

Norwich Musical Festival

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 28, No. 537 (Nov. 1, 1887), pp. 659-662

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3360240>

Accessed: 05-02-2016 05:37 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

themselves. It would be better for the promoters to revise the whole of their method of procedure. The best plan would be to drop the scheme altogether.

M. THÉODORE MASSIAC has lately contributed to *La Figaro* a long and interesting article upon the musical and dramatic agencies which abound in France, as everywhere else. Within the compass of this "Note" we cannot show the working of a system which, if M. Massiac may be credited, is degrading to the artist and demoralising to the agent. However, "business is business," and the aphorism, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. Occasionally an agent is tempted a little beyond its shelter, and puts himself in the position of an arrant rogue. M. Massiac gives several examples. On one occasion an artist was sent to fulfil an engagement in full expectation that he would fail, come back, and be good at the "office" for another commission. As a matter of fact he succeeded, whereupon the agent telegraphed to the manager: "I hear that — has pleased the public. He must not succeed. Make arrangements to have him hissed next time." The director, in fear of the powerful office, obeyed, and the singer was soon back in Paris, and on the books for another opening. A second story tells how two vocalists and a violinist were sent into Normandy to appear at a concert. The affair being in aid of a charity, they were asked, and consented, to go for a nominal sum, the singers receiving a hundred francs, the violinist only fifty. A banquet followed the concert, and during its course the artists were complimented upon their disinterestedness. At once the Mayor intervened. "There is no question of disinterestedness," said he, "when one receives 500 francs." Imagine the astonishment of the performers as, on leaving, the Mayor paid each of the singers that sum, giving the violinist 300, according to the arrangement made with the cheating agent, whose anticipation of a good haul was thus hopelessly defeated. According to M. Massiac, the whole system of French agency in matters musical and dramatic needs reform. We can well believe it.

THAT modern miracle worker, Mr. Edison, is "at it again." Having got the electric light out of hand, his restless inventiveness has taken up once more with what most of us had come to regard as a discarded toy—the phonograph. A few years ago we were all talking about the phonograph. They had one, of course, at the Crystal Palace, and there eminent singers, and others, were wont to warble into it, afterwards grinding from the interior sounds supposed to be a reproduction of their most sweet voices. The instrument became a nine-days' wonder, and then was practically forgotten. But it remained present to the mind of the inventor, who now claims to have made it a thing of commercial value. "A merchant who wishes to send a letter has only to set the machine in motion, and talk in his natural voice at his usual rate of speed into the receiver. When he has finished a sheet, or phonogram, as I call it, it is ready to put into a little box made on purpose for the mails. . . . The receiver of the phonogram will put it into his apparatus, and the message will be given out more clearly than the best telephone message ever sent." This reads like an extract from modern romance of the "Coming Race" school, but what of developments that may arise? Will singers and instrumentalists sing and play into the "receiver," and scatter examples of their skill all over the globe to order? Will Rubinstein or little Hofmann make a tour of the world by phonogram, sitting quietly at

home and preparing new specimens, while agents travel about displaying them? Shall we have shops for the sale of Albani, Patey, Lloyd, and Santley phonograms? May we hope—but a truce to questions which the reader can ask for himself in any number. Lucky artists of the future, if the phonogram becomes fashionable!

THE phraseology of musical criticism being exceedingly limited, as impartial observers are fain to admit, unstinted gratitude is due to those who enrich the available vocabulary by any new importation, be it of foreign or native growth—the latter for choice. Hence we feel that we are acting the part of common benefactors in giving publicity to an expression culled from the columns of the *Western Mail*, of the 20th ult. The subject of the notice is a performance of the "Elijah," at Cardiff, and the writer, commenting on the contralto, remarks that her "principal vice is the common one of drawing between large skips." We make no apology for transcribing another passage from the same notice, which runs as follows: "The musical world is at present exercised by the opinion which extensively prevails that the oratorio, like its secular form, the opera, should be performed in character, dramatically, and with suitable scenery. The main point at issue, we presume, is whether the fact of, say, *Elijah* appearing before the audience in a dress such as we imagine he wore would not, at all events, be more consistent than in a swallow-tail coat and lavender kid gloves. We are inclined to agree that the oratorio would largely benefit by such alterations in its mode of performance as are being proposed."

