

THE CRITIC TALKS TO MUSIC LOVERS Weekly Comment on Things Musical in Discriminating Philadelphia

THE tragic death in Boston last Friday of Lieutenant James Reese Europe, the famous colored leader of the equally famous band of the 369th infantry, at the hands of one of his own men, calls to mind the fact that it was in Philadelphia the evening before that he conducted his last full concert. The band which Lieutenant Europe organized and led with such popular success was made up of a curious assortment of instruments, and it is accepted with being the forerunner of the popular "jazz" music which is such a trial and tribulation to the musician after one or two numbers have been played.

It must not be supposed for a moment that Lieutenant Europe was a man of mere organizing ability and that he had no musical gifts. On the contrary, he had had the same musical talents, which had had the same opportunity for technical development as certain other musicians of his race, notably Henry T. Burleigh or Coleseidge Taylor, might have produced as considerable a figure in serious music as they. Like most of the colored race, he had a faultless sense of rhythm, and the composition of his, which the band played at the concert here, showed a fair degree of melodic invention and a good feeling for the uses of the instruments of which the band was composed.

However, it is rather the purpose of this article to discuss music of the type which Lieutenant Europe's band made popular than the leader himself. Music of this kind must surely have an appeal when it is able to retain impetuous audiences year after year, even if these audiences rarely represent more than a moderate amount of musical culture or learning.

IT IS the opinion of the writer that this attraction lies almost entirely in the syncopated rhythms which form the chief external characteristic of music of this kind, and also to a somewhat lesser degree in the snap and spirit in which it is always played. The tempo is invariably the same, a fast march time and there is no apparent attempt at shading, which in any case would be impossible on account of the very free use of the instruments of percussion.

In connection with these instruments, it is strange that the band contained no trumpet kettle drums, the percussion instruments being limited to two snare drums and a most resonant bass drum, the three of which were playing virtually all the time and which managed to produce an incredible amount of noise. Also, in the instrumentation of the band, Lieutenant Europe used only clarinets and piccolos in the section, three flutes, flutes, oboes or bassoons, which was probably just as well, for these delicate wood instruments would have been completely smothered in the general welter of noise which the band produced. Outside of this the instrumentation was about that of the average concert band, except that he had a quartet of saxophones, two cellos and two stringed basses, the latter reinforcing the four tubas which formed the real strength of the bass.

In performance the band gave the general impression that an important thing in playing works of this character is to play them as fast and as loud as possible. There was no evening concert here but one real piano (soft) passage. There was, however, considerable diversity in the instrumentation of the various numbers, but most of it went for little because of the tonal force with which everything was played.

THE members of the band as a whole had a remarkable feeling of rhythm, which, as said before, is a strong characteristic of those members of the colored race who are musically inclined, as most of them are. The work of the drummers (one of whom was the sayer of his chief the following day) was a really remarkable achievement in the faultless rhythmic sense displayed, as well as in the actual manipulation of the instrument. These men, it seems, were to be a sine qua non in music of this character. There was also a considerable amount of technique of execution displayed by many of the performers, the weak point being an almost universal roughness and coarseness of tone.

Another favorite device of "jazz" music seems to be what may be termed an illegitimate use of certain of the instruments. No piece was apparently complete without a certain amount of straying from the trombones (and, remember, there were six of them), while one of the clarinetists produced some shrieks from a seemingly harmless instrument that strongly reminded the hearers of a rooster with an exceptionally powerful lung capacity and a bad cold. These were obviously done to amuse the audience, and they achieved their purpose admirably. However, it may be questioned whether these effects were worse musically than some of Richard Strauss's in the "Sinfonia Domestica," "Don Quixote" or the "Alpine Symphony," although the purpose of the latter was apparently more serious.

ONE interesting feature of the concert was the performance of what the program termed a "highbrow number," the selection for this position of honor being Reissiger's overture to the opera "The Mill on the Cliffe." The writer, who was attending his first "jazz" concert, had, partly from motives of curiosity, had frequently been told that these bands "can play good music just as well as any if they wanted to." Well, perhaps they can, but at all events they didn't.

The question of just how much claim an overture to a comic opera by Reissiger has to being "highbrow music" need not be entered into, but in any case it is a well-constructed, well-written piece of music, with an abundance of light melodic weaving of which are developed with great skill. Lieutenant Europe and his band apparently had little idea of the way to play a work of this kind. He took the allegro furioso with which it opens (it is in 2-2 time) at a very moderate pace, beating four to the measure. The first movement of the overture was in more accurate accord with the tempo indications of the composer, but there was no shading and where the theme lay in the middle or lower voices it was completely lost in the counter-melodies of the louder and higher ones.

