

Foreign Notes



The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, Vol. 35, No. 614. (Apr. 1, 1894), pp. 266-267.

Stable URL:

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FOREIGN NOTES.

ALTENBURG.—The well-known song-writer, E. Meyer-Helmund, has once more tried his hand at a comic opera, which was produced with fair success at the Court Theatre here, on the 4th ult. It is in one act; its title is "Trischka," and the heroine is the dancer, Taglioni, whose terpsichorean performances save her life when she has the misfortune to fall into the hands of a band of brigands. Needless to say, ballet music plays an important part in the work.

BERLIN.—Since Hans von Bülow's lamented death a number of more or less successful and appropriate "In Memoriam" concerts have been given by the leading choral and orchestral societies here. Thus the Philharmonic Choir, under Herr Siegfried Ochs performed, *inter alia*, two choral works by Beethoven ("Elegischer Gesang") and Brahms ("Schicksalslied"), while the Stern'sche Verein chose the deceased master's own "Funerale" for orchestra and Verdi's "Requiem"—the latter a significant selection!—Verdi's "Falstaff" was, on the 6th ult., given for the first time in German at the Royal Opera and achieved a far greater success than last summer, when it was performed by an Italian troupe. The veteran Betz was an admirable *Falstaff* and the rendering of the work generally thoroughly adequate.—It is said that the German Emperor has commissioned Signor Leoncavallo to write a grand historical opera, the plot of which is to be founded on an episode from Prussian history. The General Intendant of the Court Theatre was asked to find a suitable subject, and he has selected Willibald von Alexis's novel "Der Roland von Berlin," the hero of which is the Elector Frederic II. of Brandenburg. We wonder what German composers think of this.

BONN.—The programme of the last Subscription Concert of the Städtische Gesangverein, on the 1st ult., consisted of the first five tableaux from Rubinstein's sacred opera "Moses." The performance was excellent, and the reception of the novelty favourable.

BREMEN.—Max Bruch's newest work, "Leonidas," for baritone solo, male chorus, and orchestra (Op. 66), was, on the 1st ult., produced here, under the direction of the composer.

BRUNSWICK.—Wagner's "Tristan" has at last found its way to this town. It was recently given for the first time and created a sensation. The performance was excellent.

BRUSSELS.—On the 11th ult. Herr Siegfried Wagner conducted a grand Orchestral Concert at the Alhambra Theatre. The programme consisted of works by his father, his grandfather, Liszt, and his teacher, Humperdinck. There was an enormous audience, who displayed extraordinary enthusiasm. That excellent Wagner connoisseur, Maurice Kufferath, compares, in the *Guide Musical*, Herr Wagner's rendering of several of the pieces to those lately heard under Mottl and Levi, to the advantage of the young and "inexperienced" conductor.

COLOGNE.—Verdi's "Falstaff" was given for the first time here at the Town Theatre, on February 18. The performance of this work was excellent and its reception enthusiastic.

COPENHAGEN.—The Danish Folkething has rejected the Government proposal to join the Berne Copyright Convention. The arguments against the bill were of the usual kind. To join the convention would mean a material loss to Danish theatre directors, publishers, &c., and difficulties would be put in the way of introducing and popularising the best foreign works. Therefore the Danes will continue to pirate, whenever there appears a new work worth pirating. We wonder what they would say if other nations retaliated, by appropriating their butter and cheese!

FLORENCE.—On the 7th ult. Berlioz's "Faust" was given for the first time here. The brilliant work was most enthusiastically received and several numbers were encored.

GENOA.—"Theora," a new-three act opera by Edoardo Trucco, was given on February 14 for the first time, at the Carlo Felice Theatre, and was moderately successful.

GRAZ.—Wagner's "Tristan" has recently been added to the *répertoire* of the Town Theatre here. It was performed for the first time on February 13, and without cuts.

GUBEN.—Beethoven's colossal Choral Symphony was recently given here with such great success that it had to be repeated within a few days. The achievement speaks well for the enthusiasm of the musical amateurs of this little town and the energetic conductor, Herr Traugott Ochs.

HALLE.—"Zamora," a new one-act opera, written and composed by Adolf Stierlin, was produced at the Town Theatre, on February 11, with considerable success.

LEIPZIG.—At a recent Orchestral Concert conducted by Professor Kretzschmar, the *Adagio* and *Scherzo* from Mr. F. H. Cowen's Scandinavian Symphony were performed. The *Scherzo* was redemanded and repeated.—The *Illustrirte Zeitung* published recently a hitherto unknown portrait of Beethoven. It represents the great master in his 33rd or 34th year, and used to be the property of the Brunswick family, to a member of which, the Countess Theresa, his "Unsterbliche Geliebte," Beethoven was secretly engaged.

