

Theatrical Notes.

THE GRAU OPERA COMPANY.

DEAR SIR:—If you will allow me space, I should like to endeavor to give a *candid* criticism of the company at present playing in Halifax.

The first week of the Grau Opera Company was a good financial success, and on the whole the audiences were pleased by the performances, as a musical organization a great deal is to be desired while the acting and dresses are decidedly good. In light operas such as have been presented the dash of acting goes for a great deal, while a good song occasionally will please the audience, but we expect more than that, we expect people singing in time, and the concerted parts properly done; we also expect that the orchestra should do its work and not come in only occasionally. The instrumentation was entirely lost, as most had to be done on the Piano with a few spasmodic efforts of the 1st Violin, Flute and Bass to make up, while the rest were not brought into requisition very often; we can only surmise that the talented leader thought it wise to do so and that he is more sure to produce better effects without them.

Fra Diavolo had a good run and was well played, Miss Bell made a very taking Zerlina, and the tenor acted Fra Diavolo excellently, but as to his singing little can be said in commendation: whenever he tried to give force to his notes he was off the key, and the concerted parts were as bad as bad could be. All honor however, to Mr. Crane who showed himself a good artist in every way.

The Carbuncle was extremely weak and Lord Alcash had no conception of his part, we venture to say that no such a Lord has ever appeared here before. Lady Alcash's voice is far too light to make the proper effect. The two Bandits gave a very fine representation, and amused the house by their clever acting. When this opera was presented here some years ago with Mr. and Mrs. Seguin, Castle, Searl and Peake in the cast, a different result was achieved.

The Grau Opera Company is a good and smart organization for light work, but not very strong with very few exceptions in musical and artistic excellence.

Erminie received its first representation to a full house last week, and passed off very satisfactorily. This is a showy acting piece with a few nice singing numbers to which the Company did justice.

Erminie was better carried through than either of the preceding pieces, and it is a pity that some good pieces of acting were overlooked by the audience, whose attention was diverted by the very clever facial contortions of the *Baron*.

The chief trouble in Halifax, is that there is too much advance puffing, and that none of the papers take the trouble to give an unbiased criticism of any company that visits us. So that those who know anything about these matters are led to expect more than they get, and feel dissatisfied in consequence.

The Grau Company is better than many who come here, and ranks well among the average companies that visits the Maritime Provinces; but years ago we had better, and there is no reason why we should not have them again.

The Grau Opera Company are extending their engagement for two weeks longer at reduced prices: they repeated those operas previously given to fairly good houses. The performances went much better as the company got in working order. The Chimes will be played for the balance of the week and ought to do well, the music is light and does not require very high musical ability to make it go, the principals are well cast and the comic element

quite sufficient to amuse the audience. In the orchestra and chorus not much improvement is noticeable, the ladies of the chorus appear to be more careless and look too much for familiar faces and friends in the audience; probably the jeunesse dore in the front part of house may have something to do with it.

Halifax men seem to be very susceptible and are considered a little fresh by those of experience. If Mr. Grau had only an orpheus club chorus, what a success he could make of his company!

I am, etc.

Musicus

The Orpheus Club Concert (the 5th of the series) took place last night at the Orpheus Hall to a full house. A good many strangers were present who had an opportunity to enjoy a musical treat not to be had in Nova Scotia outside of Halifax.

"Fair Ellen" by Bruch, was the piece of the evening and was very well sung. The chorus work was particularly fine. Miss Laine sang her part well, and considering that she has suffered from a heavy cold all the week, her efforts were particularly appreciated. Mr. Gillis was very good in his part, and Mrs. Taylor did fairly well. The orchestral accompaniment carried the work well through and gave a completeness to it which is so much required to perfect such work. The orchestra furnished two fine numbers which were much enjoyed, and Mr. Klingensfeld played with his usual acceptance. Two more subscription concerts will finish the season's work of the club, which will be given at short intervals.

The following programme was gone through:

1. Polonaise in A Major Chopin
(Orchestration by Herr Klingensfeld.)
Orpheus Club Orchestra.
2. Part Song—"Daybreak" (by request) Gaul
Orpheus Club with Ladies' Auxiliary.
3. Aria—"Let the bright seraphim" (Sampson) Handel
Miss Louise Laine.
(Trumpet obligato: Mr. H. F. Heenan)
4. Part Song—"Oh night, most beautiful" Rachel
Orpheus Club with Ladies' Auxiliary.
5. Violin Solo—Allegro from 9th concerto Spohr
Herr Heinrich Klingensfeld.
(Accompanied by Miss Page.)
6. "At the cloister gate" Grieg
Ladies' Auxiliary and Orchestra.
Soprano Solo: Miss Louise Laine.
Alto Solo: Mrs. J. McD. Taylor.
7. Valse—"Treasure" Strauss
Orpheus Club Orchestra.
8. Songs—(a) "The brook sings: clear and cool" Henschel
(a) "When all the world is young, lad"
(a) "I once had a sweet little doll, dears"
Miss Louise Laine.
9. Part Song—"Lullaby of Life" Leake
Orpheus Club with Ladies' Auxiliary.
10. "Fair Ellen" Bruch
Orpheus Club with Ladies' Auxiliary and Orchestra.
Solos: Miss Louise Laine and Mr. D. C. Gillis.

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