

The Bystander's Column.

A glance at the prospectus issued by the management of the Massey festival does not altogether reassure one as to the artistic value of the programmes. That "The Messiah" is an eminently respectable work there is no denying and we all like to go and hear it once a year (at Christmas,) but at the opening of a new and splendid Temple of Music, one looks for a novelty that will turn for the time being the eyes of the musical world upon the city containing it. For instance, we will suppose that Dvorak's great "Requiem" had been selected for presentation. With Dvorak in New York, just a few hours away, surely he could have been induced to conduct his work in Toronto when we should have been the cynosure of all eyes. Dvorak conducted the "Requiem" with Mr. Lang's society in Boston and there is no reason for supposing he would not have come here. One of the greatest of living composers he would have reflected glory upon Toronto, and Toronto in turn honor upon the director liberal enough to bring him here.

I am glad that Mr. Arthur E. Fisher's "The Wreck of the Hesperus" in its new form has been included in one of the programmes, for it shows that Mr. Torrington recognizes the fact that something worth producing may be found even within the rather narrow musical confines of Canada.

I hope that Goldmark's "Sakuntala" overture will go well, though it is hardly probable for the work demands the best of wood-wind and horns. Greatest of all overtures and the work upon which Goldmark's fame rests, it is tremendously difficult inasmuch as it must be played letter perfect. Who could forget Gerick's reading of this masterpiece, the lovely opening subject for 'cello (heard later for cornu Inglese,) the answering theme for the violin in the extreme high octave p. p; the furious allegro, and the wondrous precision attained by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the detached chords, when this great organization was under the baton of the greatest of drill masters?

Referring again to the Festival, it would seem out of place to have the 1,000 school children and the large orchestral school participate in, or rather interrupt, serious programmes. In a festival of their own they would not only be welcome but would also fill a decided place.

Then again, would it not have been advisable to have engaged Canadian artists for soloists who are acknowledged everywhere but in their own country? With the exception of one lady, who is fast falling behind, there are none of the solo vocalists engaged who are conceded to be artists of the first rank. With regard to the instrumentalists, Herren Freidheim and Yunk are, of course, irreproachable.

It is too bad that Mr. Torrington has not had *carte blanche* for I am sure had that been the case he would have formulated entirely different plans. Amateur committees are no good when it comes down to programme making and artist engaging. My personal wish is that the festival may be a great success as well as any other musical project, for the good of the cause in Toronto; but I hope that I may not be considered pessimistic if I say that the complete artistic success of the Massey Festival is very much in doubt, in my mind.

Tripp is working like a Trojan to make his concert—the first of the Male Chorus Club—a great success. Everybody wishes him success in his undertaking. I understand that several of the members object to singing in the Grand Opera House. It's a wonder that those thoroughly proper individuals do not ask Mr. Tripp to put trousers on the piano legs.

THE BYSTANDER.

Genius and Poverty.

The death of Gounod, the great French composer, calls to mind the difference between the surroundings and the circumstances of the composers of former days and the musical genius of our own times.

Gounod, born in 1818. When 20 years of age (1838), carried off the Conservatoire prize which gave him some time in Italy for music study. On return to France his works did not achieve immediate popularity, and even his immortal opera "Faust" was sneered at. But becoming better understood and appreciated, he poured forth work after work which were eagerly seized by the musical public. His oratorios, "The Redemption," and "Mors et Vita" (the former eleven and the latter now eight years old) are among the best specimens of modern composition in this extended form.

Applauded, flattered, and lacking nothing in a financial way, Gounod's latter years may be compared in some degree with those of Wagner, the latter part of whose career (he died in February, 1883) was passed in lavish and princely style, and of Liszt (dying in 1883), who had the whole musical world at his feet.

This is as it should be. The world has come to appreciate the master of mind as much or more than it does the master of money. But this has been true, as far as the great composers are concerned, only in the present century. A glance at the master musicians of former centuries will prove our statement.

Bach, the great disciple of counterpoint, died in Leipzig in 1750. He had been the recipient of a small salary as church music director. During his lifetime, appreciation for his works was limited almost to his own city and there it was only moderate in degree. When his widow died, ten years later, she was given a pauper's burial, yet Bach was the fountain head of all our modern music.

Handel, born in the same year as Bach (1685), outlived him nine years. The most of his life was spent in England where he was, during the latter portion, the principle musical figure. Though his latter operas were financial failures, his oratorios, beginning with the "Messiah" (1742), brought him renewed popularity, position and income. His lot was far more easy than that of his contemporary Bach, though his disposition was not nearly so exemplary.

Haydn was, in common with many other musicians of his day, a sort of upper servant. His family relations were highly unpleasant, and his position was dependant on the whim of his patron prince. He was of a religious and servile nature, the latter being due largely perhaps to the custom of the times, which gave a musician, however great he might be, but little more respect than a valet or head cook. He died in 1809 with the applause caused by his oratorio the "Creation" still in his ears. His income would to-day be deemed small by a player in the theatre orchestra, and his estate was almost a minus quantity.

Mozart, that gifted prodigy, that jovial good fellow, that hard working composer, was worn out by his work and his privations when but thirty-five years old. He died in 1791. Though the greatest composer of his time, he

suffered for proper financial support and at times for sufficient nourishment. He was the victim of many conspiracies on the part of less talented musicians. He wrote immortal operas; others profited by them. He worked; they laughed. His life was a labor to keep soul and body together, and at his death he left his family without inheritance. Though given a great funeral, it is not now known where his body lies.

Beethoven, that rugged and self-contained spirit, died in 1827. His father was a drunkard, and even in later years he never knew the joys of home life. He lived by himself and put forth the mighty children of his brain in solitude. His financial circumstances were moderate, and he considered himself a poor man, though he was better situated than Mozart or Schubert in that respect.

Schubert, one of the most musical geniuses that ever lived, died in 1828, at the age of thirty-one. He was a school teacher, with hardly enough income to keep soul and body together. He was so poor that he sold the manuscripts of his songs for *twenty cents apiece*, and so unknown that he saw comparatively few of great compositions published. Dying almost alone, in great poverty,—yet before his death, sitting up and composing merry strains to bring in a mere pittance,—his life and its end were particularly pathetic.

Schumann's disposition was of that intense nature that borders on insanity, and insanity was the end of his busy life. He died in 1856, honored and beloved. His wife still lives—a connecting link to the times of Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn.

Chopin died in 1849, after an illness of almost ten years. He was highly honored and greatly beloved for his sweet nature. He was of a retiring disposition and seldom appeared in public. Yet the public appreciated his work even during his lifetime.

Mendelssohn had an ideal career. Surrounded by wealth, position, education, his circumstances were all that could be asked. Honored by musicians and worshipped by the people, his life is the greatest possible contrast to that of Schubert and Mozart. He died in 1847, aged thirty-nine.

Meyerbeer also was a child of favorable circumstances. Though of less musical worth than that of Mendelssohn, his music obtained much popular applause, and at his death, in 1864, his funeral was as that of a monarch.

Of Wagner I have spoken above. None have obtained greater honors than he, and none deserved them more.

I might go on and mention the names of lesser lights. The circumstances of some of them would tend to show that even this century does not always repay genius with honor or riches. Still, the contrast between the last half century and the time that preceded it is certainly in our favor. Perhaps the twentieth century will repay all its debts to genius.—W. F. GATES.

Madam Albani is contemplating a fresh tour of the United States and Canada next winter, and the eminent baritone, Mr. Watkin Mills, is also coming to America.