera buffa* for him, which the maestro, inspired by success and the orders of his publisher, has promised to complete at the beginning of next year.

Mercuri's Opera "Il Violino del Diavolo," already successfully produced in Italy, has recently gained much applause at Madrid, the fact being probably due as much to the double talent of vocalist and violinist displayed by Madame Carolina Ferni, for whom the opera was originally written, as to the intrinsic merits of the work.

We have to record the death, at the age of seventy-two, of M. A. Thys, composer of several popular operettas and for many years an able contributor to the columns of the Paris music journal *Le Ménestrel*.

M. Paul de Chazot, author of several operatic libretti, and translator, in conjunction with MM. Nutter and Beaumont, of the text-book of Weber's "Oberon," has just died at Paris.

The death is also announced of Julius Schmock, "Dom-Sänger" at Berlin, and much esteemed as a vocal artist of eminence.

We subjoin, as usual, the programmes of concerts recently given at some of the leading institutions abroad:—

Paris.—Last Organ Concert of M. Alexandre Guilmant, at the Trocadéro (August 3): Prelude, E minor (Bach); Concerto in F (Handel); Double Fugue, G minor (Eberlin); "Danse des Sylphes" (Berlioz); Scherzo capriccioso (Guilmant); Gavotte (Martini); Improvisation, by the Concert-giver. Vocal soli.

Dresden.—Operatic Concert at the Conservatorium (August 2): Scenes from "Le Nozze di Figaro" (Mozart); "Trovatore" (Verdi); "Magic Flute" (Mozart); "Stradella" (Flotow); "Hans Heiling" (Marschner).

Leipzig.—Concert of the Musikverein (August 2): "Nordische Heerfahrt" (E. Hartmann); "Rouet d'Omphale," symphonic-poem (Saint-Saëns); Last Movement from Symphony in C (Schubert); Meditation for harp and stringed orchestra (Bach-Gounod); Overture, "Freischütz" (Weber); Triumphal March (R. Hofmann). At St. Thomas's Church (August 2 and 9): Prelude, A minor (Bach); Motetts and Songs (Richter, Rust, Rietz, and Hauptmann). At St. Thomas's Church (August 17): "Domini Jesu Christi," offertory (Cherubini).

Weimar.—Liszt Concert, under the direction of the composer (July 10): Introduction to "St. Elizabeth," "Ave Maria stella," for alto, female chorus, and organ; Psalm 137, for soprano, violin, harp, and organ; Fantasia and Fugue on the name of "Bach"; "The Seven Sacraments," for chorus, soli, and organ (Liszt).

