

The Scherzo of the Choral Symphony

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Felipe Pedrell, and his present first effort in dramatic composition is considered to justify the highest expectations in the future.

MAYENCE.—The combined choirs of the Liedertafel and the Damen Gesangverein, under the admirable conductorship of Herr Fritz Volbach, gave a highly appreciated performance, on the 3rd ult., of Liszt's seldom-heard 13th Psalm, for chorus and orchestra, and of Schubert's Mass in E flat major.

MILAN.—Umberto Giordano's new three-act opera "Fedora," brought out at the Teatro Lirico, on November 23, met with a most enthusiastic reception. Signora Gemma Bellincioni's interpretation of the titular part was excellent. The composer, who conducted, was recalled many times at the conclusion of a performance which had attracted music-lovers from all parts of Italy.

ST. PETERSBURG.—The directors of the Imperial Opera having acquired the exclusive right of performance in Russia of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde," the work will be brought out in a Russian version by Tcheichichin during the present season at the Marie Theatre.

SCHWERIN.—The first performance at the Court Theatre of the music-drama "Ingwelde," by Max Schillings, took place on November 29; Fräulein Friede and Herr Gura, son of the distinguished Munich baritone, taking the principal parts. The work is considered one of the most important modern German lyrical stage productions, and, with a view to its better appreciation, Herr Zumppe, the zealous conductor at the Court Theatre, delivered a public discourse on the work, with illustrative excerpts, on the eve of its performance.

STUTTGART.—Samuel de Lange's oratorio "Moses" was produced, for the first time in Germany, on November 30, by the Society for Classical Church Music. The choruses especially, in which some original Hebrew melodies have been introduced, met with much appreciation.

VIENNA.—A concert in aid of the projected Brahms monument was given by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, on the 11th ult., when the two great secular choral works of the master, the "Schicksalslied" and the "Triumphlied," were the principal numbers in the programme. Subscriptions to the fund, from France, were announced recently, amounting to over 53,000 francs.—The result has just been published of the International Prize Competition for a pianoforte concerto, instituted some time since by Herr Ludwig Bösendorfer, and in which seventy-two manuscript compositions had to be considered. The first prize has been awarded to Herr Edward Behm, the second to Herr Ernst von Dohnányi, and the third to Herr Jan Brandts.

OBITUARY.

THE death occurred, on the 2nd ult., at Neuilly, near Paris, of EMILIO PACINI, the distinguished librettist, at the mature age of eighty-eight. He was the son of the composer Giovanni Pacini, whose birth-centenary has recently been celebrated in Italy, and for many years occupied a post in the French Fine Arts Ministry. He wrote the libretto to Verdi's "Il Trovatore" and was also the author of the French version of "Der Freischütz" when that work was first produced at the Paris Opéra.

FRIEDRICH BRENNER, for upwards of forty years the highly esteemed musical director at the University of Dorpat, died on November 27, at Munich, aged eighty-four. He was considered in Germany as one of the best modern composers of Protestant Church music, amongst his best-known works being a "Choralbuch" and a number of four-part choral compositions.

WALTER LACY (Walter Williams) died at Brighton, on the 13th ult., in his ninetieth year. In former days Mr. Lacy was one of the best comedians of his time. He will be remembered by many old students of the Royal Academy of Music as professor of elocution in that Institution, where his handsome and commanding presence made him a "feature" of Tenterden Street in the old days. His professorship at the Academy extended from January, 1863, to September, 1890—a period of upwards of twenty-seven years.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. EDWARD GERMAN'S "HAMLET."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I thank you for the appreciative notice contained in your last issue of my Symphonic Poem "Hamlet," which was performed at Mr. Robert Newman's Symphony concert on October 29. The notice, however, contains an inference to the effect that Mr. Henry J. Wood, who conducted the work, had not taken such pains with its performance as he possibly might have done had it been the product of a foreign composer.

In this connection I feel it is only my duty to state that for Mr. Wood to have taken greater pains with my work than he actually did would have been quite impossible.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

5, Hall Road,
St. John's Wood, N.W.

EDWARD GERMAN.

ROBERT BROWNING AS A MUSICIAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In corroboration of Mr. Charles Fry's remarks on "Robert Browning as a Musician" in your October issue, perhaps the following extract from a paper containing reminiscences of the poet by Mrs. Bloomfield Moore in *Lippincott's* for May, 1890, may prove of interest to your readers.

"He possessed the gift of improvising at the piano. To listen was to be entranced as by the rapt strains of Beethoven's compositions or of Mendelssohn's glorious melodies, as the poet's hands swept the keys, passing from one theme to another; but you could listen only once to the same strains; the inspiration came and went; the poet could never repeat his melodies. Few there were who knew of this divine gift, for only to those who were most intimate with him did he reveal himself in this way. He shunned everything like ostentation."

