

Musical Times Publications Ltd.

Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 26, No. 507 (May 1, 1885), p. 285

Published by: Musical Times Publications Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3356275>

Accessed: 21-10-2015 00:32 UTC

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MISS FLORENCE MAY, after a protracted visit to Germany, has returned to London for the season. Shortly before leaving Berlin she had the honour of being invited to play at a Soirée given by their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany, when she performed pieces of Rameau and Chopin, and, by desire of the Crown Princess, some of her own pianoforte compositions.

MADAME FRICKENHAUS and Herr Josef Ludwig announce that they will resume their Chamber Concerts at the Princes Hall, Piccadilly, on Thursday evening, the 14th inst.; the dates of the three following Concerts being Thursdays, the 28th inst., June 11 and 25. The programmes will include the works of the old masters and modern compositions of special interest.

THE last Entertainment of the present season at the Brompton Hospital took place on Tuesday evening, the 14th ult., when a good programme was well rendered by Miss Amy Foster, assisted by Miss Fanny Moody, Miss Hyde, Mr. Lance Calkin, and Mr. Randolph Coward, Miss Foster was solo pianist and accompanist. The Concert was one of the most successful of the season.

THE new Easter piece entitled "Hobbies," produced at Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's entertainment, derives much of its attraction from the brightness and melodiousness of some appropriate music by Mr. George Gear. A song (well sung by Miss Fanny Holland) is exceedingly good, and usually secures an encore.

THE new organ, built by Alfred Monk, London, for Kelvedon Parish Church, Essex, was opened by Mr. Higgs on the 9th ult. The organ contains nine stops in great organ, nine stops in swell, three stops in pedal organ, and three couplers. All stops have the full compass, and there are four sixteen feet stops complete.

WE have much pleasure in announcing that Antonin Dvorák's "Patriotic Hymn," to be produced at the Benefit Concert of Mr. Geaussent on the 13th inst., at St. James's Hall, will positively be conducted by the composer, who remains in England for the purpose.

At the Parish Church of St. Mary, Balham, on Easter Day, at the 9 a.m. High Celebration, a new service in D composed by E. H. Ryde, Esq., was sung for the first time. Mr. H. W. Weston, A.C.O., Organist and Choirmaster of the church, presided at the organ.

THE last meeting of the Committee of the Peck Testimonial Fund was held on the 23rd ult., when it was announced that the subscriptions amounted to a total of £294 12s. 6d. This sum will be, therefore, at once handed to Mr. Peck.

IN a Convocation held at Oxford on the 25th ult., the honorary degree of Doctor of Music was conferred upon Herr Hans Richter. A Concert was afterwards given by the Richter Orchestra in the Sheldonian Theatre.

BACH'S "Passion Music" (St. Matthew) was performed in York Minster during Lent in six weekly portions. The services were largely attended, and the music produced a profound impression.

ACCORDING to report issued just before going to press, Sir Julius Benedict continues slowly to improve.

REVIEWS.

Grétry. Sa vie et ses Œuvres. Par Michel Brenet.
[Paris: Gauthier Villars. 1884.]

THE personality and artistic career of André Ernest Modeste Grétry—the true founder of French comic opera, the philosophical author, the freethinker and ardent republican—are sufficiently attractive in themselves, being moreover associated with one of the most remarkable and eventful periods in the history of France, to constitute it a matter of wonder that no biography of the master, worthy of that name, should as yet have been attempted on the part of any French music historian. More than seventy years have elapsed since the death of Grétry, who, although a Belgian by birth, is claimed to be her own by France as proudly, and with as just a reason, though in a different sphere of the art, as Handel is claimed by England. Some

three years ago, however, the Académie Royale de Belgique, anxious to fill the existing void in musico-biographical literature, and animated moreover by patriotic sentiments, offered a substantial prize for "a critical essay concerning the life and works of Grétry." M. Brenet has been the gainer of that prize with the present volume, which, let it be said at once, admirably fulfils the requirements set forth by the Académie. It is an "essay" occupying some two hundred and eighty pages, not an elaborate biography; albeit a valuable contribution towards such work in the future. It is a "critical essay," since in its pages the writer displays considerable judgment both in the sifting of his material and in the critical observations concerning the more important compositions of his hero. And, finally, the "life and works" of Grétry are here dealt with in equal proportions, due prominence being given to the leading epochs in the composer's career. A more succinct, and, within its self-imposed limits, exhaustive musical monography we have indeed rarely met with. In this respect, as in several others, M. Brenet's treatment of his subject compares most favourably with the more elaborate but somewhat rambling work of his competitor for the above prize, M. Grégoir, published in 1883. Having already, in our review of the latter, furnished an outline of the main circumstances attending the composer's life, we abstain from doing so again on this occasion, referring the reader to M. Brenet's ably told narrative itself, in the course of which the author succeeds in clearing away several hitherto existing errors and traditional myths. Although no attempt is made in so limited a space to furnish anything approaching to a historical background, sufficient indications are given to enable the otherwise well-informed reader to supply this necessary adjunct to the appreciation of the life-picture of an artist who was the *protégé* of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, some of whose operas were written amidst the terrible scenes accompanying the great Revolution of 1789, and on whom, subsequently, honours were bestowed by the offspring of that revolution, Napoleon the first. A chronological catalogue of the works of Grétry (including no less than fifty-six complete operas and *opéra-ballets*) appended to this volume, together with an enumeration of the books and pamphlets, &c., consulted by the author, and a detailed index of the contents of every chapter, complete the usefulness of M. Brenet's work, and render it a very valuable book of reference as to facts hitherto not easily available, in addition to its general merits as a biographical essay. M. Brenet, though a young author, has already acquired some reputation as such in his thoughtful "Histoire de la Symphonie à Orchestre," published in 1882, and much good and solid work may be anticipated from his pen in the future.

The Red King. Choral Ballad for Male Voices. The words written by the Rev. Charles Kingsley. The music composed by Alice Mary Smith (Mrs. Meadows White).
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE first posthumous work of this gifted representative English female composer is now before us, and increases our regret that an artist so earnest and truthful in her musical settings of high class poetry should have passed from amongst us. Like the same composer's "Song of the Little Baltung" (also to Kingsley's words), the dramatic feeling of the ballad is admirably preserved, without any undue straining after sensational effect, and the writing throughout is clear and faithfully reflective of the text. The opening chorus, commencing with a Symphony alternating between G minor and major, well prepares the ear for the bold vocal subject in the major, expressive of the *Red King's* carouse in Malwood Hall, the baritone solo of the *Monk*, and the defiant solo of the *King*, with the relation of his dream, containing some excellent dramatic points. The progress of the story—the shooting of *William Rufus* by *Tyrrel*—is musically coloured with much fidelity, the fall of the *King* and the flight of *Tyrrel*—the latter related in a graphic choral piece, interspersed with solo quartet—being especially worthy of commendation. The chorus, "And fend our princes every one," most effectively concludes the composition, which, as we have already indicated, contains all that refinement of style, artistic treatment, and feeling for melody which characterise the works of this writer. To