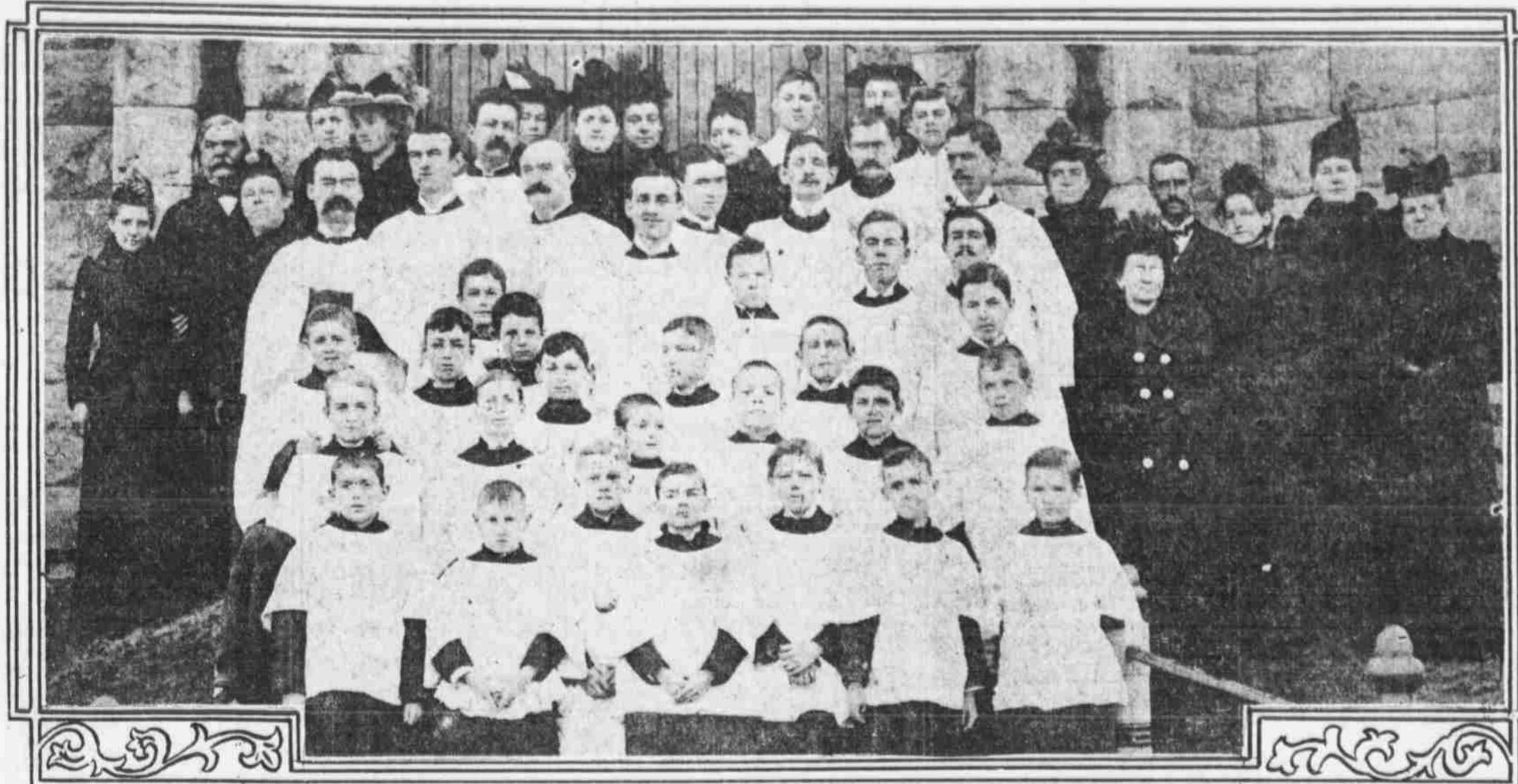


Trinity Cathedral Choir of the Early '90s



Gossip of Music and Musicians

By HENRIETTA M. REES.

ET us turn back a few pages in Omaha's musical history this morning and look at the picture of Trinity Cathedral choir, taken between twenty and twenty-five years ago. Opinions seem to differ as to just how long it has been, but the nearest guess is that the picture was taken in 1890 or 1891.