Only one slight personal knowledge of the score enabled the writer to know what was being attempted, and to

Coming Commencements and Concerts by Pupils

Tuesday—Commencement Combs Conservatory, Academy of Music, 8:15 p. m. Wednesday—Piano recital, William Hatton Greene School of Piano, 8:15 p. m. Friday—Concert main and finishing departments Philadelphia Conservatory of Music, Orpheum Club rooms, 8 p. m. Saturday—Concert Leeefson-Hille Conservatory of Music, Witherspoon Hall, 8 p. m.

A skilled musician hearing it for the first time the work would have been as unintelligible as it evidently was to a "jazz" audience. The overture closed with a terrific prestissimo and some syncopated phrases which the writer utterly fails to remember in the orchestral version, but which he believes were put in "to get it across."

THE fatal defect in this kind of music, however, is its incredible monotony. Aside from the tediousness of a performance which plays everything in precisely the same way as regards speed and tone quantity, there is an even greater monotony, if possible, in the works themselves. They are almost invariably in 2-4 or 4-4 time, only one kind of syncopation is used, the harmonic plan uses not more than four or five chords and the melodies are utterly commonplace and are as like each other as two peas.

Not one of the elements that go to make up a really good musical composition was revealed in the twenty or more numbers that made up the program of the concert. Musically speaking, it was all utterly crude. There is no attempt at emotional expression, or for that matter at the expression of anything; it seems to be designed simply as a form of amusement, or rather of entertainment.

The future of this kind of music is problematical. It may be that it is one of the diseases of our musical childhood which we shall outgrow in much the same manner as we outgrow measles and other diseases of our physical youth. That it is of the most ephemeral nature is clearly shown by the fact that a composition rarely lasts more than one season, but the funny part is that one exactly like it has an equally great success the following year. When, for example, have you heard "Alexander's Ragtime Band," of which more than a million copies were sold only a few years ago?

MUSIC of this kind does not menace serious music. Those who know any one of the elements which make up a really fine musical work will never feel more than a passing curiosity about the other, a curiosity which a couple of numbers will effectually gratify. The best that can be said of it is that it is a moderately developed form of organized noise which may appeal for a time to the ear, but to no other faculty of the human organization.

On the other hand, lacking as it does all the things that go to constitute good music, it is extremely doubtful whether it can ever serve as a factor in the propagation of a feeling for better music among the people who attend the "jazz" concerts. If it possessed a single one of these things, there would be some hope that this desirable end might in time be accomplished. But the people who attend the two musical extremes seem to be as far apart musically as the poles. And even at that, it is doubtful whether the trained musician attending a "jazz" concert suffers any more acutely than would a "jazz" audience under the infliction of a program of Beethoven and Brahms. The only thing is that under repeated doses the cultured musician would continue to suffer, the jazzite wouldn't.

Coming-Musical Events in Philadelphia Circles

The last operatic performance of the present season will be heard at the Italian Opera House this evening, when the opera "The Bohemians" will be given. The general manager of the Metropolitan Opera Company will be at the head of the orchestra. He will not be the only star of the evening, as the soprano, Florence Salsani and several other artists will accompany him. The orchestra will be conducted by the composer, who will also appear on the stage. The opera will be given at 8:15 p. m. and will be a most interesting one. The opera "The Bohemians" is a masterpiece of French opera, and the Metropolitan Opera Company is proud to present it.

The thirty-fourth annual commencement exercises of the Combs Conservatory of Music will be held on Monday evening, May 20, in the Academy of Music. As on former occasions there will be an elaborate musical program by selected members of the conservatory. The program will include a recital by the pianist, a recital by the violinist, and a recital by the cellist. The program will be a most interesting one, and the conservatory is proud to present it.

At the concert which the Symphony Club will give at the Forest Theatre next Sunday evening, May 25, the full orchestra will play the "White Coupons" by the composer, who will also appear on the stage. The program will include a recital by the pianist, a recital by the violinist, and a recital by the cellist. The program will be a most interesting one, and the conservatory is proud to present it.

The half-hour of music which opens the recital at the Forest Theatre next Sunday evening, May 25, will be a most interesting one. The program will include a recital by the pianist, a recital by the violinist, and a recital by the cellist. The program will be a most interesting one, and the conservatory is proud to present it.

