

ECHOES OF MUSIC ABROAD

London to Have a Season of Russian Opera at the Opera House Oscar Hammerstein Built—Berlin Artists Join Forces to Assert Independence of Concert Managers—New D'Annunzio-Pizzetti Opera Produced at La Scala Harks Back to Methods of Italian Primitives—Carreño, Walker and Hensel Give Last of Berlin Series of Élite Concerts—Former Tenor of Boston Opera Acclaimed in Berlin as an Ideal "Parsifal"—Cyril Scott Insists That There is a Celestial Music Which Few at This Stage of Evolution Can Hear—Havana's National Theater Inaugurated

WITH the regular "grand season" at Covent Garden omitted for the first time in many years, London welcomes the announcement of a season of Russian opera that has been decided upon for the early Summer. It is to last for five weeks at least, and perhaps more, if the patronage it receives warrants a prolongation.

One interesting feature of the project is the fact that it is to be held not at old Drury Lane Theater, which has housed the Beecham Russian seasons of the past two years, but at the opera house Oscar Hammerstein built for London. Thus, after a somewhat checkered career as a variety theater the London Opera House will return to its original patron saint.

The moving spirit in the undertaking is a singer named Rosing, a Russian tenor, formerly of the Imperial Opera in Moscow and now well known in London concert rooms. He will bring his artists and chorus from Russia to give the Russian works in the original language, and for conductor-in-chief he has engaged M. Gouravitch, of the Moscow Opera. The orchestra will be made up of English players. The scale of prices is to range from twenty-five cents to \$2.50.

Although it was originally proposed to produce a number of Russian operas as yet unknown in London it has been found impossible to secure the necessary scores for all of them from Petrograd, on account of the war. However, there will be at least three works given that will be novelties to the English public. The season is to commence on May 15, if possible, or in any case not later than the 29th.

On the opening night Tchaikowsky's "Pique-Dame" will be given its first London performance. After it will follow as soon as can be arranged César Cui's "Mam'selle Fif," which is based upon de Maupassant's tale, and Rimsky-Korsakov's dramatic duologue, or, as the composer called it, dramatic scene, "Mozart and Salieri," in which Chaliapin created a sensation in Moscow some years ago. Under consideration also are "Eugen Onegin," which is already known in London; "The Tsar's Bride," by Rimsky-Korsakov, said to be its composer's most popular opera in Russia; "Carmen," "Lakmé," with Inayat Kahn and his Indian musicians, and several other operas like these last two, outside the Russian repertoire.

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REPORTS from Milan do not indicate that Ildebrando Pizzetti's new opera "Fedra," based on Gabriele d'Annunzio's drama, is likely to find general favor with the operagoing public. The première at La Scala was not attended by any symptoms of hilarious approval. The composer, it appears, has harked back to the sources of Italian opera and taken the manner of a Peri and Caccini as his model. The monotony of the music, which utterly lacks any personal note, according to one correspondent, "succeeded in creating solely a somniferous effect upon the audience."

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FOR the last of the season's four Élite Concerts in Berlin three artists well known to the American public provided the program—Teresa Carreño, Edyth Walker and Heinrich Hensel. Probably no other artist has appeared so frequently in Berlin this Winter as Mme. Carreño, who thus closed a series of appearances that included concerts with the Bohemian Quartet of Prague, with Arnold Rosé, the Vienna violinist, with Lilli Lehmann and with the Philharmonic Orchestra under Arthur Nikisch, in addition to her own recitals, including one program of concertos with the Philharmonic Orchestra. Edyth Walker is another long established favorite in Berlin, while Herr Hensel seems to be steadily increasing in artistic stature as well as popular esteem.

The Deutsche Opernhaus in Charlottenburg restored "Parsifal" to the repertoire last month, with a singer named Felicitas Hallama as Melanie Kurt's successor in the rôle of *Kundry*. A former tenor of the defunct or dormant Boston Opera Company, Christian Hansen, received quite unusual praise

across in Switzerland who, though he had no interest in Theosophy whatever, evidently heard this music. "He was alone, and in a place where anything in the shape of ordinary material music, so to speak, was an impossibility. There was nobody there who could play an in-

strument of any sort, nor was he near any hall where the sounds of orchestral or other music could possibly reach him. And yet for the space of about ten minutes he heard a music of such overwhelming and celestial loveliness that, to use his own words, he 'nearly went down on his knees in reverence and ecstasy.'