LISBON.—Verdi's "Falstaff" was brilliantly successful when it was recently produced here with Maurel in the title rôle. He had to repeat one song five times, and for variety's sake he sang it in Italian, French, and Portuguese!

MADRID.—Wagner's "Meistersinger," or "Los maestros Cantores de Nuremberg," as it is called in Spanish, was performed for the first time in Spain, on the 3rd ult., at the Royal Theatre, Madrid. The first two acts were received coldly, but the third met with enthusiastic applause.

METZ.—A new Music-Drama entitled "Sigurd," written and composed by Heinrich Grimm, was recently produced at the Town Theatre. Its reception was, on the whole, favourable.

MILAN.—Giacomo Puccini's opera "Manon Lescaut" met with much favour on its first performance at La Scala, on February 7.—Verdi has the intention of founding a large asylum for actors, singers, and musicians, and will devote the greater portion of his fortune to this noble object. "When my name is forgotten," he is reported to have said, "this asylum shall recall it." According to Italian papers, the veteran master expressed a wish to hear Wagner's "Walküre" at the Scala Theatre. After the performance he was asked what impression the work made on him, and he replied: "A crushing one; one has such a dislike to being convinced how small one is!"—A disgraceful scene occurred at La Scala on the 8th ult. The eighteenth performance of "Die Walküre" was to be given, but when the conductor, Mascheroni, appeared at his desk, a number of persons in the audience commenced to whistle, and shout "Enough, enough!" while others replied with "Go on!" The orchestra began the Prelude, but in vain; a second start was made only to provoke still more angry protests. After some delay the police ordered the performance to be stopped and the money to be refunded to the audience, which was done. There can hardly be any doubt that this protest against Wagner's opera is the work of an intriguing minority, though who are the instigators can only be conjectured. That the work was a success the number of performances clearly proves. The directors would hardly continue to put it in the bill if it did not draw paying audiences.

MONTE CARLO.—A series of so called International Concerts is being given this winter on Sundays by M. Arthur Steck's band. On February 25 the programme was selected from the works of British composers—at any rate, they were announced as "œuvres anglaises"—and included the names of Balfe, Mackenzie, Oakeley, Sullivan ("Overture di Ballo"), Parish Alvars, Godfrey (!), and one Delius, whoever he may be. Sir Herbert Oakeley's Suite, with its brilliant *rondo finale*, was fairly played and well received, the composer himself being present, on his way back from Rome. It seems a pity that the authorities did not call to their councils someone with a competent knowledge of the resources of the English school, and thus save themselves from such inadequate expositions of what the foremost British musicians have been doing during the last fifty years.—A posthumous opera by the late highly gifted composer, César Franck, and entitled "Hulda," was produced on the 4th ult., at the

Casino Theatre here, with great success. The plot is founded on a novel by Björnson.

MOSCOW.—A new String Quartet by A. Arensky, which was successfully produced here at a recent concert of the Russian Musical Society, presents a somewhat unusual feature. It is written for violin, viola, and two violoncellos, instead of the ordinary classical combination of stringed instruments.

MUNICH.—Verdi's "Falstaff," with Eugen Gura as the fat Knight, was very warmly received on its first performance here, at the Court Theatre, on the 2nd ult. The second act especially pleased immensely.

NAPLES.—Mascagni's "I Rantzau" achieved only a bare *succès d'estime* on its first performance here at the Mercadante Theatre, and this in spite of a capital interpretation. Puccini's "Manon Lescaut," on the other hand, is an emphatic success and continues to attract enthusiastic audiences at the San Carlo Theatre.—At the Mercadante Theatre the new opera "Regina Diaz," by Signor Giordano, the author of "Mala Vita," was only partly successful on its recent production. The composer was "called" only fifteen times, an insignificant number in Italy.

NUREMBERG.—Signor Leoncavallo's "I Medici" was, on February 28, given here for the first time at the Town Theatre. The work was received with much applause.

PARIS.—Gluck is likely to become the fashion here for a time, for his "Alceste" is to be given at the Théâtre Moderne; his "Armide" is in preparation at the Grand Opéra, and "Orfeo" at the Opéra Comique.—On the 18th ult. Herr Felix Mottl, of Carlsruhe and Bayreuth, conducted the first of four "special" Orchestral Concerts at the Châtelet. The programme consisted of works by Berlioz and Wagner. The remaining three will be conducted by Hermann Levi, Edvard Grieg, and M. Colonne.—Massenet's "Thais," a comédie lyrique in three acts and seven tableaux, the libretto by Louis Gallet, after the novel of Anatole France, was produced at the Grand Opéra, on the 16th ult., but somewhat coolly received. Mlle. Sybil Sanderson was superb as the heroine. At the Colonne Concerts Berlioz's "Requiem" has been twice performed, while at the Concerts d'Harcourt, Beethoven's "Fidelio" has been given several times in its entirety.

