

INSTITUTE OF MUSICAL ART

CLOSING EXERCISES

Tuesday morning, June 5, 1906,

at eleven o'clock

Laudate Pueri Mendelssohn

Choral Class and Organ

Les Commères Pugnani

Mr. Kneisel's Class

Address

Mr. Frank Damrosch

Director of the Institute of Musical Art

The Snow Elgar

Choral Class

with

accompaniment of violins and piano

Awarding of Certificates

Allegro vivace Mozart

From the "Jupiter Symphony" C major

Orchestra Class

Address Mr. Frank Damrosch.

Students, Ladies and Gentlemen:-

The temptation is always great at the conclusion of a year of work, of earnest work, to put your best foot foremost and sit up straight and say, "Behold what we have done!" It is a temptation that is not easily, and therefore very rarely, resisted. It came to me. It was suggested to me, that the proper thing to do would be, as the saying is, to hire a hall and display some of the results of the season's work at the closing exercises of the school. But I resisted it because I have found that it is very easy to get a wrong conception, to really misrepresent things by doing them before they are properly matured, and it has always been my practice, as far as it lay in my power, to wait until things were ripe before I brought them to the notice of the public. The conditions this year were particularly of a nature to tempt one to show things which were in themselves interesting, and in some respects, wonderful. I think we have a very high average of students. We have some students of remarkable talent, not to say genius. It would have been an easy matter to arrange a programme which would have been in itself astonishing. But what I want to show at present is not the student, but the school. The individual student is my care, but I do not want the student to be the principal thing so far as the outside - the public - is concerned. I want every one who thinks of this school to think of it from a different viewpoint than merely as a hot house for the budding talent, although the budding talent will receive all the nurture it needs. But I do not want the attention misdirected. When we are ready to show it, I want the public to realize

that in this institution they have an institution unlike any that has existed before. I am not going to make this the occasion of a formal speech. I have decided to make these exercises as informal as possible. I am going to chat to you of one or two things which are near to my heart and which I think may prove of interest to you, for you have already shown your interest by studying with us or by coming to listen to us.

I shall begin by going back to the time before there was this school. Years before. I carried this idea, this plan, in my mind, and I would take every opportunity to mention it to people who might be interested, and who I thought might be sufficiently interested to help me to carry my plan into execution. That included a number of people of culture and means. I always found a kind and respectful attention, but no understanding, no real appreciation, until I spoke to James Loeb, and to him I had but to say a word and he understood, and asked for more information. I gave it to him. He said this thing must be done, there is so great a need for it. I have been sending young people to Europe to be disappointed in every single case, not because of the lack of ability of the students, but because they did not know how to take advantage of what might be had in Europe. What we need is a school here where the needs of every student shall be recognized and shall be fulfilled. He told me to go on and carry out my plans, and he would do whatever lay in his power to help me. He has done it in the most liberal way. The next thing was to plan the school. I planned it on these lines, as you know, serious study, individual attention to every student, and appreciation of his or her needs, a discipline which shall insist upon the prescribed curri-

culum being carried out, and finally a corps of teachers who should be in thorough harmony with the high ideals of the school, and who would carry them out to the fullest extent.

This is not the time to point to results, as I said before, and to brag, but it is the time to say that every one of my corps of instructors has risen to a full appreciation of the work they have undertaken. They have worked hard, but that is not all. There are many conscientious workers in the world, there are many able workers in the world, but there are not many inspired workers in the world, and nearly all our teachers may be classed among them - the inspired teachers. One proof of this is that in spite of the great wear and tear and strain - for it has been a tremendous strain - they have come to me day after day, week after week, term after term, and said it is a pleasure to work because the atmosphere is so exactly suited to the work. It is so much easier to work under such conditions. They know that the students are here for the purpose of taking advantage of what is offered; they don't have to be driven. If they need to be driven, they will be driven hence. So much for the teachers.

