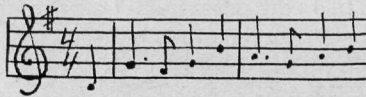
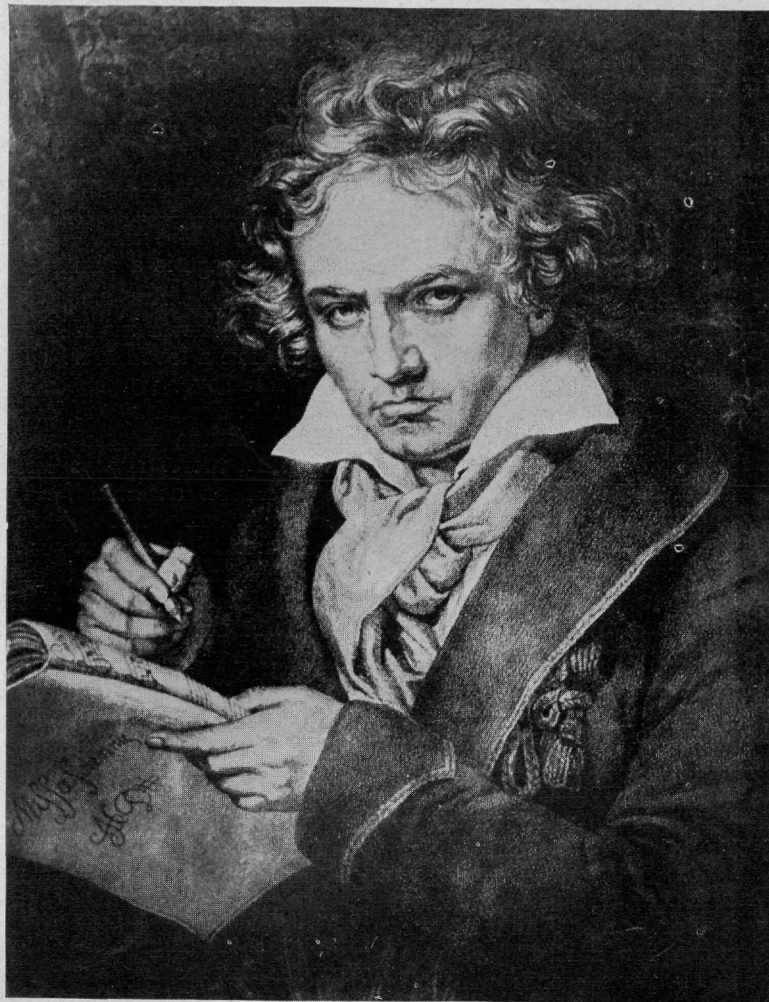


The Baton



Published by and for the Institute of Musical Art of the City of New York
FRANK DAMROSCH, Director



Beethoven

IMPRESSIONS OF BEETHOVEN

By His Contemporaries
Mozart, Liszt, Czerny, Goethe
and others.

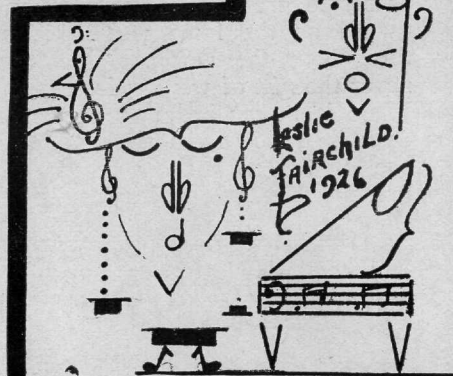
FLORENCE EASTON,
EDWARD JOHNSON
AND LAWRENCE TIBBETT
Interviewed by the Editor

ARTICLES BY
MRS. FRANK DAMROSCH
W. J. HENDERSON, AND OTHERS

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BEETHOVEN

Impressions of Contemporaries

From the book of the same name, compiled and annotated by O. G. Sonneck. Reprinted by courtesy of G. Schirmer, Inc. The following is made up of excerpts from the records of a number of the greatest personages of Beethoven's time.

His Student Days

BEETHOVEN, who as a youth of great promise came to Vienna in 1786, but was obliged to return to Bonn after a brief sojourn, was taken to Mozart and at that musician's request played something for him which he, taking it for granted that it was a show-piece prepared for the occasion, praised in a rather cool manner. Beethoven, observing this, begged Mozart to give him a theme for improvisation. He always played admirably when excited and now he was inspired, too, by the presence of the master whom he revered greatly; he played in such a style that Mozart, whose attention and interest grew more and more, finally went silently to some friends who were sitting in an adjoining room, and said vivaciously, "Keep your eyes on him; some day he will give the world something to talk about."

Ferdinand Ries says:

It was Haydn's wish that Beethoven place on his earlier works: "Pupil of Haydn." This Beethoven refused to do because, as he said, though he had taken a few lessons from Haydn, he never had learned anything from him. (During his first stay in Vienna Beethoven took some lessons from Mozart, but complained that Mozart never played for him.) Beethoven also had studied counterpoint with Albrechtsberger and dramatic music with Salieri. I knew all of them well; but though all three had the highest esteem for Beethoven, they were agreed with regard to their opinion of him as a student. Each said that Beethoven was so obstinate and so bent on having his own way, that he had to learn much which he refused to accept as a matter for study through bitter personal experience.

He had, as he often said, practiced day and night during his youth, and worked so hard that his health had suffered, and those bodily ills which produced a continual inclination toward hypochondria in him undoubtedly were due to this cause.

According to Czerny:

He once told me that as a boy he had been negligent and not much taken to task, and that his musical training had been a poor one. "And yet," he continued, "I had a talent for music." It was touching to hear him utter these words with all seriousness, as though none otherwise would have suspected it. On another occasion the conversation turned on the fame which his name had gained throughout the world. "Nonsense," he said, "I never thought of writing for reputation and honors! What is in my heart must out and so I write it down." Aside from those times when he was in one of the melancholy moods which occasionally overtook him, and which resulted from his physical ailments, he always was merry, mischievous, full of witticisms and jokes, and cared not a bit what people said of him.

When Beethoven was a young man he found a

good friend at Court. Had he wished he might have lived in the greatest style. In disposition he was much akin to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, but he was noble, great-hearted and pure in character.

The Viennese author Förster once brought him a quartet of which he had made a clean copy only that morning. In the second portion of the first movement the violoncello got out. Beethoven stood up, and still playing his own part sang the bass accompaniment. When I spoke about it to him as a proof of acquirements, he replied with a smile: "The bass part had to be so, else the author would have known nothing about composition." To the remark that he had played a *presto* which he had never seen before so rapidly that it must have been impossible to see the individual notes, he answered: "Nor is that necessary; if you read rapidly there may be a multitude of typographical errors, but you neither see them nor give heed to them, so long as the language is a familiar one."

His Love Affairs

Beethoven never married nor, strange to say, did he ever have a love affair. The truth of the matter is that Beethoven never was out of love, and usually was much affected by the love he was in at the time. . . . In Vienna Beethoven, at least so long as I was living there, always had some love affair in hand, and on occasion he made conquests which many an Adonis would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to encompass.

The letters in which occur the words "my immortal beloved" were found after Beethoven's death in a secret drawer and whoever the intended recipient was, Beethoven perhaps never mailed the passionate outpourings of his heart.

He Teaches Piano

A pupil's comment follows:

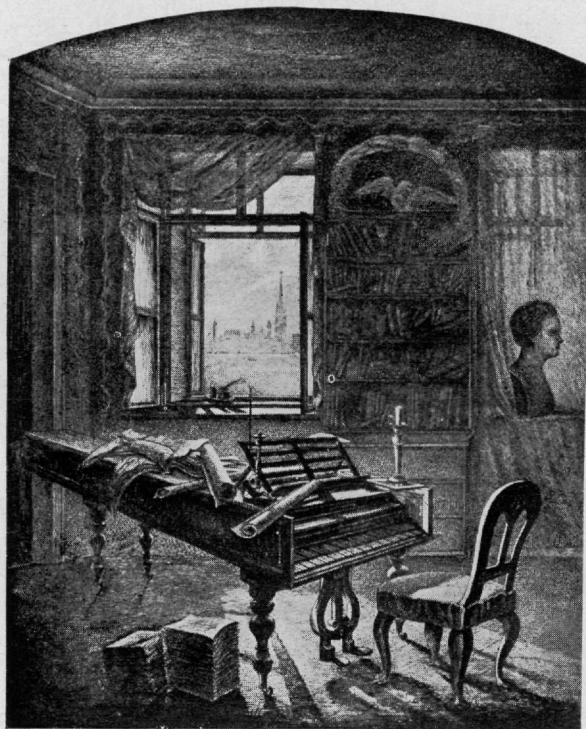
That day I had well-nigh a two-hour lesson. When I left out something in a passage, a note or a skip, which in many cases he wished to have specially emphasized, or struck a wrong key, he seldom said anything; yet when I was at fault with regard to the expression, the *crescendi* or matters of that kind, or in the character of the piece, he would grow angry. Mistakes of the other kind, he said, were due to chance; but these last resulted from want of knowledge, feeling or attention. He himself often made mistakes of the first kind, even when playing in public.

Czerny says:

I was at once told to play something, and since I did not dare begin with one of his own compositions, played Mozart's great C major Concerto, the one beginning with chords. Beethoven soon gave me his attention, drew near my chair, and in those places where I had only accompanying passages played the orchestral melody with me, using his left hand. His hands were overgrown with hair and

his fingers, especially at the ends, were very broad. The satisfaction he expressed gave me the courage to play his *Sonata pathétique*, which had just appeared, and finally, his "Adelaide," which my father sang in his very passable tenor. When he had ended Beethoven turned to him and said: "The boy has talent. I will teach him myself and accept him as my pupil. Send him to me several times a week. First of all, however, get him a copy of Emanuel Bach's book on the true art of piano playing, for he must bring it with him the next time he comes."

During the first lessons Beethoven kept me altogether on scales in all the keys, and showed me (something at the time still unknown to most players) the only correct position of the hands and fingers and, in particular, how to use the thumb,



Beethoven's Study

rules whose usefulness I did not learn fully to appreciate until a much later date. Then he went over the studies belonging to this method with me and, especially, called my attention to the *legato*, which he himself controlled to such an incomparable degree, and which at that time all other pianists regarded as impossible of execution on the fortepiano.