That Browning had also a sound technical knowledge of music no one who has read "Abt Vogler," "A Toccata of Galuppi's," or that most animated and amusing description of a fugue in "Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha" can deny, while no less an authority than the late Sir Charles Hallé has remarked on the poet's familiarity with music by certain of the earlier, little-known composers of which even he (Hallé) was unaware.

Had Browning's genius found its outlet in music instead of literature, what a musician we might have had!

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Glasgow.

GILBERT S. FERRIER.

THE SCHERZO OF THE CHORAL SYMPHONY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Permit me, as a humble and non-performing amateur, to record my protest against the remarks of your critic in dealing with Mr. Henry J. Wood's recent rendering of the Scherzo of the Choral Symphony.

My reason for doing so is that I have twice heard this Symphony under Dr. Richter, who is certainly no sentimental "purist"; and if my ears have not deceived me, he follows the score, *fortissimo* strings included.

Apart from the unique authority of Richter in the interpretation of Beethoven, I cannot believe that your critic is artistically right in his contention. I assume that the horns are made to play in octaves with the lower woodwind parts. But, in the first place, does the timbre of the horn lend itself to this, and next, is it necessary to import that timbre into the "pretty tune"? In Richter's reading the gay outburst is striking and charming in the extreme, the flutes especially asserting themselves through the octave figure of the strings. And, further, is it certain that Beethoven wanted more than a flavour, so to speak, of the "tune"?

Last time I heard the "Choral" I remarked with delight to my neighbour that the melody in the passage in question was *not* given to the horns; and, for myself, I shall think it time to talk of change when Richter does so.

Your critic ends by asserting, with a crack of his whip, his "unrepentant mind." This is very sad. I trust that, in due time, he will find a place of repentance in your columns.

With many thanks for your ever-delightful paper,

I am, &c.,

R. H. E. BAYLES.

Ipswich, December 6, 1898.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY AND COLONIAL NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

ASHFORD (KENT).—The combined forces of the local choral and orchestral societies in this town gave an excellent performance of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul," on November 24, in the Corn Exchange. The solos were sung by Miss Amy Harding, Mrs. E. Colville, Mr. Wilfred Kearton (Of St. George's Chapel, Windsor), and Mr. Byron Dewhurst (of Canterbury Cathedral). "But the Lord is mindful" was sung with great pathos by Mrs. E. Colville and "Be thou faithful unto death" received a beautiful rendering by Mr. W. Kearton. The chorus sang well throughout, more especially in "Happy and blest are they" and "Is this he?" The band played the accompaniments with great care. The performance was conducted by Dr. Wilks, to whom Ashford is greatly indebted, as both societies owe their existence entirely to his interest and energy.

BARNET.—Mr. W. R. Drifill's Choral Society gave a successful performance of Sullivan's "Golden Legend," in the Town Hall, on the 8th ult. The soloists were Miss Lillian Foote, Miss Ada Kempton, Mr. John Probert, and Mr. Albert E. Rayner, all of whom were efficient in their respective parts. Miss Barnett Bowden presided at the pianoforte, and Mr. Douglas Jones officiated at the organ. Mr. Drifill conducted with marked ability.—Mr. J. F. Barnett's "The Ancient Mariner" was performed by the Barnet Choral Society at its concert in the Town Hall, on November 29. The vocalists were Miss Winnifred Wynne, Miss M. Ingram Tucker, Mr. Trefelyn David, and Mr. Robert Grice, who did full justice to their respective solos. A small orchestra was supplemented by the pianoforte (Miss Ida M. Knott and Miss Lucy E. Richards) and organ (Mr. W. A. Richards). The performance, efficiently conducted by Mr. Frank B. Wood, reflected credit upon all concerned. The programme did not contain the composer's name!

BASINGSTOKE.—The first concert of the Choral Society for the season was given in the Town Hall, on the 8th ult., when a miscellaneous selection, consisting of Stanford's "Revenge" and Mendelssohn's "Loreley" (with Miss Amy Sargent as the soprano soloist), was performed. Mr. Arthur Strong played three violoncello solos, Miss Amy Sargent and Mr. Reginald Chalcraft contributed some songs, Mrs. H. Seymour was the accompanist, and Mr. H. E. Powell, as usual, conducted.

