

The Advertiser 29th Aug 1898

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ORCHESTRAL CONCERT.

A Wagnerian authority tells us that when the great German composer had reached the zenith of his powers, and had given the world the famous "Nibelungen ring," he was for years the object of personal attacks in the press; in point of fact he had the distinction of being the "best abused" man in Europe, the object of wilful misrepresentation and calumny—"it was," says this writer, "like having to walk against the wind with sand and grit and foul odors blowing in one's face." In musical, as well as in some of the other higher walks of life, men of gigantic intellect, have known what it is to experience the sensation, metaphorically speaking, of hearing cries of "crucify him" to-day turned into "hosannas" to-morrow at the recognition of true genius. Richard Wagner—the musical genius, passionate poet, psychologist, dreamer, and idealist—was made the target during his lifetime for volleys of sarcasm, satire, and abuse; his realism was held up to scorn, and musicians of the old school, who had been either case-hardened with pedantry or held conventional ideas with conservative pertinacity, were dumbfounded at the advent of a man who revolutionised the musical ideas of the period. Truly the good that men do lives after they have shuffled off this mortal coil, and never was this better illustrated than in the case of Wagner. To-day he has thousands of worshippers in every quarter of the globe, and there are no warmer admirers of the great musician than the English people and their kin across the seas. The leading artists in the world journey to the Covent Garden Theatre, London, periodically now to give performances of Wagnerian opera, and the public of that mighty city, and far outside its limits, feel it incumbent on to eloquently testify their appreciation of the masterpieces of the brilliant son of the "Fatherland," by going to the Opera House with as much regularity as the pilgrims of the East to Mahomet's resting place in Mecca. Unfortunately Australia is looked upon as a far cry for such singers and actors as the famous De Reske brothers, Van Dyck, Van Rooy, Madame Calve, Melba, and Ella Russell to visit our shores and favor us with interpretations of writings of Wagner. So we have to be content with hearing either excerpts from his operas in the shape of instrumental illustrations or choruses and solos from the best known works of "The Ring." Even for these small favors we are deeply thankful.

It was, indeed, a "step in the right direction," as a venerable legislator is often fond of telling us, for the grand orchestra of the Elder Conservatorium of Music to decide upon giving a "Wagner night" at the Town Hall on Saturday evening, and the patronage of the public was all that could be desired,

Wagner's "Albunblatt No. 1," a delicious morceau, in which captivating melodies are wedded together, was exquisitely played, whilst in the paraphrase Walthar's famous "Preisleid," from "Die Meistersinger," the instrumentalists did fair justice to the rhythmical grace, and tender flowing melody of this legato movement. The "Norwegian Matrosen chorus" from "Die geude Hollander"—which Spohr characterised as "imaginative of noble invention, well written, and immensely difficult"—was also on the programme. It is usually said of Adelaide audiences, whether the stigma be justified or not, that they have a weakness for leaving before the last item or two on the programme, but Saturday must have been an exception to the rule, for almost the entire audience waited till the "Pilgrims' Chorus" and the grand march from "Tannhauser" were finished—an eloquent tribute of their appreciation of the Wagnerian programme. Mr. Richard Nitschke was the vocalist of the evening, and despite a bad cold he did full justice to Wagner's romance "Der Abendstern" and Gounod's "There is a green hill far away" accompanied by the orchestra. He was encored for both numbers.

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CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT.

