THE CRITIC TALKS TO MUSIC LOVERS

Weekly Comment on Things Musical in Discriminating Philadelphia

THE newly organized Philharmonic Society, which gave its first orchestral concert at the Shubert Theatre last Sunday evening, may, if its energies are directed into the proper channels, play an important part in the musical life of Philadelphia. Of course, rivalry with the Philadelphia Orchestra is not thought of, and as a matter of fact is impossible for reasons so many and so obvious that it is unnecessary even to mention them. However, there are many functions which it is impossible for the Philadelphia Orchestra to perform and which at the same time are essential to the development of the music of the city that may well come within the scope and aims of the Philharmonic.

There is certainly room in a city the size of Philadelphia for an orchestra which shall give a limited number of concerts during the season for a reasonable membership fee, especially if they shall be given at times when the Philadelphia Orchestra cannot give them. The enthusiasm with which the first concert of the Philharmonic was received is proof that the field exists. Also it was a more or less silent but impressive protest against the continuance of the laws which forbid concerts on Sunday.

BUT the chief reason for existence of the Philharmonic Society is that it can do valuable service in the advancement of the musical interests of the city, which, for a variety of reasons, the Philadelphia Orchestra cannot perform.

For example, the Philharmonic Orchestra could at one of its concerts each year grant a hearing to the winner of the Stokowski medal of that year. This is one of the things which the Philadelphia Orchestra cannot reasonably be expected to do. The Philadelphia Orchestra is unquestionably one of the great orchestral bodies of the world; its audiences, especially on Saturday night, are extremely critical and demand the best, both in orchestral playing and in soloists, that not only Philadelphia, but the whole world can produce.

It is no disparagement to the winners of the Stokowski medal to say that at that particular stage of their careers they are simply finished students, without that poise, stage-bearing and concert knowledge which comes only from performances either with orchestras or after many public recital experiences. In fact, it is the students whom the medal is designed to encourage and help, and that, as the writer understands it, was Mr. Stokowski's idea in offering it annually. Through no fault of their own they lack the experience which is required to enable a soloist to perform a concerto faultlessly with a strange orchestra before a hyper-critical audience, with only a single rehearsal, or to meet the emergencies which arise at almost every performance of a soloist with an orchestra.

WITH the foregoing in mind, it will be readily seen that, with the demands for only the most finished soloists, it is manifestly impossible for the Philadelphia Orchestra to guarantee a hearing at a regular symphony concert to the winners of the medal, no matter how much talent they possess. Other requirements, which none but the experienced soloist has, are necessary.

But herein lies the possibilities of the Philharmonic Society. There is always a keen public interest in the winner of the medal which Mr. Stokowski presents, and a concert at which the successful contestant appeared would be sure to draw a very large audience from the professional musicians themselves, as well as from the music lovers who do not follow the art professionally, and thus redound to the benefit of the society as well as perform a very real service for Philadelphia music. If, as time goes on, Mr. Stokowski should unearth a genius at the annual contests, of whose ability and poise he feels sufficiently secure to put him or her on as soloist at a regular symphony concert, so much the better, but in the meantime the Philharmonic can stimulate musical interest here by adopting the plan suggested.

IN MANY other ways the Philharmonic Society can justify its existence as a body which can do things musical which the Philadelphia Orchestra cannot do. One of these is in the performance of the works of Philadelphia composers. An excellent beginning in this line has been made in this, its first year, for at the next two concerts orchestral works of Mr. Hedda van den Beemt and Mr. Camille W. Zeckwer will be given. Both of these compositions have been presented by Mr. Stokowski at regular symphony concerts of the Philadelphia Orchestra, which alone is an ample guarantee of their musical merit. The writer understands that it is the intention of the Philharmonic Society to continue this work and give as many orchestral compositions of local composers as shall be found to have sufficient merit and as the season of the society will permit.

To a certain extent the same situation prevails with the works of Philadelphia composers as in the case of the Stokowski medal winners. There must be many compositions for orchestra written by our own musicians which cannot pass the rigid test to which Mr. Stokowski is obliged to put them for presentation on the regular symphony programs of the Philadelphia Orchestra, but which would be entirely in place on the necessarily lighter programs which the Philharmonic will give. To present such of these as have sufficient merit is to encourage not only the composer, but also every other composer in the city, who then knows that his work, if good enough, will have a hearing. To this end, an arrangement might be made with the Manuscript Society by which such compositions would be brought to the attention of the governing body of the Philharmonic Society.