THE International Copyright Convention has been ratified, and the recommendations of the Conference have been issued. There were many States represented at this Conference, and many important ones were conspicuous by their absence. Provision, however, has been made for the admission of those who may choose to come in after. Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Tunis, Hayti, and the Republic of Liberia have sent in their adherence, so that a native of any one of those States can be assured of protection for his copyrights. The definition given of "literary and artistic" works is very comprehensive. It includes "books, pamphlets, and all other writings; dramatic or dramatico-musical works, musical compositions with or without words; works of design, painting, sculpture and engraving; maps—in fact, every production whatsoever in the literary, scientific, or artistic domain which can be published by any mode of impression or reproduction." Musical and dramatic authors may not only prevent their works from being reprinted; but they are protected against the public representation of their works in the original or in translations.

NORWICH MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

(BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

THE MUSICAL TIMES of last month contained full particulars of the arrangements made for this Festival, and the reader has only to refer back for all the details which otherwise would have to be stated here. In the matter of general preliminary remark, there is no need to be diffuse. The attitude of the public towards the Festival was much as usual—that is to say, more than a little indifferent. No attempt at decorating the city, or at giving it a festive appearance, came under my notice, nor did I hear of any such hospitality as elsewhere promotes good fellowship and

the common enjoyment. In these respects the whole affair passed off in the dulllest manner. It was, indeed, suspected that lively interest would be taken in the Festival by the Socialist part of the community, to whom it afforded an opportunity of protesting against the unequal distribution of this world's goods. To prevent any such demonstration the magistrates swore in 200 special constables—a step which may, or may not, have had the effect of making the Socialists as indifferent to what was going on as were their "betters." I am not sure that public apathy can, with truth, be laid at the door of agricultural depression, which probably, on the other hand, had something to do with a diminished aggregate attendance. Anyhow, the apathy and the falling off of patronage were facts, and depressing facts, explain them how we may. Talking of features in the week's doings which were the reverse of happy, I may as well go on to speak of the chorus, and so discharge with promptitude a very disagreeable part of my task. Readers of this journal do not need to be told that the Norwich Festival chorus has never occupied a place in the foremost rank. For some reason or other, the best efforts of the members and their trainer have failed to lift the organisation above a comparatively inferior position. Some say that nature has denied good voices to the East Anglians—a statement I am not in a position to dispute. Others trace the cause to the fact that Norwich lies off the main roads of English life, in a kind of backwater, that it receives little accession of strength from without, and lacks the stimulus of energetic surroundings. Others, again, leaving such generalities, do not hesitate to declare that the chorus is managed upon a system utterly and necessarily ruinous to its efficiency. I have some reason to believe—though unable to speak from personal knowledge—that these last are very near the truth. Amateurs who take interest in such matters know that a Festival chorus needs constant watching and firm management to counteract a natural tendency towards degeneration. Some years ago, even that at Birmingham began to deteriorate. Taking alarm at a state of things so serious, the press raised an outcry, and the committee adopted sweeping measures of reform, with the result that the old position was regained. The shortcomings at Norwich have been pointed out in like manner again and again, but the same system goes on, and mischief remains rampant. It may be asked what the committee should do. I will tell them quite plainly. In view of another Festival they should obtain the services of a professor (not a local man), in whose judgment they have confidence, place him behind a screen with a nominal list of the chorus, and call upon each member individually to sing a given piece. The professor would at once strike out the voices of poor quality and all others that in his opinion would not add to efficiency. This done, the committee, heedless of long service, social position, or influential connections, should get rid of the rejected ones and fill their places with candidates who have passed the same test. A thankless task, some may say. Of course it is thankless; exceedingly disagreeable and even painful. But you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs. Such work has often to be done in this imperfect world. The question is whether the Festival is worth it. If yes, then do it; if no, then let the Festival die at once instead of lingering in decrepitude. I do not wish to dwell in detail upon the imperfections of the Norwich chorus. They were proclaimed day after day during the Festival week, both by London and provincial critics, and their existence is no more open to dispute than the supreme and instant need for remedial measures.

