

## MUSIC IN NORTH GERMANY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LEIPZIG, March, 1879.

THE seventeenth Gewandhaus concert commenced with Weber's overture to *Euryanthe*, and ended with that to the *Magic Flute*, both works being capitally rendered. Intervening between these overtures was Reinecke's First Symphony (in A major), the interest in which was considerably heightened by its long absence from our concert programmes. The extraordinary success which again attended this work furnished ample proof of its merit. A further great attraction to this concert was the appearance of the excellent French violinist, M. Emile Sauret, who played Bruch's First Concerto, Vieuxtemps' well-known ballad and polonaise, and, as encore, an "Air Russe" by Wieniawski. His rendering is intelligent and clever, and in *technique* and fulness of tone it is our opinion that he even surpasses Sarasate, although he cannot compete with him in the richness of his *nuances* and his absolute command of every work he undertakes. Mme. Schimon-Regan sang "Die Veilchen," by Scarlatti; "Die Nachtigall," by Schubert; and "Schneeglöckchen" and "Du bist's," by Schumann. These songs exactly suit her charming style, and she sang them to perfection.

At the second chamber-music concert of the second series Beethoven's D major trio, Schubert's D minor quartet, and Mozart's C major string quintet were given. The performance of Beethoven's trio, under the skilful treatment of Herren Reinecke, Röntgen, and Schroeder, was excellent. The first movement of Schubert's quartet had an equally good rendering, whilst that of the variations (second movement) was but indifferent, the performers altogether losing their places on one occasion. The execution of Mozart's quintet was satisfactory.

The appearance of M. Camille Saint-Saëns in the different capacities of pianist, composer, and director, excited great interest at the eighteenth Gewandhaus concert. Beethoven's G major concerto, and variations in F major, gave the artist ample opportunity of displaying his intimate knowledge of classical music. M. Saint-Saëns is an excellent interpreter, under whose treatment every composer can depend on having his work fully propounded. He never inserts subjective feeling in the productions of others, and thus his rendering, though somewhat deficient in impetus, always has the merit of perspicuity. As encore, he added an étude of his own composition, in which he showed extraordinary skill in wrist-work. The Second Symphony in A minor (one of his last works) Saint-Saëns conducted himself, and greatly excited our interest. This composition is so thoroughly foreign in character that, to render it full justice, it is necessary to relinquish our usual point of view in judging of it. It is our opinion that this composer suffers much the same sort of injustice at the hands of German critics as is exercised over many French authors in the sphere of literature by some of our national *litterati*, with their one-sided views. The introduction to the symphony is a slow recitative, followed by a splendidly worked fugato. The second movement, a short *andante*, redounds in striking melodies. The finale is a fiery tarantelle. Of all the movements the scherzo pleased us least. The performance was matchless, the composer winning golden opinions. Mme. Walter-Strauss, of Basle, had a difficult position to maintain by the side of Saint-Saëns. She sang an aria from Mozart's "Il re pastore," and songs by Schubert (Suleika's second song), Brahms ("Des Liebsten Schwur"), and August Walter ("Morgenlied"). Mme. Walter-Strauss possesses great finish in *coloratura* singing, and her rendering is tasteful, although somewhat impaired by bad intonation.

A Gewandhaus concert has been postponed on account of the orchestra being engaged at the theatre, and a chamber-music concert through the indisposition of Herr Reinecke.

At the ninth "Euterpe" concert two interesting works by living composers were given—namely, the piano concerto by Raff (C minor), excellently played by Mme. Pauline Fichtner-Erdmannsdorfer, and the serenade in form of a canon by Jadassohn. Both works were very successful, and well received.

## MUSIC IN BERLIN.

March, 1879.

I MUST appeal to the kind forbearance of my readers to pardon my not supplying them with a full report of all the concerts which have been given here during the last four weeks, my excuse being a lengthened absence from Berlin on a concert tour, which took me even to the banks of the Thames, and gave me an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the most amiable and considerate qualities of a Crystal Palace audience. Writing as a public critic, I may be allowed even here to express my most perfect admiration of the excellence of the Crystal Palace orchestra, and of the extraordinary powers of the conductor, Herr A. Manns.

The orchestra is distinguished by its swing, fire, and precision, and especially by the exemplary discretion it displays in accompanying the solo instruments. With the exception of the orchestra belonging to the *Hochschule*, we in Berlin are by no means spoilt in this respect. The band of His Majesty's Opera-house contains most talented artists, but the hands that conduct it are wanting in the necessary strength to wield the baton with sufficient force; and, as a contrast, we have the "Berlin Symphony Kapelle," under the direction of an excellent conductor, yet unable to produce anything really good, owing to the weakness and inaptitude of some of its individual members. The only orchestra in Berlin which need not fear comparison is the above-mentioned one of the *Hochschule*, under Joachim, which enjoys the fullest appreciation of the audience upon every occasion of a public performance. But to return to the object of my letter. To my great regret I am unable personally to report to my readers anything concerning the two principal events of the last four weeks, which excited universal interest. I allude to the concerts of which Anton Rubinstein was the hero. The newspapers are full of admiration and praise of this really great pianist, and assure us that he never played as he has played this year.