Liszt writes:

I was about eleven years of age when my venerated teacher Czerny took me to Beethoven. He had told the latter about me a long time before, and had begged him to listen to me play sometime. Yet Beethoven had such a repugnance to infant prodigies that he always had violently objected to receiving me. Finally, however, he allowed himself to be persuaded by the indefatigable Czerny, and in

the end cried impatiently: "In God's name, then, bring me the young Turk!" It was ten o'clock in the morning when we entered the two small rooms in the *Schwarzspanier* house which Beethoven occupied; I somewhat shyly, Czerny amiably encouraging me. Beethoven was working at a long, narrow table by the window. He looked gloomily at us for a time, said a few brief words to Czerny and remained silent when my kind teacher beckoned me to the piano. I first played a short piece by Ries. When I had finished Beethoven asked me whether I could play a Bach fugue. I chose the C-minor Fugue from the Well-Tempered Clavichord. "And could you also transpose the Fugue at once into another key?" Beethoven asked me. Fortunately I was able to do so. After my closing chord I glanced up. The great Master's darkly glowing gaze lay piercingly upon me. Yet suddenly a gentle smile passed over his gloomy features, and Beethoven came quite close to me, stooped down, put his hand on my head, and stroked my hair several times. "A devil of a fellow," he whispered, "a regular young Turk!" Suddenly I felt quite brave. "May I play something of yours now?" I boldly asked. Beethoven smiled and nodded. I played the first movement of the C-major Concerto. When I had concluded Beethoven caught hold of me with both hands, kissed me on the forehead and said gently: "Go! You are one of the fortunate ones! For you will give joy and happiness to many other people! There is nothing better or finer!" Liszt told the preceding in a tone of deepest emotion, with tears in his eyes and a warm note of happiness sounded in the simple tale. For a brief space he was silent and then he said: "This event in my life has remained my greatest pride—the palladium of my whole career as an artist. I tell it but very seldom and—only to good friends!"

As Orchestral Conductor

As a conductor our Master could in no wise be called a model, and the orchestra had to pay heed lest it be misled by its mentor, for he thought only of his tone-poems, and was ceaselessly engaged in calling attention to their authentic expression by means of the most manifold gesticulations. With increasing deafness, it is true, a rude disagreement often took place. In these cases his eye came to his assistance: he could observe the bow-stroke of the string instruments, guess from it the figure they were playing, and soon find his place again.

Our Beethoven was by no means one of those pig-headed composers whom no orchestra in the world can satisfy; at times he was all too considerate, and did not even have passages which had gone amiss during first rehearsals repeated, saying: "The next time it will go as it should." He was very meticulous with regard to expression, the more delicate shadings, an equalized distribution of light and shade, and an effective *tempo rubato*, and without betraying the slightest impatience always took pleasure in discussing them individually with the various musicians. And then, when he saw that the musicians had grasped his ideas, and moved, carried away and filled with enthusiasm by the magic charm of

his tonal creations, were playing together with increasing fervor, his face would be illumined with joy, all his features would radiate happiness and content, a satisfied smile would wreath his lips, and a thundering *Bravi tutti!* would reward the successful artistic achievement. It was the first and most beautiful moment of triumph for this lofty genius, compared with which, as he himself admitted without reserve, even the stormy applause of a great receptive public was cast into the shade.

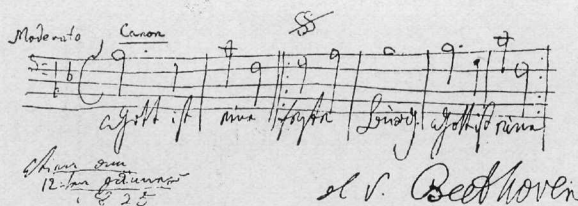
Beethoven At Work

Beethoven never was seen in the street without a little note-book in which he jotted down his ideas of the moment. When by chance this was mentioned, he would parody the words of Joan of Arc: "I may not come unless I bear my flag!" With a steadiness without compare he stuck to this law he had laid down for himself, although in other respects a truly admirable confusion ruled in his household. Books and music were strewn about in every corner; here the fragments of a cold snack, there bottles, still sealed or half-emptied; on his standing desk was the hurried sketch of a new quartet; elsewhere were the débris of his breakfast; here on the piano, in the shape of scribbled-over pages, lay the material for a magnificent symphony, still slumbering as an embryo; there drooped a corrected proof waiting for release. The floor was covered with business and personal letters; between the windows stood a respectable loaf of *Strachino*, beside it the still notable ruins of a genuine Verona salami—and despite all this higgledy-piggledy our Master, quite contrary to the actual facts, had the habit of calling attention to his accuracy and love of order with Ciceronian eloquence on all occasions. Only when something he wanted had to be hunted for hours, days and even weeks, and all endeavors to find it remained fruitless, would he strike a new note as he looked about for a victim to blame: "Yes, yes," he would wail pitifully, "it is my misfortune! Nothing is left in the place where I put it; everything is moved about; everything is done to play me a trick. O these humans, these humans!" The servants, however, knew the good-natured growler; they let him grumble to his heart's content and—after a few minutes had passed—all was forgotten until a similar cause called forth a similar scene.

Every year Beethoven spent the summer months in the country, where under skies of azure blue he liked best to compose, and composed most successfully. Once he took lodgings in romantic Mödling, in order to be able to enjoy the Lower Austrian Switzerland to his heart's content. So a four-horse wagon was freighted with a few articles of furniture and a tremendous load of music; the tower-like machine slowly got under way, and the owner of its treasures marched along ahead of it as happy as could be, *per pedes Apostolorum*. No sooner did he cross the city boundary and find himself among blossoming fields, where gentle zephyrs set the green corn swaying like waves, amid the jubilant song of fluttering larks, celebrating the longed-for coming of lovely spring with trills of raptured

greeting, than his genius awoke; thoughts began to traverse his mind, were spun out, ranged in order, noted down in lead-pencil—and the aim and goal of his migration was entirely forgotten. The gods alone know whither our Master strayed during the whole long period which elapsed, but suffice to say it was not until dusk was falling that dripping with sweat, covered with dust, hungry, thirsty and tired to death, he arrived in his chosen Tusculum. Yet, heaven be merciful, what a horrible spectacle awaited him there! The driver had made his snail-like way to his destination without misadventure, but had waited two full hours for the patron who had hired and already had paid him in advance. Since he did not know his name it was impossible to make inquiries; and in any event the cart-horse tamer wished to sleep at home. So he made short work of it, unloaded the whole contents of his wagon in the marketplace and drove off without further ado. Beethoven was at first very angry; then he broke into uproarious laughter, after a brief reflection hired half-a-dozen gaping street boys, and had all he could do before the cries of the watchmen announcing the midnight hour rang out on the air, to get the children of his brain safely under the shelter of a roof by the light of Luna's silver ray.

x *Gründe: Die die erfinden*
unruhe um glückliche



Canon "God is a Firm Stronghold"
 Beethoven's Manuscript

As a relief from strenuous work, aside from poetry, for which he had a spiritual affinity, he turned to the study of universal history. Among German poets Goethe was and remained his favorite.

With regard to the other arts and sciences he also possessed, without making any show of it, a fund of more than surface knowledge; and took especial pleasure in discussing political matters with intimate friends. His summaries were so apt, his conceptions so correct, and his viewpoints so clear that none ever would have credited this diplomatic neophyte, who lived only in and for his art, with having formulated them.

Justice, personal decency, the moral code, a devout mind and religious purity meant more to him than all else; these virtues were enthroned in him and he demanded that others cultivate them. "A man is as good as his word" was his motto, and nothing angered him more than an unkept promise. He took pleasure in helping others out of pure love for his neighbor, only too often making considerable sacri-

fices, greatly to his own disadvantage. Anyone who turned to him in free and full confidence always could count upon certain, actual aid. He was neither avaricious nor yet extravagant; yet neither had he any idea of the real value of money, which he regarded merely as a means of procuring unavoidably required necessities. While half the world reëchoed praises, only a few were capable of estimating his lofty human values to their full extent. Why was this? Because the majority were rebuffed by the rough outward shell and never even guessed at its noble inner kernel.

Pathetic Results of His Deafness

Goethe writes:

I made the acquaintance of Beethoven in Teplitz. His talent amazed me. However, unfortunately, he is an utterly untamed personality, not at all in the wrong, if he finds the world detestable, but he thereby does not make it more enjoyable either for himself or others. He is very much to be excused, on the other hand, and very much to be pitied, as his hearing is leaving him, which, perhaps, injures the musical part of his nature less than his social. He, by nature laconic, becomes doubly so because of this lack.

Rochlitz says:

In broken sentences he made some friendly and amiable remarks to me. I raised my voice as much as I could, spoke slowly, with sharp accentuation, and thus out of the fulness of my heart conveyed to him my gratitude for his works and all they meant to me and would mean to me while life endured. He stood close beside me, now gazing on my face with strained attention, now dropping his head. Then he would smile to himself, nod amiably on occasion, all without saying a word. Had he understood me? Had he failed to understand? At last I had to make an end, and he gave my hand a powerful grip and said: "I still have a few necessary errands to do. Shall we not see each other again?" N. N. now returned. "Did he understand what I said?" I queried. I was deeply moved and affected. N. N. shrugged his shoulders. "Not a word!" I cannot describe the sensations which filled me as I left. The man who solaced the whole world with the voice of his music, heard no other human voice, not even that of one who wished to thank him. Aye, it even became an instrument of torture for him.

Mme. Schroeder-Devrient records this:

You probably know with what enthusiasm the Vienna public greeted "Fidelio" on that occasion. Every artist taking part in the performance accomplished his task that evening with enthusiastic devotion; for who would not gladly have given his last breath for the wretched Master who heard nothing of all the beauty and glory he had created! Beethoven himself, the exalted Master, came the following day to express to me his thanks and recognition. I moistened the hand he offered me with hot tears, and in my joy would have exchanged all the earth's worldly possessions for this praise from Beethoven's lips.