After orchestral rehearsals in London on the 6th and 7th ult., and exhaustive general rehearsals in Norwich on the 10th and morning of the 11th, the performances began at St. Andrew's Hall on the evening of the day last named. The programme was a composite one, made up of Mackenzie's "Jubilee Ode," Saint-Saëns's "The heavens declare," and Mendelssohn's almost inevitable "Lobgesang." The committee must have entertained hopes that this selection would prove as attractive as "Elijah" (which usually opens the Festival at Norwich, as elsewhere), but it did not. There was a depressingly small audience, which would probably have been much smaller had not the Mayor, Sir Harry Bullard, forwarded gratis stall tickets to the members of the Corporation and their wives. But an

inadequate attendance was not the only drawback the music and its performance being received with singular nonchalance. Will it be believed that the noble and rousing opening chorus of Mackenzie's Ode passed "without a hand"? the people who listened to it behaving as though it did not concern them in the least. Only once in the evening did the public rouse themselves, doing so then to applaud (very justly) Miss Liza Lehmann's expressive singing of the air "Thou, O Lord," in Saint-Saëns's Psalm. Of course such apathy always has its effect upon executants, and at Norwich tended to make less effective a performance which stood in need of all possible adventitious aid. The works given call for no remark here, Mackenzie's Ode having been recently discussed, while "The heavens declare" passed under review on the occasion of its production by the Sacred Harmonic Society some time ago. With regard to the performance under Mr. Randegger's direction, the reader will understand, after what has been said, not only that it was imperfect, but in what respect. The orchestra left little or nothing to desire, the chorus left much. Of the solo vocalists, Madame Albani and Mr. Lloyd took part in the Ode, as, assisted by Miss Lehmann, they did in the "Lobgesang." Engaged upon the French composer's Psalm were Miss Annie Marriott, Miss Lehmann, Miss Lena Little, Messrs. McGuckin, Barrington Foote, Brockbank, Alec Marsh, and Santley. Regarding their doings there is nothing particular to say.

The second Concert, given on Wednesday morning, introduced one of the Festival novelties: to wit, Mr. Bottesini's devotional Oratorio "The Garden of Olivet." In arranging the libretto of this work, Mr. Joseph Bennett followed the model which has been handed down from the German "Passion." That is to say, he employed the narrative form; taking the Scriptural story almost verse by verse, and interpolating devotional reflections, either in the form of lyrics or of Biblical texts. The most ardent partisan of the dramatic form will admit that this is a perfectly legitimate species of oratorio, having its own domain and its own special uses. There is a whole class of subjects which cannot be treated in any other way; those especially that deal with particularly sacred and solemn things like the Agony in the Garden. The book comprises two parts, respectively entitled "The Agony" and "The Betrayal." In the first we have the narrative, from the opening text, "Then cometh Jesus unto a place called Gethsemane," to the words of Christ as He looks upon the slumbering disciples: "Sleep on now and take your rest." The second part, beginning with the march of the Jews and Romans conducted by Judas, ends at the point where all the disciples forsake their Master, leaving Him in the custody of His foes. The whole story is told in recitative by a contralto voice. In selecting the reflective texts, and writing the lyrics, the librettist sought to introduce as much variety as possible. Thus the chosen passages include words of comfort and words of distress, assurances of devotion, confessions of weakness, and the expression of exceeding joy. As well as meeting, to some extent, the requirements of the subject, this variety gave the composer ample opportunity for the change and relief which modern audiences, craving for excitement, so imperiously exact. Mr. Bottesini's share in the work has been freely criticised on the ground that it is light, trivial, and therefore unbecoming the theme. The imputation appears to me so entirely at variance with fact that I am at a loss to conceive on what it is based. It might, indeed, arise from such a syllogism as this: All Italian composers produce light and flippant music. Mr. Bottesini is an Italian composer. Therefore, his "Garden of Olivet" is light and flippant. I cannot suppose that any intelligent connoisseur would found a charge upon reasoning so faulty in its major premise, and the accusation brought against the new oratorio is doubtless the outcome of an honest judgment. But where in the work is triviality? Is it in the recitatives and the setting of the Divine words? Mendelssohn himself could not have supplied these with more appropriate music. Is it in the choruses? There is not one of them that, tested by the canon of oratorio, would be found wanting in sobriety and dignity. Is it in the airs? Two of these certainly are bright and cheerful, and one of them comes in at the very climax, when Christ is left alone in the midst of His enemies. But the words are bright and

