

The **COMPOSER** *as* **LISTENER**

A Guide to Music edited by

The
COMPOSER
as
LISTENER

IRVING KOLODIN

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INTRODUCTION

THE PLAN OF this volume could readily suggest editorial endorsement of the belief now prevalent, especially in America, that eminence in one field automatically qualifies a person for attention, no matter what is said. We have the spectacle daily of military people who talk about political matters, political people who are authorities on arms, actors and actresses who have opinions on both.

Where the "Composer as Listener" is concerned, however, the interest is more specialized, and I think, more relevant. Such men as Berlioz, Schumann, Wagner, Wolf, Debussy (and even Tchaikovsky) actually served at one time or another as critics. But the more pointed fact is that anybody who wrote as much music as Mozart or Liszt or Gounod had an affinity to the art quite different from that of any other listener. I am not contending that it is a better or more valid attitude—merely that it is a different one. The translation into verbal terms of Wagner's comments on Beethoven's C sharp minor quartet does not need to be identified as the product of the same mind as the one which produced *Die Meistersinger* for its weight or value to be determined. It is, rather, that the comments could hardly occur to a mind without such a capacity.

Such writing provides the all too rare blend of a man with the requisite musical sensitivity commanding the degree of verbal skill to make his meaning clear. The fusion is one less often encountered in musical writing than elsewhere, because the verbal skill too often excludes the musical sensitivity, or the technical knowledge defies verbalization. In this volume technical knowledge is rampant on every page—and, I would say, a remarkable amount of verbal capacity.

By comparison with the writings of Hanslick, Shaw, Huneker, Rosenfield, Neville Cardus, Samuel Langford and the dozens of others whose criticism have been collected for later reference, these writings are casual and unformalized. But they are distinguished also by this: they are writings which emerge not from literary perceptions brought to bear on a musical experience, but from musical experiences expressed through words. Mozart describing the composition of *Entführung* was concerned with only one reader, his fa-

ther: but what he has to say bears meaning for anyone who loves *Entführung* or any other work of Mozart.

Largely speaking, one may say there is in such writing the sense of the sounding stuff itself, which one rarely finds in the products of other temperaments. In Schumann's early salute to Chopin, for example, one perceives an appreciation of qualities the latter was to manifest only later in life. Or with all Hugo Wolf's disposition to Bruckner's Symphonies as a foil to Brahms' (for whom he had a temperamental block) one finds an awareness of their structural weaknesses, the disproportion of their architecture which is a blemish to this day.

It may be contended that this same Wolf's estimate of Brahms was a specious one relative to the position to which Brahms had been elevated by the anti-Wagnerites; or that Debussy's sharp attacks on Wagner were due at least in part to the antipathy of a reticent man for one of the German's vast outspokenness. There is, no doubt, a similar temperamental disability at the basis of Tchaikovsky's continuous and even petulant decrying of Brahms. But these are hardly attitudes more aggressive or misguided than one encounters in the writings of critics not hampered by occupational bias or professional disagreement; and there is, in each instance, at least a core of judicious perception to support the attitude.

It is, indeed, rather remarkable that so much that is sound and pertinent endures to command our attention in the writings of these composers. However, it is a fact that virtually the only writing about music done in the first half of the nineteenth century that is still read today is that of Berlioz and Schumann. (A single exception is that of the Englishman Henry Chorley, which retains an interest for students largely because of his documentation of the musical community in Germany during the period of its greatest ascendancy.) It is not too much to say that between them they created the model of what informative criticism should be.

For it must be remembered that musical criticism as it is known today had its inception almost coincidentally with the careers of Berlioz and Schumann. The reasons for this may seem mysterious, but they are fairly apparent. Most potent of all was the circumstance that the daily grist of criticism, the thing that gives its practitioners subsistence, continuity, and audience—are public performances. And save for the opera house, there were few sources of such performance prior to the nineteenth century. That the term "piano recital" (or "recitals of piano music," as he phrased it) originated with Liszt, is a landmark in locating the first activity of this kind. Chamber and concert music had emerged from the ducal pal-

aces to public attention only a short time before, and self-perpetuating groups such as the Royal Philharmonic Society were still struggling for acceptance. Consider, merely, that Spohr attracted attention to himself as the first conductor, in the modern sense, by using a baton (in 1820) and it may be seen that the materials of conventional criticism were taking shape only slowly.

It is doubtful, for example, that the monumental accomplishments of Bach would have been so little known to the public for nearly a century after his death had there been a body of critical influence as we know it today. One can scarcely credit the recorded evidence that the first biographical study of so conspicuous a figure in musical history did not appear until half a century after his death, in 1802. How much Schumann and Berlioz contributed to the establishment of a critical tone and procedure may be understood from the antique, stodgy writing in this volume by Johann Forkel, the limited acquaintance with other musical literature, the wholly provincial attitude. Beside this, the freshness and vitality of Schumann's response to the music of Schubert, the modernity and breadth of Berlioz's comments on the Beethoven symphonies are as voices of our time, speaking to us in accents at once communicative and recognizable.

One of the remarkable aspects of their twin activity is the independent beginning of their critical careers within the span of a few years. Berlioz began his critical association with the *Journal des Débats* (after a desultory career of half a dozen years with other publications) in 1835, retaining that post until 1863. Together with a group of friends, Schumann founded the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1833, continuing his active participation in its editorship for a decade. One can hardly avoid the conviction that they were drawn to the pursuit of these careers not more by wilful desire or by conscious intent than through the existence of a contemporary situation which demanded their talents.

There were battles to be fought, reputations to be established, paths to be cleared. Beethoven had completed his life's work but hardly was generally accepted by the public; Schubert was scarcely even a name; Chopin was only beginning his public career; there was Berlioz in France to be encouraged, Schumann in Germany. It is rather less astonishing that two men of the capacities of Berlioz and Schumann directed their attention to such work than that, at so critical a period of musical development, there were two men of their exceptional sensitivities at hand to propagandize as they did.

There is a point in considering the process by which they embarked on their careers. Similar though their impulses were, no two

backgrounds could have been more disparate. Berlioz was virtually penniless when he did his first writing in 1829 for *Le Correspondent*. There were hardly more sources of income for a composer in those days than now (especially one of Berlioz's flamboyant, controversial tendencies) and the cost of producing his own works was sufficient to keep him in a state of perpetual insolvency, even before he acquired a wife in 1833. It was after the latter event that one may discover Berlioz accommodating himself simultaneously to the editors of *Le Corsaire*, *L'Europe littéraire*, *La Revue européenne* and other publications. Even after he won a permanent appointment as music commentator for the *Débats* in 1835, pure necessity compelled him to find as many other outlets for his writing as possible. The fluctuating fortunes of these caused him to hold tenaciously to his post on the *Débats* for nearly thirty years, though his income from it could not have been more than 1500 francs a year.

Though Berlioz repeatedly bewailed the drudgery of this occupation, its daily procession of "insipidities," the endless necessity for writing "nothings about nothings," one is advised to accept these protestations guardedly. Certainly no man could have mustered the volatility and lightness of the *Evenings in the Orchestra* who was not devoted to the written word, jealous of the power it gave him, proud of his formidable ability to manipulate it. Even in his bitterest protests against the "punishment" of writing, he could summon the freshness of mind to say (quoted in Ernest Newman's introduction to *Evenings in the Orchestra*): "This is indeed the lowest depth of degradation! Better to be Finance Minister in a republic!" Merely the pleasure that Berlioz must have taken in that scoffing analogy should have repaid him for at least a part of the day's torture. One can only underscore the sentiment of Newman that: "The musical critics of each country ought to dine together once a year and drink to the memory of this incomparably brilliant member of their craft."

Schumann had no such pressing necessity as a springboard for a career of writing. His decision, as far as one can determine, was purely a product of an intellectual impulse, the outgrowth of nothing more than the conviction that there was a job to be done and that he should take the lead in seeing that it was done. He was not, as one might say, Hectored by the purely financial need of a Berlioz. There are, in his early letters, intimations of the enthusiasm that was the guiding spirit of his publication—apostrophes to Bach (in which "everything is written for eternity"), to Beethoven, even to Schubert (of whom, in writing to Wieck from Heidelberg in

1829, he says: "I have propagated Schubert-worship to a great extent here, where his name is hardly known").

Thus the boy of nineteen was in truth the father to the man. It was only two years later that he was hailing Chopin with the most repeated of musical salutations: "Off with your hats, gentlemen—a genius!" in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*—and scarcely four years before the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* was born of a group that met almost nightly in Leipzig. As Schumann recounted its emergence when a selection of his writings was published in 1854: "The musical situation was not then very encouraging in Germany. On the stage Rossini reigned, at the pianoforte nothing was heard but Herz and Hünten; and yet but a few years had passed since Beethoven, Weber and Schubert had lived among us. It is true that Mendelssohn's star was ascending, and wonderful things were related of Chopin, but the deeper influence of these only declared itself afterwards. Then one day the thought awakened in a wild young heart: 'Let us not look on idly, let us also lend our aid to progress, let us again bring the poetry of art to honour among men!'" One could hope for no clearer statement of a creed, or a more illuminating indication of the purposes that motivated Schumann, even to the source of his over-estimation of such transitory figures as Niels Gade and Sterndale Bennett. They were of the time, and sympathetic—qualities which in themselves were almost sufficient, in Schumann's estimation, to redeem all other failings.

Wagner's career as a writer on music partook, curiously, of elements represented in the activities both of Berlioz and Schumann. There were the early drab bitter days in Paris, the days of arrangements for *cornet à pistons*, in which he wrote out of pure economic need, such essays as the one reprinted in this volume concerning the production of *Der Freischütz*, and various papers for Schlesinger's *Gazette Musicale*. The latter connection arose out of Wagner's necessity to pay Schlesinger fifty francs for the publication of his setting of *The Two Grenadiers*, a sum of money quite beyond Wagner's purse. As he recounts it (in *Mein Leben*): "For the moment the point was to compensate Schlesinger for the fifty francs agreed upon, and he proposed that I should do this by writing articles for his *Gazette Musicale*. As I was not expert enough in the French language for literary purposes, my article had to be translated and half the fee had to go to the translator. However, I consoled myself by thinking I should still receive sixty francs per sheet for the work. I was soon to learn, when I presented myself to the angry publisher for payment, what was meant by a sheet. It was

measured by an abominable iron instrument, on which the lines of the columns were marked off with figures; this was applied to the article, and after careful subtraction of the spaces left for the title and signature, the lines were added up. After this process had been gone through, it appeared that what I had taken for a sheet was only half a sheet."

However, Wagner's temperament was hardly suited for that of workaday criticism. Most of the writings that fill the numerous volumes of his collected prose works are either windy philosophical discussions of aesthetics (always relative to his own reforms and the problem of establishing their validity), exhortations to the German people, or tracts on the baleful influence of *Judaism in Music*. But in common with Schumann, Wagner had a splendid sensitivity to certain phases of music in respect to which he was possessed of an exceptional eloquence—primarily and enduringly, Beethoven, of whom he wrote with love and discernment as early as the *Gazette Musicale* era (in which appeared the suggestive *Pilgrimage to Beethoven*) and as late as the essay herein quoted, written on the occasion of Beethoven's centenary in 1870. And certainly his essay on conducting is the basis of all philosophic and aesthetic thinking on that subject, as, by repute, his actual performances were the pragmatic point of departure for a whole school of leaders descending from von Bülow and Levi.

Wolf's career as a critic, though chronologically brief, was long enough to establish him in the true line of Berlioz as a writer of zest and individuality functioning through an assured musical orientation. He was twenty-four when he began to write for the *Salonblatt* (Vienna) in 1884, and had already served an apprenticeship as second kapellmeister under Muck at Salzburg in 1881. The musical situation of Vienna at the time was one that made it almost imperative for a critic to choose sides—though one suspects that his adoration for Wagner would have had such an issue even were there no anti-party (the Brahmsians) for Wolf inevitably to oppose. In sum one is attracted less to the body of Wolf's criticism for its justice or even temper than for the brilliance and facility of his thoughts on the occasional subjects of which he wrote with special sympathy and understanding—Beethoven, Liszt, Wagner, Bruckner—and with his sharp response to those inexhaustible sources of aggravation for every critic: conductors and the public.

Similarly Debussy, whose critical personality was as strong a reflection of his musical bias as Berlioz's or Schumann's. The feeling for a tone coloring, a harmonic flavor, a melodic inflection is aptly paralleled in his verbal scoring—such a light-fingered phraseology

as the one in which he describes Richard Strauss as "no relation to *The Blue Danube*," or sympathizes with Siegfried Wagner's desire to carry on his father's tradition as "not quite as easy as taking over a haberdashery shop"—are the marks of a wit and littérateur whose place in music would have been a secure one had he written no music of distinction, though assuredly an infinitely slighter one than he enjoys today. It must be considered, in estimating the point and significance of Debussy's writing, that he began his career not as an impressionable, wild-eyed youth (Berlioz, Schumann, Wagner and Wolf all commenced in their twenties) but as an opinionated, mature man of nearly forty (in 1901), who had already created *L'Après-midi*, *Pelléas*, the Nocturnes for orchestra, and the string quartet. These facts are to be considered in his belittlement of certain songs by Schubert and his *Unfinished Symphony*, Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, and virtually all of Brahms; but they also increase one's admiration for his enthusiastic commendation of many works by Strauss, Moussorgsky, Rimsky, and Stravinsky. And for all his impatience with Wagnerian formulae, Wagnerian bombast, and above all, Wagnerian imitation by his contemporaries, he responded ungrudgingly to the pure musical sorcery of the man, to the point indeed of describing *Parsifal* as "one of the loveliest monuments of sound ever raised to the serene glory of music."

The writings in this volume of those who only occasionally (as Tchaikovsky) wrote for publication, or not at all (as Richard Strauss, Clara Schumann, Ignatz Moscheles, Gounod, Massenet, etc.) are of another sort. Derived largely from letters or diaries, (the gradual disappearance of both will seriously impede the researcher interested, fifty years hence, in this century's music) they have an unpremeditated, impromptu quality which is often the more striking for being unrehearsed and—with latitude for individual practise—unedited. Brahms' terse answers to Elisabeth von Herzogenberg's effusive communications are as much an index to his musical thinking as Tchaikovsky's patience with von Meck's obvious unmusicality. The last phrase may seem a harsh one, but what other word suffices for a woman as insensitive to Mozart as she? Her treasurable place for us (she had, of course, another much more valuable function at the time) was in providing Tchaikovsky the opportunity for saying so much of what he thought about music and musicians, something he might not have done otherwise. As for Liszt and Berlioz and Wagner, who found time to conduct formidable correspondences along with their creative works, we should know much less of what they thought of each other, and of many contemporaries, such as the pivotal Hans von Bülow, without such

documents. The powerful intellect of Schoenberg, the impatient one of Mahler, the receptive mentality of Grieg and the penetrating one of Richard Strauss are all of an individuality to make us wish for much more material than they left to us. How they heard music, even more pertinently, how they *thought* music, cannot fail to contribute mightily to the music listening and music thinking of any one who reads their words.

The arrangement of contents has been devised to provide balance and unity where such attributes could be found among the many statements selected from a vastly larger residue. In some instances the comments assigned to the "composer" section could be located under the "composition" heading, but the rationale will be, I hope, self-justifying. The spelling of names has been retained to conform with the original texts. I should like to restate my appreciation for the services rendered, in the compilation of a previous volume containing some of the material reproduced here, by Mrs. Elizabeth Davies and my wife, Irma. A second examination of the contents has provided no cause for anything but warmer thanks.

IRVING KOLODIN
New York

The **COMPOSER** *as* **LISTENER**

PART ONE : COMPOSERS

BACH

by Berlioz

THE DAY ON which I went to the Singing Academy,* by the director's invitation, they performed Sebastian Bach's *Passion*. This famous score, which you have, no doubt, read, is written for two choruses and two orchestras. The singers, to the number of at least three hundred, were seated on the steps of a large amphitheater, exactly like the one we have in the chemistry lecture-room in the Jardin des Plantes; a space of only three or four feet separates the two choruses. The two orchestras, rather small ones, accompanied the voices from the upper steps, behind the choruses, and were thus pretty far from the *Kapellmeister*, who stood down in front beside the piano-forte. I should not have said piano-forte, but harpsichord; for it had almost the tone of the wretched instruments of that name which were in use in Bach's time. I do not know whether they made such a choice designedly, but I noticed in the singing schools, in the green-rooms of the theaters, everywhere where voices were to be accompanied, that the piano-forte intended for that purpose was invariably the most detestable that could be found. The one Mendelssohn used in Leipzig in the hall of the Gewandhaus forms the sole exception.

You will ask me what the harpsichord-piano can have to do *during the performance* of a work in which the composer has not used this instrument! It accompanies, together with the flutes, oboes, violins and basses, and probably serves to keep the first rows of the

* In Berlin. The letter from which this is extracted was written during Berlioz's visit to Germany in 1841-2, and addressed to his friend Desmarest, first cellist of the Conservatoire orchestra.—Ed.

chorus up to pitch, as they *are supposed* not to hear, in the *tutti*, the orchestra, which is too far off. At any rate it is the custom. The continual tinkling of chords struck on this bad piano produces the most tiresome effect, and spreads over the ensemble a superfluous coating of monotony; but that is, no doubt, another reason for not giving it up. An old custom is so sacred, when it is a bad one!

The singers all remain seated during the pauses, and rise at the moment of singing. There is, I think, a real advantage in respect to a good emission of the voice in singing standing; it is only unfortunate that the chorus, giving up too easily to the fatigue of this posture, sit down as soon as their phrase is over; for in a work like Bach's, where the two answering choruses are often interrupted by solo recitative, it happens that there is always some group getting up or some sitting down, and in the long run this succession of movements up and down gets to be rather laughable; besides it takes away all the surprise from certain entries of the chorus, the eye notifying the ear beforehand from what part of the vocal body the sound is to come. I should rather have the chorus keep seated unless they can keep standing. But this impossibility is one of those that disappear immediately if the director knows how to say: *I wish it* or *I do not wish it*.

Be it as it may, the execution of those vocal masses was something imposing to me; the first *tutti* of the two choruses took away my breath; I was far from suspecting the power of that great harmonic blast. Yet we must recognize the fact that one gets tired of this beautiful sonority more quickly than of that of the orchestra, the qualities of the voice being less varied than those of the instruments. This is conceivable; there are hardly four voices of different natures, while the number of instruments of different kinds amounts to over thirty.

You do not expect of me, I fancy, my dear Desmarest, an analysis of Bach's great work; that would be wholly overstepping the limits I have had to impose upon myself. Besides the selection they played at the Conservatoire three years ago may be considered as the type of the composer's style and manner in this work. The Germans profess an unlimited admiration for his recitatives, and their preeminent quality is precisely the one to have escaped me, as I do not understand the language in which they are written, and could not consequently appreciate the merit of their expression.

When one comes from Paris and knows our musical customs, one must witness the respect, the attention, the piety with which a German audience listens to such a composition, to believe it. Every one follows the words of the text with his eyes; not a movement in

the house, not a murmur of approbation or blame, not the least applause; they are listening to a sermon, hearing the Gospel sung; they are attending in silence, not a concert but a divine service. And it is really thus that this music ought to be listened to. They adore Bach, and believe in him, without supposing for an instant that his divinity can ever be questioned; a heretic would horrify them; it is even forbidden to speak on the subject. Bach is Bach, as God is God.