Description of the Master by a Young Music Student

Feverishly excited by the wonderful hymn at the end of "Fidelio," that apotheosis of faithful conjugal devotion, I hardly noticed that the house was gradually growing empty; until my faithful friend Franz Schubert seized my arm to accompany me to the exit. Together with us, three gentlemen, to whom I paid no further attention because their backs were turned to me, stepped out of a lower corridor; yet I was not a little surprised to see all those who were streaming by toward the lobby crowding to one side, in order to give the three plenty of room. Then



Beethoven

Schubert very softly plucked my sleeve, pointing with his finger to the gentleman in the middle, who turned his head at that moment so that the bright light of the lamps fell on it and—I saw, familiar to me from engravings and paintings, the features of the creator of the opera I had just heard, Beethoven himself. My heart beat twice as loudly at that moment; all the things I may have said to Schubert I now no longer recall; but I well remember that I followed the Desired One and his companions (Schindler and Breuning, as I later discovered) like a shadow through crooked alleys and past high, gable-roofed houses, followed him until the darkness hid him from sight.

The more strongly the recollection of that evening when I had seen him for the first time increased my longing, the more plans I made regarding the manner in which I might be able to pay my homage to him in person. What I regarded as impossible of attainment, however, was granted me, like so much in life, through a lucky chance. The ambassador of the Grand-Duke of Hessa, my diplomatic friend, began: "You have often stated that you wished you could be introduced to Beethoven. I am so placed

that I can gratify your wish at once. Read this letter. Perhaps you would like to see that it reaches its address, *Kotgasse* No. 60, first flight up, the door to the left? Here is the dispatch, sealed with the Grand-Ducal seal!"

The delight with which I seized the missive mocks all effort at description; and the thought of soon seeing Beethoven thrust every other sensation into the background. I had no more than hastily thanked the good Baron than I hurried down into the street and threw myself into the first carriage which came my way, loudly shouting the address of the house—No. 60, *Wiedener* suburb—as I did so. At times one is overtaken by moods which do not admit of verbal expression and which instinctively, at the thought of soon confronting some extraordinary celebrity, occasion a shyness beyond control. After repeatedly knocking in vain at the real living-room door, I entered and found myself in a rather commodious but entirely undecorated apartment. Beethoven himself, his back to me, stood busily writing down figures and the like on the wood, already covered with scribblings.

The deaf Master had not heard me enter, and it was only by stamping vigorously with my feet that I managed to attract his notice and he at once turned around, surprised to see a young stranger standing before him. Yet before I could address a single word to him, he commenced to excuse himself in the politest manner imaginable because he had not sent out his housekeeper, and no one had been in attendance to announce me, the while quickly drawing on his coat; and then first asking me what I wished. Standing so near this artist, crowned with glory, I could realize the impression which his distinguished personality, his characteristic head, with its surrounding mane of heavy hair and the furrowed brow of a thinker, could not help but make on every one. I could look into those profoundly serious eyes, note the amiably smiling expression of his mouth when he spoke, his words always being received with great interest.

Spring had appeared almost overnight, and it was on March 3, a sunny morning that, waiting for the hour of my invitation to strike, I was improving this and that in my cantata, dressed in my best and seated at the piano, when the servant opened the door and—to my anything but small surprise Beethoven stood on the threshold. I could hardly believe my eyes: the famous composer had not balked at the four flights of steps in order to pay me, a neophyte of only twenty years of age, a return visit. What I did and said in my first confusion I do not know; he, on the other hand, well aware of my embarrassment, at once began to speak: he had called, in order since it was such a pleasant day, to take me along for a little walk before dinner, and to improve the occasion by making the acquaintance of my lodgings, instruments, music and pictures of my parents, which I had mentioned to him. And he actually began to turn the pages of my copy-books of contrapuntal exercises, to look over my little hand-library,

in which he found his favorites, Homer and Goethe, and I even had to submit to him a drawing of mine, and all of these things he examined attentively and praised. That I was flushed with joy at being permitted to walk through the thronged streets on the way to the *Volksgarten* beside the man I revered, and to what degree his intelligent remarks and his comprehensive knowledge allowed me to recognize the lofty flight of his genius in every direction, I need not stress. At such moments when, full of his subject, he spoke, the wealth of ideas which escaped his mouth appeared truly astonishing.

"You will ask me whence I take my ideas? That I cannot say with any degree of certainty: they come to me uninvited, directly or indirectly. I could almost grasp them in my hands, out in Nature's open, in the woods, during my promenades, in the silence of the night, at earliest dawn. They are roused by moods which in the poet's case are transmuted into words, and in mine into tones, that sound, roar and storm until at last they take shape for me as notes."

May was drawing to a close and with it my stay of well-nigh two years in Vienna. I was heavy-hearted to think I had to leave and Beethoven, too, was visibly moved; there was a pathos in his farewell, as though he had a premonition we would not again see each other: I could have sunk down at his feet. And when I seized the pen to thank him for the last time for the infinite kindness which he had shown me, he at once drew back my hand. "No thanks!" he cried, "there is no need of it between us: what I have done came from the heart. And now no more emotion! A man should be firm and brave in all things."

I was, however, to enjoy a marvelous experience the day before my departure. Early in the morning, while putting my belongings in order, I heard a gentle knocking without and opened the door. What do I see? It is Beethoven who enters the room. My astonishment may be conceived when he discovered me in a hurly-burly of clothes and trunks, music and instruments. He hardly noticed it, however, but at once declared that he had only come in order to wish me a prosperous trip for the last time, and to deliver to me the promised letters to Cherubini and the publisher Schlesinger. "I have also brought you a little souvenir: I know that you will attach some value to it. Take it for remembrance's sake and continue to think well of me!" With trembling hands I received the precious sheet of music-paper. It contained a canon for six voices on the words: "Man should be noble, helpful and good!" Words by Goethe, tones by Beethoven. Vienna, in May, 1823." On the back was written: "A prosperous journey, my dear Mr. Schlösser! May all things turn out as according to your wish, Your most devoted Beethoven."

I walked down-stairs with him, hand in hand, and when we had reached the bottom stood looking after him for a long time, until he had vanished from my sight.

A Tragic Impression by a Young Poet

When I had ascended the quite considerable number of steps I found at my left a bell-pull with a name half-erased, yet which I thought I could decipher as that of Beethoven. I rang; steps drew near; the door opened; and my pulse raced. Actually I am no longer able to say whether a maid or a young man, Beethoven's nephew, who then was living with him, and whom later I met once or twice, opened the door for me. My high inner tension had robbed me of all consciousness of external happenings. I only recollect that I could not manage to get out the question: "Does Mr. Beethoven live here?"

I was announced, handing over my letter from Zelter, as a card of admission, and stood waiting in



BEETHOVEN
(Sketch by Lyser)

the anteroom. I could still paint it from memory in its half-void, half-disordered confusion. On the floor stood a number of emptied bottles; on a plain table a few plates and two glasses, one of them half-filled. "Could Beethoven have left this half-emptied glass?" I wondered. And the desire seized me to drink what was left.

The door of the adjoining room opened; I was asked to enter. As I stepped timidly over the sacred threshold, I could hear my heart beat.

As I entered, my very first glance was for him. He was carelessly seated on a disordered bed against the rear wall of the room, one on which he appeared to have been resting only the moment before. In his one hand he held Zelter's letter, the other he stretched amiably out to me with a look of such kindness and at the same time of such suffering that suddenly every separating wall of unease fell, and I advanced toward him whom I so profoundly revered glowing with the fullest warmth of affection.

He rose, gave me his hand, pressed my own heartily, in true German fashion, and said: "You have brought me a fine letter from Zelter! He is a real protector of true art!" Accustomed to defray the larger part of the burden of conversation, since he could only with difficulty gather what was said in reply, he continued: "I am not quite well, I have been ill. You will not find me very entertaining, for I am very deaf."

What I replied, whether I replied—really, I am unable to say! My looks, my repeated pressures of the hand, will best have expressed that for which, perhaps, words would have failed me, even if, in this instance, I could have spoken as I did to others.

And in spite of all, he lost nothing of that mysterious magnetic power, which so irresistibly enchains us in the external semblance of great men. For the suffering, the mute, silent anguish therein expressed, was not the consequence of a momentary indisposition, since a number of weeks later, when Beethoven felt much better, I recognized it again and again—but was the outcome of the whole unique fatality of his life, which welded the loftiest awards of substantiation with the most cruel renunciatory tests.

It was for this reason that the sight of the deep, silent grief which weighed upon his sadly melancholy brow and lay in his weary eyes filled me with unspeakable emotion. It called for great powers of self-control to sit opposite him and hold back the tear which would out.

The End

Hiller writes:

Not long after our second visit the news spread through Vienna that the London Philharmonic Society had sent Beethoven one hundred pounds sterling, in order to ameliorate his sufferings. It was added that the surprise had made so deep an impression on the poor great man that he even felt himself bodily much relieved. When we once more stood by his bedside on the 20th, his remarks, it is true, showed how much the attention had rejoiced him, but he was very weak and spoke only in a low voice and in broken sentences. "I shall probably soon make my way up above," he whispered after we had greeted him.

Similar exclamations he uttered frequently, yet together with them he voiced hopes and projects which, unfortunately, were not to be realized. Speaking of the noble action of the Philharmonic Society and praising the English, he opined that as soon as his condition had improved he would undertake the journey to London. "I shall compose a great overture and a great symphony for them."

In short, his worries and cares suddenly disappeared when the money arrived and he said happily: "Now we can again treat ourselves to a good day once in a while." There were no more than 340 florins, V. C. [paper-florins] in the cash box and hence for some time we had been restricting ourselves to beef and vegetables, which caused him more grief than anything else. The other day—it was a Friday—he at once had his favorite fish dishes prepared, merely in order to be able to taste them. To

be brief, his joy over the noble conduct of the Philharmonic Society at times degenerated into childishness. A large so-called "grandfather's chair," which cost 50 florins, Viennese, also had to be bought for him, and in it he rests every day for at least half-an-hour, so that his bed can be properly made. . . .

While we were spending March 26th in merry company, we were surprised between five and six o'clock by a heavy thunderstorm. A dense fall of snow was accompanied by violent thunder and lightnings which illuminated the whole chamber.