cheerful also, and the fault, if fault there be, lies at the door of the librettist. In the first case, after the Christian Church has identified herself with the Divine Victim, the soprano exhorts in this wise: "Rejoice, beloved, as partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Can the music to such words be cheerful and joyous enough? In the second case the Christian, in full view of his Lord's abandonment, has faith in Divine goodness and mercy. He sings "The Lord is my light and my salvation." Again there is no place but for the cheerful animation which Bottesini has infused into his strains. Taking the work as a whole, I see nothing that fails to harmonise with the feeling of the text, or that jars with any idea conveyed by the term "devotional." An objection that the music lacks distinctive character would be much nearer the mark. Bottesini delivers himself with eloquence and feeling, but the manner presents nothing new, nor even removed from an ordinary category. The melodies are expressive, often beautiful, and the harmonies are solid without being in any sense formal; but we are never taken away from the model which, in works of the kind, has been followed by composer after composer since Mendelssohn's oratorios saw the light. Bottesini's orchestration is somewhat disappointing. The colours are often laid on with a heavy hand, and the brass is much more freely used than required by the character of the music. Beyond this, in the way of adverse criticism, I am not disposed to go—the less because I find the Oratorio instinct with a feeling which passes from the work to the hearer. I am speaking, of course, from an individual experience—the proper basis of individual judgment. To me the music is touching and moving; as far as I am concerned, therefore, the supreme object of art is attained. Others may be unresponsive to it. Let them pronounce accordingly. As the "Garden of Olivet" will shortly be heard in London, notice in detail may be reserved till that occasion, when fuller knowledge will bring its inevitable advantages. The Norwich performance, conducted by the composer in person, was in many respects satisfactory. Improvement could hardly have been made, for example, in the delivery of the solos by Miss Marriott, Miss Wilson, Mr. Lloyd, and Mr. Santley, all of whom sang as though their sympathies were entirely with the work they had to do. Special mention should be made of the gentlemen; Mr. Lloyd's rendering of a solo, "Have pity upon me," and Mr. Santley's declamation of the *Saviour's* words being quite *hors ligne*. The attendance was miserably small, although after the novelty came Dvorák's "Stabat Mater"—a masterpiece known to Norwich amateurs. It is difficult to suggest a reason, unless it be that the chorus, as arbiter of taste in the East Anglian city, exerted their influence against a more favourable result. The choral numbers of the Bohemian master's Hymn suffered from the general inefficiency of its executants, but the orchestra was up to the mark, and the soloists—those named above—gave wanted satisfaction.

The Concert on Wednesday evening was of a miscellaneous character, and attracted a larger gathering than its predecessors. It proved to be a development from the "Ballad Concert," which flourished as part of the Festival in Sir Julius Benedict's day, and also a very good thing of the kind. Among the orchestral selections were the Overtures to "Die Zauberflöte," "Tannhäuser," "Coriolanus," and "William Tell," all capably played under Mr. Randegger's judicious guidance. The vocal pieces, too, comprised works of interest, such as the Conductor's setting of Byron's "Prayer of Nature," Gounod's magnificent song, "The Holy Vision," which secured a great success, sung by Mr. Lloyd; and a new scena, "The Song of Judith," written for the occasion by Mr. Prout, and entrusted to Miss Hilda Wilson. Madame Albani gave Weber's "Softly sighs" and Handel's "Sweet bird," and Mr. McGuckin contributed "Where sets the sun," from the "Story of Sayid," as well as Wagner's "Farewell to the Swan," with all possible effect.