A piano recital will be given by the pupils of the Leeefson-Hille Conservatory of Music at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music, 8:15 p. m. on Sunday, May 25, in the Academy of Music. The program will include a recital by the pianist, a recital by the violinist, and a recital by the cellist. The program will be a most interesting one, and the conservatory is proud to present it.

The regular monthly pupils' concert will be given in the auditorium of the Settlement Music School at 402 Chestnut Street on Sunday afternoon, May 18, at 3:30 o'clock. The program will include numbers from the best classical and modern composers.

MATTERS OF MOMENT TO MOVIEDOM'S FANS

Fairbanks, Farnum and Miss Clayton in New Offerings

Douglas Fairbanks has many new stunts that he introduces in "The Knickerbocker Buckaroo," to be shown at the Stanley next week. He has been in training with "Bull" Montana, "Spiky" Robinson and Kid McCoy and, to quote the screen athlete, "I was in the pink of condition when I made this film."

His latest release takes him out West, where, in an effort to do things for other people, he gets into various melodramatic mix-ups that create their own comedy. Fairbanks has purchased a new horse, having retired "Star" from active service.

Carolyn Wells, author of "Vicky Van," which will be the principal attraction at the Arcadia next week, with Ethel Clayton as star, is one of the most devoted readers of mystery fiction in the country. She has written upwards of a dozen detective stories herself.

In "Vicky Van" Miss Wells has touched upon the dual life of a young wealthy and the death of her brutal, but wealthy, husband. The plot grows with every foot of film, but all is cleared away at the end and romance claims its own. Ethel Clayton has an attractive role.

Persons who are not afraid of tigers sometimes in kind of cats. Dr. S. Weir Mitchell cites the case of a distinguished soldier, much given to tiger shooting, who was terrified by tame cats. The case is also cited of General Roberson, who left a room because he "felt" there was a cat in it.

Frank Hamilton's "The Fall of Babylon," an expansion of the Babylonian episode in "Intolerance," will be the attraction at the Chestnut Street Opera House next week. It is a fine, action-packed, burlesquing the ex-king and ex-Prussianism. The "backing" precede the motion picture, appearing in a miniature musical comedy in which they pose in tableaux, sing and dance, framed in the setting of a bathing beach.

Oliver Thomas, Broadway star in musical comedies, will make her debut at a movie star in "Intolerance," a picture of the stage hit by Frederick and Fanny Hatton. Its first presentation will take place at the Stanley, week of June 9. Miss Thomas in private life is Mrs. Jack Pickford.

Woodside Popular

The popularity of Woodside Park as an outdoor amusement center has been strikingly illustrated the last two weeks, when it attracted record crowds almost daily. The new amusement devices have been well patronized. These include the two new scenic rides, the Tumble Inn, another new form of amusement, and the Boomerang. In the musical line Conductor Rodin has added many friends.

Real Engine at Orpheum

For the big scene in next week's production of "The Ninety and Nine" at the Orpheum, the fire engine was built by the Philadelphia Fire Department. It took four months to complete and can be taken apart like a regular one. The fire scene was designed by John Williams, and is said to be as thrillingly staged as in the original production.

Novelty at Shore Theatre

"Look and Listen," technically described as a cinematophonic play in a prologue and three acts, will be presented Monday at the Globe, Atlantic City. It is the work of Ralph E. Dyer, a western newspaperman.

Premier of "Sunrise"

Winchell Smith and John L. Golden announce the premier of "Sunrise" at Nixon's Apollo, Atlantic City, Monday night. The scenes are laid in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.

Trocadero Open All Summer

The Trocadero will remain open all summer. One of the latest cooling devices has been installed.

WM. PENN.

Next Week First Time at Popular Prices A Most Interesting Musical Program by Selected Members of the Conservatory. The program will include a recital by the pianist, a recital by the violinist, and a recital by the cellist. The program will be a most interesting one, and the conservatory is proud to present it.

THE MODERN WIZARD He Must Combine Hindu Magic and Modern Science

Nawadras, the notable prestidigitateur such as Thurston must be more than that term implies. He must create an entertainment that possesses the glamour of mystery, the spectacular touch of Hindu and Persian wonder workers, and at the same time enter the field of modern life and do things that the average audience can appreciate.

With a natural talent for his art, coupled with agreeable personality, Thurston has introduced to the world of magic much that is novel. As a creator of illusions he stands in a class by himself. He has made a study of weird things, mystic inventions and deceptive illusions.