Students, where there are so many of you, I would not dare say anything bad about you. But I do not have to, fortunately. I cannot tell you what a pleasure and inspiration you have been to me, you students, - with your many varied requirements, your varied natures, your varied talents, your varied aspects of things. Some of you would dance into the school and say "Oh! I just study music for fun; I just want to do what I like to do". That was the first aspect. And then they had a serious talk with me and I told them that I appreciated their studying music for fun very fully, and that I sympathized with them as much,

if not more, than with those who studied music for other purposes than fun. I like to see people studying music for fun, but they can only get the right kind of fun if they study it seriously, and the mere sipping at this and nipping at that will never amount to fun in the end. It is the thorough study of anything that is beautiful that finally brings a full enjoyment of the beautiful, and many of my light hearted friends now appreciate that fully, and some have come and thanked me for insisting upon harmony, and sight-singing, and ear training, and dictation, and all these things, and I have lived to see the Harmony teacher the beau of the school. (applause)

Now I am glad that you respond to this toast to Dr. Goetschius who is now on the way to his farm in New Hampshire, driving his wife in a buggy, and just having a good time after his hard work with you. But he told me that he had spent the happiest year of his life among you, in spite of the fact that he had four hundred and fifty students of Theory to teach. He could not have stood it if you had not been such good pupils.

Now as for the students who came here because they had a set and a definite purpose - studying for the profession of music. I know that you have begun to lay a foundation during this year such as you could not have laid if you had not worked under the conditions which were offered to you here. You had as teacher of your principal subject one who was thoroughly competent, interested in you, interested in the work of the school as a whole, and working in harmony with every other teacher in it. You had a course of study marked out for you, which tended to make you well-equipped, thorough musicians. Your ear was trained, your eye was trained, your mind was trained, your

talents, such as you had, were developed. You had individual instruction, in order that the teacher might become thoroughly familiar with your needs and your peculiarities; you had class instruction that you might benefit by the criticism of others, that you might measure yourselves with others, and that you might emulate others. You had musical influences in the shape of teachers' recitals, students' recitals, orchestra rehearsals and choral rehearsals. You had lectures by men thoroughly familiar with their subjects. You had lectures on special musical topics, on general musical topics, and if you did not avail yourselves of all the opportunities which were offered to you, it may not have been your fault, because I know that many of you had other work to pursue, and could not attend everything, but it was certainly your misfortune. In connection with this, I want to say that next year in all this work, the musical influences, the things which create the musical atmosphere, you will be held to strict accountability for attendance at a certain fixed percentage of all the recitals, rehearsals, concerts and lectures which will be offered to you. Only an excuse from the Director will justify absence from any of these things. I feel that the ignorance in connection with matters of this sort is so great that the school has to exert pressure in order to overcome it. Now this is said not in criticism of you, because many of you could not know it, but when the Kneisel Quartette plays and the hall is only just filled, there is something wrong. The Kneisel Quartette is unique in the whole world, and that it should be part and parcel of this institution is something so wonderful that the students should be able to appreciate this and to crowd this place so that we will have to build extra galleries or something

of the sort. With five hundred students this year and the hall only just filled! You ought to have stood up in the aisles and crowded every nook and corner. And so when our other eminent teachers give recitals, that is the time when you should come and listen and learn. You think that an hour's more practice is more important. Not at all, not at all. The principal thing is to become familiar with the great works of art. Even if you are a singer, that is no reason why you should not know something about music, although it is the public opinion that all a singer has to do is to open her mouth and sing. What is a voice if there is not the proper kind of artistic appreciation and conception of music in the singer? I turn to you (the choral class) not as bad examples but as representative of the school. There are more in the hall and still more on the street. The important thing is this understanding of the best in music. If you do not understand it the first time, you will understand it the next. I know several of our students who have come to me after the fourth or fifth recital by the Kneisel Quartette and told me that they were just beginning to enjoy it; that at first they could not, they had never heard this kind of music. They were from Oklahoma or somewhere, therefore they could not help their ignorance. But we are providing against a continuance of this condition, and I want you all to take advantage of it.