Auburn (New York): Chamber Concerts of Mr. W. C. Richardson (July 7 to August 4); Fugue, D minor (Scarlatti); Trio for pianoforte, violin, and clarinet (Sweboda); Sonata, Op. 10, No. 3; Rondo, Op. 51, No. 1; Sonata, Op. 26 (Beethoven); Grande Polonaise, Rondo Brilliant, and Polacca Brillante (Weber); Ballet Music from "Farramors" (Rubinstein); Forest Scenes (Schumann), &c.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MUSIC IN DRESDEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—The Hoftheater here opened for the season on the first of this month, giving alternate play and opera. Meyerbeer's "Robert the Devil" was announced for the commencing opera; but at the last moment (owing to the indisposition of the singer who was to have been the *Bertrand*) it was changed for "Lucia di Lammermoor," which was only moderately well executed. The second opera performed was "Aennchen von Tharau," by Heinrich Hofman; the music of which is quite new to me, and which I found charmingly elegant and graceful. It is a village story; a pastor's daughter who inspires a passionate attachment in a sedate professor of theology and in a student youth of the same university. When the professor obtains the pastor's sanction to his suit, the daughter dutifully accepts her father's choice, which renders so desperate the enamoured student youth that he closes with the offer of a recruiting officer who passes through the village, enlists in his troop, and departs for the wars. The pastor's daughter, *Aennchen*, discovers too late that she has unconsciously returned the love of her student admirer, and confides to her friend *Gretchen* her misery at finding herself engaged to marry the sedate professor. This latter is magnanimous as well as passionately attached; so that when—on the return of his youthful rival, wounded and forlorn, exciting in the destined bride uncontrollable evidence of her pity and affection—the truth is discovered, the professor renounces his own hopes of happiness and joins the hands of the young couple. Fräulein Malten, who sang the part of *Aennchen*, seemed nervous and little at ease; but our sprightly acquaintance of the Salzburg Musikfest, Frau Schuch-Proska, was the *Gretchen*, and sang with spirit and gaiety the two lively songs and other music allotted to her in this Operetta. Herr Bulsz (the professor) has a fine rich baritone voice, which is perfectly under his command, and which he uses with a steadiness of tone and a proper taking of breath that are perfectly delightful, after the bawling and trembling that we are too often treated with by singers of the present day. Herr Decarli (the recruiting officer) is a good bass singer, acting with much soldierly bluntness and a discreet amount of military gallantry towards the attractive *Gretchen*. Herr Anton Erl (the student) has an agreeable tenor voice, and sings with earnestness and careful method. The music throughout was in the best taste, and beautifully orchestrated. The accompaniments were admirably played, with perfect attention to *pianos*, *fortes*, *crescendos*, &c., and the *entre-acte* (a lovely morsel) before the third act was exquisitely given—chiefly for stringed instruments—with a finish and delicacy worthy of quartett-playing.

The scenery, as is usual in this theatre, is an artistic study. The opening of this piece, for instance, representing the village at dawn of day, with the sky suffused by the roseate hue which precedes the rising of the sun, and gradually assuming the golden glory of morning, was a perfect piece of representation.

In the German version of Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew" (announced as "Die Widerspenstige," which unsuggestive title caused me innocently to inquire who was its author), the scenery was admirably true to the locality—"learned Padua." The colouring of the picturesque houses, the clever perspective of the streets, the perfect Italian air given throughout, was worthy of all praise. And again, when Schiller's noble drama of "Wilhelm Tell" was given, the other night, the effects of Alpine scenery were wonderfully rendered. A subdued tinkle of cattle and sheep bells, and occasionally heard distant church-chimes, suggested to the ear Swiss sounds, while gathering clouds, light and feathery at first, denser and denser by degrees, passing across the mountain heights at the back of the stage, increased whistling of the wind, deeper and deeper thunder-rolls, with more and more constant flashes of lightning, gave precisely the impression of storm approaching while the opening scene progressed. In another act, an evening rainbow; the last sunset-glow upon the distant snow-peaks; the gradual setting-in of darkness around the gorge where the insurrectionists meet to consult, the rocks revealed only by partial gleams from the men's torches and a central watchfire; the long, animated, and eager discussion of the Switzer's wrongs; then the slow stealing-on of the dawn, the rosy touch upon the loftier peaks in succession; all imparted a marvellous sense of truth to the length of passing time through a whole night of anxiously formed resolve. Theatre-going in Dresden is an elysium of artistic enjoyment to those who, like myself, take delight in good acting, sensible singing, bewitching scenery, and judicious by-play, combined with early hours and unfatiguing resort. The performances, for the most part, commence at seven, and are over before ten. The theatre itself is deliciously airy, spacious, and lofty; the accesses and egresses ample and convenient; the light beautifully arranged, leaving the audience in that semi darkness which so completely relieves the eyes, while displaying the stage in advantageous contrast; and allowing one to conclude the evening with the most satisfactory sense of comfort and untired nerves.

