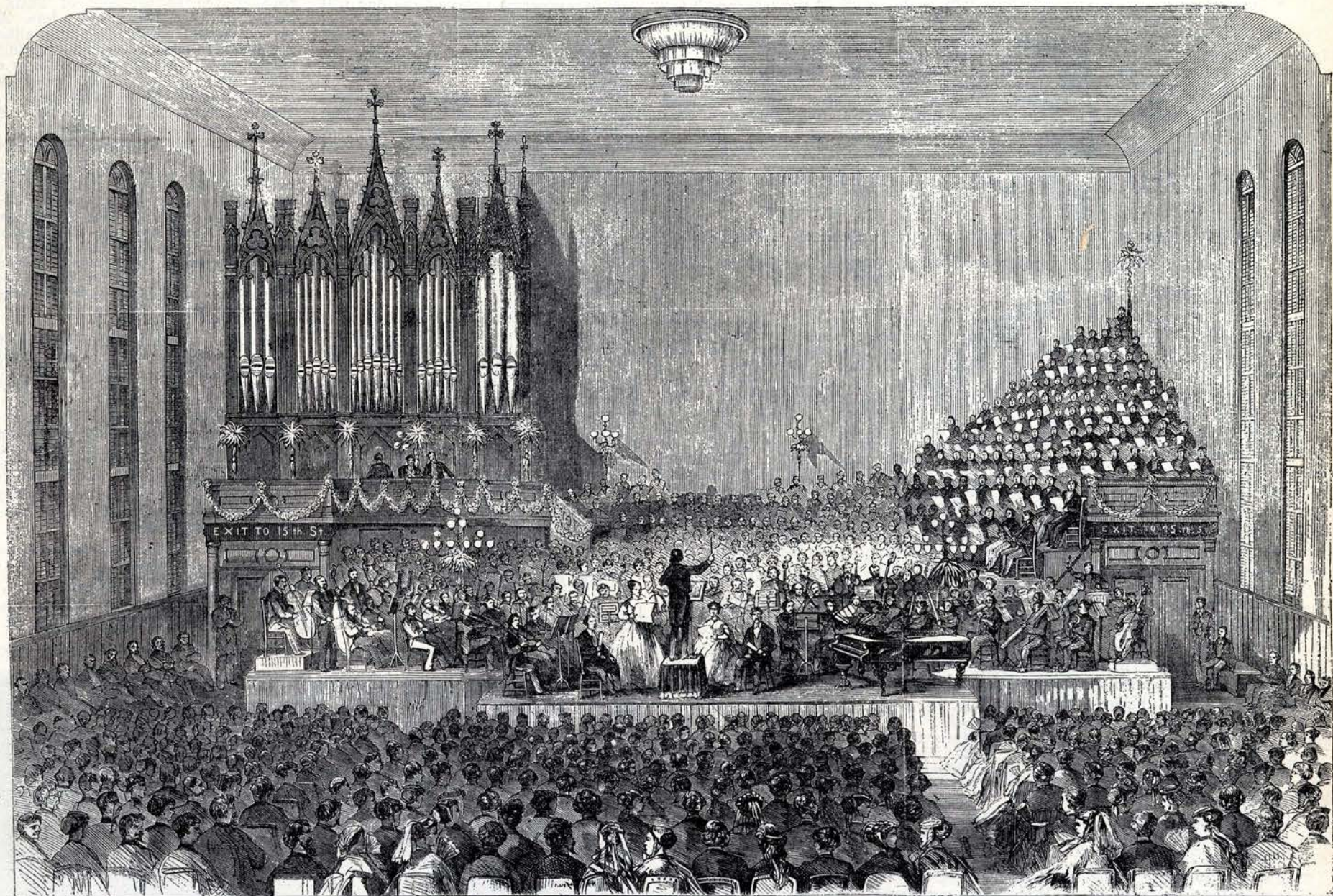


MEMORIES OF OLD STEINWAY HALL DAYS OF MUSIC



Reproduction of Wood Cut Used in "Frank Leslie's," June 22, 1867, Illustrating a Grand Musical Festival Held in Steinway Hall, Fourteenth Street, New York, June 3 to 9, Inclusive, Under the Direction of L. F. Harrison