Now I think we may well say that a school which began in October with an enrollment of three hundred students and which closed its first year with an enrollment of nearly five hundred students can claim that it has filled a great want which is appreciated. And by what kind of students! Students who feel that the more we exact of them,

the better their needs are being met; students who have become imbued with the spirit of earnestness which we try to inculcate here; and students who feel that they have a definite artistic purpose in studying here.

And the spirit of the student is the most delightful feature. Several have come to me recently and said, "Mr. Damrosch, cannot we organize into a club, and cannot we have a school pin so that we may show everybody that we belong to this school?" And to all of them I said, "Wait, wait. I am glad that you have that spirit but wait until you know each other better and then form into clubs of all kinds, and I shall be glad to encourage you for I want the students to keep together, to hold together for mutual improvement, for talking over things artistic and for helping each other to carry them out in the best way".

Now for the future, I have only to say that we will carry out our original plans with even more zeal and more understanding than before. We have had our experiences in our first year, and the marvelous thing about it is that we have been able to get through this year without the slightest friction of any kind. It seems sometimes as though this machine had been going for years and years, so accurately did it carry out its plans and purposes. But in order to make this possible, it was necessary to have the right kind of assistance, and I hereby express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation of those who have assisted me in the executive department,- those who bore the brunt of the drudgery and of the really important details which are always associated with the running of a large institution. I thank Miss Brazier and Mr. Berger. (applause)

As for the members of the faculty, I need not thank them. Their work is their reward. I have examined

I do not know how many classes during the past two weeks and I found that their work spoke for itself,- careful, earnest, conscientious work. It was not only that it showed an idealistic spirit that tended to higher things, not merely the accomplishment of a certain amount of work, but the striving for the goal, that lofty, artistic goal, whose realm is in the stars where all ideals are. On behalf of the students I do want to express to one and to all members of the faculty our hearty thanks and appreciation.

And now in closing I want to say that we are going to continue our work next year with the object of giving to all talented students an opportunity to develop their talents to the fullest extent. But there are students who are not great and pronounced talents. We love them too and we will provide for them too. They are here because they love music so dearly that they want to know all about it. We shall take good care of them. It may not be policy for me to say so, because sometimes the people who think they are destined to become virtuosos and to show the world what wonderful things they can do are under the conviction that a school which exists only for them is the only right place for them. It may not be policy for me to say so, that what I want to accomplish with this school first of all is to set high standards of musical appreciation, of musical performance, of art in music which shall not only be demonstrated by the performance of the individual, but by the appreciation of the art work itself. That is more important to us than anything else, for as it has been said a great poet can only be appreciated by poets, so it is with the great in the art of music. Not alone the great artist, but the great art work can only be appre-

ciated by those who have become musicians. And it is so easy to become a musician, so easy to become a musician. You smile when you think of the hours and hours of practice you devoted to it, but that is not what made you musicians; that is what made you piano players and fiddlers, but not musicians. What made you musicians is the love and understanding of music.

Meet music half way. What I want to do is to make people put music into their lives as a necessity, not as a luxury, as something without which they cannot exist, for we cannot live without the beautiful and remain human. I want all people who love music to study it thoroughly, and then I want those who have been gifted by the Creator with special musical gifts to come into this atmosphere of people who are all in love with this art, and under the influences of such an atmosphere to become musicians, and then they will be something more than piano players, fiddlers, and shouters. They will be really musicians. They will become interpreters of the great works of musical art instead of exploiters of their little selves.

