

MUSICAL MENTION

JOHN RANDOLPH

On Tuesday evening, December 15, a vocal recital was given at the First Presbyterian church by Miss Minnie E. Gaylord, a singer well known to Lincoln audiences. Miss Gaylord was assisted by Mrs. Plank, pianist, Mr. C. Wesley Kettering, baritone, and by Miss Grace Griffith, accompanist.

Miss Gaylord is the possessor of a clear soprano voice of good quality and carrying power. Her schooling has been good and her temperament and intentions are artistic. She was especially good in the florid "Villanelle" of Eva Dell'Acqua and in the Meyer Hellmund lied. At times the pronunciation of her English songs left something to be desired. The impression created was, however, distinctly favorable. I am glad to record the impression that Mr. Kettering sang with more freedom than usual—his voice is always agreeable. A better impression would be conveyed if this singer could regard his audience with untroubled gaze—his attention is too closely given to the music in hand. The piano forte solos of Mrs. Plank were received with evident pleasure by her audience, a pleasure which was evinced by continued applause. The accompaniments of Miss Griffith were unobtrusive and musical.

Mr. Kettering added much to the enjoyment of the evening in the duet, "I Feel Thy Angel Spirit," which was so heartily encored that the singers were obliged to repeat a portion of the song.

Miss Grace Griffith made a faithful accompanist.

The program was as follows:

Recital—Miss Minnie E. Gaylord, assisted by Mrs. Plank, pianist; Mr. Kettering, baritone; Miss Grace Griffith, accompanist.

- George Bagwell....(a)—"Elfenreisen" (Dedicated to Mrs. Plank.)
- Liszt.....(b)—"Gondoliera" Mrs. Plank.
- Verdi—Don Carlos....."O don fatale"
- Dell'Acqua—Villanelle.....
-"Oft Have I Seen" Miss Gaylord.
- Graben Hoffman.....
-"I Feel Thy Angel Spirit" Miss Gaylord and Mr. Kettering.
- Arditi-Se Seral Rose.....
-"Love In Springtime"
- Scharwenka....(a)—"Spanish Serenade"
- Schubert.....
-(b)—"Impromptu a la Hongroise" (Arranged by Scharwenka.) Mrs. Plank.
- Meyer Helmund.....
-(a)—"In allen benachbar en Garten"
- Arthur Foote....(b)—"Irish Folk Song"
- Guy d'Hardelot.....(c)—"Mignon"

Upon the program of the piano recital given by Mr. Leopold Godowsky on last Saturday evening the pianist wisely placed the most intellectual compositions first, reserving the sensuous and emotional numbers until later. I have often observed that like many seductive liquids attractive to the human palate, there is a limit to the amount of music a man may imbibe at one sitting. After a time one's receptacle is filled, no matter to what vintage the musical fluid belongs and he can imbibe no more, though schooners and kegs of melody foam and gurgle about him. Moreover in mixing my musical beverages, I personally prefer to begin with the stronger and to taper off to the more sparkling and lighter, avoiding the possibility of a next morning's headache. Upon this discreet plan was the Godowsky recital arranged. The pianist began with those tremendous Brahms variations (than try to play them I would more willingly contract to build single handed a battle ship of our new navy in the campus of the state university) those variations which speak almost the last word in pianoforte technique and which are intellectually musical mathematics—and he played them flawlessly: I have heard Paderewski, Joseffy and Rosenthal, these

three, and the greatest of these is—fill the blank to suit your personal taste my gentle enthusiast, I am not in the controversial mood today. But I have never heard more remarkable technical effects from Rosenthal himself. Those glissando octave passages were most wonderful. If Brahms be mathematical with the serene beauty of the higher mathematics Schumann is nothing if not metaphysical—and in the great opus 17 Fantasia, three moods are suggested; one of question, as of the awakening soul, in the first movement; one of certainty and poise in the second when youth has merged into confident manhood; one of resignation in the third movement when doubt and question and self confidence have alike been left humble in the presence of mysteries too great to fathom.

When the fair editor of this paper reads the preceding paragraphs she will be overcome with joy and will at once send me a large cheque for a Christmas remembrance.

The pianist's interpretation of this poem of Schumann was to my mind almost ideal. It had something of the splendid rigor of an antique statute, it did not gush and palpitate like a young lady novelist or a critic of musical performances to be sure. (there is one upon myself) but it was noble, pathetic, tragic in its severe simplicity. Wot tell! Because Mr. Godowsky does not always give us cakes and ale shall we revile him? There be many cakes and much ale in the world—would I had them now!—but I will yet contend that there are better things, and to my mind the Schumann Fantasia stamped the Russian pianist a greater artist than I had supposed him to be. The remainder of the program was the usual Chopin and Liszt affair delightfully varied by the Schubert—Liszt songs (O good Godowsky how do you make them sing so?) and by a not particularly effective arrangement of the great quartet from the "Meistersingers."

Mr. Godowsky's own arrangement of a Chopin Valse out heroded Herod in technical difficulty but was not otherwise especially noteworthy.

To sum up. I am well aware, that the rest of the world awaits Lincoln's critical verdict (as notably it did in the case of Sieveking) and that I shall for all the future make or unmake Mr. Godowsky's reputation as a pianist in this review of his recent recital.

Jesting aside, I wish to record the impression that I have rarely if ever heard a more finished performance. I was very tired and not in the mood but the pianist compelled attention by the finish of his technique and stirred me by the classic beauty of his interpretation.

In technical matters I would point out the marvelous use of the pedal, not of course for strength, but in emphasizing the harmonic basis underlying the melodies. No one save a pianist can fully comprehend the skill which analyzed and made prominent the exact note or chord which gave the key to the whole harmonic situation, although the effect was apparent to everyone. Moreover in passages requiring digital facility little less than impossible, the pianist tranquilly threaded his way, not sweating at the helm, not torn with a frenzy of physical exertion, individualizing melodies, making different voices sing at his own artistic will! Never once, save for dramatic effect when the treble sometimes shrieked, did the pianoforte cease to sing—But enough.

From the standpoint of emotion and power I personally paint the pianist absolutely satisfying. If he had had longer hair and had lifted his arms higher in the air with violent contortions of the body no doubt he would have impressed the groundlings more, but not as it seems to me with more real emotional or artistic effect. A splendidly sonorous Knabe piano no doubt contributed to the quality of tone produced.

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