BEETHOVEN

A VISIT

by Weber

HE HAD HEARD from Wilhelmine Schroeder with how much care, devotion, and energy, Weber had produced *Fidelio* in the summer of 1822, and how deep and lasting the impression of this masterpiece was on the Dresden public, he had been in active correspondence with the Saxon Capellmeister himself, and to my great joy and surprise, when I met him one morning at his publisher's, Beethoven actually condescended to speak with me on the subject.* I see him yet before me, and who could ever forget those striking features? The lofty vaulted forehead with thick grey and white hair encircling it in the most picturesque disorder, that square lion's nose, that broad chin, that noble and soft mouth. Over the cheeks, seamed with scars from the smallpox, was spread a high colour. From under the bushy, closely compressed eyebrows flashed a pair of piercing eyes; his thick-set Cyclopean figure told of a powerful frame. He approached me with his inseparable tablet in his hand, and in his usual brusque manner addressed me: "You are Weber's pupil?" I gave an affirmative nod. "Why doesn't he come to see me? Tell him to come to Baden with friend Haslinger," pointing to Steiner's partner. Asking for his tablet, I wrote in it "May I come too?" He smiled, replying, "*Ja, kleiner Naseweis*" (Yes, you saucy little fellow). So, having duly announced his visit, Weber, Haslinger, and myself drove out on the 5th of October to Baden, near Vienna, where the master was wont to take refuge till late in the autumn.

We all felt strangely moved when entering the great man's poor desolate-looking room; everything in the most appalling disorder—music, money, clothing on the floor, the bed unmade, broken coffee-cups upon the table, the open pianoforte with scarcely any strings left and thickly covered with dust, while he himself was wrapped in a shabby old dressing-gown. He recognised Weber at once, and embracing him, energetically shouted: "There you are, *du Teufel's Kerl*" (you devil of a fellow), and, handing him his tablet, pushed a heap of music from the piano, threw himself upon it, and during a

* From Sir Julius Benedict's *Life of Weber*, which assigns the visit to September 1823, when Weber was in Vienna for the premiere of *Euryanthe*.

flow of conversation commenced dressing to go out with us. He began with a string of complaints about his position, about the public, the theatres, the Italians, and more especially about his own ungrateful nephew.

Weber, evidently touched by this tale of woe, advised him to leave Vienna and go to Germany and England, where his works were so much appreciated. "Too late," cried Beethoven, pointing to his ear and shaking his head sadly; then he seized Weber's arm and dragged him away to the hotel where he used to take his meals. Weber in his diary says, "We dined together in the happiest mood; the stern rough man paid me as much attention as if I were a lady he was courting, and served me at table with the most delicate care. How proud I felt to receive all this attention and regard from the great master-spirit; the day will remain for ever impressed upon my mind and those of all who were present."

After a long and most interesting conversation referring to the highest questions of art, the time came for departure. Again and again Beethoven embraced Weber, and it was long before he would loose the thin delicate hand from the grasp of his mighty fist. "Success to your new opera; if I can, I will come on the first night," were his last words. The two great musicians never met again.

BEETHOVEN/HIS FUNERAL
ANNOUNCEMENT

WE FIND AMONG Moscheles' papers several relating to Beethoven's death:

INVITATION

TO

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN'S FUNERAL,

Which will take place on the 29th March, at 3 o'clock
in the afternoon.

The company will assemble at the lodgings of the deceased, in the Schwarz-spanier House, No. 200 on the Glacis, before the Schottenthor.

The procession starts from that point to the Trinity Church, at the Father's Minorites in the Alser Street.

The musical world sustained the irreparable loss of the famous composer about six o'clock in the evening, on the 26th March, 1827.

Beethoven died of dropsy, in the 56th year of his age, after receiving the Holy Sacraments.

Due notice of the day, "der Exequien," will hereafter be made known by L. VAN BEETHOVEN'S

ADMIRERS AND FRIENDS

(The distribution of these cards is at the music establishment of Tob. Haslinger.)

BEETHOVEN

by Liszt

FOR US MUSICIANS, Beethoven's work is like the pillar of cloud and fire which guided the Israelites through the desert—a pillar of cloud to guide us by day, a pillar of fire to guide us by night, "*so that we may progress both day and night.*"* His obscurity and his light trace for us equally the path we have to follow; they are each of them a perpetual commandment, an infallible revelation. Were it my place to categorise the different periods of the great master's thoughts, as manifested in his sonatas, symphonies, and quartets, I should certainly not fix the division into *three styles*, which is now pretty generally adopted and which you have followed; but, simply recording the questions which have been raised hitherto, I should frankly weigh the *great* question which is the axis of criticism and of musical aestheticism at the point to which Beethoven has led us—namely, in how far is traditional or recognised form a necessary determinant for the organism of thought?

The solution of this question, evolved from the works of Beethoven himself, would lead me to divide this work, not into three styles or periods,—the words *style* and *period* being here only corollary subordinate terms, of a vague and equivocal meaning,—but quite logically into two categories: the first, that in which traditional and recognised form contains and governs the thought of the master; and the second, that in which the thought stretches, breaks, recreates, and fashions the form and style according to its needs and inspirations. Doubtless in proceeding thus we arrive in a direct line at those incessant problems of *authority* and *liberty*. But why should they alarm us? In the region of liberal arts they do not, happily, bring in any of the dangers and disasters which their oscillations occasion in the political and social world; for, in the domain of the beautiful, genius alone is the authority, and hence, dualism disappearing, the notions of authority and liberty are brought back to their original identity.—Manzoni, in defining genius as "a stronger imprint of Divinity," has eloquently expressed this very truth.

This is indeed a long letter, my dear Lenz, and as yet I am only at the preliminaries. Let us then pass on to the deluge,—and come and see me at Weimar, where we can chat as long and fully as we

* Written from Weimar, December 2, 1852, to Wilhelm von Lenz (a Russian who had just published his famous book *Beethoven and His Three Styles*).

like of these things in the shade of our fine park. If a thrush chances to come and sing I shall take advantage of the circumstance to make, *en passant*, some groundless quarrels with you on some inappropriate terms which one meets with here and there in your book,—as, for example, the employment of the word *scale* (ut, fa, la, etc.) instead of *arpeggio chord*; or, again, on your inexcusable want of gallantry which leads you maliciously to bracket the title of *Mamselle* (!) on to such and such a *Diva*, a proceeding which will draw down upon you the wrath of these divinities and of their numerous admirers.

But I can assure you beforehand that there are far more night-ingales than thrushes in our park; and, similarly, in your book the greater number of pages, judiciously thought out and brilliantly written, carry the day so well in worth and valour over any thinly scattered inattentions or negligences, that I join with my whole heart in the concert of praise to which you have a right.

Pray accept, my dear Lenz, the most sincere expressions of feeling and best thanks of

Your very affectionate and obliged
F. Liszt

BEETHOVEN

by Tchaikovsky

TO BEGIN WITH Beethoven, whom I praise unconditionally, and to whom I bend as to a god.* But what is Beethoven to me? I bow down before the grandeur of some of his creations, but I do not love Beethoven. My relationship to him reminds me of that which I felt in my childhood to the God Jehovah. I feel for him—for my sentiments are still unchanged—great veneration, but also fear. He has created the heaven and the earth, and although I fall down before him, I do not love him. Christ, on the contrary, calls forth exclusively the feeling of *love*. He is God, but also Man. He has suffered like ourselves. We pity Him and love in Him the ideal side of man's nature. If Beethoven holds an analogous place in my heart to the God Jehovah, I love Mozart as the musical Christ. I do not think this comparison is blasphemous. Mozart was as pure as an angel, and his music is full of divine beauty.

While speaking of Beethoven I touch on Mozart. To my mind,

* An excerpt from Tchaikovsky's diary, 1886.

Mozart is the culminating point of all beauty in the sphere of music. He alone can make me weep and tremble with delight at the consciousness of the approach of that which we call the ideal. Beethoven makes me tremble too, but rather from a sense of fear and yearning anguish. I do not understand how to analyze music, and cannot go into detail. . . . Still I must mention two facts. I love Beethoven's middle period, and sometimes his first; but I really hate his *last*, especially the latest quartets. They have only brilliancy, nothing more. The rest is chaos, over which floats, veiled in mist, the spirit of this musical Jehovah.

I love everything in Mozart, for we love everything in the man to whom we are truly devoted. Above all, *Don Juan*, for through that work I have learnt to know what music is. Till then (my seventeenth year) I knew nothing except the enjoyable *semi-music* of the Italians. Although I love everything in Mozart, I will not assert that every one of his works, even the most insignificant, should be considered a masterpiece. I know quite well that no single example of his sonatas is a great creation, and yet I like each one, because it is his, because he has breathed into it his sacred breath.

As to the forerunner of both these artists, I like to play Bach, because it is interesting to play a good fugue; but I do not regard him, in common with many others, as a great genius. Handel is only fourth-rate, he is not even interesting. I sympathize with Gluck in spite of his poor creative gift. I also like some things of Haydn. These four great masters have been surpassed by Mozart. They are rays which are extinguished by Mozart's sun.

BEETHOVEN/A PILGRIMAGE (A
FICTIONAL ESSAY)

by Wagner

BEETHOVEN'S APPEARANCE WAS certainly not in itself adapted to have an agreeable and soothing effect.* He was in a somewhat disorderly dishabille; he wore a red woollen belt around his body; long, stiff, gray hair hung in disorder about his head; and his gloomy, repellent expression did not tend to allay my confusion. We sat down at a table covered with pens and paper.

* Wagner's fictional account of a visit to Beethoven involves a devoted admirer and a fatuous "Englishman" anxious to have Beethoven evaluate his compositions. It was written in Paris in 1840.

There was a decided feeling of awkwardness; no one spoke. Beethoven was evidently out of temper at having to receive two persons instead of one.

At last he began by saying in a harsh voice—"You come from L——?"

I was about to answer, but he interrupted me; laying a pencil and sheet of paper before me, he added—"Write; I cannot hear."

I knew of Beethoven's deafness, and had prepared myself for it. Nevertheless it went through my heart like a pang when I heard his harsh and broken voice say "I cannot hear." To live in the world joyless and in poverty; to find one's only exalted happiness in the power of music—and to have to say "I cannot hear!" In one moment there came to me the full understanding of Beethoven's manner, of the deep sorrow in his face, of the gloomy sadness of his glance, of the firm-set haughtiness of his lips—*he could not hear!*

Confused, and without knowing what I said, I wrote an entreaty for his pardon and a brief explanation of the circumstances that had forced me to appear in the company of the Englishman. The latter sat silent and contented opposite Beethoven, who, when he had read my words, turned to him rather sharply with the inquiry what he desired from him?

"I have the honor"—replied the Briton.

"I can't understand you," cried Beethoven, hastily interrupting him. "I cannot hear, and I can speak but little. Write down what you want with me."

The Englishman quietly reflected for a moment, then drew an elegant music-book from his pocket, and said to me, "Good.—Write—I request Herr Beethoven to look at this composition of mine; if he finds a passage that does not please him, he will have the kindness to mark a cross against it."

I wrote down his request literally, in the hope that we might thus get rid of him. And such was really the result. After Beethoven had read it, he laid the Englishman's composition on the table with a peculiar smile, nodded abruptly, and said "I will send it to you."

With this my "gentleman" was content. He rose, made an especially magnificent bow, and took his leave. I drew a long breath; he was gone.

Now for the first time I felt myself in the very sanctuary. Even Beethoven's features grew obviously brighter; he looked quietly at me for a moment, and began:

"The Englishman has caused you no little trouble?" said he. "Find consolation with me; these travelling Englishmen have tortured me

to death. They come today to see a poor musician as they would go tomorrow to look at some rare animal. I am heartily sorry to have confounded you with him.—You wrote me that you were pleased with my compositions. I am glad of that, for I have little confidence now in pleasing people with my productions.”

This cordiality in addressing me soon did away with all my embarrassment; a thrill of joy ran through me at these simple words. I wrote that I was by no means the only one filled with such ardent enthusiasm for every one of his creations, as to have no dearer wish than, for instance, to gain for my native city the happiness of seeing him once in its midst—that he might then convince himself what effect his works produced upon the public.

“I can well believe,” he answered, “that my compositions are more appreciated in North Germany. The Viennese often provoke me; they hear too much wretched stuff every day to be always in the mood to take an earnest interest in anything serious.”

I sought to combat this view, and instanced the fact that I had yesterday attended a performance of *Fidelio*, which the Viennese public had received with the most obvious enthusiasm.

“Hm! Hm!” muttered the master, “the *Fidelio*! But I know that the people only applaud it out of vanity, after all, for they imagine that in my rearrangement of the opera I only followed their advice. So they seek to reward me for my trouble, and cry bravo! It’s a good-natured, uneducated populace; so I like better to be among it than among wise people. Does *Fidelio* please you?”

I told him of the impression that the performance of the day before had made upon me, and remarked that the whole had gained most gloriously by the additions that had been made to it.

“It is vexatious work,” said Beethoven; “I am no composer of operas; at least I know of no theatre in the world for which I would care to compose an opera again. If I should make an opera according to my own conception, the people would absolutely flee from it; for there would be no airs, duets, trios, and all that nonsense to be found in it, with which operas are stitched together nowadays; and what I would substitute for these no singer would sing and no audience hear. They all know nothing deeper than brilliant falsehoods, sparkling nonsense, and sugar-coated dullness. The man who created a true musical drama would be looked upon as a fool—and would be one in very truth if he did not keep such a thing to himself, but wanted to bring it before the public.”

“And how should one go to work,” I asked excitedly, “to produce such a musical drama?”

“As Shakespeare did when he wrote his plays”—was the almost

angry answer. Then he continued: "The man who has to trouble himself with fitting all sorts of brilliant prattle to women with passable voices, so that they may gain applause by it, should make himself a Parisian man-milliner, not a dramatic composer. For myself, I am not made for such trifling. I know very well that certain wiseacres say of me for this reason that though I have some ability in instrumentation I should never be at home in vocal music. They are right—for they understand by vocal music only operatic music; and as for my being at home in that—Heaven forbid!"

I ventured to ask if he really thought that any one, after hearing his *Adeläide*, would dare to deny him the most brilliant genius for vocal music also?

"Well," he said after a short pause, "*Adeläide* and things of that kind are small matters, after all, that soon fall into the hands of the professional virtuosi—to serve them as opportunities to bring out their brilliant art-touches. Why should not vocal music form a great and serious *genre* by itself as well as instrumental,—that should receive as much respect from the frivolous tribe of singers in its execution, as is demanded of an orchestra in the production of a symphony. The human voice exists. It is a far more beautiful and noble organ of tone than any instrument of an orchestra. Ought it not to be brought into as independent use as this latter? What new results might not be gained by such a method! For it is precisely the character of the human voice, utterly different by nature from the peculiarities of an instrument, that could be brought out and retained, and could be capable of the most varying combinations. In instruments, the primal organs of creation and nature find their representation; they cannot be sharply determined and defined, for they but repeat primal feelings as they came forth from the chaos of the first creation, when there were perhaps no human beings in existence to receive them in their hearts. With the genius of the human voice it is entirely otherwise; this represents the human heart, and its isolated, individual emotion. Its character is therefore limited, but fixed and defined. Let these two elements be brought together, then; let them be united! Let those wild primal emotions that stretch out into the infinite, that are represented by instruments, be contrasted with the clear, definite emotions of the human heart, represented by the human voice. The addition of the second element will work beneficently and soothingly upon the conflict of the elemental emotions, and give to their course a well-defined and united channel; and the human heart itself, in receiving these elemental emotions, will be immeasurably strengthened and broadened; and made capable of feeling clearly

what was before an uncertain presage of the highest ideal, now changed into a divine knowledge."

Beethoven paused here a moment, as if fatigued. Then, with a light sigh, he continued—"It is true that many obstacles are met with in the attempt to solve this problem; in order to sing one has need of words. But what man could put into words the poetry that must form the basis of such a union of elements? Poetry must stand aside here; for words are too weak things for this task.—You will soon hear a new composition of mine which will remind you of what I am now explaining. It is a symphony with choruses. I call your attention to the difficulty I had in this, in getting over the obstacle of the inadequacy of the poetry which I required to help me. Finally I decided to choose our Schiller's beautiful *Hymn to Joy*; this is at least a noble and elevating creation, even though it is far from expressing what in this case, it is true, no verses in the world *could* express."

Even now I can hardly comprehend the happiness that I enjoyed in the fact that Beethoven himself should thus help me by these explanations to the full understanding of his last giant symphony, which at that time must have been barely finished, but which was as yet known to no one. I expressed to him my enthusiastic thanks for this certainly rare condescension. At the same time I expressed the delighted surprise that he had given me in this news that the appearance of a new and great work of his composition might soon be looked for. Tears stood in my eyes—I could have kneeled before him.

Beethoven seemed to perceive my emotion. He looked at me half sorrowfully, half with a mocking smile, as he said: "You will be able to be my defender when my new work is spoken of—think of me then; the wise people will believe me mad—at all events they will call me so. Yet you see, Herr R——, that I am not exactly a madman,—though I might be unhappy enough to be one. People demand of me that I shall write according to their conception of what is beautiful and good; but they do not reflect that I, the poor deaf man, must have thoughts that are all my own,—that it is impossible for me to compose otherwise than as I feel. And that I cannot think and feel the things that *they* deem beautiful," he added ironically, "that is my misfortune!"

With this he rose and strode up and down the room with short, quick strides. Deeply moved as I was, I also rose—I felt myself trembling. It would have been impossible for me to continue the conversation either by pantomime or writing. I perceived that the time had come when my visit might grow burdensome to the mas-

ter. To *write* my deep-felt thanks and my farewell, seemed cold; I contented myself by taking my hat, standing before Beethoven, and letting him read in my eyes what was passing within me.

He seemed to understand me. "You are going?" he asked. "Do you remain any time longer in Vienna?"

I wrote that I had no other aim in this journey than to become acquainted with him; that as he had deemed me worthy of such an unusual reception, I was more than happy to find my goal reached, and should start the next day on my return.

He answered, smiling, "You wrote to me how you furnished yourself with money for this journey. You should stay here in Vienna and make galops—they are popular wares here."

I declared that all that was over for me, for that I knew nothing that could ever again seem to me to deserve such a sacrifice.

"Well, well," he said, "perhaps something will yet be found! I—fool that I am—should be far better off if I made galops; if I go on as I have hitherto, I shall always be in want. *Bon voyage!*" he went on; "bear me in mind, and console yourself with me in all your trials!"

Deeply moved, and with tears in my eyes, I was about to take my leave, when he called to me—"Wait! Let us finish up the musical Englishman. Let us see where the crosses come in."

With this he seized the Englishman's music-book, and smilingly looked through it; then he carefully folded it up again, wrapped it in paper, took up a heavy music-pen, and drew a gigantic cross across the whole wrapper. And then he handed it to me with the remark, "Kindly return the fortunate being his masterpiece. He is an ass—and yet I envy him his long ears. Farewell, *mein Lieber*, and remember me in kindness."

With this he dismissed me. Deeply agitated, I passed out of the room and from the house . . .

At the hotel I met the Englishman's servant, as he was arranging his master's trunk in the travelling carriage. His goal, too, had been reached; I was compelled to confess that he too had shown persistency. I hurried to my room and made my preparations to begin, the next day, my pedestrian journey back again. I had to laugh, as I looked at the cross on the wrapper of the Englishman's composition. Yet the cross was a memorial of Beethoven, and I begrudged it to the evil demon of my pilgrimage. My decision was quickly made. I took the wrapper off, took out my galops, and wrapped *them* instead in this condemnatory covering. I returned the Englishman his composition without a wrapper, and accompanied it with

a note in which I informed him that Beethoven envied him, and that he declared he did not know where to put a cross on such a work.

As I left the hotel I saw my wretched companion getting into his carriage.

"Good-by"—he shouted—"You have done me a great service. I am delighted to have made Herr Beethoven's acquaintance. Will you go to Italy with me?"