STILL another way in which the organization might be useful is in the encouragement of Philadelphia soloists. In this respect it was a bit disappointing to some to see that a new York singer was the soloist at the first concert, and it is no reflection on her unquestioned abilities to say that there are many local singers who could have taken the role of soloist quite as well.

These are only a few of the hundreds of ways in which the new organization can make itself not only an acceptable but an absolutely necessary adjunct to Philadelphia music. The future of the society is in this city: it does not seek to become national; it draws its support from local music lovers; therefore its province should lie in doing the things that no other musical body in the city can do, and upon just how many of these things it does and how well it does them the future of the organization rests.

A REPORT of much interest to all chamber musicians is to the effect that Louis Bailly, viola player of the Flonzaley Quartet, will leave that organization at the close of the present season to become the viola of the Berkshire Quartet. His place with the Flonzaleys will be taken, according to the same report, by Uro Ara. Mr. Ara, it will be remembered, was the original viola of the Flonzaley Quartet, and resigned about two years ago to enter the Italian army, where he served with credit to the end of the war. Clarence Evans, the present viola of the Berkshire Quartet, it is said, is to take an important position with a prominent American organization, but whether orchestra or quartet is not divulged.

Color is given to this report by the fact that Mr. Bailly was announced some time ago as being the chairman of the committee to pass upon the compositions for viola and piano submitted for the prize of $1000 at the Pittsfield Chamber Music festival next summer, and was to play the successful work at its first performance. As both the Berkshire Quartet and the Pittsfield festival are under the patronage of Mrs. S. F. Coolidge, it was the subject of some remark at the time that the viola of the Flonzaley Quartet, and not the player of the same instrument in the Berkshire Quartet, should be selected. Mr. Bailly has as beautiful a tone on the viola as any player now before the public, and with his experience should strengthen the Berkshires considerably, while in Mr. Ara the Flonzaleys will regain their original member, leaving that quartet as it was at the time of its organization by the late Mr. de Coppet.

Musical Events of the Coming Week

Sunday—Chamber Music Association, Bellevue-Stratford, 4 p. m. Maquarre Sextet.

Sunday—Organ recital by J. Wesley Sears, St. James's Church, Twenty-second and Walnut streets, 4:40 p. m.

Monday—Concert Philadelphia Music Club, at Musical Art Club, 8:15 p. m.

Tuesday—Grand Opera, "La Forza del Destino," Metropolitan Opera House, 8 p. m.

Tuesday — Philadelphia Orchestra, at Stetson Auditorium, 8 p. m.

Wednesday—Violin and piano sonata recital, D. H. Ezerman and Sascha Jacobinoff, Little Theatre, 8:15 p. m.

Wednesday—Nicholas Douty, lecture-recital, Witherspoon Hall, 8:15 p. m.

Wednesday—Vocal recital, Maude Albert, Bellevue-Stratford, 8:15 p. m

Wednesday—Concert for war orphans, School of Design for Women, Broad and Master streets, 8:30 p. m.

Thursday — Musical tea, Musical Art Club, 3:30 p. m. (invitation only.)

Thursday — Musical Assembly, Wanamaker store, 8:15 p. m.

Friday — Philadelphia Orchestra, Academy of Music, 3 p. m. Sergei Rachmaninoff, soloist.

Saturday—Piano recital, Mischa Levitski, Academy of Music, 3 p. m.

Saturday — Philadelphia Orchestra, Academy of Music, 8:15 p. m. Sergei Rachmaninoff, soloist.

MUSICAL EVENTS IN CONCERT HALL AND STUDIO

At the Philadelphia Orchestra concerts on Friday afternoon and Saturday evening next "the giant of the Russians," Sergei Rachmaninoff, will be the soloist, playing his own concerto, the first in F sharp minor. The symphony will be the E minor of Henri Rabaud, the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which Mr. Stokowski introduced to American audiences on October 24, 1913, and which met with such popular favor at that time and at subsequent performances. As the introductory number Mr. Stokowski has programmed the "Norwegian Rhapsody" of Lalo.

