

Rubinstein: Almost a Classic Composer

Death of Nicholas Nearly Led to Recognition of Anton by Academic Authorities—Writer in the "Etude" Tells of the Russian Pianist's Bad Conducting

WRITING in the May issue of the "Etude" on "Secrets of the Success of Great Musicians," Eugenio di Pirani gives some interesting stories of Anton Rubinstein, "the lion of the keyboard."

Like Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt Rubinstein was a wonder child. He made his debut at nine years of age and his first tour at eleven. His early attempts at compositions appear to have met with "a very ludicrous end." When he took them with him to Petersburg in the year 1848, "the Russian police, always suspecting the smuggling of seditious matter, confiscated the trunk containing the manuscripts, and, after some months, instead of returning them to the owner, sold them as wrapping-paper to various green-grocers and butcher merchants in Petersburg, as later the young composer found out."

American Experiences

It was America that laid the "foundation of his subsequent wealth," Signor

Pirani remarks. Nevertheless he was willing and ready enough to recount amusing stories at the Americans' expense.

"After one of his concerts where he had played various selections from Chopin and Schumann, a prosperous looking American came up to him, and, patting him condescendingly on the shoulder, said patronizingly: 'Waal, you hev played well, Mr. Rubinstein, but why don't you play something for the soul?'"

"For the soul?" replied Rubinstein, puzzled. "Well, I have played for my soul, if not for yours."

He detested the long sea voyage, as it appears. "To look at the sea, that is delightful, but to be on it," he said, "horrible!"

"In private life Rubinstein was what one calls a good fellow. He was fond of a good story, especially when highly flavored, and he was always happy paying compliments to a pretty woman. On one occasion in London the Princess of Wales sent for him. Rubinstein, when bowing, was about to kiss the hand of the Princess, when she hurriedly withdrew it, saying it was not the custom in England. 'With us' (he should have said with me), replied Rubinstein, 'it is a law.'"

Ambitious for Composer's Fame

His celebrity as a pianist, insofar as it diverted attention from him as a composer, was in Rubinstein's own eyes a misfortune. He was further distressed because only those of his compositions which seemed to him inferior were popular.

"As a matter of fact, Rubinstein created works of great importance and beauty in all branches of composition. Who knows to-day of his operas, 'Lalla Rookh,' 'The Daemon,' 'Nero'; of his sacred operas, 'The Tower of Babel,' 'The Lost Paradise,' 'Moses'; of his symphonies, 'Ocean,' 'Eroica' and all his other numerous works for orchestra and chamber music?"

Eminence in the fraternity of conductors came to him in his later years. Yet, Signor Pirani remarks, "When I saw him direct a concert of the Imperial Russian Musical Society, I was astonished to notice how poorly he handled the baton. Afterwards some of the members of the orchestra told me they took care never to look at him during the performance, for Rubinstein, whether because of nervousness or absentmindedness, was usually wrong in indicating the entries of the instruments. The musicians assured me that the best way of avoiding catastrophes was to pay no attention to his signs."

An Anecdote and a Bon Mot

Signor Pirani tells a story of his own recital at the Philharmonic Academy in Bologna in 1881 which throws some light on the punctiliousness of the academic mind in program-making. "The program, which Signor Pirani submitted to the academy authorities several days in advance, included something of Rubinstein's. The president of the academy, however, informed me that Rubinstein, being still among the living, could not be considered as a classic, and requested me, therefore, to cancel the number. The day of the concert a telegram from Paris announced that Nicholas Rubin-

stein (the renowned brother of Anton) had suddenly died. The president of the academy then hastened to inform me that Rubinstein having just died he became *ipso facto* a classic, and I could consequently replace his number on the program. I, of course, had to call the attention of the over-zealous president to the fact that it was Nicholas and not Anton who had passed away, and the number was again expunged from the list."