"What are you after there?" asked I in reply.

"I want to make the acquaintance of Rossini—he is a very celebrated composer."

"Good luck!" I called. "I know Beethoven; and with that I have enough for all my life."

We parted. I cast one longing look towards Beethoven's house, and turned to the northward—exalted and ennobled in heart.

BEETHOVEN

by Wagner

IF WE CONSIDER the lives of Haydn and Mozart and contrast them, we shall find a transition from Haydn through Mozart to Beethoven with regard to the externals of life.* Haydn was and remained a prince's attendant, providing, as musician, for the entertainment of his master, who was fond of display; temporary interruptions, such as his visits to London, changed but little in the practice of his art, for in London also he remained a musician recommended to and paid by men of rank. Submissive and devout, he retained the peace of a kind-hearted, cheerful disposition to a good old age; the eye only that looks at us from his portrait is filled with gentle melancholy. Mozart's life, on the contrary, was an incessant struggle for an undisturbed and secure existence such as he found it so peculiarly difficult to attain. Caressed when a child by half Europe, the youth found every gratification of his lively desires impeded in a manner akin to positive oppression, and from his entrance into man's estate he sickened miserably towards an early death. He

* Wagner's long essay on Beethoven, of which this is an excerpt, was written in 1870, to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the composer's birth. Wagner visualized himself as "called upon to deliver an oration at some ideal celebration in honor of the great musician." He admitted, however, that he expanded his thoughts much more than would have been possible under such circumstances.—Ed.

finds musical servitude with a princely master unbearable, he gives concerts and "academies" with an eye to the general public, and his fugitive earnings are sacrificed to the petty enjoyments of life.

If Haydn's *prince* continuously demanded new entertainment, Mozart was none the less compelled to provide novelties day by day to attract the *public*; fugitive conception, and ready execution acquired by immense practice, will, in the main, account for the character of both their works. Haydn wrote his noblest masterpieces in old age, when he enjoyed the comforts of a foreign as well as a home reputation. But Mozart never attained that: his finest works were sketched between the exuberance of the moment and the anxiety of the coming hour. Thus a remunerative attendance on some prince, as a medium for a life more favorable to artistic production, continually hovered before his soul. What his emperor withholds, a king of Prussia offers: Mozart remains "true to his emperor," and perishes in misery.

If Beethoven had made his choice of life after cool deliberation, keeping his two great predecessors in view, he could not have gone surer than he did in fact go under the *naïve* guidance of his natural character. It is astonishing to observe how everything here was decided by the powerful instinct of nature. This instinct speaks plainly in Beethoven's shrinking from a manner of life akin to Haydn's. A glance at young Beethoven was probably sufficient to deter any prince from the whim of making him his *Kapellmeister*. But the peculiar complexion of his character appears more remarkable in those of its features which preserved him from a fate such as Mozart's.

Like Mozart, placed without means in an utilitarian world, that rewards the Beautiful only inasmuch as it flatters the senses, and wherein the Sublime remains altogether without response, Beethoven could not at first gain the world's suffrage by the Beautiful. A glance at his face and constitution would make it sufficiently clear that beauty and effeminacy were almost synonymous to his mind. The world of phenomena had scanty access to him. His piercing eye, almost uncanny, perceived in the outer world nothing but vexatious disturbances of his inner life, and to ward them off was almost his sole *rappport* with that world. So the expression of his face became spasmodic: the spasm of defiance holds this nose, this mouth at a tension that can never relax to smiles, but only expand to enormous laughter. It used to be held as a physiological axiom that for high intellectual endowments a large brain should be enclosed in a thin delicate skull, to facilitate an immediate cognition of external things; nevertheless, upon the inspection of his remains

some years ago, we saw, in conformity with the entire skeleton, a skull of altogether unusual thickness and firmness. Thus nature guarded a brain of excessive delicacy, so that it might look inwards and carry on in undisturbed repose the world contemplation of a great heart. This supremely robust constitution enclosed and preserved an inner world of such transparent delicacy, that, if left defenceless to the rough handling of the outer world, it would have dissolved gently and evaporated,—like Mozart's tender genius of light and love.

Now let any one try to realize how such a being must have regarded the world from within so massive a frame!

Assuredly the inner impulses of that man's Will could never, or but indistinctly, modify the manner in which he apprehended the outer world; they were too violent, and also too gentle, to cling to the phenomena upon which his glance fell only in timorous haste, and finally with the mistrust felt by one constantly dissatisfied. Nothing involved him in that transient delusion which could entice Mozart forth from his inner world to search after external enjoyment. A childish delight in the amusements of a great and gay town could hardly touch Beethoven; the impulses of his Will were too strong to find the slightest satisfaction in such light motley pursuits. If his inclination to solitude was nourished hereby, that inclination coincided with the independence he was destined for. A wonderfully sure instinct guided him in this particular respect and became the mainspring of the manifestations of his character. No cognition of reason could have directed him better than the irresistible bent of his instinct. That which led Spinoza to support himself by polishing lenses, which filled Schopenhauer with that constant anxiety to keep his little inheritance intact and determined his entire outer life, and which indeed accounts for apparently inexplicable traits of his character—*i.e.*, the discernment that the veracity of all philosophical investigations is seriously endangered when there is any need of earning money by scientific labor—*that* fostered Beethoven's defiance of the world, his liking for solitude, and the almost coarse predilections shown in his manner of life.

In point of fact Beethoven *did* support himself by the proceeds of his musical labors. But as nothing tempted him to strive for a pleasant life, there was less need for rapid, superficial work, or for concessions to a taste that could only be gratified by "the pleasing." The more he thus lost connection with the outer world, the clearer was his inward vision. The surer he felt of his inner wealth, the more confidently did he make his demands outwards; and he actually required from his friends and patrons that they should

no longer *pay* him for his works, but so provide for him that he might work for himself regardless of the world. And it actually came to pass, for the first time in the life of a musician, that a few well-disposed men of rank pledged themselves to keep Beethoven independent in the sense desired. Arrived at a similar turning-point in his life, Mozart perished, prematurely exhausted. But the great kindness conferred upon Beethoven, although he did not enjoy it long without interruption or diminution, nevertheless laid the foundation to the peculiar harmony, which was henceforth apparent in the master's life, no matter how strangely constituted. He felt himself victorious, and knew that he belonged to the world only as a free man. The world had to take him as he was. He treated his aristocratic benefactors despotically, and nothing could be got from him save what he felt disposed to give, and at his own time.

But he never felt inclined for anything save that which solely and continually occupied him: the magician's disport with the shapes of his inner world. For the outer world now became extinct to him; not that blindness robbed him of its view, but because *deafness* finally kept it at a distance from his hearing. The ear was the only organ through which the outer world could still reach and disturb him; it had long since faded to his eye. What did the enraptured dreamer *see*, when, fixedly staring, with open eyes, he wandered through the crowded streets of Vienna, solely animated by the waking of his inner world of tones?

The beginning and increase of trouble in his ear pained him dreadfully, and induced profound melancholy, but after complete deafness had set in, no particular complaints were heard from him; none whatever about his incapacity to listen to musical performances; the intercourse of daily life only, which never had attracted him much, was rendered more difficult, and he now avoided it the more.

A musician without hearing! Could a blind painter be imagined?

But we know of a blind *seer*. Tiresias, to whom the phenomenal world was closed, but who, with inward vision, saw the basis of all phenomena—and the deaf musician who listens to his inner harmonies undisturbed by the noise of life, who speaks from the depths to a world that has nothing more to say to him—now resembles the seer.

Thus genius, delivered from the impress of external things, exists wholly in and for itself. What wonders would have been disclosed to one who could have seen Beethoven with the vision of Tiresias! A world, walking among men,—the world *per se* as a walking man!

And now the musician's eye was lighted up from within. He cast his glance upon phenomena that answered in wondrous reflex, illuminated by his inner light. The essential nature of things now again speaks to him, and he sees things displayed in the calm light of beauty. Again he understands the forest, the brook, the meadow, the blue sky, the gay throng of men, the pair of lovers, the song of birds, the flight of clouds, the roar of storms, the beatitude of blissfully moving repose. All he perceives and constructs is permeated with that wondrous serenity which music has gained through him. Even the tender plaint inherent in all sounds is subdued to a smile: the world regains the innocence of its childhood. "Today art thou with me in Paradise." Who does not hear the Redeemer's word when listening to the *Pastoral Symphony*?

The power of shaping the incomprehensible, the never seen, the never experienced, in such wise that it becomes immediately intelligible, now grows apace. The delight in exercising this power becomes humor; all the pain of existence is shattered against the immense delight of playing with it; Brahma, the creator of worlds laughs as he perceives the illusion about himself; innocence regained plays lightly with the sting of expiated guilt, conscience set free banters itself with the torments it has undergone.

Never has an art offered the world anything so serene as these symphonies in A and F major, and all those works so intimately related to them which the master produced during the divine period of his total deafness. Their effect upon the hearer is that of setting him free from the sense of guilt, just as their after-effect is a feeling of "paradise lost," with which one again turns towards the world of phenomena. Thus these wonderful works preach repentance and atonement in the deepest sense of a divine revelation.

The aesthetic idea of the *sublime* is alone applicable here: for the effect of serenity passes at once far beyond any satisfaction to be derived from mere beauty. The defiance of reason, proud in its powers of cognition, is wrecked upon the charm that subdues our entire nature: cognition flees, confessing its error, and in the immense joy over this confession we exult from the depth of our soul; no matter how seriously the fettered mien of the listener may betray astonishment at the insufficiency of human sight and thought in the presence of this most veritable world.

What could the world see and realize of the human nature of the genius thus raised above and beyond the world? What could the eye of a man of the world perceive of him? Assuredly nothing but what was easily misunderstood, just as he himself misunder-

stood the world in his dealings with it; for to his simple great heart there was continuous contradiction in the world—that he could only resolve harmoniously in the sublime fields of art.

As far as his reason sought to comprehend the world, his mind was soothed with optimistic views, such as the visionary enthusiasm of the last century's humanitarian tendencies had developed into a creed held in common by the middle-class religious world.

Every feeling of doubt, which experience of life aroused against the correctness of that doctrine, he fought against by loudly asserting fundamental religious maxims. His innermost self said to him: Love is God; and accordingly he too decreed: God is Love. Whatever touched upon these dogmas with any emphasis in the writings of our poets met with his approbation. *Faust* always had the strongest hold of him; yet he held Klopstock, and many a weaker bard of Humanitarianism, worthy of special veneration. His morality was of the strictest domestic exclusiveness: a frivolous mood put him in a rage. He certainly did not display, even to the most attentive observer, a single trait of wit; and, in spite of Bettina's sentimental fancies about Beethoven, Goethe probably had a hard time in his conversations with him. But the same sure instinct which, as he felt no need of luxury, led him to be frugal and watch his income to the verge of parsimony, was also shown in his strict religious morality, and by virtue of it he preserved his noblest treasure, the freedom of his genius, from the subjugation by the surrounding world.

He lived in Vienna and knew Vienna only: that tells its own tale.

The Austrians, who after the eradication of every trace of German Protestantism, were educated in the schools of Roman Jesuits, had even lost the correct pronunciation of their language; which like the classical names of antiquity, were pronounced to them in an un-German Italianized fashion. German spirit, German habits and ways, were explained from text-books of Spanish and Italian origin! A people, joyous and gay by nature, had been drilled on the basis of falsified history, falsified science, falsified religion, into a species of scepticism, calculated to undermine all clinging to the true, the genuine, and the free; a scepticism that in the end appeared as downright frivolity.

Now it was this spirit which had imparted to music, the only art cultivated in Austria, the direction and the verily degrading tendency we have already commented upon. We have seen how Beethoven's mighty nature protected him from this tendency, and we may now recognize in him a similar power to aid us energetically in warding off frivolity in life and mind. Baptized and brought up as a

Catholic, the entire spirit of German Protestantism lived in his disposition. And that spirit also led him as an artist into the path where he was to meet the only colleague in his art, before whom he might bow reverentially, and whom he could greet as a revelation of the profoundest mystery of his own nature. If Haydn passed for the teacher of his youth, the great Sebastian Bach became a guide for the man in the mighty development of his artistic life.

Bach's wondrous work became the Bible of his faith; he read in it, and forgot the world of sounds, which he heard no longer. There he found the enigma of his profoundest dream, which the poor Leipzig precentor had once written down as the eternal symbol of another and a new world. These were the same enigmatically entwined lines and marvellously intricate characters, in which the secret of the world and its shapes had been seen in the sheen of light by the great Albrecht Dürer; the charmed book of the necromancer who illumines the microcosm with the light of the macrocosm. What only the eye of the German spirit could behold, and *its* ear only could hear, what, from inmost perception, forced that spirit to irresistible protestation against alien things, *that* Beethoven read clearly and distinctly in its saintliest books, and—became himself a saint.

But how, again, in actual life, would such a saint stand with regard to his own sanctity, seeing that he was indeed enlightened "to speak the highest wisdom, but in a language which his reason did not understand?"

Must not his intercourse with the world resemble the condition of one who, awakening from deepest sleep, in vain endeavors to recall his blissful dream? We may assume a similar condition to obtain in the religious saint, when, driven by dire necessity, he applies himself in some degree to the affairs of common life; only, in the very distress of life, a saint of religion clearly recognizes the atonement for a sinful existence, and, in the patient endurance of sad distress, he enthusiastically grasps the means of redemption; whilst that sainted seer accepts the sense of an atonement as though it simply meant the endurance of pain, and pays the debt of existence solely as a sufferer. And the error of the optimist is thereupon revenged by enhanced sensitiveness, and a corresponding increase of suffering. Every want of feeling, every instance of selfishness or hardness of heart, such as he meets with again and again, incense him as an incomprehensible corruption of that original goodness of man to which he clings with religious faith. Thus he continually falls from the paradise of his inner harmony into a hell of fearfully discordant existence, and this discord again he can only resolve harmoniously as an artist.

If we wish to picture to ourselves a day in the life of our saint, one

of the master's own wonderful pieces may serve as a counterpart. Only, to avoid deceiving ourselves, we shall have to adhere strictly to the mode of procedure by which we analogically applied the phenomena of dreams to throw light upon the origin of music, without ever identifying the one with the other. I shall choose, then, to illustrate such a genuine "Beethoven day" by the light of its inmost occurrences, his great *String-quartet in C-sharp minor* (opus 131) premising that if we rest content to recall the tone-poem to memory, an illustration of the sort may perhaps prove possible, at least up to a certain degree; whereas it would hardly be feasible during an actual performance. For, whilst listening to the work, we are bound to eschew any definite comparisons, being solely conscious of an immediate revelation from another world. Even then, however, the animation of the picture in its several details has to be left to the reader's fancy, and an outline sketch must therefore suffice.

The long introductory *Adagio*, than which probably nothing more melancholy has been expressed in tones, I would designate as the awakening on the morn of a day that throughout its tardy course shall fulfil not a single desire: not one.* None the less it is a penitential prayer, a conference with God in the faith of the eternally good. The eye turned inwards here, too, sees the comforting phenomena it alone can perceive (*Allegro* $\frac{9}{8}$), in which the longing becomes a sweet, tender, melancholy disport with itself, the inmost hidden dream-picture awakens as the loveliest reminiscence. And now, in the short transitional *Allegro Moderato*, it is as though the master, conscious of his strength, puts himself in position to work his spells; with renewed power he now practices his magic (*Andante* $\frac{3}{4}$) in banning a lovely figure, the witness of pure heavenly innocence, so that he may incessantly enrapture himself by its ever new and unheard-of transformations, induced by the refraction of the rays of light he casts upon it.

We may now (*Presto* $\frac{3}{2}$) fancy him, profoundly happy from within, casting an inexpressibly serene glance upon the outer world, and, again, it stands before him as in the *Pastoral Symphony*. Everything is luminous, reflecting his inner happiness. It is as though he were listening to the very tones emitted by the phenomena, that move, aerial and again firm, in a rhythmical dance before him. He contemplates Life, and appears to reflect how he is to play a dance for Life itself; (*Short Adagio* $\frac{3}{4}$) a short but troubled meditation—as though he were diving into the deep dream of his soul. He has again caught sight of the inner side of the world; he wakens, and

* A paraphrase, probably intentional, of lines spoken by Faust in the fourth scene of Goethe's play.—Ed.

strikes the strings for a dance, such as the world has never heard (*Allegro Finale*). It is the World's own dance: wild delight, cries of anguish, love's ecstasy, highest rapture, misery, rage; voluptuous now, and sorrowful; lightning's quiver, storm's roll; and high above the gigantic musician! banning and compelling all things, proudly and firmly wielding them from whirl to whirlpool, to the abyss. He laughs at himself; for the incantation was, after all, but play to him. Thus night beckons. His day is done.

It is not possible to consider the man, Beethoven, in any sort of light, without at once having recourse to the wonderful musician by way of elucidation.

We noted how the instinctive tendency of his life coincided with a tendency towards the emancipation of his art; he could not be a servant of luxury, and his music had to be cleared of all traces of subordination to a frivolous taste. Moreover, as to the way in which his optimistic religious faith went hand in hand with the instinctive proclivity towards widening the sphere of his art, we have testimony of the noblest simplicity in the *Choral Symphony*, the genesis of which it now behooves us to consider more closely, so as to throw light upon the wonderful connection between the designated fundamental tendencies in the nature of our Saint.

The identical impulse which led Beethoven's reason to construct the Idea of the Good Man, guided him in the quest of the *melody* proper to this Good Man. He wished to restore to melody that purity which it had lost in the hands of trained musicians. One has but to recall the Italian operatic melody of the last century, to perceive how curiously vapid a tone specter, exclusively devoted to fashion and its ends, that melody was. By it, and through its use, music had become deeply degraded, so that men's eager taste constantly hankered after some new tune, as the tune of yesterday was no longer fit to be heard today. Yet, in the main, instrumental music, too, drew its sustenance from that sort of melody; and we have already seen how it was made use of for the ends of a social life, anything rather than noble.

Haydn forthwith took up the sturdy and jolly dance-tunes of the people, which, as is sufficiently obvious, he often appropriated from the dances of the neighboring Hungarian peasants. So far he remained in a lower sphere, closely confined within the limits of its local character. But from what sphere was melody to be taken, if it was to bear a noble, enduring character? For those peasants' dance-tunes of Haydn's were chiefly attractive as piquant oddities; they could not be expected to form a purely human art-type, valid for all times. Yet it was impossible to derive such melody from the

higher sphere of society, for that sphere was ruled by the vicious, cockered, curlicued melody of the opera-singer and ballet-dancer.

Beethoven, too, took Haydn's course, only he was no longer content to treat popular dance-tunes so as to furnish entertainment at a princely table, but he played them, in an ideal sense, to the people themselves. It was now a Scotch, then a Russian, or an Old French people's tune, in which he recognised that nobility of innocence he dreamt of, and at whose feet he did homage with his whole art. And with an Hungarian peasant's dance he played (in the last movement of his A-major symphony) a tune to all nature, so that whoever should see her dancing to it might deem he saw a new planet before his very eyes in the prodigious circling vortex.

But the problem was to find the arch-type of purity, the "good man," and to wed him to his "God is love."

One might trace the master upon this track already in his *Eroica* symphony: it is as though he meant to use the uncommonly simple theme of the last movement, which he also carried out elsewhere, as the groundwork for this purpose; but, whatever of transporting *melos* he built upon that theme, belongs rather too much to the sentimental Mozartian *cantabile*, which he expanded and developed in such a peculiar way, to serve as a type of an achievement in the sense intended.

