

OUR OLDEST ORCHESTRA REACHES 75TH BIRTHDAY

Festival Week of Concerts as Feature of Jubilee Celebration of New York Philharmonic Society, Which Has Completed Three-Quarters of a Century of Solid Achievement—Only Concert Postponed Was Upon the Occasion of Lincoln's Assassination—Ultra-Formal Accoutrement of Early Ushers Abandoned Because of Ridicule from Younger Members of Audience—Statistics of "Then and Now"

SEVENTY-FIVE years ago coming revolutionary storms had just begun to gather ominously in Europe when the first American orchestral society was inaugurated. On Jan. 17, 1842, that society begins the celebration of its founding, while another hurricane devastates European nations. In the interim between that birthday and its present vigorous old age, the Philharmonic Society of New York, born in the shadow of a tempest and attaining old age in the midst of a tornado, has lived a life of varied interest and solid achievement in the realm of American music.

The celebration of the seventy-fifth year of the Philharmonic will take the form of a series of concerts which will be held during what has been called "Festival Week." The introductory concert on Wednesday evening, Jan. 17, will be an invitation affair for members of the society and their friends. At this concert the president of the society, Oswald Garrison Villard, will address the audience. Then there will be four concerts, which have been so arranged that each one of them will represent one of the subscription series of the Philharmonic Society, that is to say, Thursday evenings, Friday afternoons, Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons.

The Mendelssohn Glee Club of New York and the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Pa., will assist at these concerts. The Bach Choir, under its own conductor, Dr. J. Fred Wolle, will co-operate with the Philharmonic at the Saturday evening concert.

To Hold Banquet

The entire festival will be concluded by a banquet at the Hotel Waldorf-Astoria, to which will be invited the members of the Philharmonic Society and distinguished guests of musical, civic and national fame.

The story of the foundation of the Philharmonic Society is told in the tenth report of the society, which states:

"For several years previous to the spring of 1842 it was a subject of general remark among the leading musicians of New York that there was then no association of professional musicians, nor any complete orchestral band in the city, capable of performing the grand instrumental compositions of the great masters. During this period U. C. Hill, who had formerly spent some time in Europe, was active in urging such musicians as C. E. Horn, William Penson, Mr. P. Maroncelli and others to unite in a movement for the establishment of a society for the general interest of the art and for the proper performance of great orchestral pieces.

The First Meeting

"At last, wearied with the delays caused by the doubts and fears expressed when any immediate action was suggested, Mr. Hill, with the assistance of Messrs. A. and H. B. Dodworth and others, assumed the responsibility of calling, and performed the task of notifying the musicians of the city of a meeting at the Apollo Rooms, on Saturday, April 2, 1842. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Hill. A. P. Heinrich was appointed chairman and F. W. Rosier, secretary.

"Meetings for rehearsals were immediately commenced and continued almost weekly until the first concert, which was

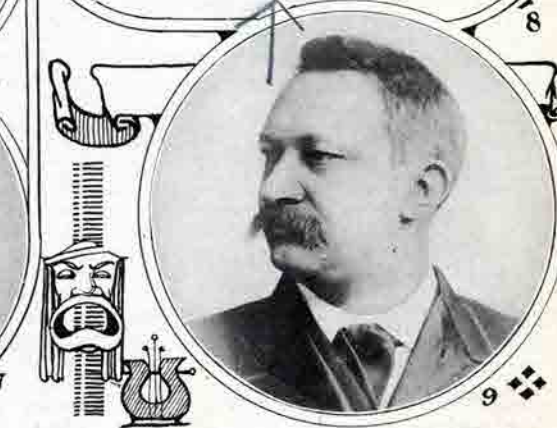


PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.
 FIRST CONCERT, FIRST SEASON.
 Apollo Rooms, 7th Dec. 1842.
 TO COMMENCE AT 8 O'CLOCK PRECISELY.

PART I.
 GRAND SYMPHONY IN C MINOR. BEETHOVEN.
 SCENA, from *Oberon*. WEBER.
 MADAME OTTO.
 QUINTETTE IN D MINOR. HUMMEL.

PART II.
 OVERTURE TO *OBERON*. WEBER.
 DUETT—from *Armida*. ROSSINI.
 MADAME OTTO AND MR. C. E. HORN.
 SCENA, from *Fidelio*. BEETHOVEN.
 MR. C. E. HORN.
 ARIA BRAVURA—from *Belmont and Constantia*. MOZART.
 MADAME OTTO.
 NEW OVERTURE IN D. KALLIWODA.

The Vocal Music will be directed by Mr. Timm.



Leading Figures in the History of the Philharmonic Society of New York and a Reproduction of Its First Program. No. 1, Chamber of Music Society, Founded in 1850 by Members of the Orchestra. Left to right, top row, Joseph Mosenthal, Viola; Carl Bergmann, 'Cello; John Gosche, Manager; left to right, lower row, Theodore Thomas, First Violin; William Mason, Piano and Organ; George Matzka, Second Violin. No. 2, Carl Bergmann, Associate Conductor of the Society from 1855 to 1865, and Sole Conductor from 1865 to 1876. No. 3, Anton Seidl, Conductor from 1891 until his death, March 28, 1898. No. 4, William Scharfenberg, one of the Founders. No. 5, Josef Stransky, the Present Conductor (appointed 1911). No. 6, Wassily Safonoff, Associate Conductor in the Sixty-third and Sixty-fourth Sessions of the Society and Sole Conductor, Program 1906 to 1909. No. 7, Gustav Mahler, Conductor, 1909 to 1911. No. 8, Reproduction of the Philharmonic's First Concert, First Season, December 7, 1842. No. 9, Theodore Thomas, Associate Conductor, 1876 to 1879, and Sole Conductor, 1879 to 1891.

given Dec. 7 of the same year. The principal pieces performed were Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, conducted by U. C. Hill; Weber's Overture, 'Oberon,' conducted by D. G. Etienne, and the Overture in D, by Kalliwoda, conducted by H. C. Timm.

"At the September election, previous to this concert, the original officers were re-elected for a year. During the first season only three concerts were given, but before the commencement of the second the constitution was amended in order to give four concerts and to admit associate members. Soon after this time provision was also made for a sinking fund, but since then there has been no material change in the regulations of the society."

A Connecticut Yankee

Ureli Corelli Hill, the man to whose efforts the Philharmonic probably owes

its existence, was a typical Connecticut Yankee, full of energy, shrewd, persevering, enthusiastic and self-reliant. He was also an excellent musician. He studied the violin under Spohr in 1835 and later became the most popular violin teacher in New York. He had the spirit of an explorer—the curiosity to discover new fields and the energy to cultivate them when he found them. His associations with the Philharmonic, in addition to the fact that he, more than any other individual was its founder, were extremely intimate. During the first six years of its existence, he was president of the society, vice-president for seven years and member of the board of directors for six years. In the first five Philharmonic seasons he conducted eight concerts.

The first concerts of the society were held in the Apollo Rooms, the same fashionable hall in which the society was

founded. At these concerts chairs were unknown. The audience sat on benches. Members of the orchestra received the subscribers at the door of the concert hall and escorted them to their seats. These ushers were selected by the society because of their appearance and demeanor, and wore white gloves, which were paid for by the society. They carried long, thin batons of wood painted white. These were the symbols of their office. Their perhaps too formal appearance caused considerable amusement among the younger members of the audience so that the custom was finally discontinued. As a result, the fourth annual report of the society declares that \$4.75 was saved owing to the fact that ushers' gloves were no longer paid for by the society.

Edwin Booth as Aide

The society rapidly became a leader

[Continued on page 4]