A few hours later guests arrived with the news that Ludwig van Beethoven was no more.

Would not a Roman augur, in view of the accidental commotion of the elements, have taken his apotheosis for granted?

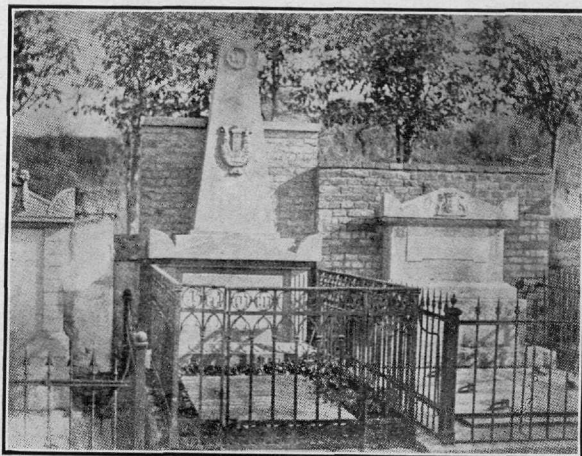
Funeral

No sooner had his friends, with bleeding hearts, done him love's last services, than they came together to determine the solemn details of his funeral, which, owing to the preparations necessary, was set for the afternoon of March 29th, 1827. Cards of invitation were at once printed and distributed in lavish quantity. The mild, beautiful spring day lured a countless number of the curious into the open, to the Escarpment of the Alser suburb before the Schottentor, at the so-called Schwarzschanerhaus in which Beethoven had lived. The crowding incident to a gathering of some 20,000 persons of every class finally became so great that the gates of the house of mourning had to be locked, since its spacious court, in which Beethoven's corpse had been biered, no longer could accommodate the densely packed multitude. At four-thirty the clerical dignitaries appeared, and the procession set out and, for all the distance to the church, in a straight line, amounts to no more than 500 feet, yet it took more than an hour and a half to traverse because of its extremely slow progress made through the swaying crowds, which could not have been kept in order without using violence. Eight singers of the Royal and Imperial Court Opera carried the coffin. Before they raised it to their shoulders, however, they intoned the chorale from B. A. Weber's opera "Wilhelm Tell." Then all the mourners—artistic colleagues of the deceased, friends and admirers of his exalted genius, poets, actors, tone-poets, etc., all in deepest mourning with black gloves, fluttering crape, bouquets of white lilies fastened to their left arms and torches with crape ribbons—formed in order. After the crucifer who led the procession came four trombone players and sixteen of the best singers in Vienna, who alternately blew and sang the *Miserere mei Deus*, whose melody had been composed by the deceased master himself.

After the band of priests, including all those in the funeral procession, followed the splendidly ornamented bier, surrounded by the conductors and choir-masters holding the long white ribbon-ends which hung down from above. They were accompanied on each side by the torchbearers. The pupils of the Vienna Konservatorium and Saint-Anna Music School, as well as the most distinguished notabilities,

brought up the rear of the ceremonially inclusive procession.

Upon reaching the church the corpse received the blessing before the higher altar, during which ceremony the sixteen-voice male chorus sang the hymn *Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna*, which Seyfried had set in the "lofty style." When the splendid hearse, drawn by four horses, drove off with the lifeless clay past the aligned crowd, it was escorted by more than two hundred equipages. At the cemetery gates Master Anschütz with the most solemn pathos and emotion spoke the incomparably beautiful funeral oration written by Grillparzer, whose profound feeling and masterly presentation moved every heart, so that many a burning tear flowed from generous eyes in memory of the departed prince of tone. Many hundreds of copies of the two poems by Castelli and Schlecta, respectively, were distributed among those present who, after the coffin together with its three laurel wreaths had been lowered into the grave, departed the sacred resting place, profoundly touched, as the twilight shadows began to fall.



Beethoven's Grave

The Funeral Oration

We stand weeping over the riven strings of the harp that is hushed.

The harp that is hushed! Let me call him so! For he was an artist, and all that was his, was his through art alone. The thorns of life had wounded him deeply, and as the cast-away clings to the shore, so did he seek refuge in thine arms, O thou glorious sister and peer of the Good and the True, thou balm of wounded hearts, heaven-born Art! To thee he clung fast, and even when the portal was closed wherethrough thou hadst entered in and spoken to him, when his deaf ear had blinded his vision for thy features, still did he ever carry thine image within his heart, and when he died it still reposed on his breast.

You, however, who have followed after us hitherward, let not your hearts be troubled! You have not lost him, you have won him. No living man enters the halls of the immortals. Not until the body has perished, do their portals unclose. He whom you mourn stands from now onward among the great of all ages, inviolate forever.

A PILGRIMAGE TO BEETHOVEN

From the Writings of Richard Wagner

Translated by Mrs. Frank Damrosch for The Baton

AMONG the prose writings of Richard Wagner there is a series of short articles, ostensibly written by a friend whom he calls R——! In the first of these, he makes Beethoven say for him some of the things which he felt so keenly. (Excerpts are given here.)

My only joy was, so to immerse myself in the depths of his genius—that I gradually imagined I had become a part of it. And this tiny part made me begin to respect myself, to have nobler ideals and greater understanding. The bread that I ate, in this state, was very dry—and my drink was very watery—for as the world well knows, giving lessons is not very lucrative! . . .

But it was true—this Beethoven lived in Vienna and he too was a poor German musician! And now my peace of mind was gone. All my thoughts became one great longing. To see Beethoven! No Musselman longed more ardently to pilgrimage to the shrine of his prophet, than I did to find the little room where Beethoven lived. But how to carry out my plan? The journey to Vienna was long and costly.

I was desperate—but this desperation had the effect of making me write some excellent polkas—I really was paid for these and at last decided that I had enough money to carry out my plan. But two years had passed and my constant fear was that Beethoven might die!

I could shoulder my bundle and journey to Beethoven! I trembled with joy as I passed through the city gates and turned my steps towards the South! I would have been glad to travel by stage coach, not because I minded the fatigue of walking—(joyfully would I have endured any hardships in this cause)—but because in this way I would have come to Beethoven so much sooner. I was not yet famous enough as a composer of “polkas” to be able to afford to travel by coach.

At last I trod the streets of Vienna; I had reached the end of my pilgrimage. Imagine my feelings as I entered the Mecca of all my hopes! The hardships of my long, weary wanderings were forgotten; I had reached my goal, I was within the walls where Beethoven dwelt. I was too deeply moved to arrange at once how to carry out my plans! I did enquire where Beethoven lived, but only in order to find a lodging near him. Nearly opposite the house in which the master lived, I found a modest inn where I rented a tiny room on the fifth floor, and there I prepared myself for the greatest event of my life, a visit to Beethoven.

After two days of resting, fasting and prayer, but without having given Vienna a glance, I took courage, left the inn and walked to the curious house across the street. I was told that Beethoven was not at home. This suited me perfectly as it gave me time to control myself. However, I received the same answer four different times and

decided that luck was against me and I had better give up my quest for that day.

A week had gone by without my accomplishing my purpose and the income I had received from my polkas did not warrant a long stay in Vienna. In desperation I decided to pour out my troubles in a letter. At any rate writing seemed to unburden my harassed spirits. With a silent prayer I personally delivered the letter at Beethoven's home.

Who can describe my feeling when within an hour I received a small piece of music paper on which were hastily written the following words:

Pardon me, Mr. R——, if I ask you not to call until tomorrow morning, as I am busy today with a package of music which I have to mail. I shall expect you tomorrow.

Beethoven.

I fell upon my knees thanking heaven for this great favor, and my eyes filled with burning tears. After that I became wild with joy, dancing about my room like a lunatic.

The new day dawned at last; impatiently I waited for the proper visiting hour; it came and I set out. The most important event of my life was before me. This thought moved me deeply.

I told him of the impression yesterday's performance had made on me and that the new numbers added greatly to the beauty of “Fidelio.” “It's unpleasant work,” Beethoven replied. “I am not an opera composer; at least I know of no theatre in the world for which I would care to write another opera! If I were to write an opera that would satisfy me, the public would run away from it. In it there would be no arias, duets or trios or any of the stuff with which they patch an opera together nowadays.”

“And how would one go to work to create such a music drama?” I asked excitedly.

“What Shakespeare did, when he wrote his plays,” Beethoven answered almost passionately. “To contrast the wild elemental feelings that sweep into eternity, as played by the instruments with the clear direct sensations of the human heart as only the human voice is capable of rendering. In the endeavor to carry out this task one naturally comes across many problems. To sing, words are needed. But who is there who could express in words poetry that would be the fundamental foundation of these various elements? Do you intend to spend some time in Vienna?”

I wrote down, that the sole object of this journey had been my visit to him, and that he had deemed me worthy of such an unusual reception made me happy beyond words, and having fulfilled my quest I was ready to begin my journey back.

“Farewell dear friend and continue to love me!” He dismissed me, and deeply affected I left his room and house.

I have met Beethoven—that is enough for my lifetime! With one more longing look at Beethoven's house, I turned my steps to the north—my heart uplifted and ennobled.

The Baton

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Editor-in-Chief

DOROTHY CROWTHERS

Assistant

ELIZABETH THODE

Associates

LLOYD MERGENTIME

MURRAY PARET

HAROLD WINTER

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FOURTEENTH ANNUAL CONCERT

By the Students of the Institute of Musical Art
At Aeolian Hall, Wednesday Evening, Feb. 23rd

Programme

- Overture, *Der Freischütz* Weber
Orchestra of the Institute
- Concerto for the Violin Tchaikowsky
Allegro moderato
Milton Feher
- Air, "L'altra notte" from *Meisostofele* Boito
Ida Gottlieb
- Concerto in B flat for the Piano Beethoven
Allegro con brio
Max Meller
- Motet, "Warum ist das Licht gegeben
dem Mühseligen?" Brahms
Madrigal Choir of the Institute
Margarete Dessoff, Conductor
- Concerto in A minor for Violoncello Goltermann
Allegro moderato; Cantilena: Andante; Allegro
moderato
Olga Zundel
- Prelude to *Die Meistersinger* Wagner
Orchestra of the Institute

The above programme was beautifully rendered and bore unmistakable evidence of the high standards maintained by the school. The Beethoven and Boito numbers were conducted by Frank Damrosch; the rest of the programme by Willem Willeke.

