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8A

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THE PUBLISHERS

Canadian Orchestral Music

THE INTERPRETATION OF
MUSIC.

THE great Russian pianist, Josef Lhevinne, has his own opinions as to the relative value of interpretation and execution in music. He says:

"I am often asked by musical people for my ideas regarding the correct interpretation of certain much-discussed and often much-abused piano masterpieces. This raises a point concerning which I feel very strongly—namely, false conception or exaggerated sentimentalism. It has always seemed to me an offence against good taste to desecrate the inspired compositions of the masters in the manner that is sometimes done, simply to force a striking personality picture or a remarkable technical equipment on the momentarily deluded audience.

The real art of music has but two phases—the creative and the interpretative. The duty of the virtuoso is to give correct and adequate expression to the composer's thought as set down in musical form. In too many instances we find the interpreting artist invading the ground that belongs solely to the composer. Beethoven is one of the worst sufferers from this clan, and Chopin ranks as his fellow victim.

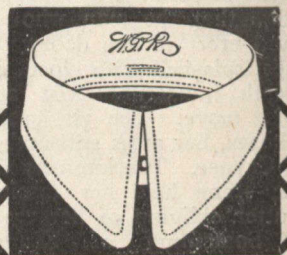
One of the best-known and most abused of the Beethoven sonatas is that in C sharp minor. Yet we have handed down to us undeniable traditional renditions that make it imperative for the sincere artist to abide by one interpretation only. Here is a work that, for some strange reason, has had applied to it a descriptive title, "The Moonlight Sonata," one that is entirely misleading. There is nothing about it to suggest moonlight nor the romantic schoolgirl idea of a love-story. It is a wonderful fantasia—an expression in music of three moods of mental storm and stress. The Adagio depicts a mood of the deepest melancholy, depression and restrained sorrow. The wonderful melody is not a love-song, but a threnody, to be played not in a romantic manner, but as an expression of poignant grief. The Allegro is a relief from the dark picture preceding—a rift in the clouds of gloom, a ray of sunshine born of the sweet remembrance of joys forever dead. It is to be played with tenderness, but not brightly, as is too often done. The dream ends, and sorrow, embittered by the fleeting vision of past happiness, turns to rage. The Presto is an expression of passionate grief. The composer looses the torrent of his sorrow in peals of pianistic thunder, ending in crashing reports and flashes of lightning. These are silenced only that we may hear the wild cries of a broken heart. There is not a moment of consoling distraction throughout the terrific excitement of that wonderful last movement.

Yet this is the work that is often distorted into a Romeo and Juliet tragedy, and is ruined by improper phrasing, absurd pedaling, over-accentuation of the singing tones, and exaggerated nuancing indulged in which pervert the composer's true intent. The composer's wishes are indicated by the expression-marks left for us. It takes years and years of study to arrive at a proper understanding of his real meaning, but that is the purpose to which the earnest artist consecrates himself. The interpreter who fails to do this is chargeable with presumption, and assumes to be greater than the creator of the music; he really has but one thing to do—play the music as it is written.

—From Ainslee's Magazine.

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