The choir at this time was in a most prosperous condition. Mrs. Cotton, now Mrs. Kountze, was the director of the music and Mr. J. E. Butler was the organist. In the choir were many singers who were soloists as well as those extra time was much taken up with musical affairs. The regular soloists at this time were Mrs. Cotton, Mrs. Moeller, Mr. Wilkins and Mr. Lumbard and Mr. Archie Pratt was the boy soloist. Charles Marley was the cross-beat. According to Mr. Wilkins through whose kindness the picture is printed, when all were present there were about seventy-five members in the choir, which contained a mixed choir and a boy choir of about thirty. Some of them were there for only a short time, some for a year or two and others for many years. Mr. Wilkins was the last one to leave, after being the tenor soloist for twenty-four years, but business affairs made it necessary to give it up about four years ago.

In this picture we see many who have been prominent in other musical affairs in our city and some that still continue to take an active part. There are some who have ceased to worship at the shrine of Apollo and who are harmonizing their life melodies in some other lines of endeavor. Others have moved away and a few have gone on to that haven of rest about which many an anthem has been written.

The boy choir at this time was worthy of especial mention. Mr. Wilkins said that in all the time that he sang at Trinity he cannot remember any time since that it has been surpassed. Archie Pratt would sing such solos as "With Verdi's Glad," from the "Creation," and other oratorio numbers, and George Meggs sang alto solos and took the lead part in many a sacred duet. At about this time Effie Ellsler, the actress, visited Omaha in "Shore Acres," and some of the boys from Trinity choir were chosen to sing, among whom were the two just mentioned and Mr. Marley, and in her three performances they won much applause and many compliments from the actress herself. Mr. Lumbard was always one of the merriest gentlemen, and one day during Lent when many extra services were being sung he amused the dean very much by remarking that they had so many services in this church that it didn't give the Lord time to eat His meal.

Where are they all now and how many are still interested in music? Of the men, Mr. Lumbard was always interested in singing and his recent death is still mourned by his many friends. J. E. Butler is organist of Trinity cathedral in Seattle, where he also has a class. Mr. Finlay was an ardent golfer, and ran the sporting goods department of Wanamaker's New York store for some time, but has since been representing the Wright Ditson company at prominent watering places. Mr. Moeller is in the live stock business in South Omaha. Mr. Wilkins is auditor of disbursements for the Union Pacific in this city. Percy Young is comptroller of the United Gas company, New York. George Peirce is deceased. Paul Beresford is secretary of the United Lead company, New York. Mr. Treat is storekeeper for the Union Pacific Coal company, Cheyenne. Michael Clarkson is also in the west. Will McCune is in the brokerage business in this city and tenor soloist at the First Baptist church and Temple Israel. Of the women, Mrs. McEwen moved away, and I think has since died. Miss Butterfield now makes her home in Sioux Falls, several have married. Mrs. Moeller, the contralto, moved to Sacramento, Calif., where she died about a year ago. Miss Bishop moved to Lincoln a few years ago and has since been in the east. Among those still in town are Miss Doane, Miss Dunster, Mrs. Kountze, Mrs. Moeller and Miss Fannie Pratt, who, although not in the picture, was one of the loyal members of the choir. Of the boys, Archie Pratt is now in the railroad business in Burlington, N. C., and still retains his in-

Left to right—Men: Jules Lumbard, J. E. Butler, Finlay, Wilkins, Moriarty, Percy Young, George Palmer, Archie Pratt, Paul Beresford, E. B. Treat, Michael Clarkson, Will McCune, Vail, —. Women: Mrs. McEwen, Miss Mellona Butterfield, Bessie Allen, Daisy Doane, Mrs. Cotton (Kountze), Miss Anna Bishop, Mrs. Moeller, Miss Clara Clarkson, Miss Dunster, Mrs. Green, Miss Mollie Allen, Mrs. George Rogers, Mrs. H. B. Morrill. Boys: Ben Cotton, Charles Marley, —, Walter Wilkins, George Meggs, Charles Gardner, Robert Johnson, —, Will Chambers, George Doane, Philip Reed, Harry Richelieu, Lewis Reed, Braes Fonda, Donald Johnson, Henry Miles, R. L. Davis, Windsor Doherty, —, Miles, Harry Carter.

