

WILL SCHÖNBERG BE A NEW YORK FAD?

When Flonzaleys Play His D Minor Quartet, Will Metropolis Adopt This Revolutionary Music as a New Sensation, Like Cubist Paintings, Lurid Dances and Bizarre Gowns?—Luncheon Conversation Reveals Flonzaley Members as Analysts and Defenders of So-Called "Musical Anarchist"

NEW YORK is about to be put to a test. What will this city think of Arnold Schönberg, as represented by his Quartet in D Minor, when that work is played by the Flonzaleys on January 26? What will this city think of Schönberg, this city of new sensations, which made a fad of the cubist paintings, which seeks thrills in the most lurid dances and authorizes costumes for its women that are equally sensational? Will New York accept Schönberg's harmonic "atrocities" as simply another new fad, will it greet them with outspoken disapproval, or will it simply pass them by as being a tedious bore. To be sure, New York has become acquainted with Schönberg's earliest style through some of his songs heard in a recent recital, but its attitude toward the Schönberg that has lately been upsetting musical Europe is to be determined through the medium of the Flonzaleys.

This puzzling question formed the chief topic of conversation last Monday during a luncheon with the members of the Flonzaley Quartet, the genial John Bacon, *aide-de-camp* to Loudon Charlton, being the master of ceremonies. The luncheon party occupied a private room at the famous Del Pezzo's café, favored retreat of Enrico Caruso and frequented by great artists of many nationalities.

While Mr. Bacon directed the course of the conversation, it was Ugo Ara, the violist of the quartet, who presided over the culinary features of the occasion and who tested each viand as it appeared, to make sure that it was fit for the table of these musician-epicures and their guests. Thus Mr. Ara authorized the serving of a soup which seemed to consist of even more solids than liquids.

"That is *minestra maritata*, or 'married soup,'" explained Iwan d'Archambeau, the cellist.

"Married Soup" for Bachelors

"Is not that an unsuitable food," queried Mr. Bacon, "for a quartet which is sternly an organization of bachelors?"

"It may give us an idea in the right direction," ventured Mr. Ara.

With the serving of a meat unfamiliar to the Anglo-Saxon visitors, the violist hazarded the remark: "Perhaps you would desire some other kind of meat—this is something that you will like the more you try it."

"Is it not like Schönberg's music in that respect?" reminded Adolfo Betti, the first violin. With that prelude, Schönberg held sway and food became a secondary consideration.

"The first time that we ever played over the Schönberg quartet," recalled Mr. d'Archambeau, "was three or four years ago in a Chicago hotel. This was a hotel in which we had always been able to rehearse without disturbing any of the other guests. But when we had played a few pages of this Schönberg work, there was such a pounding on our walls and dropping of shoes on the floor above that we had to stop playing."

"I had three dogs at our villa in Switzerland," supplemented Alfred Pochon, the second violin, "and they had been trained to listen to our rehearsing without uttering a whine. But let us commence playing the Schönberg and these four-footed critics would set up a yelping such as out-Schönberged Schönberg."

"Let me add the serious testimony," continued Mr. Bacon, "of Harold Bauer, who declares that this Schönberg quartet is one work that he can make nothing out of."

"Then there was Manheim," recollected Mr. Ara, "where the management of our concert came to us and said: 'If you insist upon playing this Schönberg quartet, well and good, but remember the blame be upon your head if the public is hostile. We will take no responsibility for it.' And then at the concert we had an announcement made that we intended to play an additional number before the Schönberg (to set it off better), the audience said, 'Are these Flonzaleys mad—to play even more than their program?' After all this suspense, however, we found the audience actually favorable toward the Schönberg."

Will Be Musical Evangel

"Our experience has been," recounted Mr. Betti, "that the English people have been the most friendly toward this work, and those in Holland. Germany is the most antagonistic, for there Schönberg has many enemies. Not only is his music revolutionary, but he has been very outspoken in expressing his opinions about various persons and things. He feels strongly and believes

in saying just what he feels. Naturally that causes enemies, but every age needs just such men as he who will speak the truth. And I believe that in the next generation, when Schönberg is recognized as a prophet of music, his present 'heresies' will be regarded as evangel."

"Schönberg heard us play the quartet in Berlin," related Mr. Pochon, "and he was

Mahler," related Mr. Ara, "and Mahler declared that it was the most remarkable score that he had read. Although he liked much of it, so he said, there were some parts that he couldn't fathom. Schönberg then showed it to Arnold Rosé, who took up the work with his famous quartet in Vienna. The Rosé Quartet rehearsed some four times and still could not get to the

the Flonzaleys are now championing this much-opposed composition, even though, as Mr. Betti confessed, "When we first took up the work it seemed to enter poisonously into our souls so that all of us lay awake night after night from the very thinking of it."