Thursday morning was devoted to the second of the two Italian novelties which formed such a peculiar feature in the general scheme. Mr. Mancinelli's "Isaias" certainly made a greater impression than the "Garden of Olivet," drew a larger audience, and caused more discussion. The reasons are obvious. Apart from the sensuous beauty

of some portions, the character and style of the work are uncommon in connection with oratorio; while such features as great sonority and rough vigour are adapted to catch the popular ear and win applause, such as would, perhaps, be denied to qualities more refined or less easily appreciated. The book of "Isaias," written in classic Latin verse by Dr. Guiseppe Albini (English version by Joseph Bennett), is founded upon a Hebrew legend connected with the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah. Tradition has it that, by way of forlorn hope, the maidens of the city went out as intercessors to the enemy's camp, where their beauty and innocence, instead of softening the heart of the foe, inflamed his lust. A feast was improvised, the maidens were plied with wine, which a miracle changed to harmless water, and just as danger appeared most imminent, the whole host fell into what their intended victims supposed to be sudden slumber. It was the sleep of death, and the girls returned unharmed to the delivered city. These incidents, with others of an accessory character, make up the "argument" of a book which afforded considerable scope to the composer. It is, indeed, a series of striking pictures. First of all, *Judith* and *Anna*—the one, daughter of the *Prophet*, the other, sister of the *King*—lead the prayers of maidens before the altar, as, with *Hezekiah*, they await the return of reverend men who have gone as ambassadors to the besieging army. The venerable fathers return, describing the contumely with which they had been treated, telling of the might of the enemy, and counselling surrender. *Hezekiah* seeks to inspire warlike courage, the crowd without clamour for submission, and *Isaias* speaks. As a prophet, he foretells the doom of the invader, and the coming of a Saviour, who shall establish the reign of justice and right. Finally, he advises the embassy of maidens; *Judith* and *Anna* declare their readiness to set out; the fair intercessors form in procession; the Temple doors are opened, and the clamouring multitude join in an *ensemble* of prayer and encouragement as the devoted band moves towards the city gate. The second part is no less suggestive of musical effect. *King* and *Prophet* have wandered by night outside the city, and there meet the returning maidens, who relate the manner of their reception, their danger, and miraculous escape. Then a cloud envelops the enemy's camp; angry Jehovah's fiery sword flashes in the sky, and the voice of *Sennacherib* is heard calling upon his dead soldiers to arise. Presently, the terrified Assyrian comes out of the darkness, bewailing the loss and ruin that has fallen upon him. *Hezekiah* would put the *King* to death, but *Isaias* intervenes, foretelling the domestic treachery that shall soon end his days. Now the sun rises; crowds approach from Jerusalem, and all sing a hymn of thanksgiving. In dealing with Mr. Mancinelli's music, I shall be content with general indications, leaving details till another, and, perhaps, not far off, opportunity arises for discussing them. What then are the chief features of "Isaias"? In the first place, the composer, penetrated with the spirit of modern art, has exercised throughout the privilege of modern freedom, though not to an excessive extent. It may be that his harmonic progressions diverge most of all from orthodox rule. As to these, Mancinelli does just what pleases him. "I allow them," exclaimed Beethoven, when Schindler pointed out that the lawgivers of music had set their cannon against consecutive fifths. The Italian composer, though not yet invested with Beethoven's authority, allows a great deal more than consecutive fifths. In point of fact, he recognises nothing that would restrict his liberty. When Admiral Parker flew the signal of recall at Copenhagen, Nelson, with the glass to his blind eye, vowed he could not see it, and pounded the Danes all the harder. Mancinelli shut both eyes, and he also goes his own way. Well, on the point in question, effect is the supreme test. No rule should forbid that which the ear accepts, and as the ear can be educated to anything the domain of the modern harmonist continually expands. By-and-bye he will be in the position of an English monarch, who, as we all know, "can do no wrong." At the same time there are daring passages in "Isaias" the reason for which I fail to discern, and when a man gratuitously shakes his fist at the highly respectable and dignified figure of Orthodoxy, he should be corrected.

