

ECHOES OF MUSIC ABROAD

Paris Journal Balks at Meyerbeer—English Critic's Fall from Aesthetic Grace After Two Years' Musical Starvation in Salonica—German Court Denies Pianos Are Necessities—Musical Delinquency of Marseilles—Nikisch as a Scoreless Conductor—Bachelet Writes Recitatives for Rameau's "Castor et Pollux"

IN Paris, at all events, there is no disposition manifested as there is in New York to accept the Berliner Meyerbeer as a Frenchman just because he lived in France and wrote operas for the Académie Nationale to librettos by Eugene Scribe. And so when the Gaité-Lyrique recently charged itself with revivals of "L'Africaine" and "Le Prophète" *Le Courier Musical* took up arms not only against that institution, but against Director Rouché of the Opéra as well, whose authorization is necessary for the production of these affairs any place outside of his bailiwick. The *Courier* deplores the neglect of the commissioners of the Municipal Council to interfere in the presentation of the Prussian's operas in a subventioned theater. "Not only was there no interference," indignantly declares Théophile Puget, "but the 'Prophète' was added to 'L'Africaine.' It is not admissible that a governmental theater like the Lyrique-Municipal should lend itself to such attempts and one does not fail to notice that the Council, whose decision concerning the Rue Wagner is generally known, has done ill in closing its eyes so complaisantly to the indiscretion knowingly committed by the management of the Gaité.

"Let no one protest that there is any difference between Wagner and Meyerbeer. If we have to reproach the former for his too famous 'Capitulation' it must not be forgotten that Meyerbeer, a Prussian of Prussia, did not spare us hostile sentiments. He lived in France, grew rich there, died there, but it was in obedience to his express wish that his remains were later buried in his mother country, where he was granted the honors of a great patriot. To be quite logical one should therefore authorize performances of Wagner. There would, at least, be the excuse of honoring the genius of a great musician—something which cannot be said in the case of Meyerbeer.

"We do not think this embarrassing tendency should be allowed to make further progress. And Mr. Rouché cannot claim any more than Mr. Duplay that he is driven to such extremes by the lack of works to present. Thank heaven, our ancient repertoire is rich and our young school abounds in works—always, alas, unpublished! But if the director of the Opéra believes that the French composers do not provide him with sufficient material he can open his doors more widely to Allied composers and make us acquainted with a number of scores of unquestionable interest. Perhaps, though, he is afraid of giving Italian music too large a place in his house!"

