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IN RELATED KEYS

HERBERT BATES

The concert of the Matinee Musicale suffered perhaps, from its restriction to one kind of music, the music, in the face of this restriction gave it, to the student of music, a peculiar interest. Mrs. A. S. Raymond's introductory paper was so apologetic and claimed so little merit for the compositions of women that it would be unjust to say that the members promised more than they gave. They promised, indeed, far less, and surprised one's diminished expectation.

Yet one's expectation needed diminishing. It would to prepare one for a restricted class of compositions, unless it were music by German or Slavonic composers, or, perhaps, the music of some one master. In so limited a program, too, it is difficult to form just, critical judgment. As on one very cold day we forget the past shiverings and think we have never seen a day so cold, so, in a concert of music exclusively of one kind, one lacks measure, and is in danger of overestimating a number by comparing it, not with all music, but only with its immediate neighbors.

The best numbers seemed those by Chaminade, though the little Study by Teresa Careno seemed to have an adequacy, a subject, a unity, that the others—those of the others that were exclusively the work of women—lacked. It attempted but a little thing, yet it achieved it, and most of its utterances seemed to serve an end. Not so with Chaminade. Her work seems ornate, rather than elaborate; sounding, rather than profound. The Andante illustrates this. It has, in its color, something that recalls, remotely, the transcription, for two pianos, of Chopin's Marche Funebre, but it lacks the subject of that, the strong conception. It has emotion, but it lacks the musical material through which that emotion should be expressed. Dr. Hanslick says that the reason that women achieve so little in musical compositions is that "the plastic element in musical composition imposes the necessity of keeping free from all subjective feelings." Many critics now agree with Dr. Hanslick, that music is not what we usually find it pictured in sentimental novels—a mere inspired "unfathomable speech." Were it, women, preeminently sensitive to emotion, should excel in its expression. Music, however, must have, as its prime object, not emotion but music, a musical idea, a musical theme, which shall thrill the musical imagination of the hearer, rousing, through this, appropriate emotion.

Now in interpretation, where emotional subjective feeling, superimposed on technique, is the essential, women always lead, often excel. When a man excels, he is often some feminine genius, like Paderewski, sensitive, impressionable, incapable of composition, supplementing feminine sensitiveness with masculine power. Somewhat of such type was Liszt, originating little, playing divinely, adapting, arranging much, making the most of the creations of others.

The compositions played at the matinee, particularly, perhaps, those of Chaminade, too obviously sought the expression, not of an idea, but of an emotion, not saying, but the effect of saying. Evidently the composer felt profoundly the grandeur of music, and aimed at this, rather than at treating adequately a grand musical idea. It is the fault of a certain kind of college oratory, which—seeing that orations elevate, blaze with imagery, amaze with climax—heaps, in its turn, vague eleva-

tion, imagery, climax—without, however, seeing that, in the true oration these are results, accessories of the strong underlying conception. In these musical compositions there is all the resonance, all the climax, all the external result of a strong musical conception. But the conception is lacking. This is shown in part by Mrs. Herzog's second number, where the theme was borrowed from another composer, presumably a man. Here it gained much by sympathetic development, and by very effective technique in rendering. At the same time, it was the presence of this subject that gave the composition its definite, compose attempt the maximum of force? memorable character.

Why, by the way, should women who Probably because it is what in listening to or in rendering music, most charms them. Yet they err in this, just as do half our poets and novelists, half the men who write music. Each has only a certain power of creation. One should not compose beyond this. If one has an imagination limited to the creation of dainty songs, compose only those. Why essay these sublimer flights calling for strong wings of imagination, sustained power of construction? A vague conception of immensities never made either a Paradise Lost or a Fifth Symphony. For these is needed the ability to imagine definitely, to utter a coherent, articulate message. That must come first. Then if it be grand and inspiring, let it work itself into worthy form.

It must be some comfort, however, for women to consider that they are not alone in the category of vague emotionalists, aiming incoherently at "effects." This vagueness, the helpless sense of unutterable vastnesses, is at the bottom of the literary and artistic inadequacies of the day. It is the real root of the "Degeneracy" that Nordau writes of, a lack of calm artistic intent, giving us, not Shakespeares and Beethovens, but Vaetedlincks and Saert-Saens, creators impatient of creation, aspiring not to utterance, but to its emotional results.

Whatever may be said with regard to the compositions rendered, the rendering calls for but little fault-finding. Mrs. Herzog, Miss Worley, Miss Davis, Miss Perkins, Miss Becker, Miss Oakley, Miss Morrow, and Miss Crook, all took part in the program. Their work is too well known to call for detailed comment, unless it be that of Mrs. Herzog, whose playing was brilliant, with force unusual in a woman. Perhaps Miss Worley deserves special mention for her singing of Chaminade's Summer. Evidently the Matinee Musicale contains excellent material and is doing excellent work.

Special concerts seem the order of the week. Close to the evening of woman composers comes an evening of lullabies. One is tempted to fancy it might have been well if the women, who surely should best understand the lullaby spirit, had composed them. Really, however, it is surprising that after over an hour of lullaby any could unfeelingly remain awake. After the cumulative effect of the Schlummedied; Wynken, Blynken and Nod; and Chopin's Berceuse, it is wonder that the Sunday morning congregation did not find the Friday night's audience still in their seats, slumbering off their sleepy portion.

A sense of the kinship of all worship

brought Protestant and Catholic together Thursday evening at the pro-Cathedral. It was a grand mingling of choirs. The fault of the program was its length. And all the numbers were not equally good; the insipid mandolin solo and that three-stanza hymn of Mr. Seemark's choir might well have been omitted. So might the final chorus by the children. The concert should have ended with the inspiring Sanctus. The best feature of the program was the singing of the pro-Cathedral choir. Mr. Movius is a remarkable leader, a leader, whom, it seems, many have failed hitherto fitly to appreciate. He has, in his choir, excellent material, particularly in Miss Helen Daugherty, whose voice, if wisely developed, promises better than any other heard this year in the city. It has the even, rounded, vibrating tones, the flute-like quality that, in so many cases, one looks for in vain. Of Miss Finnegan's voice, this is not true. It seems a little metallic, even, at times, strident. Her singing has artistic merit, but lacks power. Another new voice which surprised many was Mr. Spangler's, of St. Paul's choir. Mr. Smith still weakens his singing by adherence to tremolo. He has excellent vocal material, but he does not get what pianists would call a "singing tone." His voice does not flow. It seems to vibrate with effort. This is a pity, for he sings with spirit and musical appreciation. Mr. Seemark's choir sang strongly in the Te Deum. It seems, however, that the singers are picked a little too miscellaneous. Their voices, too, seemed to lack the blending of those of the pro-Cathedral. But this may be partly due to the fact that the latter had the advantage of orchestral accompaniment.

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