

A Note on the Tune, 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern'

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the actor. The great baritone, Lassalle, was at this time the constant companion of the two Polish artists, and they became known as 'le grand trio.'

An incomparable trio, indeed, they were! To have heard them together as Faust, Valentin, and Mephistopheles, or as Raoul, de Nevers, and Marcel, was an unforgettable experience. Later on came Plançon; but it was no longer quite the same thing. Like Edouard, he was a *basso cantante*, and their repertoires were nearly identical (bar the German, which the Frenchman barely touched), so that when Lassalle left, Plançon could not replace him, and the 'grand trio' became a thing of the past. To assert, however, that Edouard's fame was second only to that of Plançon (vide *The Times* memoir on the 1st ult.), was surely a complete reversal of the actual positions. Plançon, admirable artist and *grand chanteur* himself, always 'took off his hat' to Edouard. And he was right.

Apart from his glorious organ, Edouard de Reszke possessed in an amazing degree the rarest attributes of the *bel canto*. Thanks to his marvellous breath-control, his command of tone-colour, and his vocal agility, he could sing as lightly and delicately as a woman; or, when he pleased, he would emit a volume of rich, sonorous, powerful tone capable of penetrating through the loudest crashes of the modern orchestra. This was only one of the secrets of his remarkable versatility. Not alone as a singer but as an actor he had the gifts that enabled him to range with equal facility 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe.' His comedy was never heavy; that it was unctuous and full of humour, witness his Leporello, his Basilio, his Plunket; that it could combine the genial and sardonic with the dignified and picturesque, witness his striking Mephistopheles, modelled on Faure's original, yet having in it something of the dæmonic

that Chaliapin put into Boïto's Mefistofele. Faure, Rota, and Plançon may have sung the Serenade as well, but no voice ever sounded at once so beautiful and so forbidding in the Church scene as Edouard's. His Frère Laurent in 'Roméo' was a simple joy.

His best proof of all-round genius (as in the case of Jean) came in the early 'nineties, at about the time when the brothers went to America for the first time. It was then that they dropped Wagner in Italian, studied him in his own language, and appeared with success in some of his noblest creations. Even the Germans had to admit the beauty of Edouard's Hans Sachs, the pathos of his König Marke, the rough grandeur of his Hunding and his Hagen. It was amid the glory of these later impersonations that he quitted the stage when Jean left it, in 1905; but he continued for a time to appear at concerts, and on one memorable occasion he took part in a performance of 'Il Barbiere' in the tiny theatre attached to his brother's house in the Rue de la Faisanderie, when the Rosina was no other than Madame Adelina Patti. Two illustrious artists then bade farewell to opera on the same night.

Much might be written of Edouard de Reszke as a man and a friend, but space does not permit. Let me, in conclusion, quote the following lines from *Le Figaro* of June 1:

Every admirer of this great artist, who was at once a born gentleman and a noble-hearted man, will be grievously pained by the news of his death, happening as it did during this period of grave crisis, far removed from many who were dear to him, under conditions that deprived his brother Jean, the faithful and glorious companion of his brilliant career, of the consolation of being able to aid him in his last days and to close his eyes at the end.

A NOTE ON THE TUNE, 'WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET DER MORGENSTERN.'

BY C. SANFORD TERRY.

To Philipp Nicolai are attributed two of the finest German hymn melodies, 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern' and 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme,' of the first of which Bach makes considerable use. In my notes upon the melody ('Bach's Chorals,' Part II., page 130) I remarked that the tune improbably was original, though it is very generally attributed to Nicolai. I pointed out, moreover, that phrases of it are found in the 14th century Christmas Carol, 'Resonet in laudibus,' a resemblance which, I have since discovered, had already attracted the notice of Wilhelm Bäumker. But it is possible to be more

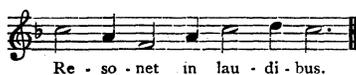
precise: a melody printed by Zahn (No. 1705), which I had overlooked, completes the materials out of which Nicolai would appear to have constructed his famous tune.

The melody, set to Psalm 100, 'Jauchzet dem Herren, alle Land,' is in Wolff Köpffel's Psalter, printed in 1538, sixty-one years before the publication of Nicolai's hymn in 1599. It consists of five lines or phrases, the first, second, and fifth of which, it will be observed, are practically identical with the first half of Nicolai's tune:

'JAUCHZET DEM HERREN, ALLE LAND' (1538).

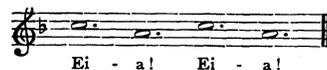


By repeating the three appropriated phrases Nicolai obtained a musical setting of six of the ten lines of his stanza. For the seventh, I suggest, he was drawn to the old carol 'Resonet in laudibus' by the likeness of its opening phrase to that of 'Jauchzet dem Herren':



Re - so - net in lau - di - bus.

Be that as it may, Nicolai picked out for his seventh line the carol's bold phrase:



Ei - a! Ei - a!