FAMOUS VIOLINIST TO PLAY IN OMAHA.



At the Brandeis

Eugène Ysaÿe

has been received by her many Omaha friends this week that Miss Myrtle Moses, formerly a popular contralto of this city, now of Chicago, will sail for Europe some time in the early part of April, to pursue her musical studies. She will be accompanied by her mother. They plan to go to Paris, but Miss Moses has not decided upon her choice of a teacher.

"What was that lovely thing that you played as an organ offertory this morning, professor?"

"That was the Andante from Tschitschikoff's String Quartet."

"Oh, a quartet, was it? Why it was pretty enough for a solo."

Thursday afternoon the writer wandered into the Woman's club music department and heard a most interesting lecture on English music. Mr. Kelly illustrated by songs by modern English writers sung by Misses Mary McShane, Blanche Bollin and Mrs. Burstein, Mrs. O'Connor, and Mrs. Martin Bush. If all the programs have been as instructive and interesting as this one, those who have the time and do not attend these meetings are missing a musical treat as well as a chance to broaden their musical horizons.

There is really nothing the matter with the rhythm of ragtime, except that we do not appreciate an entire service with a tremolo stop on the organ as music we cannot enjoy constant synchronization. If a ragtime composition contains melody, and is well written, and by some accident happens to have decent words, or a little breathing space from syncopation for a few measures, it will no doubt find supporters among serious musicians, but at present there is so much that is poor that the innocent

will not be able to appreciate it.

Is there any composer in Omaha that will enter the race for this \$10,000 prize? At the very most there are only about one or two composers among us... and yet a great per cent of our youth for years have been studying music. And this brings up an interesting point to be noticed. Although such a large number of people study music the greater per cent of them only study the means of performing upon some instrument, and for the purpose of furnishing pleasure to themselves and friends through this, and do not ever seriously consider the study of harmony and composition, or analysis of the things that they are studying. If they are working with a conscientious teacher who makes them acquainted with the different chords and progressions, they merely accept it as making it easier to memorize the pieces they are studying and as a rule never give it a thought in any other way. In other words, most students try to learn to reproduce both technically and musically some other person's musical idea, and do not try to learn the vocabulary and rules of musical rhetoric, so that they cannot only the more truly appreciate his means of expression, but also that they might be prepared to express it in case that sometimes a real bright musical idea might accidentally strike them, and not when doing couch it in such musical terms as we often hear foreigners to any other language use in expressing their verbal ideas. Who really appreciates a beautiful or expressive figure of speech as much as the man who has tried to write and to think them out himself? More interest is being shown in harmony each year, but as yet in comparison with the number of people that study music the proportion is still woefully small.

My attention last week was called to a program of the New York Plectrum orchestra concert by Frank Potter. This is rather a unique organization of its kind of which Valentine Alt is the conductor. The music played was all good music, although some of it was of a

high appearance; but if she had realized how much pride she might also have taken if she had perhaps invested something in the opportunity for education that is right at hand in the public schools, how much more her influence as a "joy forever" would have counted. Here is Omaha with beautiful material things about it, of which its citizens may be proud, and right at our hands a home product of culture in the shape of the Mendelssohn choir, capable of holding its own with any other organization of its kind anywhere. Are we going to pay any attention to it, and take enough civic pride in it to turn out and make the Thomas orchestra go home and say, "Omaha's a fine town, not only because it has good stores, wide streets and is well built, but because they know they have a good choir, and appreciate music there—they also have culture."

Did you ever see a perfectly beautiful woman, dressed most becomingly and in the height of good taste, that you have slowed up as you passed in order to look at longer and admire, and then as some gallant gentleman stoops to return to her a filmy bit of lace handkerchief she has just dropped, to have all your joy dashed away by some such remark as this: "Oh, thanks so much, I never knew that thing had fell!" There are people like this, and there are cities that can be personified by that type. It is a fine thing to have our city look nice and to take a pride in its appearance just as the lady in question takes a pride in

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