

IN RELATED KEYS

HERBERT BATES

The program of the charity concert was too long. The soloists should have been limited to one number, the instrumental performers to one movement. It would have been better, too, had the Tannhaeuser march come in the last place, sending the audience off aroused and inspired. The Am Abend, beautiful as it was, suffered from the uneasy expectancy that always prevails during a closing number—an uneasiness shown Tuesday night by the stage-manager who rang down the curtain with undue haste and considerable dissonance.

To discuss the merits of every number would be impossible. All that can be done is to mention those numbers that seem of special note. Of the vocal soloists, Mrs. Lippincott and Mr. Movius deserve particular praise. Both had effective dramatic delivery. Mrs. Lippincott's voice—at times a trifle uneven—had at its best great richness and thrilling force. Mr. Movius showed himself a thorough artist. He commands tones deep and well-sustained. His enunciation was good. It is a pity, however, that he should ever sing in English. The difference between his two numbers, in this one point of natural enunciation, was remarkable. He should sing only in German.

Of the duets, that of Miss Getner and Mr. Kettering was a surprise. Miss Getner's voice has power, richness and is well-rounded. It promises much. She has, too, a strong sense of musical and dramatic expression. Of Mr. Kettering I spoke last week. The combination was excellent, the two voices blending smoothly, each helping the other.

The two Telyn Quartets seem to have similar tastes. Both sang serenades, and both sang something about "night." Detailed criticism is impossible. The work of both seemed strong, both have good members. Mr. Tuttle, with his voice, should do solo work. The ladies sang the Schubert serenade sweetly. Miss Frank's rich contralto being particularly prominent.

Miss Scofield and Mrs. Plank both played compositions of Chopin. Without comparison of technique, it seems that Mrs. Plank entered better into the spirit of the composer, giving his capricious tempo and impetuous accent. She seemed, however, to have of the two instruments, the one less suited to Chopin's very lyric music. Its tone seemed thin and wiry. Mrs. Jones and Miss Hoover gave, by request, Raff's Tarantelle. Their playing is too well known to need description.

In the two violin solos, Miss Davis certainly excelled in brilliancy of technique, Miss Ensign in sweetness of tone. Possibly this was owing in great part to the nature of the compositions played. Both young ladies promise much and show decided genius. The Symphonie for two violins, by Charles and August Hagenow, will probably be heard later at the Universalist church, when there will be more space for comment. The same is true of the work of the string quartet.

The orchestra seems to have improved. Its playing of the Tannhaeuser March was strong and spirited. Possibly the first part should have been given with more force. Of course it was subdued to prepare, by contrast, for the fortissimo culmination. The only question is, was it not subdued a little too much.

But the concert was too long to criticize in detail. A general impression is equally impossible. It was a long concert, a concert in a good cause, a concert that succeeded. It contained much that was good, not a little that was not. All were glad to go. Most were glad, are glad that it is well over.

At the Universalist church Sunday afternoon the crowd was so great that some got no farther than the vestibule. The best numbers were the Adagio in G minor by Schubert and the Allegro from Beethoven. The solo from Mascagni, with the familiar phrases of the Intermezzo, rather suffered from the thin quality of Miss Sewell's voice. The violin obligato, however, did much to redeem it. Mr. August Hagenow's solo was played with unusual neatness. It was exquisitely linked, but, through the fault of the composer, seemed insufferably drawn out. The prayer from Miffi???, though rather robustly florid for a prayer, made a strong end.

At the concert given in St. Paul's

church by the faculty of the Nebraska conservatory last week, Mr. Hadley's organ solos deserve particular notice. Mr. Hadley is a very strong player. It is to be hoped that he may sometime give a recital here. Miss Hoover played a piano number, and Miss Davis gave de Berlioz's first concerto. Mr. Movius sang. As the work of all these is mentioned in the charity concert, it cannot be discussed this week. It was, however, of very high quality. The audience seemed rather cold and musically unintelligent. The only numbers that found favor were Mr. William's jokes. And they were not music.