ALUMNI CONCERTS

The seventh concert of the series was given by Anton Rovinsky, pianist, on March 5th. He offered a programme of unusual interest which will appear in the next issue.

The eighth concert, a programme of compositions by the Alumni of the Institute, receives comment on pages 14 and 15.



"A great man has passed out of our lives."

UNDYING LIGHT

By W. J. Henderson

(By a strange coincidence Franz Kneisel died on the same day as Beethoven, March 26th, but ninety-nine years later. This is the first anniversary of the passing away of that great personality, Franz Kneisel, so we reprint a portion of Mr. Henderson's article from the Memorial Issue of last year.)

It would be hard to point to another musician of such importance to the world who was so far removed from the bustle and glare of the same world's activity. For in no other musician's public activities has there seemed to be so whole an absorption of self in the service of the art.

We perceive that it was simply that Kneisel the man and Kneisel the artist were one and indivisible. His art was himself, himself was his art. What the man performed and what the man taught were what the man was; and the keynote of both was a sincerity so pure, so lofty, so unshakable that it can be fitly called celestial.

And so he passed out into the beyond as one of the more benignant stars might pass out of the sky, leaving indeed a dark void, but an impression of undying light.

BEETHOVEN

By W. J. Henderson

Thou couldst not hear in earthly way, and so
Didst learn of other worlds, where spirits dwell
To share with us, when sore our need.

Thy wounded heart hath paid our price so well,
We rise from all of woe to joyous swell
On surging throb of thine Adagio.

BEHIND THE MASK

Interviews with Florence Easton, Edward Johnson and Lawrence Tibbett

(On the subject of English as a medium for Grand Opera.)

By Dorothy Crowthers

INTERVIEWING is a real adventure. Serious business it has to be, of course, but it is not without its thrills when one clings persistently to Romance in this age of skyscrapers, subways, radios and traffic problems. A "Pacific 231" may satisfy a Honegger but hero worship still has its glamor for those who are made of stuff less stern.

The popularity of grand opera is due primarily to the fact that we want plumes and velvet somewhere in our lives, according to Mary Watkins. "Without shame, we are sustained by the unassailable and virtuous plea that we like music!"

Why not be honest about it? Admit that there has lurked in the nature of everyone at some time a secret longing for beplumed heroes, cloaked and sworded; for fair princesses in moonlit gardens; for love intrigues steeped in tragedy. Still our hungering hearts do not stop at the footlight frontier of illusion. We like to peer behind the masks for a "close-up" of the personalities which recently animated our gods and goddesses of grand opera. After all, this interest is born of a kind of gratitude and adoration,—a perfectly harmless enthusiasm which is frequently inspirational in its effect upon us. Truly great artists do not attract because of their worldly fame, but because of a spiritual nobility and sincerity which vivifies their achievements.

Therefore an interview with an artist can never be faced entirely with *sang-froid*; nor can it be enjoyed without the responsibility of obtaining information of value to those who read about it. The interviewer is an interpreter of the artist,—an obligation which hangs heavily on one who approaches the task, torn between exhilaration and trepidation. At least, it was consoling to know that the singers to be visited were English and American. There was no possibility of encountering the difficulties which beset a Japanese reporter struggling with the Russian Chaliapin in English,—a language unfamiliar to them both! But suppose they insist upon discussing wigs when I have come for a dissertation on diction? Dreadful thought!

Such fears, however, proved groundless. In each case, the singer was waiting at the appointed hour and received me with gracious informality, proving at once that persons of importance are wholly devoid of affectation. We talked enthusiastically on the topic of the moment and no outside interruptions were allowed to intrude upon the call.

The production of Deems Taylor's new American opera, "The King's Henchman" was directly responsible for searching out the three principals of the cast. A new art work in our native language demands serious consideration. The diction was of such excellence that the text was understandable throughout the spaces of the Metropolitan Opera House, despite the fact that Edna St. Vincent Mil-

lay employed Old Saxon English which fell with unfamiliarity on our ears. Only where the score had been heavily orchestrated did the words fail to carry.

Florence Easton would rather sing English than any other tongue because then she can give her entire attention to the interpretation of her role. In Aelfrida she must present a shallow, unsympathetic character which does not seem to be drawn quite consistently. If Aelfrida were as innocent as she appears in the second act, how could she be so full of guile in Act III. Miss Easton lent to the part all the resources of her art in singing, diction and interpretation. Many of the critics were surprisingly remiss in acknowledging the achievements of the singers, without whom the success of the opera would not have been possible. The Old Saxon text is English to which we are so unaccustomed that she found it necessary to give the same attention to the words as is required in a foreign language.

"Presenting opera in English is the only way to develop a love for opera in this country," said Miss Easton. "This is often demonstrated to me by my own friends. I always keep open house here after my performances because then I am ready for relaxation and merriment. The questions that are asked about certain things I did, show that even with the aid of a libretto, the meaning escapes the hearer." When asked about the advisability of translating opera into English, Miss Easton was enthusiastic in support of it. "In Italy does one ever hear an opera in anything but Italian?" she replied. "Isn't opera in Germany always in German? In France always in French?"

An eminent critic, who opposed translated opera, always used as an illustration the futility of making "*Tristans Ehre*" in all its virility of sound into the French "*La Gloire de Tristan*." He contended that the very meaning of the expression lost its strength. This was cited to Miss Easton. "But the French are not familiar with the correct German of the music drama, therefore this discrepancy does not bother them. It seems best to me to give them Wagner's 'Tristan' so they can understand it, and thereby encourage a love for this immortal work. Some of my friends laugh when I sing, for instance, in German, passages from operas which we know here only in French. It sounds strange only because we are not used to it. And not all translations are bad, either," she continued. "I sang excellent translations of the roles of Isolde, Elsa and Kundry in the English productions of 'Tristan', 'Lohengrin' and 'Parsifal'."

"In fact, the excellence of English diction with which you credit me, I owe to my early training in

the English Opera Company of Mme. Moody and Mr. Manners. This is not alone because I am English born, for my husband, who is an American, also acquired perfect diction in that company. Their English was so beautiful that with an accurate ear, I could learn by imitation without needing lessons in phonetics. I sang English translations of Wagner's Ring Cycle and Strauss's 'Elektra.' I also sang the first English 'Madama Butterfly' in London, as well as Ricordi's prize opera 'The Angelus' by Naylor."



Florence Easton as Aelfrida in "The King's Henchman."

When asked if she had found it necessary to sacrifice the tone in order to get the English over, especially in "The King's Henchman," she said, "Not at all. Every word could be sung. Only one line in the whole opera was declaimed, and that was done by Tibbett in the climax of the last act for dramatic effect. So, you see, I do believe English is a language for grand opera. With the possible exception of Italian, no language is easier to deliver than another. At a performance of the Guitry's recently, I noticed how much of the French escaped me even though I am familiar with the language."

Miss Easton dwelt with emphasis upon the fact that American students of singing do not take their musicianship seriously enough. The public is partly to blame. The sensational success achieved by some young Americans, not upon their merits but through newspaper propaganda, is hurting American art and those who strive to be artists in the true sense of the word. Another curious thing is that the earnest American artist has no public. Italian singers have their following, as do the Germans, but we do not encourage our own artists with similar enthusiasm. As for the notion entertained by American singing students that English tires the throat, this is because they do not speak correctly. This must be taught first and the study of phonetics is a decided aid in this direction.

Miss Easton made a delightful impression in her

simple black frock which contrasted effectively with the pastel coloring of her drawing-room. There was a formidable pile of opera scores on the piano. Her repertory is immense and it is interesting to learn that she is to sing "Turandot" in Cleveland when the Metropolitan Opera Company goes on tour.

* * *

Lawrence Tibbett is much younger than one would imagine from his appearance as the bearded king in the new opera. Not only young but handsome as well, which makes one feel that baritones do not always receive their just deserts at the hands of the librettists. They seldom have an opportunity to play the hero. Something should be done about this; Mr. Tibbett is one of the reasons.

He, too, prefers to sing in his native tongue because he feels better able to interpret all the nuances of English. Having acquired other languages only in recent years he still finds it necessary to translate.

"It is an erroneous idea," he said, "that English is not a good language for singing. The mixed vowels that are a cause of complaint are no worse than those of French. The word 'little' is difficult to sing, perhaps, but it is perfectly possible to obtain a loud or a soft tone on the vowel of the word." The sonority with which he illustrated the point in a singing tone proved that he was right.

"We must sing English as we speak it instead of distorting the vowel sounds in a long drawn melodic line," he continued. "How often do we hear and sung as *ahnd*. *I love you* frequently becomes *I lawve you*. *Do you hear me, dear* comes to us with horribly trilled r's.

"I always speak my roles before singing them. When a vowel becomes awkward in singing, I stop and say the word naturally, with relaxation. Then it comes more easily when sung.

"Some of the bad singing of English is due to the fact that most of the good vocal teachers of the past were foreigners, who had a struggle to reproduce the sound of written English. All of my teachers were Americans; I grew up in an average American home; so why shouldn't I find English desirable for singing?

"I don't think that Americans as a whole speak in their throats. The average English spoken in America is better than the average Italian spoken in Italy, for instance. There are fewer dialects in this country. Southern dialect is distinct, of course, and there are burred r's in the middle west, but New Englanders are merely imitating the English accent.

"The English distort their language. Their pronunciation of *oh* contains about four shadings of the vowel and although it is produced well forward in the mouth it lacks resonance. There have been few English singers of note. The Australians, however, speak with far more depth of tone.

"I don't want to speak our language in the English way. The English of the less cultivated mass

of Americans has more real tone and euphony than a more precise pronunciation.

"For instance, Latin was full of consonants. When modern Italian evolved from it, consonants were cancelled by the use of apostrophes. Italian verbs, as compared to Latin, are full of irregularities for the sake of euphony.

"English could be more euphony if in singing we occasionally dropped consonants as we do in speaking; gliding from vowel to vowel. Hence my belief that our *unconscious* English contains more of music, more richness of tone than the over enunciated conscious version.