Mr. Mancinelli's use of the orchestra is quite modern in spirit and character, without, however, pretending to an imitation of Wagner. It is an accompanying, not a symphonic orchestra which arrogates to itself almost the entire musical significance and interest. The distinction is large and important. Leading themes, without which, it appears, musicians of our day cannot work, are freely employed, and the composer, in the course of some very long solos, resorts to declamatory passages with considerable effect. But the bulk of "Isaias" illustrates the change which has come over Italian music, without taking from it the Italian character—a change strikingly shown in Verdi's "Aida" and "Otello." Hence we have repeated examples of the purest Italian cantilena, *ensembles* built up in the familiar style of Italian opera, and so on. Herein lies the charm of the work, and this, supplemented by extraordinary vigour, flaming tone-colours, and general picturesqueness, quite explains the impression it certainly made, even upon an unresponsive Norwich audience. No one can help taking an interest in the work, though I should be very sorry to find any English composer accepting it as a model for oratorio. That "Isaias" demonstrates the capacity of Mr. Mancinelli as a dramatic writer, constitutes, to my mind, its chief value. The piece was, considering all things, performed in commendable style; the solos being taken by Mesdames Albani and Lena Little, Messrs. Barton McGuckin, Alec Marsh, and Barrington Foote, the last-named among whom may especially be complimented upon his able delivery of a solo occupying some thirteen minutes. Mr. Mancinelli conducted in person, and was loudly cheered at the close of his task. Following the new work came Cherubini's Mass in C, the more temperate beauty of which stood little chance in close proximity to the "sensationalism" of Mancinelli.

The Concert given on Thursday evening opened with Stanford's "Irish" Symphony, conducted by the composer, and closed with Sullivan's "Golden Legend." I cannot commend the make-up of the programme. Stanford's work requires a close hearing, but, in point of fact, it was performed amid constant distractions, as a sort of involuntary. The audience came to hear "The Golden Legend," and regarded the orchestral piece as a convenient thing *pour passer le temps* while everybody settled down. It would serve no purpose again to discuss Sullivan's favourite work. Of course it attracted a great crowd, whose approval can only be described as complete and unanimous. The solos were given by Madame Albani, Miss Lena Little, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Alec Marsh, and Mr. Santley, the famous baritone singing the music of *Lucifer* for the first time, and giving it a significance such as had not previously been observed. Revelations always attend the efforts of great artists. The orchestra and chorus excited remark in different ways; the one by excellence, the other by demerit.

After "The Messiah," which was given on Friday morning, under Mr. Randegger's guidance, the Festival closed, on the evening of the same day, with Berlioz's "Faust," the success of which on a former occasion naturally led to its repetition. Again the *ensemble* proved faulty in a serious degree, the chorus, tired out with their week's work, being grievously inadequate. Amends were made, however, by the orchestra, whose share of the general task was admirably done, and by the soloists—Miss Marriott, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Brockbank, and Mr. Santley—who gave complete satisfaction.