I shall therefore not read to you a list of activities, for there are not any in the regular courses. But there is a special course which is being completed by some students; who have thereby earned a certificate for the studies they have mastered and the special subjects they have been trained in, and that is the course for teachers of music in public schools. Now you may ask, what is it

Awarding of Certificates

We are a year old. Our regular academic course, so to speak, is three years. Now some students came to us at the beginning of the year and said: "I want to come and take the third year of the regular course. I have studied this, and I studied that, and I want to graduate at the end of the first year." I said, "Very good; you shall." They were put to work, and after a short time they discovered that they did not want the third year's course at all. They then wanted the second year, and finally they decided that it was the first year that they wanted. And so most of the third year students have found out that it was best to start from the very beginning, in certain subjects, and master them before they considered themselves well-equipped musicians. Do you know that that is a very fine spirit, because it is a rare thing to find people who are willing to acknowledge their deficiencies and remedy them, even if they are no longer fifteen years of age. And there are such students in this school, I am happy to say, and I am proud of them, even more proud of them, if that were possible, than of any other students.

I shall therefore not read to you a list of graduates, for there are not any in the regular courses. But there is a special course which has been completed by some students, who have thereby earned a certificate for the studies they have mastered and the special subjects they have been trained in, and that is the course for teachers of music in public schools. Now you may ask, what is it

that a teacher of music in public school needs to know that any other musician does not have to know. Well, there was a time when I was a boy and went to school when all a teacher of music in the public schools had to know was to bang out an accompaniment to a patriotic song and say, "Sing louder, boys, sing louder". That time is happily over.

The development of the methods of instruction in vocal music in public schools has progressed more wonderfully in America than in any other country in the world, thanks to such pioneers as Dr. Lowell Mason, Mr. Holt, Mr. Jepson, and others. It has become a science, and there are now a great many schools all over the country which equip teachers in this direction, and they have done excellent work.

When I first took charge of the music in the public schools of New York in '97, I found a very discouraging state of affairs. Music was part of the curriculum apparently. Every teacher was expected to teach it in her class-room. As some of them were musical, and more were not musical, you can easily understand that there was not much system, and that it was no easy thing to bring order out of the chaos. I entered at a time when that was difficult to do. In order to be able to move a mountain of opposition and indifference, you have to have the authorities back of you and with you heart and soul. That was not the case at first. It was not until the Hercules who is now at the head of the school affairs of New York City came into office that I was able to make progress. People have said that Dr. Maxwell is arbitrary in his methods, so was Hercules when he cleaned the Augean stables. And that was the task set for Dr. Maxwell, and I cannot express in sufficiently high terms my appreciation and gratitude for

the way in which he supported all efforts for improving the general work in the schools, and the special work which up to that time had been looked upon as a fad, and which he recognized as an important part of the instruction and proper education of the young citizen.

The standards which were set for teachers of music became very high, and it is not easy to pass the rigid examinations provided by the Board of Examiners of this City.

But it was not merely with the view of preparing teachers in methods of instruction, not only to enable them to pass these examinations, that I planned the course for the students who desired to become music teachers in the schools. It was rather to bring up these teachers among musical surroundings, to place musicians in the schools and not merely people who have learned a method of instruction by heart. I therefore opened up all the lectures, concerts and recitals to the students of this course, and did my best to encourage them to come under these influences, and they have taken advantage to the full of what we have offered them, and I feel that in sending them out into the schools of this country, we are sending well-equipped musicians and teachers, and it gives me great pleasure, therefore, to award the certificates to the students whose names I shall call out.

And I want to say to these ladies that they have accomplished a great deal in a comparatively short time. In planning the course, I was under the impression that it would be possible to complete it in one year, but I believe that two years would allow the work to be accomplished with a little more comfort and ease to the student. The course hereafter will therefore be two years. It is all the more

creditable to these ladies that they have accomplished it in one year. Some of them have come to us being already very well prepared, others again have worked with us from the very beginning. At any rate, I count you who have completed this course as among the most earnest students of the school. I am sorry to have you go. You set a splendid example, and I hope to see you with us as often as your duties will permit.

GRADUATES CLASS OF 1905-1906

Miss Fannie C. Amidon	Miss Georgetta M. Hollis
Mrs. Thomas M. Balliet	Miss Claire L. Kuhn
Miss Cleophe Donovan	Mrs. Nellie V. V. Munger
Miss Josephine Herron	Miss Anna Cecile O'Brien