There is other than operatic music constantly going on here—concerts at the Public Gardens, on the Brühl Terrace, and elsewhere; while on alternate days, early in the afternoon, a military band plays close by the King's Palace, with enchanting brilliancy, precision, and rich effect. The other day I heard one of Mendelssohn's "Lieder ohne Worte," admirably arranged for wind instruments, breathed out by this band in a style of exquisite expression, with light and shade of tone that was perfectly entrancing; and on a previous occasion they gave a chorus from Wagner's "Rienzi" and one of Brahms's "Ungarische Tänze," with the utmost spirit and vivacity. Subsequently I have heard them play Mozart's Overture to "Zauberflöte" with a rapidity and clearness quite marvellous in wind instruments; and a Hymn for voices (arranged by the Music Director for this admirable brass band), composed by C. von Behr, with bewitching softness and purity of tone. It is a lovely composition, worthy of the very best composers, and was played with consistent excellence.

On the 6th, Adolphe Adam's pretty Operetta of "Le Postillon de Lonjumeau" was given, with Schuch-Proska as *prima donna*, and Anton Erl as tenor, both singing particularly well. On the following night we had "Preciosa," with Weber's bright Overture and incidental music, to which was added some characteristic dance music by Herr Wolf. The piece is pretty, and affords scope for rich and varied costumes in the Spanish nobles and wandering gipsies who form its *dramatis personæ*. The scenery was, as usual at this theatre, perfect; romantic forest and woodland glades, castle grounds and parterres; with effects of moonlight rippling on the sylvan brooks, or shedding its beams on the "loosening silver" of a fountain of real water plashing amid illuminated terraces and gala festivities.

The promised performance of Meyerbeer's "Robert the Devil" took place on the 8th, and was a success with the assembled audience. Herr Riese, the tenor, is a great favourite here, but to my taste he is vulgar in style and very pretentious. He has a horrible way of shouting out particular notes in his voice with an offensive stress utterly distasteful and insufferable. He has not an idea of "phrasing," but sings with a grand disdain of care in the mode of breath-taking, heaving deep gasps whenever it suits him, preparatory to a loud, held-on note. The *Bertrand*, Herr Decarli, was evidently still suffering from indisposition; and though he sang with much painstaking, he was so hoarse towards the conclusion of the Opera that it was with difficulty he could sing at all. He was admirably "got up" for the part, and looked very picturesquely diabolic. The *Princess* (Frau Sembrich) was devoid of sentiment, though she executed her passages with creditable precision; while the *Alice* (Frau Otto Alvsleben) possessed a clear strong voice without sweetness or charm. The orchestra accompanied the vocal music with its wonted care and delicacy, leaving the singers to be heard with due effect. As to the scenery and stage-groupings they were a true pictorial treat; and the ruined convent and churchyard at midnight, with the moon's rays falling upon the range of cloister pillars, each truly varied in design according to cloistral architecture, and upon the Gothic remains towering into the sky, formed a perfect study in scenic art.

As I had never before heard Wagner's "Tannhäuser," I rejoiced in the opportunity afforded me by its performance here on the 10th. It was splendidly got up, and the singers executed their difficult parts with great credit, while the orchestra was equally meritorious. As for the chorus-singers, it was perfectly amazing to hear the correctness with which they sang passages so unusual in interval and musical flow. The points in the Opera most to my taste were the exquisitely poetic effect of the peaceful shepherd's piping and song, with the chorus of passing pilgrims, and the calmer air of the tenor-hero, just after he has returned to earth's surface from the allurements of the Venusberg, the three—shepherd, chorus, and *Tannhäuser's* air—blending together. Then the fine part-music of the septett for men's voices, where *Tannhäuser's* knightly friends welcome his return among them again, is admirable, and was admirably sung. Then *Wolfram's* address to the evening star, and the well-conceived yearning effect of the accompaniments by stringed instruments to *Tannhäuser's* last song, recounting to his faithful friend his misery and defeated purpose in Rome, particularly pleased me.

The elaboration and originality of this music throughout is certainly most striking, and keeps the attention perpetually on the stretch.

