Boston Organization Was Pioneer
In the Field of Chamber Music

Gift of Extensive Program Collection to the New England Conservatory Recalls Early Musical History
In This Country—Mendelssohn Quintet Made First Tours in the Late Forties

BOSTON, Jan. 1.—A large collection of programs, books, and musical manuscripts of the Mendelssohn Quintet Club of Boston, the pioneer organization to give chamber music concerts throughout the United States, has been given to the library of the New England Conservatory of Music. At the latter repository of musical books and scores it will be added to an already extensive department of programs of the Mendelssohn Quintet Club, the concert circuit which the librarian, Mary Alden Thayer, has been forming in the past ten or twelve years.

The well equipped working library of the music school on Huntington Avenue is now well equipped with programs of major concerts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Cecilia, Apollo and other musical organizations.

A complete file is included of the student concerts and recitals of recent years, and of the programs of the choirs, oratorio societies and other older alumni of the Conservatory, is rapidly filling in the library. The first concert undertaken in the early days of the institution, whose first public concert took place in the spring of 1887, the Mendelssohn Quintet Club also has a valuable data to illustrate the history of music in the middle nineteenth century.

The original members were August Fries, first violin; Francis Elia, second violin; William Thomas Ryan, viola; William Thomas Ryan, viola; and Anthony Fries, bassoon. The program of their first concert, given in the Chickering piano rooms in December, 1849, was as follows: Quintet in A, op. 18, Mendelssohn; Serenade, op. 9, Schumann; and Fries' own "Pirouette." The organization promptly "caught on." There was nothing comparable in the United States, and there is no trace of whose those were presented in the Middle West after the Civil War. A "concertizing" the organization, or being assisted by it, they bring in the number of many of the nineteenth century musicians: Mile. C. A. Eberhardt, Robert Schumann, Adolph Riepenstock, Johann Thomas Gruhn, Van Dyke, Long, J. C. D. Parker, Ernest Perabo and many others. They show a high standard of musical numbers which were given the Boston Mendelssohn Quintet Club one of the most successful of the series.

The story of the Mendelssohn Quintet Club, as many musically inclined people know, is interesting, happiness, and no small part of their success was due to the fact that they willed "The Collections of an Old Musician," Mr. Thomas Ryan, who was the managing member of the Quintet during its forty-nine years of existence. It was through Mr. Ryan's joyous enthusiasm for Mendelssohn that the name was adopted and retained. Other members came and went, most of them Teutonic or Swiss, but this Irish-born clarinetist remained, always efficient, companionable and popular, and in his later years he wrote out a narrative of his career. At a time when America was filling up with foreign music, the people who ran away from their own countries after the revolutionary troubles of 1814 the Mendelssohn Quintet Club was formed to give concerts in the North American cities.

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