The trace is more distinct in the jubilant final movement of the C-minor symphony, in which the simple march melody, based almost entirely upon tonic and dominant and the natural notes of horns and trumpets, moves us so much the more by its grand simplicity, as the preceding symphony now appears as a protracted preparation, holding us in suspense, like clouds, moved now by storms, now by delicate breezes, from which at length the sun bursts forth in full splendor.

But the C-minor symphony (we introduce this apparent digression as important to the subject) engages our attention as one of the rarer conceptions of the master in which, from a ground of painful agitation, passion soars upwards on a scale of consolation, exultation, to a final outburst of consciously triumphant joy. Here the lyric pathos almost touches upon an ideal dramatic sphere; and, whilst it may appear dubious whether the purity of musical conception might not thus be impaired—as it must lead to the introduction of ideas which seem quite alien to the spirit of music—it should, on the other hand, not be overlooked that the master was by no means led thither by any aberration of aesthetical speculation, but solely by an instinct, altogether ideal, which germinated in the true domain of music.

This instinct coincided, as we have shown at the outset of this latter investigation, with an effort to rescue the faith in the primitive goodness of man, or perhaps to regain it, in the face of all protests of experience that might be referred to mere delusion. Those conceptions of the master's which originated mainly in the spirit of sublime serenity, belonged, as we saw above, for the most part to that period of his beatific isolation which, after complete deafness had set in, seems to have entirely removed him from the world of suffering. There is, perhaps, no need to assume a decline of that inner serenity on the ground of the more painful mood, which now appears in certain of Beethoven's most important conceptions; for we should assuredly err were we to believe that an artist can ever conceive save in deep serenity of soul. The mood expressed by the conception must therefore pertain to the idea of the world itself, which the artist apprehends, and interprets in the work of art. But then, as we positively assumed that an *Idea of the world* is revealed in music, so the conceiving musician must above all be taken as himself included in that Idea; and what he utters is not *his view* of the world, but rather the world itself, wherein weal and woe, grief and joy alternate.

BERLIOZ

by Gounod

BERLIOZ, LIKE BEETHOVEN, was an illustrious victim of the mournful privilege of being an exception, and dearly did he pay for the heavy responsibility!* The exceptions are doomed by fate to suffer, and to make others suffer also. How can the crowd (that *profanum vulgus* which Horace so cordially detested) be expected to recognise and confess itself incompetent before the diminutive audacity, purely personal, which has the hardihood to give the lie direct to inveterate habits and prevailing routine? Did not Voltaire, man of mind as he was, did not Voltaire say that nobody was possessed of as much mind as all the world? And is not universal suffrage, that grand conquest of our own time, the unquestionable verdict of the collective sovereign? Is not the voice of the people the voice of God?

Meanwhile, history, which is always progressing, and which from time to time does justice to a goodly number of counterfeits of the truth, history teaches us that everywhere, in all paths of life, light proceeds from the individual to the multitude, and not from the multitude to the individual; from the learned individual to the ignorant mass, and not from the ignorant mass to the learned individual; from the sun to the planets, not from the planets to the sun. Would you have thirty-six million blind people represent a telescope, or thirty-six million sheep make a shepherd? How! Was it the crowd, then, that made Raphael and Michael Angelo, Mozart and Beethoven, Newton and Galileo? The crowd! Why, it spends its life in believing and disbelieving, in condemning its predilections and its repugnances by turn, and would you have it a judge? Would you that this wavering and contradictory jurisdiction should be an infallible magistracy? Go to, that is ridiculous. The crowd scourges and crucifies, *at first*, but is sure to reverse its own decisions by a tardy repentance, not, as a rule, the repentance of a contemporaneous generation, but of its successor and successors, and on the tomb of genius are showered the crowns of *immortelles* which were denied to its brow. The final judge, posterity, is but a superposition of successive minorities; the majorities are the conservatories of the *status quo*; I bear them no grudge for it; it is evi-

* An introduction to a collection of Berlioz' letters published in 1882.

dently their proper function in the general mechanism of things; they keep hold of the chariot, but they do not make it advance; they are the curbs when they are not the ruts. Contemporary success is very often only a question of fashion; it proves that the work is on a level with the epoch, but does not in the least guarantee that it will outlive it. There is, therefore, nothing to be proud of in the achievement of it.

Berlioz was a man all of a piece, without concessions or compromises; he belonged to the "Alcestis" class, and naturally had the "Orontes" order against him. God knows that the race of "Orontes" is a numerous one! He was considered whimsical, snappish, snarlish, and I know not what else. But, by the side of this excessive sensibility pushed to the extreme of irritability, one must take into account the irritating things, the personal ordeals, the thousand rebuffs undergone by his proud soul, so incapable of grovelling complacency and cowardly cringing; he is always the same, and if his judgments appeared harsh to those whom they reached, they would never be attributed to that shameful motive, jealousy, which was so incompatible with the lofty proportions of his noble, generous, and loyal nature.

The ordeals which Berlioz had to undergo as a competitor for the grand prize of Rome were the faithful image, and, as it were, the prophetic prelude of those which he had to encounter throughout the rest of his career. He competed on as many as four occasions, and did not gain the prize until 1830, when he was twenty-seven years of age, and then only by dint of sheer perseverance, and in spite of the obstacles of all kinds which he had to surmount. In the same year that he carried off the prize with his cantata, *Sardana-pale*, he brought out a work which showed the exact measure of his artistic development, whether considered in the light of conception, colour, or experience. His *Symphonie Fantastique* (an episode in the life of an artist) was a veritable event in music, the importance of which was testified to alike by the fanatical admiration of some, and the violent opposition of others. However open to discussion such a work might be, it reveals, so far as the youth who produced it is concerned, faculties of invention absolutely superior, and the powerful poetic sentiment which is met with in all his works. Berlioz introduced into the musical world very many important effects and orchestral combinations unknown before his time, of which several illustrious composers have made use; he revolutionized the domain of instrumentation, and in this subject, at least, he may be said to have founded a "school." And notwithstanding this and in spite of some brilliant triumphs, Berlioz was the subject of opposi-

tion, in France and abroad alike, during the whole of his life; in the face of performances to which his personal direction as an eminent conductor, and his indefatigable energy imparted so many chances of success, and so many elements of enlightenment, he never had any but a partial and limited following. The "public," that "everybody" which endows success with the character of popularity, failed him; Berlioz died from the procrastination of popularity. *Les Troyens*, a work which he foresaw would prove a source of endless annoyance to him, completed the fatal work. It may be said of him, as of his heroic namesake Hector, that he perished beneath the walls of Troy.

With Berlioz every impression and every feeling was carried to extremities; he only knew joy and sorrow at the pitch of delirium; as he said of himself, he was a "volcano." Sensibility carries us as far in sorrow as in joy; Tabor and Golgotha have a bond of union. Happiness does not consist of the absence of suffering any more than genius consists of the absence of defects.

Great geniuses suffer, and are bound to suffer, but they are not objects of pity; they have experienced a degree of delirium undreamt of by other men, and if they have wept for sorrow, they have also shed tears of ineffable joy. That alone is a paradise which is never paid for at its true value.

Berlioz was one of the profoundest emotions of my youth. He was fifteen years my senior, and was thirty-four years of age at the time when I, a lad of nineteen, was studying composition at the Conservatoire under Halévy. I still remember the impression then made upon me by Berlioz himself and by his works, rehearsals of which frequently took place in the concert-room of the Conservatoire. Hardly had my master Halévy corrected my lesson, than I was off in hot haste to ensconce myself in a corner of the concert-room, where I intoxicated myself with this weird, passionate, convulsive music, which unfolded to my gaze horizons so new and so vivid in colour. One day, among others, I had been present at a rehearsal of the symphony, *Roméo et Juliette*, then unpublished, but on the eve of being brought out by Berlioz for the first time in public. I was so struck with the breadth of the grand *finale* of the reconciliation of the Montagues and the Capulets, that I carried away with me in my memory the whole of the superb phrase put into the mouth of Friar Lawrence, "*Jurez tous par l'auguste symbole!*"

A few days afterwards I called upon Berlioz, and, sitting down to the piano, I played the entire phrase.

He opened his eyes, and, looking at me fixedly, said—
"Where the devil did you get hold of that?"

“At one of your rehearsals,” I replied.
He could scarcely believe his ears. . . .

The letters now published possess a two-fold attraction; they have none of them been published, and they are all written under the sway of that absolute sincerity which is a perpetual necessity in friendship. A feeling of regret will, undoubtedly, be caused by the presence among them of certain signs of a want of deference towards men whose talent would seem to place them out of reach of irreverent and unjust epithets. It will be considered, and reasonably so, that Berlioz would have done well to have refrained from calling Bellini a “little shrimp,” and that the designation of “illustrious dotard,” applied to Cherubini with evident malice, was ill-suited to the exceptional musician whom Beethoven regarded as the foremost composer of his age, and to whom he, Beethoven, that giant of symphony, paid signal honour by humbly submitting to him the manuscript of the *Messe Soleunelle*, Op. 123, asking him at the same time to favour him with his observations upon it.

However this may be, and in spite of the blots for which a cross-grained temper is alone responsible, these letters possess a most lively interest. In them Berlioz displays himself, so to speak, *in puris naturalibus*; he gives himself up to all his experiences; he enters into the most confidential details of his existence as a man and an artist; in a word, he unfolds his soul to his friend without reserve, and that in terms of effusion, tenderness, and warmth which show how worthy these two friends were of each other, and how completely they were made to understand each other. To understand each other! These words recall the immortal fable of our divine La Fontaine, *Les Deux Amis*.

To understand each other! To enter into that perfect communion of feeling, thought, and solicitude to which is given the sweetest names in human language—Love and Friendship! Therein lies all the charm of life, and it is also the most powerful attraction of this *written life*, the conversation between the absent, so rightly called *correspondence*.

If the works of Berlioz have led to his being admired, the publication of these letters will do better still—they will make him beloved, and that is the best of all things here below.

BERLIOZ/HIS CAREER

by Liszt

I HAVE LONG wanted to repeat my hearty thanks to you* for the faithful, noble devotion which you have always bravely and decidedly shown to the Weimar Period of Progression in the years 1849-58. The third volume of your collected writings *Hector Berlioz* affords another proof of this devotion, which is highly to be valued in contrast with the far too general wishy-washy absence of opinion.

After the unheard-of success of more than twenty performances of *The Damnation of Faust* by the concert societies of Lamoureux, Padeloup, Colonne, in the same season in Paris—not counting the theatre, for which this work is not suitable, the French Berlioz literature is increasing. You know Hippeau's octavo book *Berlioz Intime*, which is shortly to be followed by a second "*Berlioz Artiste*." I wish this to profit by your work.

In reading the first volume I was painfully affected by several passages out of Berlioz's letters, in which the discord and broken-heartedness of his early years are only too apparent. He could not grasp the just idea that a genius cannot hope to exist with impunity, and that a *new thing* cannot at once expect to please the *ancient order of things*.

For the rest, there lies in his complaints against the Parisian *gredins et crétins* [fools and scoundrels], whom he might also find in other places, a large share of injustice. In spite of his exaggerated leniency in favour of a foreign country, the fact remains that up to the present time no European composer had received such distinctions from his own country as Berlioz did from France. Compare the position of Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Schumann, with that of Berlioz. In the case of Beethoven the Archduke Rudolf alone bespoke the *Missa Solemnis*. The profit from his rarely given concerts was small, and at the last he turned to the London Philharmonic Society for support.

Weber acted as Court conductor in Dresden, and wrote his *Oberon* at the invitation of London.

Schubert's marvellous productiveness was badly paid for by the publishers; other favourable conditions had he none.

Schumann's biography testifies no patriotic enthusiasm for his works during his lifetime. His position as musical conductor at Düsseldorf was by no means a brilliant one . . .

* Addressed to Richard Pohl and published in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Musikzeitung* of October 24, 1884.

It was otherwise with Mendelssohn, who had private means, and who, by his delicate and just eclecticism, clinging to Bach, Händel, and even Beethoven, obtained continual success in England and Germany. King William IV called him to Berlin at the same time with Cornelius,* Kaulbach, Schelling, and Meyerbeer, which he did not enjoy any better than Leipzig.

I make no further mention of Meyerbeer here, because he owes his universal success chiefly to Paris. It was there that all his Operas, from *Robert* and *The Huguenots* to his posthumous *L'Africaine*, were first performed—with the exception of *Das Feldlager in Schlesien* [The Camp in Silesia], which also sparkled later in Paris as *L'étoile du Nord*.

Now let us see how things went with Berlioz in his native land.

Like Victor Hugo, he was, after three times becoming a candidate, elected a member of the Institute of France,—similarly (without any candidature) to be librarian of the Conservatoire; he was also a collaborator of the highly esteemed *Journal des Débats* and officer of the Legion of Honour.

Where do we find in Germany similar proofs of distinction? Why, therefore, the bitter insults of Berlioz against the Paris *gredins* and *crétins*? Unfortunately it certainly never brought Berlioz an out-and-out theatrical success, although his nature leaned that way.

BERLIOZ/A FRIENDSHIP

by Wagner

ONE REAL GAIN I bring back from England—the cordial and genuine friendship which I feel for Berlioz, and which we have mutually concluded.† I heard a concert of the New Philharmonic under his direction, and was, it is true, little edified by his performance of Mozart's *G Minor Symphony*, while the very imperfect execution of his *Romeo and Juliet* symphony made me pity him. A few days afterwards we two were the only guests at Sainton's table; he was lively, and the progress in French which I have made in London, permitted me to discuss with him for five hours all the problems of art, philosophy, and life in a most fascinating conversation. In that manner I gained a deep sympathy for my new friend; he appeared to me quite different from what he had done before. We discovered suddenly that we were in reality fellow-sufferers, and I thought, upon

* This means the painter Cornelius.

† To Liszt, Zurich, July 5, 1855.

the whole, I was happier than Berlioz. After my last concert he and the other few friends I have in London called on me; his wife also came. We remained together till three o'clock in the morning, and took leave with the warmest embraces. I told him that you were going to visit me in September, and asked him to meet you at my house. The money question seemed to be his chief difficulty, and I am sure he would like to come. Let him know exactly when you will be here.

BERLIOZ/A FRIENDSHIP

by Liszt

IN THE MEANTIME I am delighted at your friendly relations with Berlioz.* Of all contemporary composers he is the one with whom you can converse in the simplest, openest, and most interesting manner. Take him for all in all, he is an honest, splendid, tremendous fellow; and, together with your letter, I received one from Berlioz, in which he says amongst other things: "Wagner will, no doubt, tell you all about his stay in London, and what he has had to suffer from predetermined hostility. He is splendid in his ardour and warmth of heart, and I confess that even his violence delights me. It seems there is a fate against my hearing his last compositions. The day when, at the demand of Prince Albert, he conducted his *Tannhäuser* overture at the Hanover Square Rooms, I was compelled at the same hour to attend a horrible choral rehearsal for the New Philharmonic concert which I had to conduct two days afterwards," etc.

And lower down:

"Wagner has something singularly attractive to me, and if we both have asperities, those asperities dovetail into each other:"



(Berlioz's drawing is more brilliant than mine.)

* To Wagner, Weimar, July 11, 1855, in reply to the foregoing.

BRAHMS

by Mahler

I HAVE GONE all through Brahms by now.* All I can say of him is that he's a puny little dwarf with a rather narrow chest. Good Lord, if a breath from the lungs of Richard Wagner whistled about his ears he would scarcely be able to keep his feet. But I don't mean to hurt his feelings.† You will be astonished when I tell you where I get more completely bogged down than anywhere else—in his so-called "developments." It is very seldom he can make anything whatever of his themes, beautiful as they often are. Only Beethoven and Wagner, after all, could that.

BRAHMS/FORM

by Schoenberg

FORM IN MUSIC‡ serves to bring about comprehensibility through memorability. Evenness, regularity, symmetry, subdivision, repetition, unity, relationship in rhythm and harmony and even logic—none of these elements produces or even contributes to beauty. But all of them contribute to an organization which makes the presentation of the musical idea intelligible. The language in which musical ideas are expressed in tones parallels the language which expresses feelings or thoughts in words, in that its vocabulary must be proportionate to the intellect which it addresses, and in that the aforementioned elements of its organization function like the rhyme, the rhythm, the meter, and the subdivision into strophes, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, etc. in poetry or prose.

The more or less complete exploitation of the potency of these components determines the aesthetic value and the classification of the style in respect to its popularity or profundity. Science must explore and examine all facts; art is only concerned with the presen-

* To Alma Mahler, Malernigg, June 23, 1904.

† Brahms died in 1897.

‡ From *Style and Idea*, published by the Philosophical Library, 1950.

tation of characteristic facts. Even Antony, when addressing the Roman people, realizes that he must repeat his ". . . and Brutus is an honorable man" over and over, if this contrast is to penetrate into the minds of simple citizens. Repetitions in Mother Goose songs are of course on a different level, and so is the organization of popular music. Here one finds numerous slightly varied repetitions, as in the otherwise very beautiful *Blue Danube Waltz*.

Here are six repetitions, and almost all are based on the alternation of tonic and dominant.



EXAMPLE 1

Though richer in harmony, the example from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* is of no higher order.



EXAMPLE 2

An artist or an author need not be aware that he accommodates his style to the listener's capacity of comprehension. An artist need not think very much, if only he thinks correctly and straightforwardly. He feels that he obeys the urge of a spring within himself, the urge to express himself, just like a clock, which indicates twenty-four hours every day, without questioning whether it means "this" day, this month, this year, or this century. Everyone knows this, except the clock. The artist's response to the urge of his motor occurs

automatically without delay, like that of every well-lubricated mechanism.

It is obvious that one would not discuss the splitting of atoms with a person who does not know what an atom is. On the other hand, one cannot talk to a trained mind in Mother Goose fashion or in the style of what Hollywoodians call "lyrics." In the sphere of art-music, the author respects his audience. He is afraid to offend it by repeating over and over what can be understood at one single hearing, even if it is new, and let alone if it is stale old trash. A diagram may tell the whole story of a game to a chess expert; a chemist recognizes all he wants to know by glancing at a few symbols; but in a mathematical formula are combined the distant past, the actual present, and the most remote future.

Repeatedly hearing things which one likes is pleasant and need not be ridiculed. There is a subconscious desire to understand better and realize more details of the beauty. But an alert and well-trained mind will demand to be told the more remote matters, the more remote consequences of the simple matters that he has already comprehended. An alert and well-trained mind refuses to listen to baby-talk and requests strongly to be spoken to in a brief and straightforward language.

Progress in music consists in the development of methods of presentation which correspond to the conditions just discussed. It is the purpose of this essay to prove that Brahms, the classicist, the academician, was a great innovator in the realm of musical language, that, in fact, he was a great progressive.

This may seem contestable to an incarnate "old-Wagnerian," no matter whether he is one of the primigenial Wagnerians who has grown old, or simply an "old-Wagnerian" by birth. There were still fireproof "old-Wagnerians" born at the time of my own generation and even ten years later. Pioneers of musical progress on the one hand, and keepers of the Holy Grail of true art on the other, they considered themselves entitled to look with contempt at Brahms the classicist, the academician.

Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss had been the first to clarify these concepts. They had both been educated in the traditional as well as in the progressive, in the Brahmsian as well as in the Wagnerian philosophy of art (*Weltanschauung*). Their example helped us to realize that there was as much organizational order, if not pedantry in Wagner as there was daring courage, if not even bizarre fantasy in Brahms. Does not the mystic correspondence of the numbers of their dates suggest some mysterious relationship between them? Brahms' one-hundredth birthday anniversary in 1933

was the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Wagner. And now, as this essay is being rewritten, we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Brahms' death.

Mysteries conceal a truth, but direct curiosity unveils it.