Next Thursday a musical event of much importance will be held in the Wanamaker Store. Charles Courbam, the Belgian organist, will play the Widor concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra, using, of course, the organ in the store, which is the largest in the world. The guests of honor will include Dr. and Mrs. Leopold Stokowski, Mr. and Mrs. Giovanni Martinelli and the officers and directors of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Famous musicians from all over the country will be among the invited guests.

Mischa Levtzki, the young Russian pianist, who will be heard in a recital at the Academy of Music on Saturday afternoon, March 29, says the human side of music appeals to him. This gives the personal touch of human interest to his work and brings him into closer relationship with his hearers. At his recital Mr. Levtzki will play for his chief number the Beethoven sonata op. 53 (the Waldstein). Other numbers will be a Scarlatti sonata, the Gluck-Brahms Gavotte, a Chopin group and compositions by Stokowski, Dohnanyi and Liszt.

The Philadelphia Music Club will give a concert next Monday evening at 8:15 o'clock at the Musical Art Club, at which the performers will be Agnes Clune Quinlan, pianist; Zipporah Rosenberg, soprano; Philip Warren Cooke, tenor, and Thomas Milton, ancient war piper.

Frederic Cook, violinist, and William A. Schmidt, cellist, both members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, will assist at the half hour of music which opens the regular evening service tomorrow at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, of Overbrook. They will play first an Andante Religioso by Thorne, "the Elegy of Arensky," and the offertorium will be Widor's Serenade.

The song recital announced by Maude Albert, contralto, of Baltimore, at the Bellevue next Wednesday evening, is one of the most important concerts of the week. Madame Albert will be assisted by Maurice Eisenberg, cellist, and Ethelyn Dryden. Madame Albert will sing first a group of Italian songs, by Marcello, Paisiello and Verdi, followed by a French group by Debussy, Delibes, Rabaud, Laparra and Saint-Saens. Other songs on the program are by Buzzi-Peccia, Robey, Gounod, Burleigh, Bizet and Foster. A song by Maurice Weyl, of Philadelphia, will also be given.

May Farley, soprano, and Piotr Wizla, baritone, will be the artists at the musical tea under the auspices of the women's executive committee of the Musical Art Club, next Thursday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

Rosa Raisa and Giacomo Rimini, of the Chicago Opera Company, will give a recital at the Metropolitan Opera House on Saturday evening, April 5.

The third in the series of organ recitals now being given in St. James's Church, Twenty-second and Walnut streets, will be played at 4:40 o'clock tomorrow afternoon by S. Wesley Sears. Mr. Sears will be assisted by George Russell Strauss, baritone.

The song recital of Edwin Evans, which was to have been given on Wednesday evening, March 19, in Witherspoon Hall, in the department of music of the University Extension Society, has been postponed until Saturday, April 26, owing to the illness of Mr. Evans.

Nicholas Douty will give the third and last of his lecture-recitals, this one entitled "The Poets of Today," at Witherspoon Hall next Wednesday evening. Mr. Douty will illustrate the poems of which he speaks with songs from contemporaneous composers.

D. Hendrick Ezerman, pianist, and Sascha Jacobinoff, violinist, will give a sonata evening on Wednesday next at the Little Theatre at 8:15 o'clock. The first number will be the C minor Sonata, op. 30, No. 2, by Beethoven, followed by the G major Sonata of Lekeu, and the program will be closed with the C minor Sonata, op. 45, by Grieg.

Miss Reba Day, of the faculty of the Combs Conservatory, will give a piano recital in the concert hall of the conservatory Wednesday evening next at 8:15. There will also be a violin recital given by Evan Swartz on Thursday afternoon at 4 o'clock. Both these recitals will be open to the public.

A concert in aid of a French war orphan adopted by the students of the Philadelphia School of Design for Women will be given at the school building, Broad and Master streets, next Wednesday evening at 8:30 o'clock. The soloists are Zipporah Rosenberg, soprano; Bernard Poland, tenor, and Piotr Wizla, baritone.

There will be a special musical service at the Second Presbyterian Church, Twenty-first and Walnut streets, at 7:40 tomorrow evening. Instrumental trios for violin, harp and organ will be given and the choir will sing some very interesting a cappella numbers, under the direction of N. Lindsay Norden.

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PAULINE FREDERICK
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From the Stage Success by Lillian Trimble Bradley and George Broadhurst
Notable Supporting Cast Including:
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Continuous 11 A. M. to 11 P. M.
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ALL NEXT WEEK
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