"Mme. Sembrich once told me that pupils who come to her from the far west speak a more resonant English, have better diction and a greater aptitude for languages, than those from any other section of the country." Mr. Tibbett studied diction with Frank La Forge.

In Edna St. Vincent Millay's text for "The King's Henchman" Mr. Tibbett finds that the words of the Old Saxon English have a beautiful tang. They are not hard to deliver; on the contrary, because rich in color, they are more virile and dramatic.

"Where in foreign languages do you find a text to compare with it?" he asked. "So many opera librettos contain absurdly melodramatic dialogue with endless repetition of the same words.

"American audiences with their practical turn of mind would only laugh if they understood what they were hearing. The text of 'L'Amore dei Tre Re' by Sem Benelli is one of the outstanding examples of an exquisite poem. The melodramatic type of old opera does not lend itself, therefore, to translation. The Mozart operas and the Wagner music dramas stand the test better.

"Opera in English is the only way to reach the greatest number of American people; I refer to the public outside of New York. At present if a traveling company visits a town, the performance is attended somewhat in the spirit of a bargain sale. For the price of one ticket they can hear four singers instead of a concert in which only one would appear. And you cannot blame them when they do not know what it's all about!"

As to whether he found the text of "The King's Henchman" difficult to memorize, he claims it is easy because it is logical; much easier than a foreign text with the constant repetitions which are very confusing. Deems Taylor has set the text to music with rare perfection and understanding of vocal possibilities, he declares.

In his estimation it doesn't seem wrong to stress the idea of *American* opera. "That creates a certain pride of racial accomplishment. There would never have been a Debussy if he hadn't risen in defense of national music when his countrymen were becoming surfeited with Wagner.

"In my opinion, neither Wagner nor Debussy would have attained universal consideration had they not been first intensely individual. They sought the fundamental truth within themselves and ex-

pressed that. The composers of mixed blood or those who allowed themselves to be influenced from without, never seem to have achieved much. They were neither themselves nor that which they tried to emulate.

"The same appears to have been true with artists. Chaliapin is essentially national. He sings roles of different racial origin yet each as interpreted by him is Russian in coloring.

"There are, as you see, Russian traditions, French traditions, etc. Why shouldn't we foster American traditions? Tradition in turn reflects upon our personality and art.

"I have never been abroad and at present I do not wish to go for fear I should succumb too readily to a foreign influence. A tariff was estab-



Lawrence Tibbett as The King.

lished to protect home industry against the influx of foreign merchandise. It was even considered economically unsound at the time but what a wise measure it has proved in the end.

"Why shouldn't American art have a protective tariff in the form of American tradition, encouraged and honestly and lovingly adhered to by American artists? In other words, 'Be Yourself!'"

Mr. Tibbett is striving to do this and in his enthusiasm there is a grave sincerity which convinces one that he will succeed—that America will be proud of this son who furthers her young art with such earnest devotion.

* * *

How can one interview *Romeo*? How confront *Pelleas* with practical questions? How approach *Avito* with equanimity? Yet we had to obtain the opinions of Edward Johnson and, therefore, assuming an air of businesslike determination, we set forth. With the same magnetism which infuses his performances on the stage, he played the genial host, putting his visitor immediately at ease and turning what might have been a difficult task into a memorable experience.

Mr. Johnson was amused at the complaint of his admirers that in all the accounts of the premiere of the new opera, more praise was given to the composer and the librettist than to the perfection of diction accomplished by the singers. "When an opera is a success, naturally the composer receives much laudatory comment. Probably if it did not succeed, the artists would be blamed!" A similar remark was made by the great Lilli Lehmann, to the effect that if the composer were praised, the artist should be proud that the message had been properly interpreted; if the artist were praised, it testified to lack of success in conveying the composer's message. Perhaps the critics, intentionally or not, were paying a subtle tribute to the artists!

"Although the text of 'The King's Henchman' is difficult to memorize," Mr. Johnson said, "it commands the respect and admiration of the public. It contains many words not in daily use. For instance, when Aedgar in Act III reproaches Aethelwold saying, 'Thou!' how much more impressive is this word than its substitute *you*. The *th* preceding the vowel sound, although hard to sing, has



Edward Johnson and Florence Easton in the new American opera.

important dramatic value. Certain expressions in the Old Saxon English the audience took for colloquialisms. 'I clean forgot,' Miss Easton says in Act II, which caused laughter at an inopportune moment. Instead of the commonplace 'What is the matter?', how much more poetic is Miss Millay's 'What hath borne thee down?' English of this sort is beautiful for grand opera. Translations are not

likely to be so good. Mr. Taylor has heeded the genius of the language in setting it to music.

"Why shouldn't a composer study the range and possibilities of the vocal apparatus in the same way he investigates the same details in regard to the flute? How few composers who write for the voice know anything about singing. Many times young American composers bring their manuscripts to me and I have to point out errors or suggest improvements in the setting of the words. A singer knows what will help to 'put a song over' as we say.

"Do you know where I learned a great deal about this? At vaudeville performances. There an actor has perhaps six minutes allotted to him. He has to work fast." In an engaging manner, Mr. Johnson proceeded to demonstrate his point. He made a quick entrance, chaining the attention with an immediate and arresting remark, never allowing the interest to lag for a second. "I must do the same at a concert performance," he said. "I appear and must immediately get the audience with me. I usually begin my programs with the aria from the first act of 'Andrea Chenier.' It is a stirring narrative. Should there be no program notes, I address my hearers informally, taking them into my confidence with a simple explanation of the aria. This establishes their interest and a friendly atmosphere prevails.

"English is more understandable in songs than in opera where heavy instrumentation obscures the text. After an absence of six years abroad I found trouble singing in English again. It seemed guttural. In thinking about it, I saw no reason why English could not be approached in the same way as Italian. Whether one sings *mich* or *je* or *you*, there is a singable vowel to sustain the tone, no matter what consonant precedes or follows it. Mixed vowels and diphthongs add to the difficulty of singing English, whereas Italian vowels are pure. How *io t'amo* lends itself to beauty of tone." Mr. Johnson sang the Italian words and the audience of one was thoroughly convinced! "There is a belief that Italians are antagonistic to foreigners on the operatic stage in Italy. This only refers to those foreigners who mutilate their language. It must be accurate,—the vowels pure."

When asked whether he had made a study of phonetics, Mr. Johnson said that he had learned the Yersin method of French diction; Italian he had studied only as a language.

"The breath control of Italians and French must be the same for speaking as for singing, because the vowels of their languages are high. English is allowed to drop too much into the throat in speech, due to faulty breath support." He described graphically the voice of an American he overheard recently. The speaker never moved his lips or opened his mouth more than the necessary minimum, the sound coming entirely from the throat. Mr. Johnson claimed that his own throat began to hurt in sympathy. A Canadian by birth, he escapes the pitfalls of the *vox Americana*, though he says charmingly and inclusively, "We

Americans." This is because he has lived here so long. "We must speak English correctly before we can sing it successfully."

Mr. Johnson pointed out another difficulty which occurs in such operas as "The King's Henchman" and "L'Amore dei Tre Re." "The book in each case is mental; the story is not carried by action alone. It is the test of all one's powers when not singing, to fill in the periods of orchestral continuity with effective gestures. There are many moments which might be awkward unless careful thought is given to the acting." Remembering Mr. Johnson's art of gesture and pose, and his grace of figure, we furtively hoped that he would always have to sing in these subjective operas.



Edward Johnson as the King's Henchman.

The doubt was expressed as to whether the American temperament could ever lend itself to the composing of great music. "We have it in us as much as anyone," said Mr. Johnson. "We have merely been brought up from childhood to hide our emotions. They are not crushed, only disciplined. That makes us extremists when emotion does break forth. Why shouldn't our emotion find outlet in creative music? In all music history a solitary figure rises occasionally as a milestone along the path to artistic achievement. We are still young and must not be discouraged."

It is perhaps wrong to overstress the idea of an American opera, Mr. Johnson believes. "Art is not national. We do not think of Wagner as only a German. His appeal is more universal than that. Deems Taylor and Edna St. Vincent Millay have opened the way for American opera. Some day a Wagner may arise in our midst. He will not have

'Made-in-America' stamped upon him. It is inevitable that he will have imbibed the ideas of the masters of all nations before him, which through the years are metamorphosed so that the final expression will be his own. In other words, a seed is sown; it takes root in his personality and the result is a creation!"

Possessed of an unusually dynamic personality, Mr. Johnson enlivened every bit of the visit with interesting comment. When he picked up the book of "The King's Henchman" and read passages from the love scene, to illustrate the poetic beauty of the language, one felt that business determination was useless. And when he declaimed portions of "L'Amore dei Tre Re" we were again convinced that interviewing does have its moments!

TWO POEMS

By W. J. Henderson

Love's Harmony

If I shall sing to thee, wilt thou not listen?
If I let rhythmic whispers outward creep
From where rapt fancy murmurs in her sleep,
Shall they not cause thy drooping eye to glisten,
Or make thy pulses leap?

Wherefore is song, if not to make thee tremble
With knowledge, round and living as the earth,
Of that great love which gave the numbers birth?
Let passion have its way; do not dissemble;
Or what is singing worth?

Sing thou in silence, with my song agreeing;
Sing in thy heart of love, for he is lord:
Thus song shall have its infinite reward,
And find in thy pure soul the perfect being
Of absolute accord.

In Chains

Oh, for a clear and perfect use of pen!
Not for the trade of words in measured ink,
Nor on the lip of pale starvation's brink
To write: "Give us our daily bread, Amen";
But to fling wide the doors of hope again,
And write as when youth's star dreamed not to sink
Beyond the sweet horizon's verge; to think
Without the count of cost, as I thought then!
I'd take this English tongue I love so well,
And mining out its gold in reverent fear,
Round well the treasure in a rhythmic sum,
And mold from it a mighty Saxon bell
To toll one peal into the great world's ear,
And then be silent and forever dumb.

THE MASTER LIVES IN THE PAGES OF A LITTLE BOOK

NOW far more fascinating a picture of the great personality of Beethoven is presented through a volume of reminiscences of those who actually knew him, than through a mere history of his life. Such a book has just been published by G. Schirmer appropriately at this centenary of Beethoven's death, which occurred March 26th, 1827.