While the directors of the Elder Conservatorium of Music are endeavoring to educate the public taste in musical matters by orchestral concerts, which embody classic, semi-classic, and popular items, in the Town Hall, they are also fully alive to the necessity of inculcating a love for the sublime classics of the great masters among their patrons, and with this object in view Chamber music concerts are given at intervals. One took place in the University library on Monday evening, and it was unfortunate that the inclement weather militated against a larger attendance. Amongst those present were the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of the University, Miss Mabel Buxton, and Major Guise. The Conservatorium staff were assisted by Messrs. A. C. Quinn (one of Adelaide's foremost violinists) and W. L. Harris. The programme opened with Beethoven's quartet (op. 16) in E flat major, for pianoforte (Herr Reimann), violin (Herr Heinicke), viola (Mr. Quinn), and violoncello (Herr Kugelberg). There were three movements—grave, allegro ma non troppo, and andante cantabile, and rondo (allegro ma non troppo.) This is a characteristic writing of the great musician, whose inexhaustible originality, earnestness, grace, and impassioned spirit are stamped on every bar. The rhythmical accentuation, breadth of conception, and beautiful harmony were cleverly treated by the performers, the tenderness and melodic charm of the andante cantabile being splendidly contrasted with the opening movement and the rondo. Schubert's andante from the quartet in D minor (op. 161) for two violins (Herr Heinicke and Mr. Harris), viola (Mr. Quinn), and violoncello (Herr Kugelberg) was the next number, and it proved, perhaps, the most acceptable item on the programme. The prodigious spontaneity of Schubert's genius is apparent from the magnificent pianissimo introduction, in which the most delicate and dignified effects are heard, to the singular beauty and romance of the finale, and throughout there is an ever flowing stream of melody and harmonic passages which are full of passion and imagination. The instrumentalists achieved a grand success in this performance, and it is to be hoped that Professor Ives will endeavor to secure its repetition at one of the Town Hall concerts. Raff has composed an enormous amount of Chamber music, and two of his writings found a place on the programme. These were "The declaration" and "The mill," from the quartet (op. 292) for two violins (Herr Heinicke and Mr. Harris), viola (Mr. Quinn), and violoncello (Herr Kugelberg). The versatility and fertility of resources of the composer could not be better illustrated than in these numbers, his remarkable gift of melody and sympathetic nature being an evidence in "The declaration," while in the descriptive morceau "The mill" the technical skill and the abundance of his melodic talents had to be heard to be appreciated. Herr Heinicke is too seldom heard in public now, and it was indeed a pleasure to renew his acquaintance once more in a violin solo. He selected Lauterbach's "Romance" (op. 12), which has not been performed before in this city, and he displayed a complete mastery over the instrument, the polish and elegance of the great Bavarian composer's work, whether it was in the legato or double-stopping passages, being admirably emphasised. Miss Gull Hack, who was accompanied by Miss Ethel Hack, was the only vocalist of the evening. She gave the recitative "Giunse alfin il momento," and the aria "Deh vieni non tardar" from Mozart's "Nozze di Figaro" with much expression and pathos, her phrasing and mezzo voce production being excellent. In Macfarren's "Pack clouds away," to which Herr Heinicke contributed a violin obbligato, Miss Hack was also listened to with pleasure, the concluding trills being executed with such taste and refinement as to secure a recall for the artiste.

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION.

Mr. J. C. E. Murray, on behalf of Mr. Richard W. Bennett, made an application for exemption. Mr. Bennett was arrested for five years from 1887 to 1892 in Melbourne. He then went to Western Australia, and was prospecting, but during the last eighteen months had been acting as law clerk to Mr. H. S. Wyatt in Western Australia, and Mr. Wyatt was a practitioner of the Supreme Court of South Australia. Mr. Bennett had passed the Matriculation Examination in the University of Melbourne, and Examinations in the Law of Obligations, Property, and Constitutional Law. The application was that he should be exempt from the obligation of the final certificate under the regulations; also that having passed in the Law of Property, Obligations, Wrongs, Constitutional Law, and Procedure he might be admitted on the certificate of the University of Melbourne, and on the certificate of having passed the University of Adelaide Examination in the Law of Wrongs and Procedure.—Mr. James Henderson submitted that the Law Society did not offer any factions opposition, but a sufficient case had not been made out by the applicant.—The Chief Justice said the question was whether this Court could accept the certificate of the examination of the University of Melbourne instead of a certificate of the Adelaide University.—After argument the Court ordered that the applicant might apply to be admitted after he had passed in the Law of Wrongs and Procedure, and had been re-examined on the Law of Obligations in the University of Adelaide.

