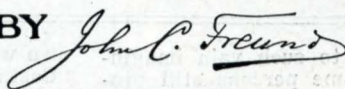


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MAHLER'S "EIGHTH" GIVEN A BRILLIANT AMERICAN PREMIÈRE

"Symphony of a Thousand"
Thrillingly Performed by Philadelphia Orchestra and Huge Assisting Chorus—Audience Demonstrative in Its Approval—The Music Melodious and Impressive, with Truly Majestic Climaxes

Bureau of Musical America,
34 South Seventeenth Street,
Philadelphia, March 3, 1916.

THE many months of hard work necessary to the preparation of the Eighth Symphony of Gustav Mahler (the "Symphony of a Thousand") were crowned with glowing success at the Academy of Music last evening when the work was given its first performance in America by the Philadelphia Orchestra, under the direction of Leopold Stokowski, with a double chorus of 400 voices each, a chorus of children numbering 150, eight soloists, and an augmented orchestra of 110 musicians. This was the first of four performances in this city, the second taking place this afternoon, the third to-morrow evening, and the fourth, which has been announced because hundreds of persons have been unable to secure seats for the first three, on Tuesday evening, April 4. These performances will be followed by one more, to be given at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, under the auspices of the Friends of Music, on Sunday evening, April 9.

A description of what took place at the Academy of Music last evening, with a consideration of the brilliant audience, its reception of the work, and the enthusiasm with which it was swayed in paying tributes of admiration and congratulation to conductor, chorus, soloists, orchestra and all concerned in the performance, might lead to a succession of superlatives, as the occasion undoubtedly was one of the most notable in the musical history of Philadelphia, and perhaps in that of this country. At any rate, there was a tremendous demonstration at the conclusion of the first part, which was exceeded in enthusiasm by that which occurred at the end of the performance. Mr. Stokowski, who not only had conducted the symphony with certainty and intuitive insight and deep appreciation, but entirely from memory, was presented by Alexander Van Rensselaer, president of the Orchestra Association, with a framed bronze wreath, in bas relief, the gift of the association, also receiving two laurel wreaths from individuals, while the audience rose to him with shouted "Bravos!" and fairly overwhelmed him with the ardor of its enthusiasm. To the presentation speech made by Mr. Van Rensselaer, Mr. Stokowski responded, expressing his gratitude to the Philadelphia public for its warm support, stating that it was a source of deep gratification to him that the audience should so appreciate so difficult a work in a single hearing.

It is not necessary here to enter into a discussion of Mahler's place in the musical world, although many interesting things might be said bearing upon the eighth in his list of nine symphonies. (He left an uncompleted tenth which, it is said, will not be published.) The first performance of the Eighth Symphony, accepted as the greatest of Mahler's works, was given in Munich, Sept. 12, 1910, under the direction of the composer, with memorable success, and was repeated the following evening. Mr. Stokowski, who was present at both of these performances, after having attended many of the rehearsals, was so deeply



EDITH MASON AS "MICAELA"

Photo © Mishkin

American Soprano Who During Her First Season as a Member of the Metropolitan Opera Co. Has Achieved Success in Leading Rôles (See Page 14)

impressed that he has likened his sensations to those which he believes may have been experienced by the first white man when he looked for the first time upon Niagara. "Something of the same feeling of awe—the same flashing insight into infinity—I felt before this mighty work of Mahler," says Mr. Stokowski. It was only natural, therefore, that, a few years later, when he became the conductor of so large and efficient an organization as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Mr. Stokowski should be imbued with the desire to give the Mahler work its first presentation in this country.

Of the composition itself, as presented with the large number of singers and instrumentalists which Mahler indicated as being essential, there is some danger of speaking at first with unthinking enthusiasm. For this reason it is best to remember that quite naturally such an unusual combination of orchestra, chorus and soloists would be likely to thrill, perhaps somewhat superficially, in any

worthy work to which such a combination might be applied. There have, of course, been larger choruses, and probably as large or larger a combination of voices and instruments, presented in this country, and it is not difficult to imagine effects fully as impressive being produced by the music of some of the great oratorios, if the same number of persons in chorus and orchestra were employed. But this is not the question to be considered, since Mahler's composition is neither oratorio nor cantata, nor does it partake of the operatic. It must be regarded as essentially symphonic in form and development.

The Two Divisions

The first part is built upon, or around, the words of the old Latin hymn, "Veni, Creator Spiritus," while the second part is a setting of the final scene from Goethe's "Faust," that of the Anchorites,

AMERICAN COMPOSERS AGAIN EXPLOITED IN A CHICAGO CONCERT

Burleigh's Concerto, Played by Amy Emerson Neill, Prize-winning Violinist, the Feature of Program Arranged by Conductor Gunn—American Choral Society Assists the Orchestra—Music of Varying Interest and Merit Presented

Bureau of Musical America,
624 South Michigan Avenue,
Chicago, March 6, 1916.

THERE is no gainsaying that the movement started some three years ago by Glenn Dillard Gunn to provide for the performance of American music by American musicians has met with most flattering and gratifying success. This has been brought about first by enlisting in the cause several distinguished musicians and music-lovers of Chicago; second by establishing an orchestra composed entirely of performers who received their training in this country, and lastly by bringing before the musical public a number of symphonic compositions by American writers, whose works otherwise might have remained unheard.

That the results of the last-named endeavor have in some instances been negligible does not affect the value of the movement. During the three years that Mr. Gunn has directed these concerts, we have heard some music which might just as well not have been brought forth, and some composers whose works were performed were hardly given the time to review their own writings in that thoroughly self-critical manner which would have served to improve them or else have deferred their performance.

The task which Mr. Gunn gave himself was no easy one. It is difficult to fill out an entire evening with music of any one kind or nationality, and especially so with new American works almost exclusively symphonic in scope. But Mr. Gunn has shown great talent for organization, capacity for hard work, and adaptability in the field of conducting for which, they say, the chosen ones are born and not developed.

Moreover, Mr. Gunn has found a number of works which have merited production, and among them, the Cecil Burleigh Violin Concerto, which was played for the first time at the second concert of this season given by the American Symphony Orchestra at Orchestra Hall last Thursday evening.

On the other hand, there were several works on the program which hardly deserved this distinction. It is my belief that Mr. Gunn has found the difficulties of giving such concerts onerous, for he had the assistance of the new American Choral Society, under Daniel Protheroe's direction, at this concert, to vary the program with choral compositions.

In the Burleigh Concerto, which was the piece selected for the violin contest, in which twenty-eight aspirants competed to determine who should have the honor of playing the work at this concert in addition to a prize of \$200 donated by Charles G. Dawes, president of the American Symphony Orchestra, Amy Emerson Neill, the winner, disclosed extraordinary talent. The piece is well written to exploit the resources of the instrument and reveals novel and original musical ideas. It is in four movements which occasionally are too heavily scored. But the themes are melodious and readily susceptible to musical development.

Miss Neill played with technical facility, with warmth and temperament

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