How great an innovator Brahms was in respect to harmony can be seen in this example from his string quartet in C minor, Op. 51, No. 1 (ms. 11-23).

The image displays four systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment, each with a corresponding harmonic analysis below it. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various notes, rests, and phrasing slurs. The harmonic analysis uses Roman numerals to denote chords and their inversions.

System 1: t: IV, sd: I, IV, I

System 2: t: V, sd: II, ♯, IV

System 3: t: I, ♯, V

System 4: t: V, G I, Gm, V, ♯, V, I, V

EXAMPLE 3

This is the contrasting middle section of a ternary form whose a-section is already rich enough harmonically in comparison with the I-V or I-IV-V harmony, intermixed occasionally with a VI or III and sometimes a neapolitan triad, of Brahms' predecessors. To base a main theme on such a rich harmony seemed a daring enterprise to the ears of the time.

But the harmony of this middle section competes successfully with that of many a Wagnerian passage. Even the most progressive composers after Brahms were carefully avoiding remote deviation from the tonic region in the beginning of a piece. But this modulation to the dominant of a minor region on B, and the sudden, unceremonious and precipitate return to the tonic, is a rare case. The succession of three major triads on E flat, D flat and C respectively in the coda of the first movement of the *Eroica* (ms. 551-561) and the juxtaposition of two unrelated triads (on B and B \flat) in the following example from Schubert are cases of a similar procedure.

Mut - - - ter - haus has - - sen - den

EXAMPLE 4

Examples from Wagner in which similar progressions occur are often not easily analyzed, but then prove less complicated than one might have expected. For instance, the motive of the *Todestrank*, from *Tristan und Isolde* Example 5 unmasks itself as remaining

t: VI
sm: I

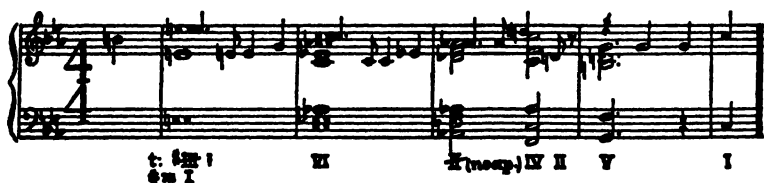
II (noep)

t: IV
sm: VI

EXAMPLE 5

within the closer relations of the tonality. Also not very distant is the harmonic deviation in Isolde's order to Tristan: "*Befehlen liess dem Eigenholde. . .*"

But the *Traurige Weise*, Example 6 the English Horn solo of Act



EXAMPLE 6

III Example 7 shows in its modulatory section no more remote



EXAMPLE 7

modulation than the end of the a-section of the aforementioned C minor string quartet of Brahms, Example 8.



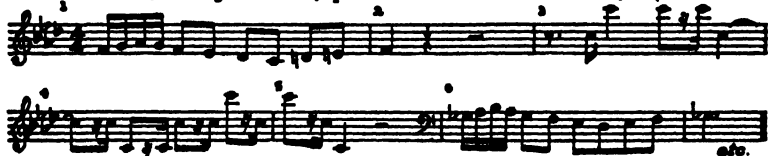
EXAMPLE 8

These are in essence chromatically descending triads, most of them inversions; their treatment is similar to that of neapolitan triads. Some examples of their appearance in classic music are illustrated in Example 9 a, b, c.

Beethoven, String Quartet, op. 59, N^o 2



Beethoven, String Quartet, op. 95



Bach, St. Matthew Passion, N^o 40



EXAMPLE 9 A, B, C

If there is no decisive difference between Brahms and Wagner as regards extension of the relationship within a tonality, it must not be overlooked that Wagner's harmony is richer in substitute harmonies and vagrants, and in a freer use of dissonances, especially of unprepared ones. On the other hand, in strophic, songlike forms and other structures, such as represent the Wagnerian version of arias, the harmony moves rather less expansively and more slowly than in similar forms of Brahms. Compare, for instance, the "*Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond*," the "*Als zullendes Kind, zog ich dich auf*" or the song of the Rhine Daughters to Brahms' song "*Meine Liebe ist grün*," or the main theme of the String Quintet in G, Op. 111, which starts roving in its third measure, or the Rhapsody, Op. 79, No. 2, which almost avoids establishing a tonality.

Ternary, rondo, and other rounded forms appear in dramatic music only occasionally, as episodes, mostly at lyrical resting-points where the action stops or at least slows down—in places where a composer can proceed along formal concepts and can repeat and develop without the pressure of the progress of an action, without being forced to mirror moods or events not included in the character of his material.

Dramatic music resembles in its modulatory character the modulatory elaboration (*Durchführung*) of a symphony, sonata, or other rounded form. Wagner's *Leitmotives* usually contain some germinating harmonies in which the urge for modulatory changes is inherent. But simultaneously they fulfill another task, an organizational task, which shows the formalistic side of Wagner's genius.

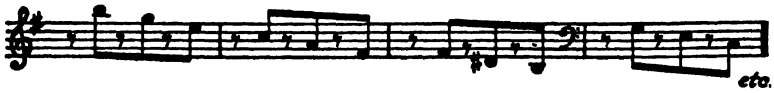
The recitative in pre-Wagnerian operas was also modulatory. But it was unorganized, if not incoherent, with respect to thematic and even motive requirements. The *Leitmotiv* technique represents the grandiose intention of unification of the thematic material of an entire opera, and even of an entire tetralogy. An organization as far-reaching as this deserves an aesthetic rating of the highest order. But if foresight in organization is called formalistic in the case of Brahms, then this organization is also formalistic, because it stems from the same state of mind, from one which conceives an entire work in one single creative moment and acts correspondingly.

When Brahms, towards the end of the last movement of his Fourth Symphony, carries out some of the variations by a succession of thirds Example 10 he unveils the relationship of the theme of the



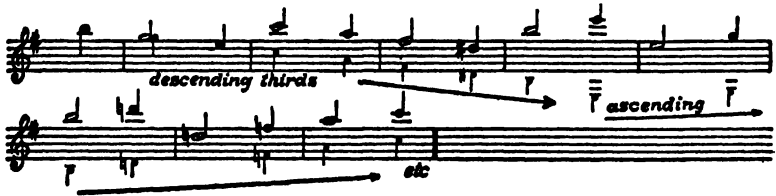
EXAMPLE 10

passacaglia to the first movement. Transposed a fifth up Example 11 it is identical with the first eight notes of the main theme Ex-



EXAMPLE 11

ample 12 and the theme of the passacaglia in its first half admits



EXAMPLE 12

the contrapuntal combination with the descending thirds. People generally do not know that luck is a heavenly gift, equivalent to, and of the same kind as, talent, beauty, strength, etc. It is not given for nothing—on the contrary, one must deserve it. Sceptics might attempt belittling this as a mere “lucky chance.” Such people have a wrong evaluation of both luck and inspiration and are not capable of imagining what both can achieve.

It would look like a high accomplishment of intellectual gymnastics if all this had been “constructed” prior to inspired composing. But men who know the power of inspiration, and how it can produce combinations no one can foresee, also know that Wagner’s application of the *Leitmotiv* was, in the great majority of cases, of an inspired spontaneity. As often as Siegfried came to his mind, his mind’s eye and ear saw and heard him just as his motive depicts him.



EXAMPLE 14 A, B, C

I assume that I have been the first to lay down a principle which, about four decades ago, began directing and regulating my

musical thinking and the formulation of my ideas, and which played a decisive role in my self-criticism.

I wish to join ideas with ideas. No matter what the purpose or meaning of an idea in the aggregate may be, no matter whether its function be introductory, establishing, varying, preparing, elaborating, deviating, developing, concluding, subdividing, subordinate, or basic, it must be an idea which had to take this place even if it were not to serve for this purpose or meaning or function; and this idea must look in construction and in thematic content as if it were not there to fulfill a structural task. In other words, a transition, a codetta, an elaboration, etc., should not be considered as a thing in its own end. It should not appear at all if it does not develop, modify, intensify, clarify, or throw light or color on the idea of the piece . . .

Great art must proceed to precision and brevity. It presupposes the alert mind of an educated listener who, in a single act of thinking, includes with every concept all associations pertaining to the complex. This enables a musician to write for upper-class minds, not only doing what grammar and idiom require, but, in other respects lending to every sentence the full pregnancy of meaning of a maxim, of a proverb, of an aphorism. This is what musical prose should be—a direct and straightforward presentation of ideas, without any patchwork, without mere padding and empty repetitions . . .

The most important capacity of a composer is to cast a glance into the most remote future of his themes or motives. He has to be able to know beforehand the consequences which derive from the problems existing in his material, and to organize everything accordingly. Whether he does this consciously or subconsciously is a subordinate matter. It suffices if the result proves it.

Thus one must not be astonished by an act of genius when a composer, feeling that irregularity will occur later, already deviates in the beginning from simple regularity. An unprepared and sudden change of structural principles would endanger balance . . .

There is no doubt that Brahms believed in working out the ideas which he called "gifts of grace." Hard labor is, to a trained mind, no torture, but rather a pleasure. As I have stated on another occasion: if a mathematician's or a chess player's mind can perform such miracles of the brain, why should a musician's mind not be able to do it? After all, an improviser must anticipate before

playing, and composing is a slowed-down improvisation; often one cannot write fast enough to keep up with the stream of ideas. But a craftsman likes to be conscious of what he produces; he is proud of the ability of his hands, of the flexibility of his mind, of his subtle sense of balance, of his never-failing logic, of the multitude of variations, and last but not least of the profundity of his idea and his capacity of penetrating to the most remote consequences of an idea. One cannot do this with a shallow idea, but one can, and one can *only*, with a profound idea—and there one *must*.

It is important to realize that at a time when all believed in "expression," Brahms, without renouncing beauty and emotion, proved to be a progressive in a field which had not been cultivated for half a century. He would have been a pioneer if he had simply returned to Mozart. But he did not live on inherited fortune; he made one of his own. True, Wagner has contributed to the development of structural formulations through his technique of repetitions, varied or unvaried, because they freed him from the obligation of elaborating longer than necessary upon subjects which he had already clearly determined. Thus this language admitted turning to other subjects, when the action on the stage demanded it.

Brahms never wrote dramatic music—and it was rumored in Vienna that he had said he would rather write in the style of Mozart than in the *Neudeutsche Stil*.^{*} One can be sure it would not have been Mozart's style, but pure Brahms, and though he might have repeated whole sentences, and even single words of the text, in the manner of pre-Wagnerian opera, he could not have entirely disregarded the contemporary feeling for dramatic presentation; he would not let an actor die during a *da capo aria*, and repeat the beginning after death. On the other hand, it would be highly enlightening to see all the dramatico-musical requirements carried out over Brahms' immensely advanced harmony.

It might be doubtful whether Brahms could have found a libretto fitting to what he liked and to the emotion he was capable of expressing. Would it have been a comic opera, a comedy, a lyric drama or a tragedy? He is many-sided, and one can easily find in his music expressions of all sorts, with the possible exception of violent dramatic outbursts such as one finds in Wagner and Verdi. Who knows? If one considers Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which is distinctly symphonic in its organization, remembers the tremendous outburst at the end of the second act, "*O namenlose Freudel!*" ("Oh inexpressible joy!") and compares that with the strictly sym-

^{*} See Brahms' comment on *Meistersinger*, page 185.

phonic style of the greater part of the third act, one may get an impression of what a genius is capable "wenn der Geist ihn packt."

BRAHMS/THE FIRST MEETING

by C. Schumann

THIS MONTH* INTRODUCED us to a wonderful person, Brahms, a composer from Hamburg—twenty years old. Here again is one of those who comes as if sent straight from God. He played us sonatas, scherzos, etc. of his own, all of them showing exuberant imagination, depth of feeling, and mastery of form. Robert says that there was nothing that he could tell him to take away or to add. It is really moving to see him sitting at the piano, with his interesting young face which becomes transfigured when he plays, his beautiful hands, which overcome the greatest difficulties with perfect ease (his things are very difficult), and in addition these remarkable compositions. He has studied with Marxsen in Hamburg, but what he played to us is so masterly that one cannot but think that the good God sent him into the world ready-made. He has a great future before him, for he will first find the true field for his genius when he begins to write for the orchestra. Robert says there is nothing to wish except that heaven may preserve his health . . .

* September 1853, from Clara Schumann's diary.

BRUCKNER

by Wolf

BRUCKNER? BRUCKNER? Who is he? Where does he live? What can he do? Such are the questions heard in Vienna, and especially from patrons of the subscription concerts of the Philharmonic and the Society of the Friends of Music. And if you do meet someone who is acquainted with the name he will recall that Bruckner is Professor of Music Theory at the local conservatory. Another person will add, with a triumphant glance at the semi-educated enquirer, that Bruckner is an organ virtuoso. A third music-lover will believe, a fourth will know, a fifth will even declare, and a sixth will finally swear that Bruckner is also a composer.

And the connoisseur will shake his noble head to say that Bruckner's form is not quite adroit, the amateur will complain of the confusion in Bruckner's ideas, another commentator will decry the poor instrumentation, and finally, the critic will find everything terrible, and so—*basta*.

Only one other individual is left to be heard from—the conductor. The conductor approves of the composer, defends his works, and, despite criticism, proposes that Bruckner's symphonies should be played. But to whom must the conductor make the suggestion? His orchestra, his servants, so to speak. But here the lone conductor finds that he is far from having dictatorial powers. If the tribunes of the orchestra veto the decision of the conductor he may move heaven and earth to gain his ends—in vain.

(The consequences of such a situation are obvious, particularly when members of the orchestra understand as little of a composition as they do their instruments. A good soldier does not make a good general; and an orchestra player may be a technical expert on his instrument and still be unable to perform a moving, well-executed solo.)

With the conductor's defeat the last hope disappears, and Bruckner, a titan locked in battle with the gods, is forced to make himself understood by means of the piano. It is bad, but still better than not being heard at all. And if in this unfortunate situation he can be said to be lucky at all, Bruckner is lucky to have found two

* An article of December 28, 1884.

enthusiastic interpreters in Messrs. Lowe and Schalk. And with them Bruckner's unjust treatment at the hands of the influential music circle is somewhat ameliorated.

I mentioned that Bruckner is a titan battling with the gods. And in truth, I cannot think of a better figure by which to paint the characteristics of this composer. For in it both praise and blame are combined. Raw, natural powers in conflict with intellectual superiority, or, in the person of the composer, an extraordinary natural artistry, freshness, and naïveté thrust against a musical self-consciousness, intelligence, and education—these are the principal contradictory elements in the development of this artist. If the composer could have smoothed this antagonism he could undoubtedly achieve an importance equal to Liszt's. It is the lack of a certain intelligence that makes Bruckner's symphonies so difficult for us to understand, despite their originality, freshness, strength, imagination, and invention. In all of them there is a great Will, and tremendous Force, but no satisfaction, no artistic solution. And from this apparent extravagance of expression there springs that characteristic formlessness of his works. Bruckner wrestles with the idea, but lacks the courage to point it, and then to proceed further with a clear conscience. Thus he teeters midway between Beethoven, and the new achievements as best expressed in the symphonic poems of Franz Liszt. Bruckner seems to strike roots somewhere between the two, without being able to decide to which he belongs. That is his misfortune.

I do not mean to imply that Bruckner's symphonies are the most significant symphonic expressions since Beethoven. They are the work of a genius, an ill-starred genius, similar in quality to the great poetry of Grabbe. Bold, grand-scaled conceptions are common to both artists, as is a loose and formless execution of the concepts. Like Grabbe, who reminds us of Shakespeare by virtue of the riot of his fantasy and the brilliance of his thoughts, Bruckner recalls Beethoven to us by means of his great themes and the thoughtful uses to which they are put. It is well worth the trouble to pay this stormy figure more attention than he has received. It is a shattering sight to see this extraordinary man banned from the concert halls, this man who has first call among contemporary composers (except Liszt, of course) on our praises and admiration.*

* It must be remembered that Wagner had died in February of the preceding year.

BRUCKNER

by Brahms

DEAR LADY,*

I understand! You have sat through the roaring of Bruckner's symphony once, and now, when people talk about it, you are afraid to trust the recollection of your own impressions. Well, you may safely do so. Your delightful letter† expresses most lucidly all that can be said—all that one has said oneself or would like to have said so nicely. You will not mind when I tell you that Hanslick shares your opinion, and read your letter with pious joy! But one symphony and one quintet of Bruckner's have been printed.‡ I advise you to get them to look at, with a view to steeling your mind and your judgment. You will not want me!

With supreme ill-humour, deepest respect and kindest regards,
yours

J.Br

* To Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, Vienna, January 12, 1885.

† Our friend Hildebrand will have delivered our messages, and told you of the Bruckner excitement here [Leipzig], and how we rebelled against having him thrust upon us—like compulsory vaccination. We had to endure much stinging criticism—insinuations as to our inability to detect power under an imperfect exterior, or admit a talent which, though not perhaps fully developed, still exists, and has a claim to interest and recognition. We are not to consider artistic results everything, but to admire the hidden driving-power, whether it succeeds in expressing itself satisfactorily or no. That is all very well in theory, but in practice it all depends on the value of this driving-power. Unless it is very great, one can only hold aloof, and resign oneself to be abused of the philistines, who have eyes for beauty only when it wears their own colours. We wished we had you to back us up, and could hear your sound views, which are based on super-abundant experience and are therefore worth more than all the theories of the wise, all the mere instincts of the simple. And, who knows? you may agree with us, the simple; and that is what I particularly want to know. It would be such a help. Integrity of judgment is, to one of us, as precious in the domain of art as in human jurisdiction, and it oppresses us to appear as narrowminded, ungenerous, timid observers, so afraid of overrating that they lose all sense of justice.

You must excuse this letter, which superfluous as it must appear, could only be written to you; for who else could give us the desired answer? Thank you again for the songs. If Bruckner had written *Kränze*, or *Liebesbotschaft*, or *Die Liebende schreibt*, or *Abenddämmerung* (Brahms, Op. 26, No. 1; Op. 47, Nos. 1, 5; Op. 49, No. 5), I would search the symphony through half a dozen times for that hidden gold; but I think the fact is, that whoever could write the one would never be guilty of the other.

E. von Herzogenberg

‡ The third symphony in D minor, dedicated to Richard Wagner, and the quintet in F major.

BRUCKNER AND BRAHMS

by Mahler

NOW THAT I'VE worked my way through Brahms, I've fallen back on Bruckner again.* An odd pair of second-raters. The one was "in the casting ladle" † too long, the other not long enough. Now I stick to Beethoven. There are only he and Richard—and after them, nobody.

Gustav

* To Alma Mahler, Maiernigg, (July?) 1904.

† A reference to *Peer Gynt*.

CHOPIN

by Moscheles

WE ARE LIVING here [Paris, 1839] in the fullest enjoyment of our freedom and independence, and at Leo's, where I love to make music, I first met his friend Chopin, who had just returned from the country.* His appearance is completely identified with his music—they are both delicate and sentimental (*schwärmerisch*). He played to me in compliance with my request, and I now for the first time understand his music, and all the raptures of the lady world become intelligible. The *ad libitum* playing, which in the hands of other interpreters of his music degenerates into a constant uncertainty of rhythm, is with him an element of exquisite originality; the hard inartistic modulations, so like those of a *dilettante*—which I never can manage when playing Chopin's music—cease to shock me, for he glides over them almost imperceptibly with his elfish fingers. His soft playing being a mere breath, he requires no powerful forte to produce the desired contrasts; the consequence is that one never misses the orchestral effects that the German school demands of a pianoforte player, but is carried away as by some singer who troubles himself very little about the accompaniment, and follows his own impulses. Enough; he is perfectly unique in the world of pianoforte players. He professes a great attachment for my music, and at all events knows it perfectly. He played me some of his Studies, and his latest work, *Preludes*; I played in return several things of my own. [Who would have believed that Chopin, with all his sentimentality, had also a comic vein? And yet among repeated notices about the playing and listening to music in artist and amateur circles, we read the following:] Chopin was lively, cheerful, nay, extremely funny in his imitations of Pixis, Liszt, and a hump-backed pianoforte connoisseur. [Again:] Today he was quite a different Chopin from the Chopin last week. I visited him by appointment with Charlotte and Emily, who are his enthusiastic admirers; they were profoundly impressed with the Prelude in A flat major in 6/8 time, with the perpetually recurring A flat resembling the pedal bass of an organ. Chopin's excellent pupil Gutmann

* From *Recent Music and Musicians*, published in 1879.

played his manuscript Scherzo in C sharp minor, Chopin himself his manuscript Sonata in B flat minor, with the *Funeral March*.

