

Music Notes.

BY AMATEUR.

IN the weeks which have elapsed since our last issue, the chief musical events have been two concerts by Toronto societies—that of the Mendelssohn Choir in late January, and of the Male Chorus Club in mid-February.

Although the daily and weekly press have pronounced upon these excellent entertainments, there still remains to the monthly journal the not unpleasant task of voicing the memories that linger with the audience after first impressions and present sound and sense have vanished.

For after all, it is that which remains with us which is our gain: the resonance, the passionate delivery, the beautiful face and form, the high pure note, the fine expressive shading the deep strength of tone, sometimes even a look or gesture—these are the details which singly or in combination write upon our hearts their indelible imprint, and as the days and weeks elapse, we discover what our memories are, and therefore what has been our chief impress and our enjoyment at such events.

In the matter of chorus work, the Mendelssohn choir had the advantage, inasmuch as the 'full humanity of parts'—both male and female voices—gave greater scope for expressive work.

It is difficult to conceive of finer work in shading and expression than that done under Mr. Vogt's conduct. From the first motette—Gounod's arrangement of that plaintive 137th Psalm—to the merry descriptive absurdity, 'Humpty-Dumpty,' the chorus renditions were a delight.

A certain joyous freshness of voice and style was one of the pleasantest features of the chorus; while carefully noting their conductor they sang under no constraint, but lightly, joyously, as though each measure sprang to the lips from involuntary impulse; and this trait was marked throughout—the closing choruses were as brightly and easily rendered as were the first.

The programme was excellently chosen; the range from strong to sweet, from grave to gay, from mirth to majestic measures, presenting a choice variety.

Mlle. Verlet with a faultless little form and pleasing presence, and a soprano sweet and clear—yet failed to capture her audience, because she lacked temperament. Her notes were faultily faultless, missing only the greatest gift—that humanity, which betrays itself not in an outward expression, but in a pervasive warmth and depth. Canada has sweet woman voices, not yet so perfectly trained perhaps; but promising a splendid fulness, which such a voice as Verlet's can never reach.

Miss Aus der Ohe was a delight. She approached her instrument caressingly. Her first touches lingered upon the keys, and presently the sweet-mannered German lady and the piano had it all between them. She did not 'execute' or 'perform,' but wooed the silent instrument with her slender fingers; and it answered her many moods in instant and beautiful response.

Aus der Ohe won from her piano that which Verlet failed to give forth in those clear bell-like notes—humanity.

Yet the chorus renderings stood first and above the solo successes. Mr. Vogt is to be congratulated, even as he deserves our thanks.

A house fully as brilliant as that which greeted the Mendelssohn Choir, assembled for the concert of the Male Chorus Club, held two weeks later.

Under the careful leadership of Walter H. Robinson, this organization of well-trained men's

voices gave their large and critical audience a delightful evening. The range of music for such a chorus is naturally more limited than in one of mixed voices; but within that range Mr. Robinson secured fine effects.

The choruses were marked with a finished restraint, smooth delivery and good shading.

This was especially noticeable in Lachner's 'Hymn to Music,' which was perhaps the best rendered selection. Cooke's 'Strike the Lyre' was also given with fine promptness.

It was a pleasure to see this choir of men singers without music and without accompaniment, responsive only but instantly to the little white-gleaming baton in the hand of the slender young conductor. The voices rising, falling, blending in such perfect unison of melody.

Perhaps the best evidence of the chorus' successes might be found in the openly-expressed regret that the Club had not appropriated a few more numbers, leaving less to the over-generous solist.

Mr. Bispham, the baritone, made the mistake of singing too much and too often. Nine songs plus one or two encores on a limited programme, is a tax upon the loyalty of the audience to even an exceptional singer.

And Mr. Bispham is not exceptional. He has a genial and attractive personality that suggests actor or lecturer rather than singer. His manner and method are essentially English, and his voice well attuned to ballad music. When we pronounce him a graceful and finished ballad singer, with voice fitted for the drawing room or after dinner song rather than the concert hall—with charm of manner, easy delivery, good articulation, and carefully guarded tone—we have said all. This gentleman may have been suffering from cold, or for some purpose been restraining his voice, but on that evening he showed neither power nor range, consequently, pleasant as those sweet old ballads were, nine numbers were twice too many.

But Herr Gregorowitsch won us altogether. A genius among violinists is he, and the most magic of instruments he little fairy in his finger hold. A young man of no marked personality beyond a pale reserve,—a little man with a little instrument, but such sweetness of sound, such rushes of liquid melody, those two showered upon us, that we were spell-bound beneath it. Gregorowitsch might have played all night and we would not have grown weary.

Gregorowitsch is a genius, and his little bit of brown curved wood is enchanted.

Among the new music is a minuet, 'Auf Wiedersehen,' by Mary O'Hara,—a melodious musical composition with German motif. It has several changes which show effective harmonies, and responds to an expressive interpretation. It is not too difficult, and makes a charming ripple for that pretty dance.

'Red Roses' is a new song for mezzo-soprano or alto voice. The words are by Chas. D. Birmingham; the music by W. O. Forsyth. The plaintive music gives full expression to the sentiment, and deserves interpretation by singers possessing the genuine artistic temperament. The song is a pretty and effective love melody of good composition and should be popular. It is dedicated to Miss Beverley Robinson.

Alone in my bower I am dreaming,
All careless of time in its flight;
Dreaming of blushing red roses,
Red roses you sent me to-night.
Entwined in their depths I found hidden
A story so old yet so new;
'Twas only 'I love you,' but somehow
I know that dear story is true.

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