On the evening of the 13th there was some incidental music, composed by J. B. André, given with the German version of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night, or What you will," its second title being adopted as "Was ihr wollt." The original five-act play was condensed into a three-act piece, and admirably put upon the stage. The *Viola* was charmingly impersonated by Fräulein Elmenreich; who is a delightful actress. She has lovely expressive eyes, an enchanting smile, a graceful figure with most graceful action and mien, and—to crown all—has an exquisite speaking-voice, tender, emotional, and capable of varied intonation and inflection. My only regret was the loss of one of my chief favourites among Shakespeare's clown-jesters,—dear cheerful-hearted *Feste*; this character being eliminated from "Was ihr wollt," and incorporated in that of *Fabian*; but the whole adaptation was so judiciously done and so satisfactorily enacted—from the very first personages down to the most subordinate ones—that I enjoyed the performance completely.

Fortunately for me, Weber's "Freischütz" was performed here during my stay; because it is not only, to my thinking, one of the most charming operas ever written, but it is associated with a very bright period of my life. When I was a girl, more than half a century ago, the "Freischütz" was first performed in England at Covent Garden Theatre; and I remember the enthusiasm it excited in the musical circles of the day, and in the public generally. Its novel effects of instrumentation, its bold discords in the

incantation scene, its grace and freshness of vocal passages at once aroused the liveliest interest; and it became "the rage." Every evening, the Overture was encored—and nothing was talked of but Weber and "Der Freischütz." Its London success brought its composer the order for his next Opera, and he was engaged to write his "Oberon" for Covent Garden Theatre, where it was brought out under his own conductorship, an event which I also witnessed.

The late performance of "Der Freischütz" here was super-excellent as regards orchestra, choruses, and careful level singing in all the characters; but the chief vocalists, to my taste, left much to be desired. The *Agathe* knew nothing of the art of phrasing or expression; the *Max* was poor; and the *Caspar* utterly lacked spirit in the Drinking-Song and the Triumph-Song of the first act.

I was struck, too, by the difference between the *tempi* taken in several of the movements here and with us; for instance, the opening of the Overture was, the other night, almost slower than *largo*; the Laughing-Chorus lagged; and the Drinking-Song was taken so slowly as to be heavy in the extreme, while the *agitato* second part of the moonlight aria lost all character by the tame rate at which it was executed. In all these pieces the slower *tempo* taken here was, I think, disadvantageous as compared with the one usually taken in England. It is to be supposed that Germany should know by tradition the exact *tempo* in which Weber wished his pieces to be performed; still, I prefer the one in which they are traditionally taken with us. On the whole, however, I was deeply grateful to have heard "Der Freischütz" again, and given in such generally satisfactory style as here in Dresden. Moreover, it was delightful to see the perfect "get-up" of the Incantation Scene in old Covent Garden times quite equalled by the modern supreme scenic arrangements of the Hoftheater here, and even to behold my well-remembered stage-owl of fifty-five years ago, with undimmed glaring eyes and still flapping wings.

MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

August 15, 1879.

P.S.—Since the above was written, Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," with Mendelssohn's music, has been given at the Hoftheater in exquisitely satisfactory style. The fine Overture and imaginatively conceived incidental music were played to absolute perfection by the orchestra; the elaborate and beautiful "inner parts" of the compositions, and their general light and shade, with grand swellings-out of rich tone or delicate murmurs of undertone, were all rendered in a manner to make me behold Mendelssohn's own face again as it used to look when I have seen it irradiated by pleasure at skilful performance of a great composition. I felt too as if Shakespeare himself would have smiled approval upon the charming way in which his "Midsummer Night's Dream" was arranged for adaptation to modern scenic appointments. For instance, during the second act a "set scene" was maintained throughout; but so ingenious were its stage devices (the foreground of forest-trees, diverging paths, and bushy thickets in dim moonlight, with Athens in the distance, the Acropolis, Parthenon, and colossal figure of Minerva, all bathed in the full effulgence of the moonbeams), that it served completely to give the effect of the various changes of spot indicated by the original text as those wherein, successively, *Puck* and the *First Fairy* meet; the entrance of *Oberon* and *Titania*, with their respective trains of attendant elves; the misunderstandings of the two pairs of human lovers; the rehearsal of the "rude mechanicals"; the transformation of *Bottom* (the Weaver) and his enamourment of the *Fairy Queen*; and, lastly, the dawning of the day, with the approach of the royal hunting-party arousing the sleeping couples, and *Theseus's* bidding them repair to the nuptial temple. This final scene also exhibited the taste and care which mark all the scenic arrangements of the Dresden Hoftheater; for the vast roof and columns of the temple, which occupied the front and centre of the stage, had a background of mere blue sky, thereby giving the effect of a building on an eminence.