No book has been heretofore available in English which devotes itself exclusively to impressions of his contemporaries. Of the one hundred and fifty or more recorded recollections of those who visited Beethoven, slightly more than thirty were selected. In only rare instances were they written in English. All others called for translation. Mr. O. G. Sonneck, Vice President of G. Schirmer, Inc., has selected, chronologically arranged and annotated these intimate, informal impressions in a book which is of absorbing interest. It is so planned that the reader feels as though accompanying such famous personages as Mozart, Czerny, Goethe, Spohr, Rossini, Weber, Liszt in their visits to the master, and sharing their vivid impressions of his personality, his household affairs, the humor, failures, glories and tragedies of his life.

Smiles and Tears

There is a natural tendency among young musicians who are studying the works of a great master to reverence him as a god exclusively. This is of course all very well and yet there is a much closer contact to be gained through the realization that the master was a human being, not immune to the heights and depths experienced by the least of us.

So drop for a moment your worship at the shrine of his art; live through the pages of this book with Beethoven, the man; climb the stairs to his room; he will receive you and talk to you on many subjects; peep over his shoulder as he works; hear him improvise at the piano; listen to his advice on piano-playing and on composing; or watch him conduct an orchestra rehearsal; walk with him through the country in the fragrance of spring and thereby derive new inspiration and encouragement.

One runs the whole gamut of emotions in this delightful volume. Can you but laugh at this?

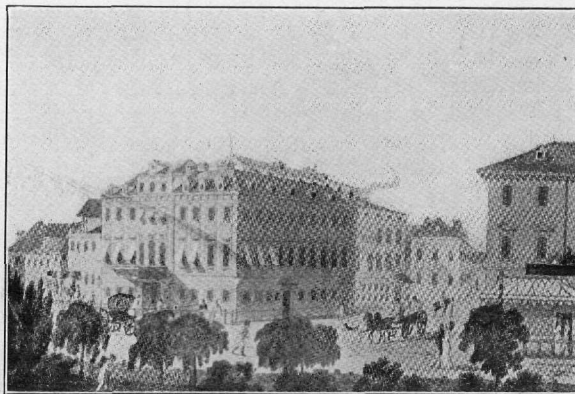
In his manner Beethoven was very awkward and helpless; and his clumsy movements lacked all grace. Thus, on several occasions, he upset his ink-well into the piano which stood beside his writing-desk. And he never learned to dance in time to the music.

In the early part of our acquaintance, I once asked, after he had absented himself for several days from the dining-rooms: "You were not ill, I hope?"—"My boot was, and I have only one pair."

Does not the dramatic contrast in this expression of Rossini's appeal to you?

Shall I confess it? When I mounted the stairs leading to the poor lodgings of the great man, I barely mastered my emotions. When the door opened, I found myself in a sort of attic terribly disordered and dirty. I remember particularly the

ceiling. It was under the roof and showed crevices through which the rain could not help pouring down in streams.



The Opera House in Vienna where "Fidelio" was produced.

The portraits of Beethoven which we know, reproduce fairly well his physiognomy. But what no etcher's needle could express was the indefinable sadness spread over his features—while from under heavy eyebrows his eyes shone as from out of caverns and, though small, seemed to pierce one. The voice was soft and slightly veiled.

When I descended those dilapidated stairs, I retained of my visit to this great man an impression so painful—thinking of this destitution and shabbiness—that I could not repress my tears. "Ah!", said Carpani, "that's what he wants. He is a misanthrope, cranky and can't keep friends."

That very evening I attended a gala dinner at the palace of Prince Metternich. I was still upset by that visit. I confess, I could not rid myself in my heart of a sentiment of embarrassment when I saw myself, by comparison, treated with such consideration by that brilliant Viennese assembly.

After dinner, the evening ended with a reception which assembled in the Metternich salons the foremost names of Viennese society. There was also a concert. On the program figured one of the most recently published Trios of Beethoven. . . . Hearing it in the midst of all those mundane magnificences, I said to myself sadly that perhaps at that very moment the great man was creating in the isolation of his attic some work of deep inspiration, destined, like his previous ones, to initiate into sublime beauties this same brilliant aristocracy from which he was excluded and which, given over to its pleasures, did not worry about the misery of him who had furnished the pleasures.

* * *

And then—one hundred years after—stand beside his grave with those who said, "We were there, when they buried him, and when he died, we wept."

"IN A COTTAGE SMALL"

A Short Story

By Joseph Machlis

THE great hall of the Conservatoire was festive with many lights, which reflected themselves in the bald, shiny pates of the Professors. All eyes were turned towards the platform, where stood the Director near the great bronze bust of Beethoven. He addressed the wide-eyed, curly-haired youth at his side.

"My boy, the gold medal of the Conservatoire has been awarded to you. A great future awaits you."

A wave of enthusiastic applause surged through the Auditorium, as he gravely kissed the student on the forehead.

"One, two, three, one, two, three," the piano-teacher counted in a tired, mechanical sing-song voice.

"No, that's not right," he said to the little girl perched upon the piano stool near him. "When I say one, you must play with more emphasis. Now remember, Helen. *One two three, one two three.*"

Helen blinked her half-closed, murky eyes, and continued to play exactly as before. Mr. Herman again interrupted her.

"Helen, how often must you be told that the accent falls on the 'one.' Don't forget it. *One two three, one two three,*" he continued to count, marking the rhythm with his pencil.

The pupil nodded her head in assent, and began again. There was, however, no change in her playing. The teacher stopped her, now with a note of exasperation in his voice.

"Will you play as I tell you, or not?" He waved an excited pencil before the expressionless eyes and half-open mouth of the girl, as he began once more to vociferate the rhythm of the piece: "*One two three, one two three.*"

When the lesson was at an end, Helen closed the music and quickly left the room. She was eager to rejoin her friends, to continue the game which had been interrupted an hour before by the arrival of her teacher.

The nervous, fatigued man who slowly arose from the chair near the piano was very far removed from the curly-haired boy who many years before had stood in the center of the platform, in the great hall of the Conservatoire. Many experiences, many disappointments he had had during that time. The anticipation and hopes of those happy years had long since departed. His was one of those rare spirits which attain, for one brief glorious moment, the highest peak of development; then he spends long, dreary years in an attempt to regain that perfect moment; but it eludes him forever, this unrecapturable, fleeting joy of once-triumphant youth.

As Herman entered the adjoining room, Helen's mother glanced up at the clock, to assure herself that the lesson had lasted a full hour. She then extracted from somewhere a little, black wallet, which she proceeded to open very deliberately.

"Well, Mr. Herman, how was Helen's lesson today?"

"It could have been a bit better. I don't believe she practices enough. But next week I'm going to bring her a Sonatina by Beethoven, and I think she will do better on that."

"That's just what I've been wanting to talk to you about. You give her such dull pieces lately, even I find nothing interesting about them. But a few days ago I was at the theatre, and they played there the sweetest tune you've ever heard. It's called 'In a Cottage Small,' and I've been humming it all the time ever since I heard it. My next-door neighbor was with me, and on our way out she bought it. Today she told me that her little girl's piano teacher has given it to her for this week. So I'd like my Helen to play it too, instead of that—what do you call it, I've forgotten, that you were going to bring her. It goes this way:—" and with great relish she sang the first line of the song, "In a Cottage Small," and the second to rhyme with it, "Near a waterfall."

With ill-concealed annoyance, Mr. Herman looked at the clock, at the door, and at the few greenbacks which peeped out of the little black wallet.

"I have told you more than once before that I cannot do as other piano teachers do. I will not spoil your daughter's musical taste, which is as yet undeveloped. I have decided to give her a Beethoven Sonatina for next week."

Helen's mother replied resolutely: "Well, I want my daughter to play 'In a Cottage Small,' and if not. . . ."

She uttered the last words as if to herself, but they were audible to the teacher nevertheless.

As Mr. Herman descended the stairs, there still rang in his ears 'Cottage small, waterfall.' He passed into the street. A cold, drizzling rain was hastening the approach of a dreary November twilight. He wrapped more closely about him his overcoat, from which were missing two buttons, while he thought:

"Winter is coming early this year." But at once he was reminded of the recent demand of Helen's mother.

"What brazenness! Teaching me what to give her daughter! Beethoven isn't interesting enough for her. She must have 'A Cottage Small' and a 'Waterfall.'"

The farther Mr. Herman went, the more aroused he became, the more resentful against his lot, which had brought with it such disillusion and degradation. He saw once again the gold medal which he had won many years before. He visualized anew the motto engraved on it: "Devotion to Art." He decided to resign from the lesson, just as he had done not long ago in a somewhat similar case.

And in his mind he was already writing a bitterly sarcastic note to Helen's mother, recommending her neighbor's teacher, who would most assuredly con-

sent to teach her daughter "In a Cottage Small," or whatever else her heart might desire.

As he walked ever faster and faster, his angry eyes sweeping past the desolate, dripping street-lamps, he continued to mutter to himself.

"They must be shown, bourgeoisie swine! They must be made to understand that there is Art true and sacred. Bring down Beethoven to them,—never! Raise them up, drag them up, until they comprehend,—that's what must be done!"

He saw himself as the apostle of, the martyr to, Art. . . . as the Teacher.

In his excitement he failed to notice that he was walking ahead at a pace twice as rapid as his normal gait. At the fiery words, "That's what must be done!" he took a resolute step forward in the darkness. Immediately he heard a splash of water, and felt something wet and cold around his foot.

He stopped short, peered down, saw that he had stepped off the curb right into a puddle of water. He drew his foot out, stopped to shake the water out of the shoe.

"I'll need a new pair of shoes, and rubbers. An early winter this year."

He continued on his way, now slowly and cautiously. The cold water permeated his well-worn shoes; the cold wind sent a mournful breath through his almost threadbare coat; the blinking street lamps, haggard, wraith-like, weary, seemed to whisper hoarsely to the night: "Why?"

His anger cooled within him; the previous excitement left him, and now seemed unreal, far-away.