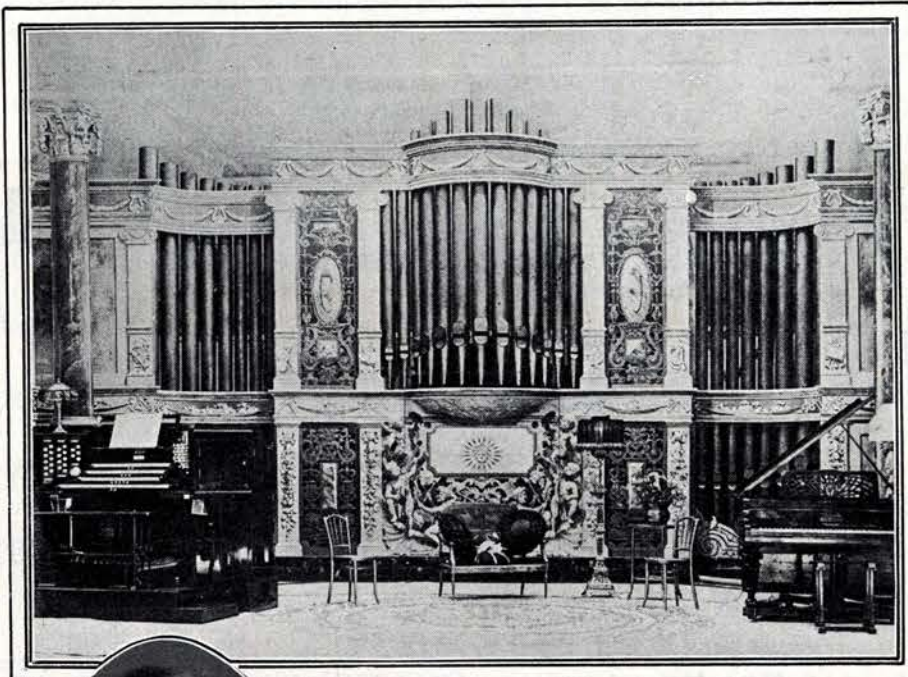
Nikisch and Orchestra Scores

Some day, perhaps, concert-goers will become so accustomed to the practice of conductors in dispensing with scores that the direction of a whole symphonic program from memory will mean as little as the performance of a piano program without notes does now. That time is not quite yet. We in this country have in our midst a young conductor so proud of his ability along these lines that he makes use of a collapsible music-stand which a member of the orchestra ceremoniously adjusts just before he lifts his baton, that everyone present may be duly impressed by the prodigy of mnemonic accomplishment. And we could name another who carefully pushes the conspicuously scoreless stand to one side. Let it be imagined that we alone are provincial in this matter, it is becoming to ponder the fact that even the great Nikisch has a weakness for soliciting attention in this way. It appears that at a concert given by the fiery Hungarian on one of his Continental tours not long before the war the principal number on the program was Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Before the symphony an attendant placed on Nikisch's stand a score which looked thick enough to be

that of the "Götterdämmerung," and opened it. Nikisch thereupon mounted the podium gravely, closed the huge score, remained for a moment rapt and pensive and presently attacked the famous theme of "Fate knocking at the door." But he did more than dispense with the notes! He let the orchestra go through the whole first movement without indicating the beat save for a picturesque gesture or two!

Which is, after all, just a degree above the practice dear to the unlamented Karl Muck of allowing the Boston Symphony

A good deal of lamenting has been in order among musicians of this community that, although theaters and "movies" attract the crowds continually, the concert situation is deplorable. Performances at the Opéra Municipal have been made possible only by the union of the Grand Théâtre and the Concerts Classiques orchestras. The *Courier Musical* lays further blame for popular indifference to concerts the fact that a small group of Chauvinists insisted upon the elimination of all music of Germanic origin—to such an extent, indeed, that



George T. Pattman, Noted Organist of Glasgow, and a View of His Organ, with Which He Is Touring England. The Organ Weighs Twelve Tons and Was Constructed After Mr. Pattman's Designs and Specifications. It Is Said that He May Visit America with His Organ

to play the first part of the "Eroica" scherzo while preserving on his own part a statuesque immobility!

A Legal View of Pianos

In spite of the notions current elsewhere that music is regarded in present-day Germany as something sanctified and inviolate, a Berlin court ruled not long ago that a piano was by no means an "article of daily necessity." It appears that a Berlin instrument dealer was prosecuted by the anti-profiteering authorities for selling at a certain price a second-hand piano, for which he had not paid half the amount he asked. He was charged with having committed "usury" with an article of "daily necessity." The courts refused to agree with the official view that pianos were a necessity for the soothing of war nerves, and said that the tradesman had a right to sell a piano like any other "luxury" for whatever he could get for it. This sidelight, according to the London *Daily Mail*, tends to show that there is a shortage of pianos in Germany, and does not bear out the stories that have been told of warehouses full of instruments ready to be dumped on the English and other markets as soon as the war is over.

Death of Beethoven's Grand-Nephew

Recently there was reported the death of the sister of Clara Wieck, wife of Schumann, in Dresden, and now comes news that Karl Julius Maria Beethoven, a grand-nephew of the creator of the Ninth Symphony, passed away in a military hospital in Vienna last September.

Marseilles's Music

Musical stagnation appears to have affected Marseilles since the war began.

ties and denatures the substance of enthusiasm.

For those who think salvation lies in long abstinence there is a well of wisdom in the words of Gerald Cumberland, who was a music critic for years and then went to Salonica, where for two years he was virtually cut off from all musical provender.

"To what extent my intellect became atrophied by this enforced idleness," he writes in the London *Musical Opinion*, "I do not know, but from time to time I had opportunities of observing my emotional nature and its condition; moreover, I kept a close watch on the reactions created by soldiers' crude songs upon the emotional natures both of officers and men. It might be thought that one's emotions, if left untouched by any artistic stimulus for a long period, would become sluggish and unresponsive; but, as a matter of fact, precisely the contrary is the case. One's esthetic faculties become wakeful by disuse. They respond almost frantically to the slightest appeal. All critical judgment is inhibited, all power of discrimination is lost.