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On Saturday next a grand musical fete will be given in the Exhibition Building in aid of the Elder Statue Fund. Over 300 performers will take part, comprising the Conservatorium Grand Orchestra, fifty instruments, the Liedertafel and Orpheus Societies, forty and sixty strong (all male voices), and the Choral Society, 180 mixed voices, Miss Gull Hack, A.R.C.M., Miss Jule Layton, Miss Lucy Stevenson, Mr. R. Nitschke, Mr. Oscar Tauber, and Mr. J. Opie. Mr. T. H. Jones, Mus. Bac., will be the accompanist, and the piano to be used is one of Lapp & Sons', supplied by Messrs. S. Marshall & Sons. All the performers are generously giving their services, and the length of the programme, sixteen numbers, will not admit of any encores. The programme submitted is a splendid one, and ought to please the most fastidious taste. The patronage, which is more than nominal, is unusually strong. His Excellency the Governor and Lady Victoria Buxton have signified their intention to be present and have selected their seats. The object being a praiseworthy one, appealing to all classes of the community, coupled with the high class of the entertainment and the low price of admission, ought to draw a large house. A full programme appeared in "The Register" of Tuesday, and will appear again in next Saturday's issue. Tickets may be had at Marshall's, Cawthorne's, Howells', and Woodman's, and seats may be reserved at Marshall's.

Edwin Stephens

the building being well filled in every part. The programme was a carefully selected one, some of the finest passages from the operas being presented to the audience in a manner that reflected credit on Herr Heinicke's combination. At times, however, there was a slight carelessness and want of expression in the more intricate numbers, and Herr Heinicke would do well to take the brass instruments in hand and make them play in tune. In the open item, the ballet music from "Rienzi," there was an absence of harmony, in which the brass played a prominent part. Those who listened to some of the other pieces could only marvel at the phenomenal technical powers of the composer. One hears melodic and rhythmic combinations of great beauty and striking originality, allied to the most weird and fantastic themes, and all serve to show what a master Wagner was of instrumentation and orchestral coloring. The emotional expressions in "Lohengrin," for instance, are beautifully outlined, while in "Die Walkure" are heard the sounds of most unique and brilliant orchestration, which play upon the heartstrings and elicit a sympathetic response. "Der ritt der Walkuren," from "Die Walkure," was given for the first time, and it was perhaps the most attractive item on the programme. "Das Rheingold" serves as a prelude to "The ring," and in the interval between this drama and "Die Walkure" many years are supposed to elapse. In order to gain possession of the ring, which in "Das Rheingold" has been fashioned out of gold, which possesses so many marvellous spells, and which has been lost, implying the annihilation of the race of gods, Wotan, chief of the gods, has begotten two children by an earthly woman, for the treasure can only be redeemed by a champion born of human kind. These children are "Siegfried" and "Sieglinde," twin brother and sister, who grew up together, till one day the latter was carried off for wife by Hunding. The Walkure are the nine daughters of Wotan, by Erda, of whom Brunnhilde is the most renowned. The scene chosen for representation by the orchestra was the fourth of the opera. The eight Walkuren are awaiting the coming of their sister Brunnhilde, who swoops through the air on her horse, bearing Sieglinde flying from Wotan's wrath. When her sisters learn of her disobedience they refuse to help her, but Sieglinde pleads for her babe that is coming, and is bidden to escape on Brunnhilde's horse to the place where Fafner lore the treasure, about the most dangerous spot that could have been chosen. Brunnhilde warns her to guard with care the fragments of Siegmund's sword for the son that is yet to be born. "Siegfried" she names him because through Siegmund's line will the gods be redeemed from their impending fate. Wotan comes to punish Brunnhilde, he takes her girdle from her, and condemns her to sleep on a rock till a man should awake her and claim her for his bride. But to make sure that none but the most valiant shall win her he surrounds her with a circle of fire through which only the stoutest of hearts shall pass, and so bids farewell. Such is a brief outline of this intensely dramatic scene, which the orchestra illustrated in such a clever manner. Another new item was the introduction and bride's chorus from "Lohengrin." The French horns and cellos play the initial movement, which is descriptive of the opening of the third act. The brass instruments take up the theme, and the delightful strains of the oboe are listened to in an entrancing melody. The full orchestra then depict the departure of the bride surrounded by her bridesmaids to her chamber. Lohengrin appears on the scene, sings a beautiful air, and the bridesmaids depart, leaving the two together. The orchestra in this item also scored a success, and the repetition of "Lohengrin" and "Die Walkure" will be warmly welcomed at some future concert.