For lines eight and nine he was thrown upon his own resources, owing to the metrical dissimilarity of his hymn and his models; hence, probably, the pedestrian phrases to which those lines are set. For his last

line, phrases four and five of 'Jauchzet dem Herren' appear to have furnished the materials.

The exceedingly effective result of this musical carpentry was the melody :

'WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET DER MORGENSTERN' (1599).



Occasional Notes.

The Opera-in-English seasons now taking place in London provoke the customary obvious comments on the insufficiency and occasional absurdity of translations. But with a cosmopolitan (minus British, alas!)* repertory performed by British-speaking singers there is no other course practicable than to sing in one language. It would be unreasonable to demand that French, Russian, and Italian (to say nothing of German) operas should be all given in the language in which they were composed. Our singers are proving their capacity as fine vocalists and good actors ; but even if individuals could sing in other languages besides their own, it would be difficult for the whole company to rise to this height. Besides, does it matter so very much? Can the keenest ears catch a tenth of the words sung in any language in operatic performances?

THE CINEMATO-
GRAPHIC VOCAL
WOBBLE.

Why do so many singers, eminent and otherwise, persist in using the vibrato wobble! It is certainly not adopted in order to afford pleasure or satisfaction to auditors, for they condemn it with unanimity. We must admit that vibrato delivery may be a means of the self-expression of highly strung emotion, but when a request to 'pass the salt' is made with passionate and tearful intensity the sense of the ridiculous is stirred. Who brought the fashion in! It was evidently current in Mozart's time, as in one of his Paris letters he says :

Nothing can be more truly odious ; besides, it is a style of singing quite contrary to nature. The human voice is naturally tremulous, but only so far as to be beautiful, and it is imitated not only on wind instruments but on stringed instruments, and even on the pianoforte. But the moment the proper boundary is passed, it is no longer beautiful, because it becomes unnatural. It seems to me then just like an organ when the bellows are panting.

Punch reads the *Musical Times*—
THE *M.T.* even the small type articles. This is
PUNCHED. all to the good. In its issue for
June 13 it quotes the following :

You will find that the men most likely to get off the note are those who never get on to it.—*Musical Times*.

And the comment made is that :

The real question is how those who never get on to the note contrive to get off it.

But the quotation is incomplete, for immediately after 'never get on to it' the *M.T.* says 'at the beginning of a sentence.' The complete extract is a familiar way of describing the circular tour some singers will make round the centre of a pitch.

The *Lausanne Exchange* reports that one hundred-and-twenty members of the famous Vienna Glee Club who have just finished a tour in Switzerland, were

* In a letter to the *Observer* (June 24), Sir Thomas Beecham states that he is preparing four British Operas.

searched at the frontier on their homeward journey, with the result that the following foodstuffs were discovered : Four hundred pork sausages, sixty-five pounds of ham, ninety pounds of rice, and a large quantity of potatoes. The travellers explained that the food was for use on the journey, but the authorities confiscated it. We mention the incident chiefly in order to thank the seventeen correspondents who sent us versions of it, each one pointing out that the Glee Club proceeded to Austria Hung(a)ry.

Mr. William Boosey has started a new discussion on a perennial VICARIOUS GENEROSITY. topic. He rightly and warmly protests against the rampant pressure put on professional singers to perform gratuitously at the numerous concerts (never before in our history were there so many) organized, sometimes ostentatiously, for charitable purposes by well-meaning folk. He excepts concerts given in hospitals. He says :

The ordinary war charity concert victimises cruelly a generous profession, and I should like to ask if it is not possible for a few prominent leaders of society to agree among themselves not to lend their names in future to any charity concerts at which the only payment artists receive is a 'Thank you for your kind attendance,' even if as much as that.

He asks whether it is too much to expect that at least a beggarly ten per cent. of the profits should be set aside to pay concert-artists a bare living wage. Mr. Boosey's letter elicited sympathetic replies from concert-organizers like the Hon. Mary Portman and others who have duly recognised the claims of the musical profession. The most notable of the statements is that made in the following letter from Sir Hubert Parry to the *Daily Telegraph* :

CHARITY PERFORMANCES.

With reference to the letter from Mr. William Boosey, about the unfair way in which well-known singers and performers are made use of by rich people to gather in funds for charities, often with hardly so much as a word of thanks, it might serve to save possible misapprehension, that musical artists' interests are not looked after, if it was more generally known that the Music in War-Time Committee of the Professional Classes War Relief Council has for over two years been getting work for those who have been affected by the war, and has during that period provided 7,880 paying engagements, representing £10,000. It might also afford musical artists, whose livelihood has been hindered by the war, and who happen not to have heard of the Committee, the opportunity of knowing of its existence, and that it is always glad to be of service to them.

C. HUBERT H. PARRY, Chairman, Music in War-Time Committee.

W. G. ROTHERY, Secretary.
13 and 14, Prince's Gate, S.W. June 7, 1917.

This brief summary of the great work done by the Committee will doubtless be a revelation to many persons.