

MUSIC

WILL PLAY AT THE BRANDEIS TUESDAY AFTERNOON



BRUNO STEINDEL, World Famous Cellist.

On Tuesday afternoon, December 3, at 4 o'clock, Bruno Steindel, solo cellist of the Theodore Thomas orchestra of Chicago, will be assisted by Max Landow, pianist, and Mary Munchel-off, soprano, in giving an artistic program at the Brandeis theater. This concert will be the second of the series under the direction of Miss Hopper, and the popularity of the participating artists has aroused much interest. As Mr. Steindel has chosen to open the program with Mr. Landow playing the beautiful Beethoven Sonata in its entirety, punctuality in attendance is respectfully suggested.

There appears a most splendid article in the New Music Review for December, entitled "Music as an Aid to Religion," by Peter Christian Lutkin. It says in part:

"The primary quality of music is an intensifying of the emotions. Through the appeal of melody, harmony and rhythm our feelings can be greatly affected and through their combined influence our moods may be immensely increased in intensity. It is this direct appeal to the emotions that gives to music the important place it occupies as an aid to religion, for religion is also largely concerned with the emotions.

It is, perhaps, not too much to say that the depth of our religious life is apt to be in direct ratio to our sensibility to emotion and any agency which tends to increase this susceptibility should be carefully cultivated. We recognize in painting, statuary, architecture and decorating the appeal to the emotions through the eye, but this appeal to the average human being is by no means as powerful as the appeal of music through the ear.

"It is not through any moral quality itself that music intensifies the religious life, although that is the popular idea. There is good music and bad music from the artistic point of view. There is sacred music and secular music; there is frivolous music and earnest music, and there is sensuous music and spiritual music, but whether the hearing of abstract music can either induce to vice or virtue is a moot question, which the psychologists are disposed to answer in the negative.

"The moment music is definitely connected with ideas it may acquire moral significance. * * * The reason that the popular mind accepts sacred and secular music as distinct entities is practically a matter of text association. If we examine into the facts more closely we will discover that it is not a question of sacred or secular, but of seriousness and light-heartedness, qualities which music possesses variously in a marked degree. For example, so-called sacred music could be set to secular words, either in effectiveness or appropriateness. And the contrary process is equally true, provided that it has the qualities of sincerity and serious-

ness—qualities that are the essential tribute of all great composers. "The value and efficacy of music as an aid to religion is largely dependent upon the following three factors:

"1. The nature or quality of the music as such.
"2. The manner of performance.
"3. The emotional response on the part of the worshiper.

"Should not the music conform to the same high standards set by the Episcopal liturgy in the purity of diction? Fortunately, there is a considerable supply of church music that is comparatively simple and still not lacking in dignity and worth. It is much better to have simple music well performed than to have difficult music struggled through with or ineffectively given.

"Like the religious instinct, artistic appreciation is fundamentally a natural gift, and many a man of humble birth and restricted advantages has strong within him the germ of the love of the beautiful, which responds most readily the moment it is offered opportunity for development. * * * I firmly believe that in the course of a revival of the Moody and Sankey type, a really great artist could make more effect with Mendelssohn's "For the Lord is Mindful of His Own" than could possibly be made by the revival songs manufactured for the occasion, provided that it be sung at least three times during the meeting. It might fall the first time, but if repeated at the psychological moments, I am convinced that it would profoundly move the most miscellaneous one could gather together. The musical appreciation of people in general is not always crude because it is not in evidence upon the single hearing of an art work. Of course, revivalists aim to make immediate appeal and trust to the catchy single and cheap sentiment of their songs to accomplish this result. They succeed temporarily, but it is an open question whether the superficial and ephemeral character of the means employed does not promote religious feeling of a similar sort, and whether a stronger and more wholesome diet would not produce a more substantial religious product."

Thus far Mr. Lutkin's remarks would apply in most particulars to music in general. I think often that while musicians are discussing the demoralizing effect of certain kinds of music, it is the connection with words that really has the strong influence. Mr. Lutkin then takes up the church itself, pointing out how many other hands the work of a composer must go through before it can be presented. The difficulties in this are touched upon, the musical ability of the chormaster, his ability to express himself, the experience and interest of the choir, cold, unexpected absences, indisposition, etc., all that are liable to mar the performance. He closes by stating that the church really needs more musicians who are

churchmen and points out that the trouble in the most of the religious music written today is that the starting point is not a desire to make the teachings of religion more potent through the aid of music, but to compose an art product.

Several of the New York critics express themselves as a little disappointed in the much heralded Mr. Ruffo, the great baritone of the Chicago Opera company. Although all concede that he is a great artist, some deplore his lack of shading, some the coldness of his low tones, some his acting, and some the metallic quality of his voice. They speak of him as extraordinary and sensational, and although the audience gave him an ovation a few of those that ought to know are loth to concede him first place.

Miss Alice Nielson, who appears in concert at the First Methodist church on the evening of Thursday, December 12, is an American by birth. She first saw the light of day at Nashville and much of her early singing was done in church choir in Kansas City.

Mr. Cecil Berryman, who gives a piano recital at the First Baptist church Thursday night, assisted by Mr. Frank Mach and Madame Borglum, has included several novelties (to Omaha people, at least). A sonata in D flat major by Schyffe opens the program. A group including compositions by MacDowell, Debussy and Schlozer precedes Mr. Berryman's own composition, sonata in D minor for violin and piano. Mr. Mach will play an a and b number in the latter part of the program. Besides other selections from Ravel Rubenstein and an etude caprice

by Mr. Berryman, the pianist, will conclude with an oriental fantasia entitled "Idamee", by Balakroff.

Miss Luella Allen gave a pupils' recital Saturday afternoon in violin and plans another one for the early part of January.

Here is what the London Daily Chronicle has to say after hearing an "American octet" at one of the music halls: "Ragtime is the musical ideal of the American nation. It is hasty set to music, energy chained to rhythm. This ragtime is a storm, a cyclone, a racing tide, and also it is a shrouding mist, blotting out perspective."

It is said that in London street boys and noble dames twirl with the jerkiness of the "Hitchy Koo," prance with the stimulant of "Velling for the Robert B. Lee," and writho with the squirming suggestions of "Mellow Melody."

Isn't a "rag" a good name for a piece of music that really is one in comparison with the finely woven harmonic fabrics that exist?

It was a great surprise to learn the other day that an entire orchestra in Chicago had struck because one of the violinists was playing on a Cremona that did not have a union label in it. Had it been the cymbal players and the drummers alone, we would not have wondered. One would expect all the fiddlers to display fidelity to their fellow violinist, but if they did, they were just stringing him. As for the rest of the orchestra, a lot of them have motives that are always bass, and horn players and flutists always do a lot of blowing about things anyway.

The recital Miss Emily Olive gives December 10, assisted by Mr. Martin Bush, will be her first public appearance in Omaha since her return from Europe.

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