"Before the war I had educated my esthetic nature to the point where one begins to feel disgust for Puccini and a real and handsome dislike of practically all modern Italian music. Mascagni had captured me as a boy and my dirty little fingers had raced through Leoncavallo's 'Pagliacci' dozens of times on the piano that stood in the dining-hall at school. The crude, flaunting music of these men pleased me simply because, being a schoolboy, I was more or less of a savage. I suppose I liked my music hot and strong and that I detested and feared all forms of subtlety, of reserve, of indirect expression. When a few years later I began to study Puccini—I don't mean 'study,' of course; one doesn't study the sayings of a grown-up baby—when a few years later I began to overhear Puccini crying madly in the wilderness, I stopped and I looked and I listened. Needless to say, I never thought him a great composer, but I must confess that I liked him enormously. I liked him just in the way that almost everybody else does; and it was not until one day that Samuel Langford of *The Manchester Guardian* said that Puccini made him feel physically sick that I realized that perhaps my fond worship of the Italian was misplaced. I determined to try to dislike him.

"Now in Salonica we never heard any music at all except a few jolly, ribald songs and sentimental things like 'It's a Long, Long Trail.' These did not count. The only music I heard was the music my memory retained and which my mind would reconstruct note by note as I stood in the trenches or sat in my dug-out. How many scores of times have I silently sung or as silently played the Suleika Songs of Hugo Wolf, 'Als ich auf dem Euphrat schiffte' and 'Dies zu deuten erbotig,' and the one (I forget its name) about 'Balch, Bokhara, Samarkand.' I remembered some Brahms songs also and five Beethoven sonatas, and almost the whole of Bantock's 'Omar Khayyam.'

"But there came a day when I went to a hospital with malaria; here, after I had lain in bed for about a week, I heard an Italian military band play a whole program of music. It was one of the most trying experiences I have ever been called upon to endure. I must explain that physically I was almost well and that my mental and nervous state was as normal as can be expected from a man whose ordinary life has been suddenly interrupted and changed from intense mental activity to equally intense physical activity. Well, the military band played Puccini—the scene in which *Butterfly* waits at her window before dawn for the coming of the bowerish Pinkerton. I found it overwhelming, vitalizing, unbearably poignant. I gave myself up to its sensuousness; I wallowed in its pathos. All my pre-war standards vanished. My emotions conquered my intellect and insisted upon enjoying what my reason condemned. Esthetically of course I was starved, and any kind of food was welcome. I was unmanned, and unmanned by the greasy music of Puccini!

"But these thoughts did not occur to me till the following day when, having had a cold douche and a most hearty breakfast, I recollected my emotions of the previous afternoon with some disgust. "Well, I think the moral of it all is that in one's youth one should stick to the classics almost exclusively. If, as a child and young man, I had played more Bach I should not now be so easily seduced by Puccini and his school."

H. F. P.

Leo Ornstein's 'Cello Sonata has twice been played during the last few weeks at Philadelphia by Hans Kindler, with the composer at the piano. The work aroused much interest and enthusiasm.

when Hasselmans gave the "Damnation of Faust" he was obliged to replace Berlioz's stirring setting of the "Rakoczy March" by the "Marseillaise." An attempt was made by the Association des Concerts Classiques to stir public interest through the importation of certain Parisian artists. In this way music-lovers of the Mediterranean city heard the organist, Tournemire, the Société des Instruments à Vent, Edouard Risler, the pianist, and several singers of greater or lesser worth. Apparently the ban on German music was lifted, for Tournemire played works by Buxtehude and Bach, Risler the C Sharp Minor Sonata and the "Appassionata" of Beethoven and the soprano, Mlle. Brunlet, sang from "Fidelio" and several Mozart operas.

The Marseilles Opéra, laments a writer, "limits itself to the platitudes of 'Tosca' and 'Cavalleria,' or to the 'agreeable melodic effusions' of Gounod and Massenet."

Bachelet Supplements Rameau

Making recitatives of spoken dialogue has for generations been a favorite task of French composers. They did it for all manners of operas from "Freischütz" to "Carmen." The latest individual engaged in this hack job is Bachelet, the composer of the much-mauled and sentimental song "Chère Nuit," who has operated on Rameau's "Castor and Pollux" "with the greatest respect for the work."

Gerald Cumberland's Horrible Experience

It is a fixed habit of music critics to bewail the necessity which their vocation imposes of hearing music whether they be in the spirit or no. Likewise, they fancy for a surety that a year or more without music would give them a degree of judicial equipoise and a mental balance impossible to attain under the stress of constant opera and concert-going, which—supposedly—dulls the receptive facul-