BATH.—The Bath Choral and Orchestral Society, at its first concert of the season, on the 19th ult., performed Dr. C. H. Lloyd's "Hero and Leander" and Mr. Edward Elgar's growingly popular choral-ballad "The Banner of St. George." Both these works were admirably rendered by the Society, under the skilful conductorship of Mr. Sims. The vocalists were Miss Alice Esty and Mr. Douglas Powell, both of whom did full justice to the music assigned to them, and Mr. J. W. Duys played Wieniawski's Second Violin Concerto with brilliant effect.

BERKHAMSTED.—A successful performance of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" was given by the members of the Church Choral Society, in the Parish Church, on the evening of the 8th ult. The solos were well sustained by Miss Whitfield, Mrs. Ling, Mr. E. Branscombe, and Mr. Streatfield. An orchestra of strings, drums, and brass was

most ably led by Mr. Halfpenny. The choruses were attacked with vigour, especially "Stone him to death" and "Rise up, arise." Mr. S. Mosdell presided at the organ and Mr. W. H. London conducted.

BISHOPS STORTFORD.—Spohr's "Last Judgment" was given in the Parish Church on a recent Wednesday evening, under the able direction of the organist and choirmaster of the church, Mr. A. Eaglefield Hull, who presided at the organ. The soloists were Master Harold Curd (solo chorister of St. Albans, Holborn), Messrs. Watson, Rodway, Searles, Ackermann, and Dupère, all of whom realised their respective responsibilities. On the 19th ult. Mr. A. E. Hull gave a lecture before the Students' Association on "Early Music."

BRADFIELD.—The annual school concert at Bradfield College took place on the 17th ult., under the direction of Mr. C. F. Abdy Williams. The chief feature of interest was the performance of S. P. Waddington's "John Gilpin" by the College choir and orchestra, which was rendered with great vivacity and go. Mr. A. M. C. Nicholl, the Senior Prefect, was deservedly encored for his singing of "Nazareth." Professor Bower received a similar compliment for his violoncello solo. The orchestra performed creditably in the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony (No. 1) and the War March of the Priests from "Athalie." Mr. Williams is to be congratulated on the high standard of music attained at Bradfield.

BROMLEY (KENT).—The Bromley Philharmonic Association gave its first concert of the season on the 14th ult., at the Drill Hall. The programme included Alice Mary Smith's "Ode to the North-East Wind," Anderton's "Wreck of the Hesperus," and Eaton Fanning's "Miller's Wooing." The soloists were Miss Cordelia Grylls, Mr. Bert Pearce, and Mr. Cyril Streatfield. The string band was ably led by Mr. Norman Bath and Mr. T. Chambers presided at the pianoforte. The conductor was Mr. Frederic Fertel.—The first part of Spohr's "Last Judgment" was performed at the Parish Church on the 7th ult., by the choir, in conjunction with that of St. Mark's Church, under the direction of Mr. Frederic Fertel, who officiated at the organ. The soloists were Master Stevens and Messrs. Dutton, H. R. and B. H. Latter.

CHARD.—Haydn's evergreen "Creation" was selected for performance by the Chard Harmonic Society at its concert on the 8th ult. The soloists were Miss Ethel Wynn (who efficiently replaced Miss Nellie Palmer, absent through illness), Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Brandon, both of the Bristol Cathedral choir. The chorus sang throughout with marked success, the unusually distinct enunciation of the words being a commendable feature. The band, too, led by Mr. R. Crawford, discharged its important duties with distinct credit, and it had a fine opportunity to display its efficiency in Edward German's Three Dances from the music to "Henry VIII." The popular conductor of the Society, the Rev. H. N. Dymond, led his forces in a manner calling for the highest praise.

CIRENCESTER.—A singularly impressive Advent service was held in the Parish Church, on the 14th ult., when Spohr's "Last Judgment" was given by the choir, assisted by the following soloists: Master Willie Gammage, Master James McBean, Mr. A. Kenningham, and Mr. G. Stubbs, under the able direction of Mr. A. H. Gibbons, the organist of the church.

CHORLTON-CUM-HARDY (MANCHESTER).—On the 14th ult., at the Macfadyen Memorial Congregational Church, Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise" was sung by the choir and Choral Society. The soloists were Madame Lizzie Burgess and Mr. G. A. Seeborn. Both the principals, as well as the chorus, gave an excellent rendering of the work. Mr. James Haley (of the Hallé orchestra) played a violin solo in the second part. Mr. G. F. Walter, organist and choirmaster of the church, conducted.

DOVER.—The Dover Choral Union gave a specially interesting concert in the Town Hall, on the 7th ult.—interesting from the fact that a new cantata, composed by the popular conductor of the Society, Mr. H. J. Taylor, was performed for the first time. The title of the new work is "The Last Supper," which received an admirable