At nine o'clock Chopin and I were called for by P. and his charming wife. We all four went off in a pelting storm of rain, and felt more comfortable when we entered the warm and brilliantly lighted palace.* We passed through some splendid apartments, to a *salon carré*, where only the Royal Family was assembled; the Queen at a round table, with an elegant work-basket before her (I wonder whether she was knitting a purse for me?). Next to her was Madame Adélaïde, the Duchess of Orleans, and the ladies of the Court. They one and all treated us kindly, as if we were old acquaintances. The Queen as well as Madame Adélaïde, declared that they still remembered with gratitude the delight I gave them at the Tuileries. The King came up to me to say the same thing, adding, he supposed an interval of between fifteen and sixteen years had elapsed since that time. I said he was quite correct, but thought all the while of the poor Count d'Artois, who had then been present. The Queen then asked if the instrument—a Pleyel—was placed as we liked it; was the lighting what we wanted? if the chairs were the right height, etc.; and was as anxious for our comfort as a Citizen Queen might well be. First of all Chopin played a *mélange* of Nocturnos and *Études*, and was extolled and admired as an old Court favorite. I followed with some old and new *Studies*, and was honored with similar applause. We then sat down together at the instrument, he again playing the bass, a thing he always insists on. The small audience now listened intently to my E flat major Sonata, [4 hands] which was interrupted by such exclamations as *divin! délicieux!* After the *Andante* the Queen whispered to one of her suite: *Ne serait-il pas indiscret de le leur redemander?* which was tantamount to a command; so we played it again with increased *abandon*, and in the *Finale* gave ourselves up to a "musical delirium."

Chopin's enthusiasm throughout the whole performance of the piece must, I think, have kindled that of his hearers, who overwhelmed us both with compliments equally divided. Chopin played another solo as charmingly as before, and met with the same reception. I then improvised on some of Mozart's sweetest airs, and finally dashed away at the *Zauberflöte* overture. Better than all the words of praise which flow so glibly from the lips of princes, was

* An account of a visit to the court of King Louis Philippe at St. Cloud on October 30, 1839.

the King's close attention during the entire evening. Chopin and I revelled like brothers in the triumph achieved by the individual talent of each, there was no tinge of jealousy on either side. At last, after being allowed to enjoy some refreshments, we left the palace at 11:30, this time only under a shower of compliments, for the rain had ceased, and we had a clear night.

CUI

by Liszt

VERY HONOURED FRIEND, It is well known in various countries in what high esteem I hold your works.* As I am convinced that the *Suite* of which you speak will prove itself worthy of your preceding compositions, I feel that I am honoured by the dedication, and thank you for it with gratitude. Your musical style is raised far above ordinary phraseology; you do not cultivate the convenient and barren field of the commonplace . . . Doubtless *form* in art is necessary to the expression of ideas and sentiments; it must be adequate, supple, free, now energetic, now graceful, delicate; sometimes even subtle and complex, but always to the exclusion of the ancient remains of decrepit *formalism*.

At Meiningen, where Bülow's admirable conducting is working wonders of rhythm and *nuances* with the orchestra, I lately had the honour of a conversation with the Grand Duke Constantine Constantinowitch, on the actual development of music in Russia and of the well-known capacity of its courageous promoters. His Imperial Highness justly appreciates their serious worth, their noble character and intense originality; consequently, dear Monsieur Cui, the Grand Duke accords full praise to your talents and desserts.

I take pleasure in repeating this to you, at the same time renewing to you the assurance of my very sincere regard.

F. Liszt

A young Russian pianist, M. Siloti, who has been brought to a high state of virtuosity by the lessons and example of Nicholas Rubinstein, is now gaining a real success in Germany. When he comes to Petersburg I recommend him to your kindness.

* Weimar, December 30, 1883.

FRANZ

by Schumann

THERE IS MUCH to say regarding these *lieder* (Opus 1) by Robert Franz;* they are not isolated productions, but bear an inward relationship to the whole development of our art during the past ten years. It is well known that in the years 1830-34, a reaction took place in opposition to the reigning taste. On the whole, the struggle was not a difficult one; it was principally waged with that empty flourish of manner that displayed itself in nearly every department of art (always excepting the works of Weber, Loewe, and a few others), and especially in pianoforte music.

The first attack was made on this last; more thoughtful pictures began to take the place of mere passage work, an influence of two masters—Beethoven and Bach—became perceptible in these. The young musical party grew numerous, the new life penetrated into other branches. Franz Schubert had already worked on the *lied* form, but principally in the Beethovenian manner, while the influence of Bach was more perceptible in North German song. Development was hastened by the appearance of a new school of German poetry. Eichendorff and Rückert, though they began to write before this time, had now become familiar to musicians, and Uhland and Heine were frequently set to music. Thus arose that more artistic and profound style of song, of which earlier composers could of course know nothing, since it was the new spirit of poetry reflected in music.

The songs of Robert Franz thoroughly belong to this noble new style. Hurdygurdy sing-song writing, the reciting penny verses with the same indifferences as a poem by Rückert, for example, is beginning to be estimated at its proper value and though this progress has not yet reached the mass of the public, the better class has long been aware of it. And indeed the *lied* is the only form of composition in which a remarkable improvement has taken place since Beethoven's time. If, for instance, we compare the industry which has been made use of in the songs before us to interpret the ideas of the poems almost word for word, with the negligence of the former mode of treatment, in which the poem was considered

* *Neue Zeitschrift*, July 1843.

of very secondary importance; or contrast the whole harmonic construction here, with the slovenly formulas of accompaniment which earlier times found so difficult to shake off; only narrow-minded prejudice will fail to perceive this great improvement.

Robert Franz's characteristics as a *lied* composer are expressed in the preceding sentence. He desires more than well- or ill-sounding music; he strives to reflect the poem with lifelike profundity. He is most successful in the quietly dreamy mood, but we find in him some simple, charming traits, as in the first song, then the *Dance-song in May*, and some yet more cheerful out-wellings to some of Robert Burns's texts. This double book of songs suggests the most varied pictures and feelings, and all bear a trace of melancholy. For the performance of these songs we need a poet as well as a singer; but they will please best when sung alone and at evening. A few things in them are painful to my ear, as the beginnings of the seventh and twelfth songs, and the often-returning E in the last. I wish the seventh had been omitted from the collection; it seems to me too artificial in melody and harmony. The others are interesting, remarkable, often uncommonly fine. Tieck's slumber-song should have had a more richly musical close, but it is, notwithstanding, one of the happiest. It would be an endless task to describe separately the fine musical features of these songs; musicians of feeling will discover them for themselves.

These *lieder*, then, differ remarkably from others. But he who has thus commenced, must not wonder if higher things are demanded from him in future. Success in a small style often leads to one-sidedness and mannerism. We trust the young artist will protect himself from this by grasping new artistic forms, and by expressing his rich inward feelings otherwise than in songs. Our sympathy, however, will be with him on any path.

LISZT

by Tchaikovsky

LISZT, THE OLD JESUIT, speaks in terms of exaggerated praise of every work which is submitted to his inspection.* He is at heart a good man, one of the very few great artists who have never known envy (Wagner and in some measure Anton Rubinstein owe their success to him; he also did much for Berlioz); but he is too much of a Jesuit to be frank and sincere.

LISZT

by C. Schumann

YESTERDAY THE 31ST† Liszt died at Bayreuth—once again a man of unusual type is borne to the grave. How sad it makes one that one cannot lament him with unmixed feelings. All the tinsel around him obscures the image of the artist and the man. He was a great piano virtuoso, but a dangerous model for the young to imitate. Almost all the rising pianists imitated him, but they lacked his mind, his genius, his delicacy of touch, so that now we have nothing but great masters of technique and a number of caricatures. . . . Then Liszt was a bad composer—in this respect too he did harm to many people, but this is not so serious as his compositions lack all the qualities which have been mentioned as belonging to him as a virtuoso: they are trivial, wearisome and they will soon disappear now that he has gone. His personal charm and his brilliant execution have always turned people's heads, and so they have accepted his works. As a young man he was most fascinating, but later he let so much coquetry blend with his really intellectual and charming disposition that I often found it disagreeable . . .

* An excerpt from a letter to Nadejda von Meck dated Paris, November 18, 1879, in which he disagrees with Liszt's high opinion of the *Paraphrases* by Rimsky, Borodin, Cui, etc.

† From her diary dated August 1, 1886.

MENDELSSOHN

LATER IN LIFE

by Moscheles

WHEN MENDELSSOHN APPEARED in the orchestra,* he was received, as he deserves, with raptures and enthusiasm. With him for a permanent conductor the Philharmonic Concerts must improve. The mediocre performances were often a source of annoyance and regret to me, and the one remedy, the appointment of a permanent conductor, was unwisely from time to time postponed; now I feel quite relieved. Once more, to my great delight, I heard Mendelssohn's *A minor Symphony*, with its fine piquant and original instrumentation. His *Midsummer Night's Dream* music, given at the fifth, was repeated at the sixth concert, when the Court was present; last of all we had the *Walpurgis Night*, all the more delightful to me as I had studied its beauties in the pianoforte score. The *Suite of Bach* † is a most interesting novelty—this too, we owe to my dear friend. He played himself Beethoven's *G major Concerto*, improvising splendid cadenzas, and introduced his young friend Joachim [age 13] in the same great master's *Violin Concerto*—both performances were triumphant. Of course Felix was the bright star of my birthday party on the 30th of May. He brought a most welcome contribution to my album. It was a sequel to the illustrated catalogue of my works, the first page of which he had filled in 1832; the present continuation is as witty and clever as its predecessors. At the bottom of the page he had written the words, "God willing, to be continued." It was decreed otherwise.

* London, 1844.

† Unidentified.—Ed.

MOZART

by Grieg

"WHAT KIND OF face would Bach, Handel, Haydn, and Mozart make after hearing an opera by Wagner?" asks an English writer. I shall not attempt to answer for the first three, but it is safe to say that Mozart, the universal genius whose mind was free from Philistinism and one-sidedness, would not only open his eyes wide, but would be as delighted as a child with all the new acquisitions in the departments of drama and orchestra. In this light must Mozart be viewed. To speak of Mozart is like speaking of a god. When *Gretchen* asks *Faust*, "Do you believe in God?" he answers, "Who dares name him, who confess him?" In these profound words of Goethe I would express my feelings toward Mozart. Where he is greatest he embraces all times. What if this or that generation be sufficiently *blasé* to desire to overlook him? Beauty is eternal, and the edicts of fashion can obscure it only for a moment. As far as our day is concerned, it is well that Wagner has engraved Mozart's name on his shield. His belief in Mozart is unmistakably attested in his writings, and he has thereby placed himself in emphatic opposition to the musicians of our time, who are so advanced that they care no longer to hear Mozart's music, and reluctantly grant it a place in their concert programs. It is to be hoped that this arrogant ignorance has not found a root in the healthy musical youth of the free West, and I therefore speak to my honored readers under the presumption of their sympathy with the unapproachable master . . .

It is said that unprincipled persons took unfair advantage of Mozart in the last years of his life, and thus accelerated his death. The author of the more than dubious libretto of *The Magic Flute*, Schikaneder, certainly helped to secure to the world this masterpiece of Mozart's. But if he was, as is said, one of those who dared to exploit Mozart for their selfish purposes and thus draw him down to their own level, then woe to him and his memory! In that case we can understand why, when he heard of Mozart's death, he went about like one possessed, exclaiming, "His ghost pursues me everywhere—stands always before my eyes!" Yet even if he

helped to break down Mozart's health and thus to shorten his life, he did not succeed in clouding his ideal imagination, as *The Magic Flute* proves. Schikaneder is mere superficiality. With Mozart even the superficial becomes symbolical, and a deep ethical spirit pervades the whole work.

When I hear people exclaim, "Yes; but the wretched text!" I answer, "Very true; but do you not understand that the text is re-composed by the music, ennobled by it, and raised high above triviality?" If music did not possess this capacity, many of its greatest masterworks would be entirely unpalatable. I can well understand that a bright man of letters, who is unable to hear how the text is refined and vivified by the tones, who looks at it from a purely literary point of view, may find it a disagreeable task to listen to *The Magic Flute*—nay, even to operas with much better texts. A great composer understands how to animate any detail of the poem, be it ever so dull; and he who attends an operatic performance with a predominating literary interest runs the risk of losing the most inspired moments. For, strange as it may sound, such passages often are built up most impressively on the most ordinary literary substratum. There are excellent texts which absolutely demand music. It is related of a great modern poet who for the first time heard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and had gone to the theater free from all prejudice, that after he had gazed for a while with the most serious and expectant face on the scene which, by its duration, is capable of producing, on one to whom it is not idealized by the music, an impression which is not only fatiguing, but positively parodistic, he suddenly, in spite of the tragic situation, was unable to suppress a smile. This smile changed into laughter which at last shook the bench, so that a friend who accompanied him had to whisper in his ear, "But, X—, we can go away!" "Yes, we can go away," groaned the poet, who at that moment realized the painful situation. And in the midst of the act the two men made their way through the parquet. May this episode furnish food for thought to those in particular who listen to an opera like *The Magic Flute* first from a literary, then from a musical, point of view! "Yes; but the text!" We must get so far in our understanding of the stage-work, compounded of words and tones, that at a certain moment the music supplements the words, or *vice versa*; otherwise works like *The Magic Flute* will remain to many a book with seven seals.

When we compare Mozart and Wagner, the truth of the proverb that "extremes meet" forces itself upon us. That these two masters represent "the extremes" is easily understood by any lover of

music, but it may perhaps be necessary to indicate where they "meet." Truly Weber must be regarded as Wagner's immediate predecessor; but if Gluck is named, and not improperly, as the man on whose shoulders Wagner stands, then we must not forget how much he owes to Mozart. For the greatness of Mozart lies in the fact that his influence in the dramatic part of music extends to our time. I have in mind, for example, the developed recitative where Mozart more and more trod paths which it remained for Wagner to develop in his dialogue still further for the modern music-drama. Certain recitatives of Donna Anna and Elvira in *Don Juan* are the originals after which our whole conception of the recitative has been modeled. That Wagner also understood how to appropriate Mozart directly is, oddly enough, proved by a passage in *Lohengrin* which, although genuinely Wagnerian in coloring, yet in its conception has its musical counterpart in *Don Juan*. Compare, for instance, in the second act of *Lohengrin*, Ortrud's words,

Stärkt mich im Dienste eurer heil'gen Sache,
Vernichtet der abtrünnigen schnöden Wahn! *

with the close of the first act of *Don Juan*, the music to the words of Donna Anna and the chorus, "Bebe, schwarzer Missethäter!" †

I mention this casually in order to show that the messieurs Wagnerites would do well to whisper softly when they talk about ignoring Mozart. This ignoring would be too ridiculous to consider, were it not that so many of the best operatic conductors of our time are one-sided Wagnerians. How often have I heard in Germany perfect performances of Wagner's music-dramas under the direction of the same conductors who huddle a Mozart opera in a workaday manner! Nay, here and there these operas are even intrusted to second-rate conductors, the chief being reserved for Wagner. Under such circumstances it is asking too much to expect to come away from a Mozart performance with an impression corresponding even approximately to the value of the opera. It is enough to drive one to despair to think that such a state of affairs is tolerated—nay, even approved. But what a satisfaction it is, too, to be able to mention exceptions! As one of the most eminent of these I name Arthur Nikisch. To him the great is great, whether its name is Wagner or Mozart. His masterly interpretations of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungs*, of *Tristan*, of the *Meistersinger*, will

* Strike them with death who profane your altars!
And strengthen my soul to avenge your wrongs!
† "Tremble, wretched evil-doer!"

live in the memory of all who were so lucky as to reside in Leipzig during the period of his conductorship at the opera. But no less assuredly will they remember his performance of *Don Juan*, his devoted interpretation and careful attention to details, not least in the elaborated recitatives. On these occasions the house resounded with the same rejoicings that one hears after a Wagner opera. May the time come soon when at least those masters who belong to history will be treated with equal justice by their sole representatives, the musical directors, in whose hands their fate is placed! May these gentlemen be brought to a realizing sense of their great responsibility! If our generation acts as if it had outgrown Mozart, we find here the main secret of that attitude. If a Wagner opera were done as negligently as Mozart's often are, not only musically but scenically, we should see strange things; and such things we shall see when the inevitable reaction sets in. Then Wagner will get what is Wagner's, and Mozart what is Mozart's. Let but a more objective and reverential period displace the Wagnerian agitators! All art that belongs to history should be viewed historically. All acquisitions of our time, such as orchestration, harmony, etc., had their counterparts in Mozart's time. He too was once new—so new that his boldness aroused a strong opposition among many contemporary musicians; and Wagner will some day be viewed at the same distance, and judged historically. Then it will be shown how much it means to stand firm like Mozart in spite of changing times. It is not difficult to stand if one is surrounded by the complete sympathy, the full appreciation, of the whole young generation—a generation, moreover, which has been educated for the task of making converts to the master's cause, and not resting until his ideas have been impressed on all . . .

But, you may ask, whence comes this lack of reverence for Mozart in so many talented young musicians? Here is the heart of the matter. Many of us have in our early youth loved—nay, worshiped—Mozart, but afterward we ate of the modern fruit of knowledge, an indulgence which, like that in the garden of Eden, drove us from our paradise. Some of us, luckily, avoided a complete forfeit, and found the way back. I frankly confess that I too suffered this change: I loved Mozart, then for a time lost him, but found him again, nevermore to lose him. A modern musician can easily find the cause of these changes in the attitude of young people toward drawing and color. We begin our artistic schooling by learning the lines. Our teachers exhibit to us the great masters of the past, who are unexcelled in this matter. We study them, and learn

to love and imitate them. Modern art is still unknown to us, and is, indeed, kept from us as much as possible. But when we gain our first peep, behold! the vivid, brilliant colors to which our time has given the place of honor appeal temptingly from every canvas. We are intoxicated, completely enthralled, forget former ideals, and deliver ourselves over unconditionally to the seductions of sense-enchanting colors. This is what happened to the last generation, and the newest of the new composers more than ever find their joy in drowning themselves in the color-sea, in which no ideas or forms or lines can save them any more, or prevent them from sinking deeper and deeper. "Color, color, and again color," seems to be their motto. It is true that with great search one may still recognize some lines, but sadly out of drawing, as a rule. But there are signs of an impending change. A small minority already feels the craving for pure lines so strongly that we may hope before long to see it lead to some result. I do not mean that the art that is to come will, like a Rinaldo, shrink from color as from a seductive siren who, at the sound of the plain, chaste melody of the knights of the cross loses all her charms. No; this new art will, first of all, preach the gospel of the true joy in life, will unite lines and colors in marriage, and show that it has its roots in all the past, that it draws sustenance from old as well as from new masters.