RIGA.—Rubinstein's sacred opera "Moses" was, on February 20, produced at the Town Theatre, under the direction of Capellmeister Wilhelm Bergner. The musical forces under his command consisted of a large chorus, powerful orchestra, as well as *four grand pianofortes and a harmonium*, and yet the good people of Riga failed to display any spontaneous enthusiasm!

ROUEN.—Anton Rubinstein's opera "Nero" was, on February 14, given for the first time in France, at the Théâtre des Arts, and seems to have been very cordially received. The composer was present at the performance, and after the third act appeared before the curtain in response to enthusiastic applause, together with the librettist, Jules Barbier, who embraced him *coram publico*. This was the first performance of any opera of Rubinstein's in France.

STRUTTGART.—Anton Rubinstein's opera "Die Macchabäer" met with much success on its first performance here on February 20, at the Court Theatre.—At the seventh Subscription Concert of the Court Orchestra a new "Spring" Symphony in C, by J. J. Abert, was played for the first time in public and achieved a great success.

TOULOUSE.—Wagner's "Flying Dutchman" was recently performed here for the first time at the Théâtre du Capitole, and favourably received.

TURIN.—On February 27 a new opera by a new composer, Gaetano Luporini, was produced at the Teatro Reggio, without however meeting with much success. Its title is "Dispetti amorosi," and it is the young musician's first attempt.

VIENNA.—A special Concert recently given by the Hellmesberger Quartet was exclusively devoted to novelties. Amongst them were a String Quartet in A minor and a Pianoforte Quartet in B flat, both by Adolph Barjanski, and a String Quartet, also in A minor, by a new Bohemian composer, Carl Kovazovic. The last-named work was received with exceptional favour.—The two hundredth performance of Wagner's "Tannhäuser" at the Court Opera was given on February 25.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ART OF CHANTING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—If your correspondent, "A Cathedralist," will kindly read the passage he refers to, as at p. 35 of my book, in connection with its context, he will see that the whole paragraph refers only to what can or cannot be done with Ouseley and Monk's pointing, and that I nowhere contemplate being constrained, by any good system of pointing, to leave without dissection such dissyllabic endings as "cymbals," or "gladness." The 1,376 trochaic verses remain, therefore, without any deductions. The word "cymbals" occurs at the end of the mediation and again at the end of the cadence in a verse of the 150th Psalm. Your reviewer says that I am unable to account for what he considers an inconsistency of treatment of this verse in Baker and Monk's Psalter. The reason I did not refer to his remark on the subject was that the clue to the answer was already given on pages 20 and 21 of my book. If I do not reply now, however, it will simply be because you do not permit me the space. Assuming that you grant it me, and thanking you for your courtesy in the matter, I will at once give the reply. The old chant form

o d d d d || o d d d d becomes in practice by an old chanting rule o d d d d || o d d d o in order to round off the chant and give an effect of finality and repose. The final semibreve of the mediation of the pure Anglican chant represents the last two minims of the older form, written now as one note, because they usually, but not invariably, have the same sound: thus, the pointing below is consistent, unless the theory is incorrect, which has to be proved.

{	Ancient.	o d d d d o d d d o		o d d d d		o d d d o
{	Anglican.	o d d d d o d d d o		o d d d d		o d d d o

Praise him upon } | tuned | cymbals: { praise him } | loud | cymbals.
the well. } | upon the. }

It gives me much pleasure to learn that we are soon to welcome a publication dealing with the strophical construction of the Psalms and the assignment of appropriate chants to their structural divisions. In my own limited sphere I have worked on this plan, so far as accompaniments extend, for the past twenty-two years, and, as opportunities offered themselves, with regard to chants also; while, at one time, I had some thought of publishing my notes on the subject.—Yours faithfully,

JOHN HEYWOOD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Baker may I say that to modify strong accents and strengthen weak ones is altogether a different matter from maintaining the indefensible theory that in an Anglican Chant the antepenultimate is the natural place of the musical accent. There is scarcely an ordinary secular melody in which the treatment of the musical accent has not to be considered, and sometimes modified or strengthened, when words are set to it; and in a former letter I have ventured to insist, with Mr. Baker, on the necessity for similar treatment in the case of the Psalter. The instances Mr. Baker quotes are precisely in point,

thý | — sal- | -va- | -tion,
through | my | foolish- | -ness,

and others I could cite, being simply the most obvious way of "making the best of a bad job," and any musician, while admitting that the strong accent cannot but fall on the final syllable, would do his utmost to lighten its inevitable stress.

But, in the name of common-sense, if such compromise is forced upon one here and there, perhaps a score of times in the Psalter, why is the defect to be reproduced everywhere? It is "the fox without a tail" over again.