The Boston Transcript of December 9 says commenting on Mr. Sieveking's appearance at the Symphony concert: "Mr. Sieveking made, we believe, his first bow to a large Boston audience at this concert. His playing of the concerto was superb. He evidently possesses great physical strength, the exertion of which he, however, never pushes farther than the pianoforte can bear. His technique is exceedingly brilliant, if not invariably perfectly sure—now and then he strikes wrong notes. But he plays like a master for all that. In the matter of style he is perhaps just a thought old-fashioned. He plays with more artistic measure than one is accustomed to nowadays, and does not by any means abuse the musical pepper-box."

The Glee and Banjo clubs have been working hard. Their first concert, with all the defects of a first concert, had much promise.

The Banjo club did very finished work. I do not like banjos. It seemed to me that the Banjo club did not try sufficiently to overcome the defects of their instruments. The great weakness of banjo clubs is in the music they play. No very great composers have written banjo music. Possibly some scherzos, some bright passages written for staccato notes on the piano or pizzicati passages for violins might be worked over for them. As yet I have heard none. The only composers who have composed for the banjo are of the sort that compose for the brass band, composers whose whole stock consists of five or six chorhs, much rhythm, and some sentimentality. Now I would rather hear a banjo club play "Johnny get your gun," which has at least a theme—vulgar though it be—than hear them play the Cupid's Dream Overture, or the Crescent Club March. I would rather have the lively "nigger" than the "poor white." And I wish that the conductors of banjo clubs felt the same and would limit their selections to the work of really able composers, or to music of the primitive race that has adopted this primitive instrument. The Banjo club, however plays what it plays with precision and with a good deal of dash.

The Glee club has a little of the same defect in musical matter. It sang songs that were half way between rollicking nonsense and serious music. They gave comparatively little of the best male glee music, which is German. They kept to the very ungolden mean. Still there were notable departures. On the side of comedy was the medley, and the "dirge" for Little Willie, with its "leitmotif" of tumbling straddle-bugs and its demure "Amen." It is a pity that there were not more good nonsense songs of this sort. What they may lack in music, they make up in good comedy. Indeed, there are a number of good old comic college songs not at all worn out; nor by any means so old as the Swanee River, which many of us, those of us in particular who were once Eastern college boys, would be glad to hear. For this work the club should try to gain in clearness of enunciation. Last night the point of several jokes was inaudible.

In serious work, so far as it attempted it, the club did well. Kucken's Serenade was given smoothly, so too was the serenade of Grehg. The best was the song of the Vikings, by Fanning. This rather lacked confident strength in the chorus, but it was given with fine dramatic force, the slight suggestion of the shout and swagger of the sea-robbers being very effective. The song is one of the best of glee songs, original, stirring, with a wave-like subject that suggests the roll and lift of the open sea. The combination numbers by the two clubs were given with

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spirit, the Honeymoon march, in Mr. Manley's arrangement, being the most effective. The banjos go better when backed by a strong body of choral tone.

Mr. Matthews and Mr. Langworthy did creditably in the solos, though it was rather hard to catch Mr. Langworthy's words, and this rather detracted from his number. The solo of the evening was Mr. Tucker's, "Ho, Fill Me a Flagon," by Nevins. This was much strengthened by Mr. Tucker's acting, for he threw himself thoroughly into the spirit of the song. Mr. Tucker should have been heard at the charity concert. Not that I would have had it longer! Heaven forbid! But I would gladly have exchanged Mr. Tucker for one, perhaps for two of the singers whom I did hear there. Mr. Tucker has the negative merit, rare in Lincoln, of being able to sing without a cabinet-organ tremolo. He has the positive merit of being able to sing words as well as notes, and to make these words mean something. What is more, he sings the notes well, with musical expression. What he lacks is in breadth and fullness of tone. But time may better that. Certainly he deserves recognition as one of the best singers of the city.

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