"And I have no reason whatever to suppose this gentleman—well advanced in years—should either be guilty of falsehood in any shape, or evince the



Frederick Delius, One of England's Most Discussed Composers

Few composers in any country can claim to be essentially so cosmopolitan in make-up and experience as Frederick, or Fritz, Delius. He is definitely classed among British composers, but by virtue of the German blood in his veins he has been claimed by the Germans. His works have been given more frequently in Germany and France than anywhere else, though they have figured in English concert programs more frequently this winter than ever before. Some years ago, after a physical crisis, he came to this country and lived on a farm in Florida until he had regained his health. He is one of the outstanding personalities of the advanced school.

for his impersonation of the title rôle. Paul Schwerts, writing in the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, had this to say: "Herr Hansen is for me an ideal *Parsifal*. Figure, gestures and voice combine to create a perfect effect. His appearance is convincing, his conception poetically true, while of magnificent effect is the luscious but masculine voice."

The *Gurnemann* of the cast was once more the American basso, Robert Blass. His treatment of the rôle now is praised as showing a distinct advance upon that of last year.

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THAT individual young English composer, Cyril Scott, has found in the course of a "somewhat long-extended study of mysticism, theosophy and occultism" that there is a great deal more in music than at first "meets the ear," and that "there is a music to be heard on higher planes by a certain training of latent faculties in all people which is of ravishing beauty." Writing of "Some Occult Aspects of Music" he dilates on this point in the *Monthly Musical Record*.

As an instance of special interest to the incredulous lay mind Mr. Scott cites the experience of a man he once came

slightest indication of having an over-impressionable or not entirely balanced mind. Indeed, he possessed the rather skeptical brain of the scientist who is not content with the experience of others in order to awaken belief of any sort."

As to the layman's probable supposition that this music was subjective rather than objective, "the experience of occultists, mystics and philosophers in all ages goes to disprove this, and, combined with the testimony of those who can function on the astral plane, make its objectivity seem as certain as the Queen's Hall Orchestra." These celestial strains cannot be transcribed because, it seems, we on this material plane do not possess instruments subtle enough.

"It is, however, the conviction of occultists that what largely constitutes a musical genius is the degree of receptivity he possesses for the 'downpouring' of this music from subtler planes of thought; and although he may not 'hear' it in the manner the Swiss gentleman did, yet nevertheless it filters through into his mind to some extent and thus gets translated into ordinary music. I was told by a psychic of great powers that Wagner was particularly receptive in this way, and hence his music was 'richer' than that of any of his predecessors, especially in those qualities which seem to touch so graphically the great forces of Nature."

An interesting quotation from "Isis Unveiled," bearing on the therapeutical uses of music, is given. "From the remotest ages the philosophers have maintained the singular power of music over certain diseases, especially of the nervous class. Kircher recommends it, having experienced its good effects on himself, and he gives an elaborate description of the instrument he employed. It was a harmonica composed of five tumblers of a very thin glass placed in a row. In two of them were two different varieties of wine; in the third, brandy; in the fourth, oil; in the fifth, water. He extracted fine melodious sounds from them in the usual way, by merely rubbing his fingers on the edges of the tumblers. The sound has an attractive property; it draws out disease, which streams out to encounter the musical wave, and the two, blending together, disappear in space. Asclepiades employed music for the same purpose some twenty centuries ago. He blew a trumpet to cure sciatica, and, its prolonged sound making the fibres of the nerves to palpitate, the pain invariably subsided. Democritus in like manner affirmed that many diseases could be cured by the melodious sounds of a flute."

But far grander associations can be claimed for music than this, from an occult point of view, Mr. Scott insists. He quotes again: "Music is the combination and modulation of sounds, and sound is the effect produced by the vibration of the ether. Now, if the impulses communicated to the ether by the different planets be likened to the tones produced by the different notes of a musical instrument, it is not difficult to conceive that the Pythagorean 'music of the spheres' is something more than a mere fancy, and that certain planetary aspects may imply disturbances in the ether of our planet, and certain others, rest and harmony."

Mr. Scott thinks that for most of us, at our present stage of evolution, it is impossible to hear this music of the spheres, as "a person who has developed such a degree of clairaudience as would be necessary" is very rarely found. "Nevertheless, such people do exist, and, I may add quite honestly, I know who some of those people are."

FOLLOWING the example of Darmstadt and Vienna, the lesser German city of Crefeld recently produced Felix Weingartner's one-act music drama, "Cain and Abel." The public of this industrial city gave it a friendly reception.

Mr. Weingartner has re-written the

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