What I have so far written relates, in the first place, to Mozart's dramatic works, although it may with full justice be applied also to his orchestral works. In the complicated conditions of our time it is natural to become a specialist. Thus we see Wagner concentrating himself entirely on the opera. The older school was more comprehensive, and it is true of Mozart in particular that his greatness as an operatic composer must not mislead us into neglecting the other sides of his activity. Here we have a new proof of Mozart's universality. In church music, chamber music, in the concert-hall, everywhere, he is equally great. Luckily, in the lapse of time Mozart has been less mutilated in the concert-hall than in the theater, thanks, in the first place, to the worthy virtuosi, many of whom were also excellent musicians. Under the protection of these masters several of the most beautiful piano-forte concertos, sonatas, string quartets and quintets of Mozart have been able to keep their place in the minds of concert-goers as revelations of the highest beauty. Yes, even in the sphere of the romanza, in which new times have produced new masters who opened new paths for it, a little song like *The Violet* can hold its own victoriously in comparison with Schubert, Schumann, Franz, and Brahms.

Divers composers of our time have attempted, by subjecting Mo-

zart to a modernizing process, to make him more palatable to a public jaded by strong spices. A dangerous undertaking! Thus the Russian master Tchaikovsky has, with admirable discretion and refined taste, united into an orchestral suite, in a modern instrumental garb, a group of Mozart's piano and choral pieces, some of them comparatively unfamiliar. The writer of this article has himself attempted, by using a second piano, to impart to several of Mozart's pianoforte sonatas a tonal effect appealing to our modern ears; and he wishes to add, by way of apology, that he did not change a single one of Mozart's notes, thus preserving the respect we owe to the great master. It is not my opinion that this was an act of necessity; far from it. But provided a man does not follow the example of Gounod, who transformed a Bach prelude into a modern, sentimental, and trivial show piece, of which I absolutely disapprove, but seeks to preserve the unity of style, there is surely no reason for raising an outcry over his desire to attempt a modernization as one way of showing his admiration for an old master. Mozart's orchestral works, however, show us that he has colors fresh enough to captivate the ear today and probably for an immeasurable time to come. From Mozart's instrumentation we can still learn much as regards clearness and euphony. Those who wish to study beauty of tone may open Mozart's scores wherever they please, and they will find rich profit. And this orchestral tone-beauty has the invaluable property of not being the one essential. An orchestral score of Mozart's transferred to the piano is not reduced to absolute nothingness (like, for example, a score of Berlioz and his imitators), for his music is of such a nature that it can be deprived of its colors without losing its attractiveness. A glance at his three wonderful symphonies in E flat major, G minor, and C major (this last being called by posterity the Jupiter Symphony, because it appears perfect, as if created by a god) proves this completely. They show us the master at the height of his power. All three were written in the summer of 1788—that is, three years before his death. It is difficult to decide which of these symphonies deserves the most admiration. We note at once the great step from Haydn's to Mozart's treatment of this the highest of instrumental forms, and our thoughts are involuntarily transferred to the young Beethoven, who, without any specially noteworthy break, rises from where Mozart left off to those proud summits which none but he was destined to reach. In the introduction to the E flat major symphony, just before the first allegro, we come upon harmonic combinations of unprecedented boldness. They are introduced in so surprising a way that they will always preserve the im-

pression of novelty. The minuet of this symphony, as arranged for the piano, has made the tour of the world on the concert programs of many virtuosi. In the G minor symphony Mozart shows himself to us in all his grace and sincerity of feeling. It is worth noting what astonishing effects he gets here by the use of chromatic progressions. Excepting Bach, who here, as everywhere, is the fundamental pillar on which all modern music rests, no one has understood as well as Mozart how to use the chromatic scale to express the highest effect in music. We must go as far as Wagner before we find chromatic harmonies used for the expression of ardent feeling (*Innigkeit*). In the case of Spohr, who made extensive use of them, and who in so many respects followed Mozart, they remain without any deep significance.

In the *Jupiter Symphony* we are astounded, above all, by the playful ease with which the greatest problems of art are treated. No one who is not initiated suspects in the finale, amid the humorous tone gambols, what an amazing contrapuntal knowledge and superiority Mozart manifests. And then this ocean of euphony! Mozart's sense of euphony was, indeed, so absolute that it is impossible, in all his works, to find a single bar wherein it is sacrificed to other considerations. Not so with Beethoven, who, indeed, never hesitated to push aside euphony for the sake of reaching higher ends. With him began the new era, the motto of which might be expressed in the words, "Truth first, then beauty." And here we find Schumann as the first who followed in Beethoven's footsteps.

Of Mozart's chamber compositions we single out for special admiration the string quartet in G minor (note the wonderful chromatics of the first theme), the pianoforte quintet in E flat major, and the pianoforte quartet in G minor. It is a curious fact that whenever Mozart conceives a movement in G minor he always surpasses himself. In the beautiful middle movement of the pianoforte quintet it pleased him to introduce the motive of Zerlina's aria in *Don Juan*, "*Wenn du fein fromm bist, will ich dir helfen*,"* (If you are real good I will assist you) and how bright is this reverie! Of his string quartets the so-called six famous ones are justly admired. The introduction to the C major quartet also contains bold chromatic effects, which even liberal musicians of his time were unable to digest. The musical historian Fétis won for himself the fame of "The aspiring youth that fired the Ephesian dome," by his foolhardy attempt to change this introduction, which he

* A German version of "*Vedrai, carino*."—Ed.

considered "impossible": a typical critic, who lies down like a wet dog on just the best places!

Of the pianoforte concertos the one in D minor is the most famous and beautiful. I should advise, by the way, to use Mozart's original, and not Hummel's edition, which is provided with superfluous ornamentations and other arbitrary changes. A characteristic illustration of Mozart's method of workmanship may be introduced here. Not long ago I saw in Vienna the manuscript of the concerto in question. In the finale Mozart was in some way or other interrupted in his writing. When he again took up his pen he did not continue where he had left off. A stroke of the pen over the excellent piece, a new finale, the one which we all know! No laborious search for the lost thread! It seems as if Mozart preferred to complete a large form in a single large mood. No wonder, therefore, that even the most practised eye and ear cannot discover the subtlest points of connection. The simple large mood and the simple large line are, too, most intimately allied. We can only wonder at this method of workmanship, which it is given to only a few of the select to employ.

In his pianoforte trios Mozart took a sort of siesta, if I may so express myself. On the other hand, he has often given us his best in his sonatas for the violin, and no less in those for the pianoforte. We are amazed at the great step from the *naïveté* of Haydn to the depth of thought in Mozart. That he is not always equally deep must not surprise us; quite the reverse. We read in Mozart's biography of his desperate situation, which compelled him to write for the Cherethites and the Pelethites, seldom from an inner impulse.

Before bringing this paper to a close, I shall dwell a moment on Mozart's swan-song, the work which, vital with the spirit of eternity, was conceived and born when the cold hand of death was already extended toward the master; his *Requiem*, even in its incompleteness, shows us, as perhaps no other work of his does, what incalculable treasures he took with him to his grave. Which parts of this work are Mozart's, and which not, is a question that may now perhaps be considered settled. Yet, in face of all the jewels which the *Requiem* contains, we cannot help expressing our surprise that the same master who could write a *Requiem aeternam*, a *Rex tremendae*, a *Recordare*, a *Confutatis*, a *Lacrymosa*, whose nobility is beyond all description—that this same master could incorporate in the same work a number like the *Tuba mirum*, with its more than modest beginning, with the really desperate obbligato trombone (or bassoon), and its thoroughly worldly pomp. If this

is really Mozart, only one explanation seems possible—that he used a fragment composed in a much earlier period in order to save trouble. This number seems also to show a strong Italian influence.

Mozart stands before us like an embodiment of childish joy in life, amiable benevolence, and unpretentiousness. He was able to conduct his *Magic Flute* in Schikaneder's "board theater" without compromising his artistic dignity. Could he look down to us, he would surely say: "Ye modern masters, why all this commotion? Why clothe yourselves with this mail of outward dignity? It does nothing for your art; it merely kills genuine human feeling, which is the real salt of art."

PALESTRINA

by Gounod

I WENT, USUALLY, on Sunday to hear High Mass at the Sistine Chapel, frequently accompanied by my friend, Hérbert.* But the Sistine—to speak of it as it deserves, too much cannot be said of the authors of both what one sees and hears there—or rather, of what was once heard there in former days; for alas! although one may still see the sublime work of Michelangelo—destructible and already very much changed—it seems that the music of the divine Palestrina no longer resounds under those vaults that the political captivity of the sovereign pontiff has rendered mute, and which mourn eloquently in emptiness the absence of their holy guest.

I went, therefore, as often as possible to the Sistine Chapel. The music there—severe, ascetic, horizontal, and calm as the line of the ocean, anti-sensuous, and nevertheless, possessing an intensity of contemplation that sometimes amounts to ecstasy—produced at first a strange, almost unpleasant, effect upon me. Whether it was the character of the composition itself, entirely new to me, or the especial sonority of those particular voices, heard for the first time, or, indeed, that attack, firm to harshness, that forcible hammering that gives such strong relief to the various entrances of the voices into a web so full and close, I cannot say, but, at any rate, this impression, however strange it might have been, did not displease me. I went the second time, and still again, and finished by not being able to do without it.

There are works that must be seen or heard in the places for which they were created. The Sistine Chapel is one of these exceptional places, unique of its kind in the world. The colossal genius who decorated its vaulted ceiling and the wall of the altar with his matchless conceptions of the story of Genesis and of the Last Judgment, the painter of prophets, with whom he seemed to be on an equality, will doubtless never have his equal, no more than Homer or Phidias. Men of this stamp and stature are not seen twice upon the earth; they are syntheses, they embrace a whole world, they exhaust it, they complete it, and what they have said no one can repeat after them.

* An excerpt from Gounod's *Mémoires*.

The music of Palestrina seems to be a translation in song of the vast poem of Michelangelo, and I am inclined to think that these two masters explain and illustrate each other in the same light, the spectator developing the listener, and reciprocally, so that, finally, one is tempted to ask if the Sistine Chapel—painting and music—is not the product of one and the same inspiration. Music and painting are there found in a union so perfect and sublime that it seems as if the whole were the twofold expression of one and the same thought, the double voice of one and the same hymn. It might be said that what one hears is the echo of what one sees.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

“THE FIVE”

by Tchaikovsky

THE YOUNG Petersburg composers are very gifted,* but they are all impregnated with the most horrible presumptuousness and a purely amateur conviction of their superiority to all other musicians in the universe.

The one exception, in later days, has been Rimsky-Korsakov. He was also an “auto-dictator” like the rest, but recently he has undergone a complete change. By nature he is very earnest, honorable, and conscientious. As a very young man he dropped into a set which first solemnly assured him he was a genius, and then proceeded to convince him that he had no need to study, that academies were destructive to all inspiration and dried up creative activity. At first he believed all this. His earliest compositions bear the stamp of striking ability and a lack of theoretical training. The circle to which he belonged was a mutual admiration society. Each member was striving to imitate the work of another, after proclaiming it as something very wonderful. Consequently the whole set suffered from one-sidedness, lack of individuality, and mannerisms. Rimsky-Korsakov is the only one among them who discovered, five years ago, that the doctrines preached by this circle had no sound basis, that their mockery of the schools and the classical masters, their denial of authority and of the masterpieces, was nothing but ignorance.

I possess a letter dating from that time which moved me very deeply. Rimsky-Korsakov was overcome by despair when he realized how many unprofitable years he had wasted, and that he was following a road which led nowhere. He began to study with such zeal that the theory of the schools soon became to him an indispensable atmosphere. During one summer he achieved innumerable exercises in counterpoint and sixty-four fugues, ten of which he sent me for inspection. From contempt for the schools, Rimsky-Korsakov suddenly went over to the cult of musical technique. Shortly after this appeared his symphony and also his quartet. Both works are full of obscurities and—as you will justly observe—bear the stamp of dry pedantry. At present he appears to

* From a letter to von Meck, December 1878.

be passing through a crisis, and it is hard to predict how it will end. Either he will turn out a great master, or be lost in contrapuntal intricacies.

C. Cui is a gifted amateur. His music is not original, but graceful and elegant; it is too coquettish—"made up"—so to speak. At first it pleases, but soon satiates us. That is because Cui's specialty is not music, but fortification, upon which he has to give a number of lectures in the various military schools in St. Petersburg. He himself once told me he could only compose by picking out his melodies and harmonies as he sat at the piano. When he hit upon some pretty idea, he worked it up in every detail, and this process was very lengthy, so that his opera *Ratcliff*, for instance, took him ten years to complete. But, as I have said, we cannot deny that he has talent of a kind—and at least taste and instinct.

Borodin—aged fifty—Professor of Chemistry at the Academy of Medicine, also possesses talent, a very great talent, which however has come to nothing for the want of teaching, and because blind fate has led him into the science laboratories instead of a vital musical existence. He has not as much taste as Cui, and his technique is so poor that he cannot write a bar without assistance.

With regard to Moussorgsky, as you very justly remark, he is "used up." His gifts are perhaps the most remarkable of all, but his nature is narrow and he has no aspirations towards self-perfection. He has been too easily led away by the absurd theories of his set and the belief in his own genius. Besides which his nature is not of the finest quality, and he likes what is coarse, unpolished, and ugly. He is the exact opposite of the distinguished and elegant Cui.

Moussorgsky plays with his lack of polish—and even seems proud of his want of skill, writing just as it comes to him, believing blindly in the infallibility of his genius. As a matter of fact his very original talent flashes forth now and again.

Balakirev is the greatest personality of the entire circle. But he relapsed into silence before he had accomplished much. He possesses a wonderful talent which various fatal hindrances have helped to extinguish. After having proclaimed his agnosticism rather widely, he suddenly became "pious." Now he spends all his time in church, fasts, kisses the relics—and does very little else. In spite of his great gifts, he has done a great deal of harm. For instance, he it was who ruined Korsakov's early career by assuring him he had no need to study. He is the inventor of all the theories of this remarkable circle which unites so many undeveloped, falsely developed, or prematurely decayed, talents.

These are my frank opinions upon these gentlemen. What a sad phenomenon! So many talents from which—with the exception of Rimsky-Korsakov—we can scarcely dare to hope for anything serious. But this is always our case in Russia: vast forces which are impeded by the fatal shadow of a Plevna from taking the open field and fighting as they should. But all the same, these forces exist. Thus Moussorgsky, with all his ugliness, speaks a new idiom. Beautiful it may not be, but it is new. We may reasonably hope that Russia will one day produce a whole school of strong men who will open up new paths in art.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

by Liszt

DEAR HERR RAHTER,* Best thanks for kindly sending me the Russian *Fantasie* by Naprawnik—a brilliantly successful concert-piece—and the *Slumber Songs* by Rimsky-Korsakoff, which I prize extremely; his works are among the rare, the uncommon, the exquisite.—The piano edition of his opera *Die Mainacht* [The May Night] has either not reached me or else has got lost.—Send it me to Weimar together with a second copy of Naprawnik's Russian *Fantasie*, which is necessary for performance.

Many of my young pianists will be glad to make this *Fantasie* known in drawing-rooms and concerts.

* To the music publisher Rahter in Hamburg; dated Munich, August 28, 1884.

SCHUBERT

by Liszt

OUR PIANISTS SCARCELY realise what a glorious treasure they have in Schubert's pianoforte compositions.* Most pianists play them over *en passant*, notice here and there repetitions, lengthinesses, apparent carelessnesses . . . and then lay them aside. It is true that Schubert himself is somewhat to blame for the very unsatisfactory manner in which his admirable pianoforte pieces are treated. He was too immoderately productive, wrote incessantly, mixing insignificant with important things, grand things with mediocre work, paid no heed to criticism, and always soared on his wings. Like a bird in the air, he lived in music and sang in angelic fashion.

O never-resting, ever-welling genius, full of tenderness! O my cherished Hero of the Heaven of Youth! Harmony, freshness, power, grace, dreamings, passion, soothings, tears and flames pour forth from the depths and heights of thy soul, and thou makest us almost forget the greatness of thine excellence in the fascination of thy spirit!—

* A letter from Villa d'Este dated December 2, 1868, to Sigmund Hebert of Munich with whom Liszt prepared an edition of Schubert's piano music.

SCHUMANN

by Grieg

SOME YEARS AGO, a young lady was sitting at the piano, singing, on board a steamer on the coast of Norway. When she paused, a stranger stepped up to her, introducing himself as a lover of music. They fell into conversation, and had not talked long when the stranger exclaimed: "You love Schumann? Then we are friends!" and reached her his hand.

This is characteristic as illustrating the intimate quality in Schumann's art. To meet in quiet comprehension of the master during a mysterious tête-à-tête at a piano—that is genuinely Schumannesque; to swear by his banner in associations and debating-clubs, or amid the glare of festal splendor—that is decidedly non-Schumannesque. Schumann has never ostentatiously summoned any body of adherents. He has been a comet without a tail, but, for all that, one of the most remarkable comets in the firmament of art. His worshipers have always been "the single ones." There is something in them of the character of the sensitive mimosa; and they are unhappily so apt to hide themselves and their admiration under the leaves of the "Blue Flower" of romanticism, that it would seem a hopeless undertaking ever to gather them (as, for instance, the Wagnerians) into a closed phalanx. Schumann had made his way without any other propaganda than that which lies in his works; and his progress has therefore been slow, but for that reason the more secure. Without attempting by artificial means to anticipate the future, he lived and labored in accordance with his own principle: "Become only an ever greater artist, and all other things will come to you of their own accord."

That this principle was a sound one has been confirmed by the present generation, by whom Schumann's name is known and loved even to the remotest regions of the civilized world, nay, up to the very Ultima Thule. It is not to be denied, however, that the best years of his artistic activity were lost without any comprehension of his significance, and when recognition at last began to come, Schumann's strength was broken. Of this melancholy fact I received a vivid impression when, in the year 1883, I called upon his famous wife, Clara Schumann, in Frankfort on the Main. I fancied she

would be pleased to hear of her husband's popularity in so distant a region as my native country, Norway; but in this I was mistaken. Her countenance darkened as she answered dismally, "Yes, now!"

The influence which Schumann's art has exercised and is exercising in modern music cannot be overestimated. In conjunction with Chopin and Liszt, he dominates at this time the whole literature of the piano, while the piano compositions of his great contemporary Mendelssohn, which were once exalted at Schumann's expense, would seem to be vanishing from the concert program. In conjunction with his predecessor Franz Schubert, and in a higher degree than any contemporary,—not even Robert Franz excepted,—he pervades the literature of the musical "romance"; while even here Mendelssohn is relegated *ad acta*. What a strange retribution of fate! It is the old story of Nemesis. Mendelssohn received, as it were, more than his due of admiration in advance; Schumann, less than his due. Posterity had to balance their accounts. . . .

It will be remembered that in the year 1879 an article appeared in the *Bayreuth Blätter* entitled *Concerning Schumann's Music*, signed Joseph Rubinstein but (this is an open secret) unquestionably inspired and probably more than inspired by no less a man than Richard Wagner. The tone, the style, as well as the inconsiderable audacity with which the writer hurled forth his taunts, the public recognized as truly Wagnerian, and promptly designated the Bayreuth master as the one who must bear the responsibility of its authorship in spite of the fact that he had attempted to disguise himself by simpler constructions than those which we recognize in his public writings.

In this incredible production Schumann's art is by all possible and impossible means reduced *ad absurdum*. Not a shred of honor is left to it. The very greatest qualities of the master—his glowing fancy and his lofty lyric flights—are dragged down into the dirt and described as the most monstrous conventionality. His orchestral music, his piano compositions, his songs—are all treated with the same contempt. One does not know which ought to be the greater object of astonishment—the man who did put his name to the pamphlet or the man who did not. The former is said to have been one of Wagner's piano lackeys, who was contemptible enough to be used as a screen. There is nothing more to be said of him except that he could not even attain the fame of a Herostratos.* But upon

* Also known as Erostratus, the Ephesian who set fire to the Temple of Diana on the day that Alexander the Great was born in 356 B. C. His name was forbidden mention thereafter.—Ed.