PUPIL RECITALS IN COLUMBUS

Third Yearly School Festival Shows Students' Proficiency

COLUMBUS, OHIO, June 11.—The Columbus Third Annual Public School Festival took place on June 9 and 10 under the direction of Robert W. Roberts, director of music in the schools. Upward of 5000 children participated, the concerts opening each evening with orchestral selections by pupils directed by Stella De Selm. There are seventy-five pieces in the orchestra. The chorus work was well handled and the children excellently drilled. The numbers were, "My Own United States," "Dear Old Glory" and "America." The schools represented were Mound Street Intermediate, Avondale Intermediate Sixth Grade and other grades.

Marie Hertenstein, concert pianist, who has been teaching in the Wallace Conservatory here, went to New York on June 9 to re-enter the concert field. Wallace Conservatory had its closing recital in Carnegie Hall June 9, presenting Marian Carlisle, soprano; Dorothy More and Louise Ackerman, pianists. Maud Cockins presented a large class of violin students on June 7. Those who played were: Alan Schaefer, Louise Ketterer, Dorothy Young, Martha Darnell, Faith Melsheimer, Vernon Smith, James Long, Clement Bennett, Otho Hardman, Freda Mehling, Elizabeth Rasor Nelson Block, Donald Tidrick, Lucille Reichelsheimer, Arthur Thomas and Willis Aleshire. Alma Marie Mohr, soprano, accompanied by Marie Collins, sang two songs. Alice Rich, Bertha Gould and Mrs. H. H. McMahon presented pupils in recital at Columbus School for Girls last week. The pupils appearing were Helen Fowler, May Katherine Johnston, Virginia Smith, Elizabeth de Golier, Margaret Scheuler, Lydia Viasak, Wilodine Jones Blanche Collins and Dorothy Shannon.

Ethel Manley Long, a coloratura soprano, pupil of Cecil Fanning, who has been trained in French diction by Mrs. Samuel Gaines and in dramatic action by Grace Henderson Orr, gave a *chanson en crinoline* recently in the ball room of Hotel Desher. The room was well filled. Mrs. Long gave an ambitious program, including the aria, "Thou Brilliant Bird," from David's "Perle du Brésil"; a group of early eighteenth century bergerettes, for which her voice was especially well suited, and a scene from "Faust," featuring the arias, "The King of Thule" and the "Jewel Song." These were charmingly sung and acted.

The assisting artists were Josef Eagle harpist of the Grand Theater, and Henry Abbott, flautist, of the Majestic Theater. The two last named were heard in the Chopin Nocturne in E Flat, the flautist in obbligato in the David "Bird Song" and the harp accompaniments added much charm to the French pastorales.

Edwin Stainbrook contributed the piano accompaniments in a capable and musicianly manner.

ELLA MAY SMITH.

Hermann Jadlowker, the tenor, formerly with the Metropolitan Opera Company, has stated his intention of coming to America next autumn.

GRAINGER PLEASES MONTREAL

Pianist-Composer Plays in Aid of War Veterans

MONTREAL, June 12.—Evelyn Boyce presented Percy Grainger in recital at His Majesty's Theater last Monday night before a distinguished and enthusiastic audience. The recital, which was for the benefit of the Great War Veterans' Association, was most enjoyable. Mr. Grainger played in a fascinating manner pieces by Liszt and a suite by Grieg, and his own arrangements of British and Irish folk-tunes. The Grieg offerings were so well received that the artist was compelled to respond with an encore, Grieg's "To Spring." Of chief interest, however, were his own compositions, which he played in a jolly manner, especially the gay "Country Gardens," through which he rollicked in happy-hearted fashion, repeating it in response to the insistent applause.

University Settlement children presented a charming little play on McGill University campus Friday afternoon. The play had been written by Mrs. R. W. Lee (Amice MacDonnell) of this city, and the incidental music and songs arranged from old English airs. The performance was heartily applauded.

R. G. M.

ROCKFORD, ILL.—H. A. Hemphill presented his advanced pupils in dancing at his studios, June 3 and 4. Among those presented in groups of Japanese, Greek, Russian, Indian, Egyptian and colonial dances were Mrs. W. Grant Hatch, Frederic Boynton, Ella Lee Ruby, Eleanor Hatch, Mildred Long, Constance Rutz, Marjorie Parker and a ballet.

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