"Why? Years of struggle, of aspiration, of defeat. . . . What for? . . . Helen's mother, with her complacent, well-fed face. . . . Beethoven, Art. . . . what for? . . . Helen with her stupidly-blinking eyes. . . . One two three, *one two three*. . . not so bad a pupil after all, never misses her lesson, as some of the others do, who become sick or sprain a finger the night before they are to come. . . . An overcoat will cost, let's see, and a pair of shoes. . . an early winter this year. . . one two three, *one two three*. . . and, after all, how is one going to uplift and educate them! Certainly not by giving it all up and running off. . . . Helen, don't forget now, the accent falls on the. . . ."

He approached the music store in which he bought the books for his pupils. He went in.

"Let me have the Brahms Rhapsodie in G minor, Schumann's Fantasiestücke, the Bach toccatas,"—and with a quiet, uncertain voice he added— . . . "In a Cottage Small."

A GREAT NIGHT

A concert of unusual significance and interest took place at the Institute of Musical Art on Saturday evening, March 12th. It is the first time a program has been devoted to the compositions of the Alumni of the Institute, although many of the members have distinguished themselves as composers in recent years.

The occasion was honored by the presence of Dr. Percy Goetschius, who was from the foundation of

the Institute the head of our Department of Composition. After rounding out a half century of teaching, Dr. Goetschius retired two years ago and is now enjoying a well-earned rest. He came especially from his home in New Hampshire to attend this concert as all the young composers represented had reached maturity under his influence. Many other successful composers before the public also owe their training to him. Their talents grew and blossomed under his benevolent guidance as flowers do in the care of a faithful gardener. It is noteworthy that the composition which received the most favorable criticism on the program of Modern Music, Pleasant and Unpleasant, given during the winter at Mecca Auditorium by Walter Damrosch and the Symphony Society of New York, was "Fuji in the Sunset Glow," by Bernard Rogers. Mr. Rogers was a pupil of Dr. Goetschius and it is regretted that this orchestral number could not be placed on our Alumni program.

Preceding the concert, a dinner was given at the Beethoven Association for "Daddy" Goetschius (as he is affectionately known) and his students. Dr. Frank Damrosch, Director of the Institute, presided. It was a proud night for him as well, for the young composers are his children, too, having grown up musically within the walls of the Institute.

A word of explanation is in order regarding those whose names appeared on Saturday's program. Conrad Held, William Kroll, Lillian Fuchs, Samuel Gardner, Sascha Jacobsen and Marie Roemaet-Rosanoff have been respectively winners of the Thousand Dollar Loeb Prize. Karl Kraeuter and Bernard Ocko are also artist graduates and have both been heard this winter in recital; Louis Kaufman holds the Certificate of Maturity. All the foregoing were pupils of the late Franz Kneisel, except Marie Roemaet-Rosanoff, who studied with Willem Willeke. Messrs. Held, Kroll, Kraeuter, Gardner and Jacobsen are now members of the Institute Faculty, and the first three are also members of Mrs. Coolidge's ensembles,—the Elshuco Trio and the South Mountain Quartet. Lillian Fuchs plays viola with the Marianne Kneisel Quartet. The Musical Art Quartet has gained an enviable reputation in this, their first season, and Katherine Bacon has just closed a remarkable series of recitals comprising all the Beethoven Pianoforte Sonatas. Gladys Mayo is a member of the piano faculty and has won the Seligman Prize for Composition, and Wintter Watts has taken both the Loeb Prize and the Prix de Rome. Samuel Gardner holds the Pulitzer Prize for Composition and has appeared as soloist with the Philharmonic Orchestra as well as in recital. Nathan Novick has had his orchestral compositions played by the Stadium Orchestra. Louis Greenwald holds the Seligman Composition Prize and Lillian Eubank-Kemp-ton, formerly with the Metropolitan Opera Company, is now a member of the singing faculty. Katherine Swift Warburg, daughter of the late Samuel Swift and now the daughter-in-law of Paul Warburg, our Trustee, received her musical education at the Institute.

Programme

Theme and Variations for String Quartette....Conrad Held
Milton Feher Deiniol Di Fiore
Harry Needle Olga Zundel

Three Pieces for Violin and Piano

Out of the East.....William Kroll
 GwendolynKarl Kraeuter
 Caprice FantastiqueLillian Fuchs

Karl Kraeuter and Louis Greenwald

MazurkaKatharine Swift Warburg
 Furlana
 Tango
 Americana

Katharine Swift Warburg

WiegenliedNathan Novick
 Herbstlied
 Schalachmoneh

Rebecca Kaminsky and String Quartette

Theme and Variations for Piano.....Louis Greenwald
Katherine Bacon

Three Songs

IdlenessGladys Mayo
 Nächtlicher BrandGladys Mayo
 Wild TearsWinter Watts

Lillian Eubank-Kempton

Quintette in F minor, "To A Soldier"....Samuel Gardner

I. Prologue, LA VIE
 II. Capriccio
 III. Dans la foret, LA MORT
 IV. Epilogue

Frank Sheridan and The Musical Art Quartette

Sascha Jacobsen Bernard Ocko
Louis Kaufman Marie Roemaet-Rosanoff

Our Young Composers

The compositions of two members of our Theory Faculty have recently been sung in concert. Howard Murphy's song, "The Heron," made its "début flap," as the composer puts it, on a program of Mme. Amelita Galli-Curci and on a program of Myra Mortimer at Town Hall, Feb. 2nd.

Richard Donovan's arrangements of Old English nursery rhymes: "Good King Arthur," "The Frog and the Crow," "Oranges and Lemons," and "Dame Get Up," were sung by the Junior League Glee Club to a throng in the ballroom of the Colony Club in February at their sixth annual concert. Other arrangements on the program were by Deems Taylor and Frank La Forge.

The Sunday Symphonic Society, conducted by Josiah Zuro, gave the first public performance of Lamar Stringfield's "Indian Legend" on Sunday, March 6th, at the Hampden Theatre. The composer, who is at present flutist with the New York Chamber Music Society, wrote this piece about three years ago after a visit to the Cherokee Indian Reservation, N. C. The numerous Indian themes were clearly discernible against a background of turbulent and frequently inharmonious modern orchestration. The comparatively peaceful stream of Indian tunes was almost swallowed up by the contrasting imagination of the composer. Both were characteristic of the different modes of life and thought of the Indian and the white man. The piece was well played and cordially applauded.

The Orchestras

Owing to the fact that the present issue of the Baton is devoted to commemorating the death of Beethoven and to the important event of the new opera in English, "The King's Henchman," detailed comments of recent concerts of the New York Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestras must be postponed until the next issue.

Suffice it to say that Otto Klemperer has just completed his period as guest conductor of the Symphony. His programs have been interesting and included a good measure of modern music as well as the classics. Fritz Busch of Dresden has just succeeded Mr. Klemperer as guest conductor.

The Philharmonic, since Arturo Toscanini's departure has been under the baton of Wilhelm Furtwaengler of Leipsic. One newspaper spoke of this conductor's "fine aristocratic command of style"; that an adequate tribute to his treatment of his offerings would require a complete inventory of the gentleman's excellent and well known capacities.

Students, it is hoped, will take every advantage of these wonderful opportunities to hear fine orchestral concerts. Much more *music* is to be learned from them than from technical exercises.

Beethoven Honored at the Opera

This is the Beethoven year and therefore Mr. Gatti-Casazza had to heave a deep sigh and prepare to sacrifice himself once more on the altar of art. Beethoven was not a child of the theatre. His single opera contains one of the greatest scenes and surely the greatest moment in all lyric drama and some fine numbers surrounded by areas of conversational dullness. But since there is only this one opera, the Metropolitan observed the Beethoven centenary by reviving it. It had its last previous performance in New York by the Wagnerian singers at the Manhattan Opera House on March 19, 1923. It was a typical German performance—not much fine singing, but admirable unity of effort and profound feeling. Those who go to performances of "Fidelio" discount these things and find much to recompense them in the pages where Beethoven is profoundly himself, when he searches the human heart, when his utterance is surcharged with the poignancy and the dynamic power which set him apart from all other composers of music.

TO HONOR BEETHOVEN

The commemoration of Beethoven's death centenary will be carried out in 500 American cities and towns.

Among the material to be furnished to all are a centennial oration written by Daniel Gregory Mason, a sermon on the religious aspects of Beethoven's works and an address on the civic influence of music, to be distributed to Mayors and other officials, churches and schools. There also will be available Walter Damrosch's record of the funeral march in the "Eroica" symphony and a special composition for orchestra by Howard Hanson of Rochester, formerly a pupil at the Institute, as "a tribute of the modern spirit to the classical genius of Beethoven."

Forty-eight cities have adopted the American committee's plan for Beethoven week, March 20 to 26 next. The national advisory board, of which George Eastman is Chairman, has the cooperation of the centennial committees overseas, including that in England headed by Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir George Henschel, Sir Alexander MacKenzie, Sir Hamilton Harty and Sir Henry Wood; in France, by Vincent d'Indy and Albert Roussel; in Germany, by Bruno Walter, and in Austria by Felix Weingartner and Guido Adler.

Vienna's long and carefully planned observance of the Beethoven death centenary is now day by day crystallizing into a many-faceted reality. The tra-

ditional city of melody and music makers is indeed leaving very little undone to honor the memory of this greatest of all tone poets, who spent nearly two-thirds of his stormy and oftentimes tortured existence in and about her picturesque precincts, and who here brought to light the greater number of his immortal creations.

Felix Weingartner wrote as follows in the New York Sunday Times:

"To all those who honor the holy centenary I cry: forget for once what has been inoculated into you for the past decade. Just for this once cleanse your souls, your hearts, your brains of all so-called modern tendencies. Then take up the works of the Great One, try to imbibe them into your very being and to interpret them in their monumental simplicity. Thus might be brought about not only a better grasp of his meaning, but an all-around improvement of general musical interpretation as well. And such a change is urgently needed, for, failing that, all will perish."

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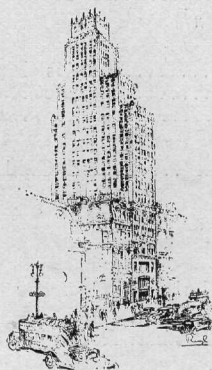
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