THE transfer of Steinway Hall from its old home on Fourteenth Street to its new site at 109-11-13 West Fifty-seventh Street, as related in MUSICAL AMERICA last week, calls to mind many interesting débuts of musicians in the early seventies who later were destined to make their names household words in America.

Charles H. Steinway, president of Steinway & Sons, recalled the opening of the hall in 1866, Rubinstein's début six years later, and a multitude of anecdotes narrated in his comprehensive diary. Nahum Stetson, who joined the firm of Steinway & Sons exactly forty years ago, told a MUSICAL AMERICA representative of his lessons with William Mason, who had a studio "upstairs," as he described it, and mentioned with pride his purchase of a Steinway piano in 1868. "Although I have no definite recollection of the artists that I heard in Steinway Hall before 1876 with the exception of Rubinstein," said Mr. Stetson, "I do remember paying for many a concert in the old hall when admission was one dollar, and secured seats a dollar and a half." Mr. Stetson showed the writer a volume containing the programs of Steinway Hall's tenth season, 1876-77, and a brief glance therein will probably recall pleasant reminiscences to music-lovers who delight in comparing our present-day artists with those of the "good old days."

In volume one, number one, published in September, 1876, the Theodore Thomas Series of Six Symphony Concerts is announced to begin on Oct. 4, with Myron W. Whitney, tenor, and Mme. Madeline Schiller, pi-

anist, as the assisting artists. On Oct. 9 "Phaëton," the symphonic poem by Saint-Saëns, received its first hearing in New York.

Shortly after, the Mozart Club gave its first concert, with Anna Drasdil, contralto, and Richard Arnold, violinist, as the soloists. On Oct. 20 "Scandinavian Night" enlisted the Swedish Lady Quar-

ter, and William H. Sherwood, pianist, made his first appearance.

We who are accustomed to regard the concerts of the Oratorio Society as annual institutions would be astonished to see an announcement of the first appearance of the society, under Dr. Leopold Damrosch, as far back as Nov. 8, 1876, when Mendelssohn's "Elijah" was given,

with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

This would be a treat for the Wagnerites! On a dusty, time-worn page dated Nov. 11, 1876, the "Götterdämmerung Funeral March" is marked "first time." Emma Thursby, the soprano, appeared on the same occasion. The following evening, at the Carl Bergmann Grand Memorial Concert, the Deutsche Liederkrantz, the Arion Society and the New York Sängerbunde appeared.

Here is a record for a débutante pianist: On Nov. 14 Mme. Annette Essipoff, the Russian pianist, made her début. One month later this same artist gave her seventeenth recital in Steinway Hall! And, if reports are true, the house was not papered.

At one of the Essipoff concerts Lillian Norton, later to become the celebrated Lillian Nordica, was the assisting artist.

The month of February, 1877, is also notable. The German Liederkrantz, under A. Paur, gave a concert, at which Max Liebling, the pianist, appeared. "Mark Twain" gave humorous recitations at a benefit of the New York Press Club. S. B. Mills, the prominent teacher, appeared in concert. Toward the end of the month the Ole Bull concerts were inaugurated.

April 2, 1877, contains an interesting announcement. Maurice Strakosch introduces the "first performance on Prof. Elisha Gray's marvelous telephone," with Signor Tagliapetra, the baritone, and Mme. Carreno-Sauret, the pianist, as the artists. This was the first transmission of music by telephone.



An Artist's Conception in the 60's of the Rush to Buy Seats to Dickens's Readings at Steinway Hall. The Original was Published in "Harper's"