"It is perhaps the non-musical person," Mr. d'Archambeau submitted, "who gets the most out of this quartet at first. Such a person has no advance information to go by, as has the musician, and therefore he hears the work without being hampered by too much analysis. Thus the novel Schönberg effects appeal to him immediately, because he is not always watching the 'wheels go round.'"

By this time, the *Parmigiano* cheese and the coffee had been duly dispatched, and as the little gathering adjourned, Mr. Betti laid the Schönberg discussion "upon the



—Photo by Kossuth

Flonzaley Quartet and Harold Bauer, Photographed at Wheeling, W. Va., on Occasion of Their Joint Concert in that City. On Bench, Left to Right: Adolfo Betti, Ugo Ara, Iwan D'Archambeau, Alfred Pochon. In Rear, Mr. Bauer

deeply touched. He is very shy and retiring, and at the close when we wanted him to share our recalls, he kept slouching down in his seat so as to be unnoticed. We finally got him up on the platform, but unfortunately he was greeted with some hisses—such is the enmity toward him."

"Wasn't it Manheim," asked Mr. d'Archambeau, "where some of the people in the audience were looking around to see if we had a wind instrument concealed somewhere? So natural were Schönberg's wood wind effects with the strings."

"I went to see Schönberg," so Mr. Betti disclosed, "for the purpose of finding out if our interpretation of the quartet was according to his ideas. It meant an hour's journey from Berlin and I found him settled attractively in the country. He played quartet for me on the piano and I was delighted to find that our reading of the work coincided exactly with his. I saw there some examples of his painting and believe he would have made an impression in that art, as well. Yes, his paintings are obscure, like his music, but as his figures look down at you, one feature that stands out is the eyes."

"Then they are similar to his own eyes," commented Mr. Pochon, "for they have that same penetrating quality."

"Is Schönberg sincere?" Mr. Betti was asked.

Insists Upon Sincerity

"Absolutely," he replied. "He is neither crazy, nor is he creating his kind of music as a pose and merely to attract attention. His attitude toward himself is seen in his methods with his pupils. When they show him a bit of writing, he will ask 'Are you sincere in this?' or 'Do you actually feel this music?'. He will then add: 'If you feel the music, it's all right, but otherwise you'd better throw it away.'"

"Schönberg took his quartet to Gustav

bottom of the work, so the composer proposed: 'Let's all go to Mahler and work it over with him.' With this combination of musicianly insight the D Minor was finally elucidated until it became clear to all."

Throughout this luncheon, there was no doubt as to the ardent sincerity with which

table," with the parting thought: "When you examine the Haydn quartets and then the later quartets of Beethoven, do you not find it true that the distance between the Haydn and the later Beethoven works is just as great as that between the later Beethoven and the Schönberg?" K. S. C.

BOSTON'S APPROVAL FOR HENRI DANGÈS

Paris Baritone Applauded at Début in "Thais" Both as Singer and Actor

Bureau of Musical America,
No. 120 Boylston Street,
Boston, December 15, 1913.

IN the Saturday matinée at the Boston Opera House, in which Mary Garden was the *Thais* in Massenet's opera, Henri Dangès, the famous Paris baritone, made his Boston début, as *Athanael*. Louis Deru, the *Nicias*, appeared here for the first time in that rôle.

Mr. Dangès made a decidedly favorable impression by his finished and thoughtful impersonation. His voice is unusually beautiful. He sings; he does not merely declaim, and he showed further his training and experience in not attempting to force his voice. As an actor he is not as sensational as are others in this famous rôle, but a change of facial expression, a gesture, said much, and no gestures or facial expressions were thrown away. On the whole, although he sang under embarrassing conditions, Mr.

Dangès justified the enthusiastic reports which had preceded him from Paris. Mr. Deru made an excellent impression as *Nicias*. Charles Strony conducted effectively.

In the evening there was a performance of the "Barber of Seville," which was in many respects a model of what a popular-priced performance of an operatic masterpiece should be. Most of the artists in the cast were deeply imbued with the traditions of their rôles, and all worked together with exemplary understanding and effectiveness. The entire performance was permeated with the spirit of comedy, and that wonderful music bubbled and sparkled again as if it could never grow old. Hazel Sanborn made her début as *Rosina* and showed a pleasing, flexible voice of considerable range, although she was so nervous that it was hardly possible to make any just estimate of her accomplishments at the present time. Alfredo Ramella was the *Almaviva*, singing with a light, pretty voice. Jose Mardones, one of the best baritones of the Boston Opera Company, was really superb as *Basilio*, and Rodolfo Fornari, whose voice is of unlovely quality, was nevertheless a capital *Figaro*. Luigi Tavecchia is an exceptionally amusing *Dr. Bartolo*. O. D.

A memorial tablet was recently placed on the house in Vienna at Säulengasse 3 in which Schubert lived for a long time, and composed "Der Erlkönig" and numerous other works.