An unusually good reception was given also to the pianist Carl Heymann, who had selected as the principal piece of his programme Chopin's charming concerto in E minor. The audience, which bore a strongly marked Oriental impression, overwhelmed him with applause, and the critics, who were on this occasion recruited more strongly from journalists than from musicians, sang a solemn hymn in his praise—in which I regret that, for one, I am unable to join—for which I trust Herr Heymann will not be angry with me. I am bound, however, to admit and appreciate Herr Heymann's perfect execution, accurate memory, and modest demeanor, but at the same time to notice the complete absence of individuality of character, the exaggerated rendering of misinterpreted movements, and the unrefined taste of his manner of playing generally. Besides the Concerto of Chopin, Herr Heymann played Bach's Prelude and Fugue, Chopin's "Funeral March," Mendelssohn's "Spinning Song," Beethoven's Sonata in C (Op. 53), a "Rhapsodie" of Liszt, and two compositions of his own, of which the finale of a Concerto for pianoforte and orchestra was very pleasing from the peculiarly charming tone which the composer has been able to produce from his combination of orchestra with pianoforte. His second composition, "Elfenenspiel," was full of grace and elegance. Herr Heymann was greatly supported by Fräulein Schmittlein, who sang several songs, and especially an aria from Handel's *Jodua*, which was received with the strongest marks of public approval, and an applause which her fine well-schooled voice and spirited rendering thoroughly deserved. The orchestral accompaniment was undertaken by the "Berlin Symphony Kapelle," under the direction of Herr Franz Mannstaedt, but which was scarcely equal to the occasion. The following day Fräulein Laura Zagary, Kammer Sängerin to the King of Portugal, was introduced to the Berlin public, and would undoubtedly have met with far greater success had not the newspapers shown so much indiscretion in describing her, before her first appearance in public, as one of the greatest singers of the day. Fräulein Zagary, in fact, does really possess marvellous vocal facility: her staccato, especially in the highest notes, is wonderful; her shakes, scales, *forituri*, are dazzling in effect. Had these acquirements been connected with a voice of musical quality

Frl. Zagary would certainly be a great singer, and could hold her own even with Adelina Patti. I believe I may be allowed to judge that at one time her voice was fresher and younger than it is, but those days are past and gone. She was supported by Herr Hermann Zach, who played Beethoven's F minor sonata (Op. 57) and Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*. Beside this dwarf pianist there were Herr Hitter and Herr Jakobowsky. The former played a bolero of Moszkowski and a "Polonaise brillante" of Wieniawski, with great technical skill but a feeble quality of tone. The latter attempted to perform pieces by Saint-Saëns and Fischer upon the violoncello. Herr Robert Hausmann, our best performer upon the instrument just named, gave a concert, with the co-operation of his gifted sister, Frau Marie Schulz, in the Sing-akademie, in which he showed himself from the most favourable aspect. This concert afforded Herr Hausmann the opportunity of proving himself to be not only a great artist, but a most self-sacrificing friend. He shone especially in a concerto for violoncello by Molière, in which his full, free tone, his perfect and accurate execution, and the poetry of his reading, were remarkable; whereas in the concerto for violoncello by his friend Dressler, a young local musician, he placed upon record, besides the above-named good qualities, the fact that he possesses yet greater powers of self-sacrifice, for little else but the most sincere friendship for the composer could have prompted him to bring such a thing forward. The piece produced has only one fault, and that is, that it exists. Frau Marie Schulz sang an aria from *Fidelio*, and by her exquisite rendering of it earned and received an ovation.

On the 8th of March the writer of these lines gave a concert in the Sing-akademie, in aid of a fund for erecting an obelisk. He played a selection from the compositions of Chopin. As I have already refused to criticise Scharwenka, the pianoforte player, I now suppress my opinion upon the performance, in the hope that I may have another opportunity of inducing the English public to express that which I naturally feel a certain amount of delicacy in undertaking.

XAVIER SCHARWENKA.

Mozart's symphony, E flat (Köchel, No. 543), throughout full of euphony, the concert closed. At the extra concert (in Passion week) we are to hear Liszt's *Graner-Messe*, conducted by the composer.

A grand concert at the Imperial Opera, for the benefit of the Pensions Fund of that theatre, had as its centre of attraction the works of Saint-Saëns. The famous French composer and virtuoso has gained in Vienna a certain popularity by his "Danse Macabre," performed about a dozen times. All we have heard of his besides has the stamp of an intellectual talent, which interests by freshness, lustre, and animated spirit. But we look in vain for inner warmth and soul, and that feeling which Germans mark as "Gemüth." It was the same thing with the compositions we heard now for the first time, "La Jeunesse d'Hercule," poëme symphonique; "Le Déluge," poëme Biblique, in the form of a small oratorio. In that sort of *Tonmalerei*, which endeavours to express all sorts of elements in a musical sense, M. Saint-Saëns, by the help of the most eccentric orchestration, is an able master; his melody in solo or part-song, or chorus, is only of a mediocre scale. Both works had a *succès d'estime*, no more. Saint-Saëns conducted in a very intelligent manner. He also played Beethoven's concerto in G, and Liszt's fantasia on *Die Ruinen von Athen*, and here as an artist he won the applause of the whole house. It was a first-rate performance in every respect. The Schattentanz aria from *Dinorah* was well sung by Frl. Carlotta Grossi, and Herr Walter, in two songs by Schubert, instrumented by Doppler, showed again his fine qualities as a Liedersänger. When he gave his own concert, a "Schubert-abend," all compositions by that genial master, the like effect was obtained. Professor Epstein accompanied all the songs on the piano, and played some solos in his exquisite and noble manner. The applause on that evening was most genuine. Bösendorfer's saloon, the *locale* of the concert, was filled with a most elegant audience. After an interval of about seven years, Signora Carlotta Patti has again appeared here. Two evening concerts were expressly arranged for the occasion in the Ring Theatre, at which the lady sang her favourite pieces in an attractive manner. Time and voice, however, never keep a durable friendship, and even here the alliance begins to weaken, but the *diva* uses her powers