

MUSIC AND PLAYS

Three Band Conductors.

WHEN three hundred clarionets, oboes and French horns began to shudder into a pianissimo over a torch-lighted field it sounded suddenly like the first faint horns of a new dawn. That many is a safe estimate from the aggregation of 800 bandmen who played in the great spectacular tattoo farewelling H. R. H. the Duke on the occasion of his last visit to Toronto. The place was the grandstand circus of the Canadian National Exhibition. For a few moments it seemed like a touch of a new world. The vast extension of that sombrely cheerful body of tone from the wood-winds and the French horns was a universal note that lost sight of bands and bandmen, khaki and crowd—even the Duke, who was inconspicuously huddled down in the Royal box the width of the lawn from the conductor.

The conductor was big John Slatter, bandsman of the 48th Highlanders, who must have got cold creeps from those wood-winds such as he never had before. When the full aggregate of the massed bands played to the dousing of hundreds of glims the old camp-fire hymn, Abide With Me, the concourse of 20,000 people in front took up the melody. It was a solemn moment.

Otherwise—leaving out the agreeable choral hymns sung by men's, women's and boys voices from behind the simulation of Westminster Abbey, at the close of the pageant following the tattoo, the massed bands performance was an affair of colossal and inspiring noise. No such aggregation of instruments was ever before heard in Canada; in America only at the Peace Jubilee at Boston fifty years ago. All the bands from Camp Borden combined with several local bands. The ensemble was overpoweringly huge. In spite of a disastrous reverberation and the fact that the bandmaster was not high enough up to be conspicuous, the gradual building up of the mass was a great success. There were a few seesaws of tempi which the echo did its best to obliterate. A number of the pieces were not successful in themselves. Some of the individual bands were not up to a high standard. But the general effect was remarkably good, and must have been achieved only at the expense of some searching and humming rehearsals at Camp Borden. We have no hesitation in complimenting Bandmaster Slatter as heartily as the Duke did when he had him summoned to the Royal box. Big John is a veteran of sound band music. Few military bandmasters in this country wear so well with the public and are so popular with players in any regiment or battalion. He knows what he wants and gets it; is never rattled by circumstances and is always sure of his ground when it is his business to give good military programmes. Of late years he has not been giving quite the variety of good music with his own band that he used to give some years ago. But he remains a big, steady and encouraging figure among the bandmasters of Canada, who would be sorely missed if he were to abdicate the 48th.

BANDMASTER CONWAY, whose band played twice a day at the Exhibition, is a new package of unusual elements. Conway is the most restrained, popular bandmaster that ever performed at the "Ex." He is even more subdued than Rogan of the Coldstream Guards, who sometimes seemed to be nodding a bit. He budes not an inch one way or another from his desk, and if he were suddenly to take a walk with his baton into the midst of his band to work up a climax, half his players would fall from their chairs. Climaxes and diminuendoes are all the same to him so far as his own movements are concerned. He gets both and everything else as sedately as a professor picking books from his library shelves. Finally his band is first-rate. Technically it is up to a high pitch. But it fails in inspiration. A certain degree of abandon in a conductor is always effective in open-air work. Conway's Band seemed to be afraid to give the people thrills—which everybody wants on an occasion of that kind.

OWING to having lost a sheet of our music (information) last week we announced that Mr. Frank Welsman would be at the Conservatory right away, sprained ankle and all, to look after his pupils. That is a mistake. Mr. Welsman will be at his home at 2 Walmer Road, Toronto, for that purpose. He is reserving

from 4 to 5 o'clock each day for interviews.

CONDUCTOR VON KUNITZ, of the Toronto Symphony Band, comes much nearer to the Createore style without a few of Createore's blandishments. With a small band he gets surprisingly big dramatic effects, due to his experience with symphony orchestras. Some people think he has too many extravagant motions. If so, he errs on the safe, popular side. It is as necessary for a popular bandmaster, even in big music, to exaggerate as it is for an actor to exaggerate his face by means of make-up and his voice also. In his work for two seasons now with the Symphony Band Mr. Von Kunitz has demonstrated that he knows how to give big, serious music something of the picturesque "punch" that it needs to make it popular. A lot of people never

think any big thing is good unless it is delivered with something of a spectacle. To do so may be sometimes a serious concession in a man of such thorough and scholarly musicianship as Mr. Von Kunitz. But after all he is the "doctor" and a very good judge of how much concession he can afford to make for the sake of getting the groundlings a little higher.

Cherniavskys on Tour.

THE first American tour of the Brothers Cherniavsky, starting on the Pacific Coast in October, has been booked through the New York offices of Maud Allan, the dancer, who has established herself as an impresario by directing her own tour of the entire country this season. The famous trio of Russian musicians—Leo, the violinist; Jan, the pianist, and Mischel, the 'cellist—has been appearing on the concert stage ever since



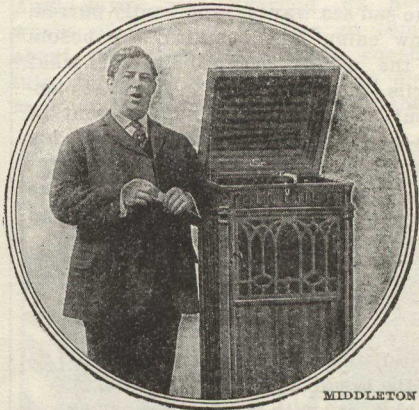
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