SHUBERT SUMMER SHOWS

Playhouse Plans to Open Season With "Oh, Uncle"

The theatrical season at the Shubert Theatre is not to be allowed to lag when the hot weather arrives. Announcement was made yesterday by Leonard A. Blumberg, general manager of the Shubert theatres here.

"The Messrs. Shubert," he said, have decided to adopt a summer policy and a summer schedule of prices at the Shubert. They will go into effect Monday night when "Oh, Uncle" will open.

In the evenings, except Saturday, the entire orchestra section will sell at \$1.50 a seat. Eight hundred seats in the first balcony will be priced at \$1 and the entire family circle will go at fifty cents.

Clementon Park Reopening

With its natural beauties enhanced by the work of landscape gardeners, Clementon Park, which is but a few miles from Camden, N. J., will present a picture to delight the eye when it reopens for the season on Memorial Day. Improvements made this season are on a big scale. One of the features is a new carousel. The bathing beach has been enlarged and will accommodate several thousand more. New bath houses with up-to-date equipment have been erected.

Noted Vaudeville Dancer

One of the features at Nixon's Grand is a dancing specialty by Max Ford, formerly of the Four Fords, and Hetty Urm. Max Ford is recognized as one of the cleverest dancers in vaudeville.

CARRILLO, CARTOONIST Star Can Draw Characters as Well as Impersonate Them

If the theatrical business ever goes to the bad there's a job waiting in San Francisco for Leo Carrillo, of "Lombardi, Ltd." The job is on a San Francisco paper, where Mr. Carrillo used to work as a cartoonist.

That was twelve years ago in San Francisco. Mr. Carrillo was sent down to Chinatown to get pictures of the inhabitants. But he found more than pictures. He discovered the fascination of racial types. He studied the "Chineses," not only their broken English, but their gestures and mannerisms. Then one day when he returned to the office the art department of the paper was given a series of Chinese monologues.

Soon the monologues and stories became a part of the day's work. Mr. Carrillo continued to improve, and presently his fellow workers began to urge him to go on the stage. He said good-bye to the office and drawing board and started on the Orpheum circuit. Later he entered the "legit."

Movie Repertory Season Here "Broken Blossoms," a picture said by New York reviewers to set a new mark in artistic achievement, will be shown for the first time here when D. W. Griffith opens a repertory season at the Garrick on May 29, Lillian Gish, whose role in the story suggested by "The Child and the Child" by Thomas Burke, has been acclaimed as a tragedy of attainment. Richard Barthelmess and Donald Crisp are others in the cast to gain distinction. It is a tale of London and of China.

In the repertory season there will be "The Fall of Babylon," an expansion of the Babylonian episode in "Intolerance," which will be the attraction at the Chestnut Street Opera House next week. It is a fine, action-packed, burlesquing the ex-king and ex-Prussianism. The "backing" precede the motion picture, appearing in a miniature musical comedy in which they pose in tableaux, sing and dance, framed in the setting of a bathing beach.

W. M. S. HART

Money Corral

ARCADIA

Ethel Clayton

"Vicky Van"

VICTORIA

Rigoletto Brothers

BROADWAY

CROSSKEYS

REGENT

ALHAMBRA

GRAND

LADY TSEN MEI

Metropolitan Opera House

The Scotti Grand Opera Co.

Metropolitan Opera House, N. Y.

Leoni's and Cavalleria

Princess Texico

CLEMENTON PARK

Dancing Cortsioz

Sam S. SHUBERT Theatre

LAST \$1.50 MAT. TODAY

LITTLE SIMPLICITY

Point Breeze Park

FORREST

FIDDLERS THREE

TAVIE BELGE

Stanley

Knickerbocker Buckaroo

PALACE

W. M. S. HART

ARCADIA

Ethel Clayton

"Vicky Van"

VICTORIA

Rigoletto Brothers

BROADWAY

HERMAN TIMBERG

CROSSKEYS

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LITTLE SIMPLICITY

Point Breeze Park

FORREST

FIDDLERS THREE

TAVIE BELGE

SAM S. SHUBERT THEATRE LOCUST BEGINNING MONDAY EVG. AT 8:15 the Opening of the Spring and Summer Season AT SUMMER PRICES

LYRIC LEO CARRILLO in OLIVER MOROSCO'S Record-Breaking Fun and Fashion Hit Lombardi, Ltd. With GRACE VALENTINE and the Entire Original Cast

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WALNUT Last 6 Nights—Last 3 Matinees Belasco's \$2.00 Play at \$1.00 Walnut Prices

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STRAND GERMAN TOWN AND ELsie Ferguson

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