The Festival will be remembered for its two Italian novelties, and, by those concerned, for the lesson of instant and thorough reform it so effectually taught.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

If the attendance at the first Saturday Concert of the season may be taken as a safe augury for the success of the series, the Directors of the Saturday Concerts ought to feel at their ease. But it is impossible to resist the conclusion that a large proportion of those present were attracted simply by the announcement of young Hofmann's appearance. Joachim himself could not have drawn a fuller audience. For ourselves, though harbouring a strong prejudice against the pushing of precocious talent, we are bound to admit that in the face of such an exceptional case our prejudice

melted clean away. The sense of uneasiness and alarm which was produced by the almost uncanny spectacle of a little child out of the nursery emerging on to the platform to co-operate with a great orchestra and a great Conductor soon gave place to amused surprise and wonder, not only at the technical mastery, but the remarkable intelligence displayed by the performer. It has been said, and truly, that only a man *qui a vécu* can do justice to a slow movement of one of Beethoven's Sonatas or Concertos; but it is wonderful, as in the present case, how instinct can supply the want of experience. The final rondo was played with admirable brightness and rhythmic grip—indeed, the whole performance was an astonishing achievement. The occasion was remarkable as the first on which the young performer attempted to play octaves. Criticism is disarmed by such an exceptional musical organisation as that of young Hofmann's, but it is permissible to express regret at the choice of the Cadenza selected by those who are responsible for his training, and at the inclusion in his *répertoire* of such a tawdry piece as Gottschalk's hideous "Chanson Nègre." Young Hofmann appeared as a composer as well as an executant, contributing two trifles, in which musically feeling is already noticeable. His Valse, conceived in the Chopinesque vein, with a good leaven of Strauss thrown in, is a decidedly taking piece. Finally, his performance of Mendelssohn's well-known Rondo Capriccioso left hardly anything to be desired, so delicately and sympathetically was it rendered. A Concert Overture from the pen of Mr. G. J. Bennett, entitled "Jugend-träume," which formed the orchestral novelty, although it may not show any advance upon his "Serenade," performed at these Concerts last year, is marked by the same vein of flowing melody and graceful orchestration which characterised his previous effort. The theme for horn, accompanied by the *tremolo* of the strings, is especially engaging, and the work, which is noticeable for the lucidity of the ideas set forth and a total absence of pretentiousness in its design, was very favourably received. The orchestra gave a noble rendering of Schumann's First Symphony, and the large but Gothic audience, who let the *larghetto* pass without any symptoms of appreciation, made up for their want of discrimination by applauding very heartily at the close. The soloist was Mdle. Elvira Gambogi, who gave Pacini's "Il soave e bel contento," "O cessate di piagarmi" (Scarlatti), and Godard's graceful "Chanson de Florian," in a conscientious style. Excellent renderings of the "Danse des Sylphes," "Menuet de follets," and "Marche Hongroise," from Berlioz's "Faust," brought the Concert to an enjoyable conclusion.

The new Suite of ballet airs, composed by Mr. Goring Thomas for the Cambridge University Musical Society, and performed at their Concert last June, was heard for the first time at the second Concert of the series. This graceful work illustrates very happily Mr. Goring Thomas's faculty for scoring so as to show off the *timbre* of the various instruments, whether separately or in combination, to the greatest possible advantage. The second movement, with its charming slow waltz rhythm, is a most effective piece of orchestral embroidery. Herr Waldemar Meyer, who appeared as solo violinist on this occasion, belongs to the category of good rather than great players. He lacks the absolute confidence of the first rate *virtuoso* and the individuality of conception of the true artist. Besides sustaining the solo parts of Vieuxtemps's Fourth Concerto, Herr Meyer contributed Sarasate's arrangement of a well-known Nocturne of Chopin's and a couple of Spanish dances by Moszkowski. Beethoven's C minor Symphony, as interpreted by Mr. Mann's orchestra, dwarfed every succeeding number of the programme into insignificance. The vocalist was Mr. McGuckin, who was particularly successful in "Lohengrin's Farewell." The programme also included the Overture to Wagner's "Flying Dutchman," played with great spirit by the band.

Of the performance of "The Golden Legend," which occupied the programme of the third Concert of the series, little need be said. The cast consisted of Madame Nordica, Miss Hilda Wilson, and Messrs. Iver McKay, Watkin Mills, and Horscroft, the efforts of all being duly appreciated by the audience. The Crystal Palace Choir co-operated in an efficient manner, the Evening Hymn being given with specially good effect.