A word of special praise must be given to Herr Hagen, who played *Flute* (the Bellows-mender) and impersonated *Thisbe* in the Interlude; he was admirably got up in a

Greek female costume, and acted with delightfully playful humour. But, indeed, all the *dramatis personæ* were admirably represented: and the whole performance was worthy of Shakespeare's poetical drama and Mendelssohn's poetical music.—M. C. C.

CARL ENGEL'S CLAVICHORDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—The remarkable "gebundene Klavier," the No. 4 Clavichord, of Mr. Engel, now to be seen at Messrs. Broadwood's, described by him in your last month's number (p. 413), presents two fresh aspects for consideration to the musicologist. The one leads back by the peculiarity of scale to an early accordence, perhaps anterior, unless entirely due to mechanical conditions, to the general acceptance of our major mode. It is this: supposing we start from C (although F has equal rights), the scale proceeds by three fifths up, G, D, and A, and as many down, F, B♭, and E♭, thus by seven open notes making a diatonic series, with minor instead of major seventh—a scale of which there is a survival in the Highland bagpipes. The second stopping produced by the half-tone tangents is measured off by about an eighteenth of the vibrating length of string, a mean of fluctuating measures from rather more than a sixteenth to a twentieth. This is practically the fretting of a lute or viol finger-board, and leans to an equal rather than a larger or smaller semitone.

The other aspect is that, by the adoption of "bundfrei" clavichords, whereby each note had its own tangent, temperament became possible; and it may be that J. S. Bach intended to mark the great importance of this invention allowing a complete circle of twelve fifths, as much as that he had adopted equal temperament, when, in 1722, he called his first collection of twenty four preludes and fugues "Das Wohltemperirte Klavier." Of course, the organ and harpsichord were capable of temperament at any time, but the clavichord, for many reasons, and of these not the least that it was expressive, was the special instrument for study.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Kensington, August 6, 1879.

A. J. HIPKINS.

FOURTHS TO OLD CHANTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In the Rev. H. Parr's letter upon the above subject contained in the June number of THE MUSICAL TIMES, he states (Canon Havergal being his authority) that the chord 6-4-3 is "hardly a century old"—of course Mr. Parr means the 6-4-3 arising from the dominant seventh, for any musician knows that instances of the 6-4-3 from the diminished seventh are often met with in the works of Handel and even Purcell; and supposing that the second inversion of the dominant seventh is referred to, I should be glad to be permitted to say that, although I believe Handel never used the chord in question, I have before me several instances of its employment more than a century ago. I refer to "Der General-Bass" by Johann David Heinichen, first edition, 1711; second edition (from which I quote), 1728; pages 153, 166, 191, and 198, where are numerous examples of the 6-4-3.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Sidmouth, August 12, 1879. H. A. HARDING, B. Mus.

P.S.—May I add that Mr. Heineken, of this town (Sidmouth), has lately reprinted, for gratis distribution amongst those who are really interested in the matter, an extract from the venerable volume above referred to, which contains in bar 28 a perfect 6-4-3 second inversion of dominant seventh?

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

* * * Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will greatly oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.