Wagner's relation to Schumann this article throws so interesting a light that it cannot be overlooked. As a matter of course, Wagner as a man is here left out of consideration. And from out of the depth of my admiration for Wagner the *artist*, I can only affirm that he was as one-sided as he was great. As regards Schumann, the very opposite was true. He was anything but one-sided. He was, in most respects, a remarkable counterpart to Liszt. The rare faculty of both of these masters of recognizing anything great and new that was stirring about them forms a contrast as beneficent as it is evident, to the unintelligent and illiberal view of the greatest contemporary talents which is so prominent a trait of Wagner and (in his attitude towards Schumann) also of Mendelssohn.*

Compare only the harsh judgments of Wagner on Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms—to name only the most important—with Schumann's warm and sympathetic criticism of the great men of his day, as it is found on nearly every page of his collected writings; and it will be necessary to take exception to the poet's declaration, "*Alles grosse ist einseitig.*" Schumann has, indeed, raised a most beautiful monument to himself in his unprejudiced judgment of all that was considerable among his surroundings. I need only refer to his introduction into the musical world of such names as Berlioz, Chopin, Brahms, Gade, etc. We find him in his youth so busily occupied in clearing the way for others that we are left to wonder how, at the same time, he found it possible to develop his own deep soul as he must have done in the first great creative period of his life which was chiefly devoted to piano music. What a new and original spirit! What wealth, what depth, what poetry, in these compositions. The fantasia in C major, with its daring flight and its hidden undertone for him who listens secretly (*für den der heimlich lauscht*), as the motto declares; his F sharp minor sonata, with its romantic enthusiasm and its burlesque abandon; *Kreisleriana*, the *Carnival*, *Davidsbündlertänze*, *Novelletes*,—only to name a few of his principal works,—what a world of beauty, what intensity of emotional life, are hidden in these!

And what bewitching harmony—out of the very soul of the piano—for him who is able to interpret, for him who can and will hear! But the above-mentioned Bayreuth hireling has not taunts enough for Schumann's piano music, which he finds to be written in a certain virtuoso style that is, after all, absolutely false and external. "The difficult passages in Schumann," he says, "are effective when,

* Grieg's praise of Schumann's foresight and generosity to other musicians is, of course, merited; but it is also true that he could not sympathize with the Wagner of *Tannhäuser*, as his printed words attest.—Ed.

as is mostly the case, they are brought out obscurely and blurred."

A poor witticism! And this talk about virtuoso style, falseness, and objectiveness in Schumann's piano phrasing! Can anything more unjust be imagined? For one ought rather to emphasize his moderation in his use of virtuoso methods, as compared, for instance, with Chopin. And to accuse him of unsuitability for the piano, amounts of course to a denial of familiarity with the piano.

It is a fact, however, well known to the genuine piano player that Schumann could not have written a single one of his many compositions without the most intimate familiarity with the subtlest secrets of the instrument. Nor need any one be told that he was a most admirable player. One of the best friends of Schumann's youth, the late Ernst Ferdinand Wenzel, teacher at the Leipzig Conservatory, with whom I often talked about the master, used to recall with a sad pleasure the many evenings, in the olden time, when he would sit at twilight in the corner of the sofa in Schumann's den, and listen to his glorious playing.

The attempt to turn the master's greatest and most obvious merits into defects is such sharp practice that one would be justified in attributing to its author an acquaintance with that "jurisprudence" which he flings into Schumann's face, reproaching him with having devoted too much time to it at the expense of his music. However much energy and infernal ingenuity in the invention of charges one may be disposed to concede to the writer, here—in the question of the technique of the piano—he has allowed his zeal to run away with him to such an extent that he has forgotten to cover himself.

In wishing to hit Schumann he hits himself. He openly betrays how destitute he himself is of any idea of the technique of the piano. Liszt, whose judgment on the subject of everything relating to the piano, Wagner, on other occasions respected, expressed, as is well known, a very different opinion of Schumann's compositions of which he always spoke with the warmest admiration, and in appreciation of which he was an enthusiastic and powerful pioneer. Liszt advocated Schumann's claims at a time when no one else ventured to do it. Wagner, on the contrary, tried to make an end of him long after his death, when his reputation was as firmly established as that of Wagner himself. If the matter concerned Wagner only as an individual, I should not undertake to discuss it in an article on Schumann. But it concerns, in my opinion, in an equal degree Wagner the artist. It is possible that Wagner the individual *would* not recognize Schumann's greatness: but it is absolutely certain that Wagner the artist *could* not recognize it. However, his

effort to dethrone Schumann was happily a total failure, for the reason that it was not feasible. Schumann stands where he stood, impregnable . . .

When I turn to his chamber music, I encounter some of his most beautiful inspirations. It has been asserted that he is greatest in the smaller forms. But the quintet, the piano quartet, the trio in D minor, both sonatas for the violin and the quartets for strings in A major and A minor give sufficient evidence that where a larger strength is required he had also a wealth of beauty at his command. It is not to be denied that in his tone-blending of piano and stringed instruments he never attained the height which Mendelssohn and Schubert reached. It has also been affirmed that he neglects absolute harmony, that his stringed instruments, carrying the melody, do not always enter in the most appropriate places, etc. But such things are trifles which an intelligent conception and careful study will easily remedy. The principal thing—*viz.*, the splendid impulse and illusion—is rarely wanting. Minor impracticabilities, which hundreds of smaller spirits easily avoid, are, strange to say, to be met with in Schumann. In the piano quartet, for instance, he has had the delightful idea of uniting the andante and the finale thematically. But the returning of the cello from the deep B flat to C, which is here absolutely required, excludes the immediate transition to the last movement, whereby the exquisite effect which has been obviously intended is lost.

The three quartets for stringed instruments (Opus 41) are conceived with as much originality as love. Schumann, to be sure, often ignores the traditional notion that the character of the quartet for stringed instruments is only polyphonic. Hence the complaint of want of style in his quartets, as well as the charge that the instruments do not attain their full musical value. But who, having heard, for instance, the distinguished performance of the quartet in A major by Brodsky and his fellow-artists, will forget the flood of harmony which Schumann can entice from stringed instruments when they are in the hands of great artists?

A survey of Schumann's art will disclose the fact that, having emerged from his youth and early manhood, he was no longer able, as it were, to think his own thoughts with full consistency to the end. He was afraid of himself. It was as if he did not dare acknowledge the results of the enthusiasm of his youth. Thus it happened that he frequently sought shelter in the world of Mendelssohn's ideas. From the moment he did this he passed his zenith; his soul was sick; he was doomed long before the visible symptoms of insanity set in. It is therefore a futile labor to seek the real Schu-

mann in his latest works, as one may do in the case of Beethoven and Wagner. This is most obvious if we examine his latest choral compositions. But before doing this, we have happily the satisfaction of registering as masterpieces of imperishable worth a series of orchestral compositions, and foremost among these his four symphonies. Who has not been carried away by the youthful freshness of the symphony in B flat major; by the grand form and impulse of the C major symphony, and its wonderful adagio with the heaven-scaling altitudes of the violins; by the E flat major symphony, with its mystically medieval E flat minor movement (Schumann is said to have imagined here a procession entering Cologne Cathedral); and finally, who has not marveled at the conception of the D minor symphony, with its tragic exaltation and magnificent unity! Truly, the proud, victorious bugle-blasts which open the first symphony—instinct with a noble self-esteem—are fully justified. About this opening we have, however, an interesting tradition, that it was originally written a third lower, viz.:



But during the first rehearsal it was demonstrated that the old-fashioned instruments then exclusively used could not produce the stopped notes A and B. The practical Mendelssohn was promptly at hand with the suggestion to place this motif a third higher, as we now have it. In this way it came to consist of natural notes only, which could be rendered with all desirable *éclat*. If Schumann had written his work now, when these instruments have been abandoned, and improved instruments with valves, etc., have taken their places, he would have retained the motif in the tone compass in which it was first conceived, and where, according to the opening of his allegro, it properly belongs. If I were to lead the B flat major symphony at this time, I should not hesitate to change the passage, and carry out Schumann's original intention.

It is this B flat major symphony which the above-mentioned lampooner in the *Bayreuther Blätter* chooses as the target for his most poisonous arrows. Through a long series of musical citations the attempt is made to prove that this work (like all the other orchestral compositions of the master) is made up of an almost uninterrupted succession of what he calls "shoemaker's patches." By this expression he means to indicate "repetitions of musical phrases in related tone intervals, which pupils in composition are especially

went to toil over in their first labors." Now, however, in the year 1893, every musician who is not too much of a Philistine will maintain it as an incontestable truth that the means by which a musical effect is produced are of minor consequence compared to the effect itself; and it is a matter of no moment to us if a pupil by "repetitions in related tone intervals" attains only "the deadliest monotony," when Schumann, by dint of his peculiar application of these "shoemaker's patches," woven together by the force of his genius, contrives to enchain and enrapture us. Schumann's repetitions always sustain the flight of his thought; and where he does not reach his own proper level, it is not the fault of a repetition, but it is because his inspiration is running low. These repetitions, so frequently assailed, occur, however, with all the great masters from Bach to Wagner himself. A repetition, applied with intelligence, has the same object in music as in language, *viz.*, to produce an impressive, stimulating effect. It will not do, then, to stamp every repetition in related tone intervals as a "shoemaker's patch."

Much is being whispered in corners about the attitude of Schumann and Mendelssohn toward each other. One thing is, however, likely to impress the unprejudiced observer as being curious; *viz.*, that Schumann's writings furnish numerous and striking evidences of his boundless admiration for Mendelssohn, while the latter in his many letters does not once mention Schumann or his art. This cannot be due to accident. Whether Mendelssohn was really silent, or whether the editor of his letters, out of regard for his memory, has chosen to omit all references to Schumann, is of slight consequence. This, however, is beyond dispute: his silence speaks, and we of posterity have the right to draw our inferences from this silence. We arrive at the conclusion that here we have the clue to a judgment of the opinions which the two masters entertained of each other. Of petty envy on Mendelssohn's part there can be no suspicion. He was of too pure and noble a character to be animated by such a sentiment; and, moreover, his fame was too great and too well established in comparison with Schumann's. But his horizon was too contracted to enable him to see Schumann as the man he was. How perfectly comprehensible! He had his forte in clear delineation, in classical harmony; and where Schumann fell short of his requirements in this respect, his honesty forbade him to feign a recognition which he could not candidly grant.

Another musical and warm-hearted family in whose house Schumann was a constant guest during his residence in Leipzig was that of Herr Voigt, to whose wife, Henrietta Voigt, his intimate

friend, Schumann dedicated his beautiful G minor piano sonata. The silent Schumann loved this peaceful home. It is told that he was in the habit of daily entering the drawing-room unannounced, giving a friendly nod to the "lady of the house," walking the length of the room, and departing by the opposite door, without having uttered a single word. All he wanted was to see her.

But to return to the choral works. Besides *Paradise and the Peri*, his music to Byron's *Manfred* must be reckoned among his most glorious compositions, in spite of the fact that it belongs to his last period. The overture is a tragic masterpiece cast whole in one mold. His music to Goethe's *Faust* also contains many a stroke of the purest inspiration; but as a whole, it is unequal, and can scarcely, in the same sense as the preceding ones, be characterized as a monumental work.

If we now turn to his later choral compositions,—*Der Königssohn*, *Der Sängers Fluch*, *Vom Pagen und der Königstochter*, *Das Glück von Edenhall*, *Neujahrslied*, *Requiem*,—we must admit that it is easy for those who wish to make an end of Schumann to find points of attack; for these productions indicate, almost uniformly, soaring will and failing power. His self-criticism is lax, and the greater part of this work is unclear in color as in drawing.

Here we have melancholy evidence that the master's strength was forever broken. It would be far better to pay no attention to these and similar productions of his later years bearing the mark of his decadence. But as regards the derogatory judgment of Schumann which has of late become the fashion in certain influential cliques, I may be permitted to ask: Why should not he, like other creative spirits, have the right to be judged by the best that he has done? Homer, as we all know, will nod. And I should fancy that no one need search long in Schumann's production before finding its core. Although his later activity resulted in such glorious things as *Manfred*, the violin sonatas, the symphony in E flat major, etc., it is easy, if one prefers, to leave this entire period out of account, and to judge Schumann by his opera 1 to 50. I should think that there was to be found among these a sufficient treasury of priceless jewels to entitle Schumann to a seat among the immortals of music. If we are to judge Mozart by his *Concert Arias*; Beethoven by his *Prometheus*, *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, and the *Triple Concerto for Piano, Violin, and Cello*; Mendelssohn by his *Antigone*, *Ruy Blas*, *Lobgesang*, and the *Reformation Symphony*; Schubert by his dramatic attempts; Wagner by *Rienzi*—in short, if we are to hunt high and low for the weak moments of strong souls—then, considering the imperfection of everything human, we shall find no

lack of material for a very unprofitable labor. But such a search would not be in the interest of justice. Happily, in art, as in life, it is the good that is cherished; mistakes are consigned to oblivion, especially when, as is the case with Schumann, the good so largely preponderates.

A beautiful conclusion of Schumann's chamber music is his two sonatas for violin, particularly the first (A minor, Opus 105); and in this the first movement especially has always appeared to me highly significant. Every time I read or play them, I hear in these tones the master's foreboding lament of the heavy fate which was soon to overtake him. The first marvelously singing motif of the violin is instinct with an overpowering melancholy, and the surprising return of the first motif in the last movement shows what importance Schumann attached to it. It is the worm gnawing at his mind, which lifts its head afresh in the midst of the passionate toil of the fancy to banish it. In enchanting contrast to all this gloomy soul struggle are the suddenly emerging, bright, sweet, appealing—nay, entreating—melodies. Is it not as if one heard the cry, "Let this cup pass from me"? But in the council of Fate the terrible thing has been decreed; and the work closes in manly, noble resignation, without a sign of the unclearness and groping occurring in much of Schumann's production belonging to this period upon which I have commented.

I have also referred to the slowness with which Schumann's popularity spread during his lifetime. This is the more remarkable because of the many advantages which he enjoyed. He lived in the very center of the musical world; occupied important positions, being at one time a teacher at the Leipzig Conservatory; and was married to one of the most soulful and famous pianists of his day. With his wife he even made musical tours, from which he brought home with him many evidences of his unpopularity. Thus, in the year 1843 he accompanied his wife to Russia, where in many of the principal cities she was received with great enthusiasm, and where also she endeavored to introduce the works of her husband. Let it not be forgotten that in 1843 Schumann had already written and published much of his most beautiful chamber music,—piano works, songs,—and even his symphony in B flat major. Nevertheless, it is said that at a court soirée where Clara was greatly fêted, one of the most exalted personages addressed him in this wise, "Well, Mr. Schumann, are you, too, musical?" The story bears the stamp of truth. What artist is there who could not relate similar incidents? The reigning princes and their hangers-on seem to possess a peculiar aptitude for uttering stupidities when they have the misfortune

to stray within the pale of art. But what happened to Schumann is a signal instance of what can be achieved in this direction by those who represent the claim "We alone know."

That after such an experience Schumann could dedicate his C major symphony to a prince—though this time really a musical one, *viz.*, Oscar I. of Norway and Sweden—is an evidence that he had not yet achieved his emancipation from the naïve notion of an earlier time, that the king is the best guardian of art. In spite of the abnormal relation of King Louis of Bavaria to Richard Wagner, our age is happily on the point of outgrowing this great misconception.

The chief impediment to Schumann's popularity was his total lack of that faculty of direct communication which is absolutely indispensable to the making of a good conductor or a beloved teacher. I fancy, however, that he was himself very little troubled about this. In fact, he was too much of a dreamer. Proofs are not wanting that he actually took pride in his unpopularity. Thus, in a letter to his mother he writes, "I should not even wish to be understood by all." He need give himself no anxiety on that score. He is too profound, too subjective, too introspective, to appeal to the multitude.

I cannot take leave of Schumann's larger labors without pausing for a moment at the opera *Genoveva*, a work which has rightly been named his "child of sorrows." He expended upon it much of his best power, and it prepared him for the bitterest disappointments. So many pens have been set in motion against this composition, especially by Wagnerians, that it seems almost foolhardy to lift up one's voice in its defense. Nevertheless, I must maintain as my unalterable opinion that Schumann's music cannot be briefly dismissed as undramatic: there are so many passages in the opera which furnish incontestable proof that Schumann was not without dramatic talent—but wanting, indeed, in knowledge of the requirements of the drama. The most excellent dramatically inspired things stand side by side without transitions, demanding frequently only a few bars to bring them into harmonious relations. On the other hand, there seems occasionally to be a little too much transition. The external apparatus is not always practically applied. The rare skill of Wagner on this point furnishes a striking contrast. But, as I have said, the dramatic flight is often enough present; and I am convinced that the day will come when a performance, by skilled and affectionate hands, will yield at least a portion of that which the master, in certain passages, has hinted and indicated, but which he had not sufficient technique to express with clearness and force . . .

Intentionally I have chosen to consider last that portion of Schumann's work which proves him to be what, according to his innermost nature, he really was—a poet. I refer to his songs. Even all the demons of hate which possess the Bayreuth critic do not here suffice to reduce the composer to a nonentity. In order to disparage, however, and minimize even this expression of his genius, he resorts to far-fetched humor. I cannot refrain from quoting literally the following choice effusion:

Since nowadays one does not find it ridiculous when, in our salons, a lady, holding a fan and a fragrant lace handkerchief between her gloved fingers, sings of her former lover as a "lofty star of glory who must not know her, the lowly maid,"—or when a gentleman in swallow-tail coat assures us that he has seen in his dream a serpent feeding on the gloom-engulfed heart of a certain miserable person who shall not be mentioned,—then certainly one ought not, primarily, to be angry with the composer because in his illustration of such poems, popular in our higher circles of society, he has, in his effort not to be outstripped by the poet, sounded all the depths and heights of musical expression.

What a quantity of genuine Wagnerian gall is concentrated in this long-winded monster of a sentence! But—it goes too far. Schumann's songs emerge from this mud-bath as pure as they were before they were dipped into it. If there is anything at all that Schumann has written which has become, and has deserved to become, world literature, it is surely his songs. All civilized nations have made them their own. And there is probably in our own day scarcely a youth interested in music to whom they are not, in one way or another, interwoven with his most intimate ideals. Schumann is the *poet*, contrasting in this respect with his greatest successor, Brahms, who is primarily *musician*, even in his songs.

With Schumann the poetic conception plays the leading part to such an extent that musical considerations technically important are subordinated, if not entirely neglected. For all that, even those of his songs of which this is true exert the same magic fascination. What I particularly have in mind is his great demand upon the compass of the voice. It is often no easy thing to determine whether the song is intended for a soprano or an alto, for he ranges frequently in the same song from the lowest to the highest register. Several of his most glorious songs begin in the deepest pitch and gradually rise to the highest, so that the same singer can rarely master both. Schumann, to be sure, occasionally tries to obviate this difficulty by adding a melody of lower pitch, which he then indicates by smaller notes placed under the melody of his original con-

ception. But how often he thereby spoils his most beautiful flights, his most inspired climaxes! Two instances among many occur to me,—*Ich grolle nicht*, and *Stille Thränen*,—for which one will scarcely ever find an interpreter who can do equal justice to the beginning and the end. But if, on the other hand, a singer has a voice at his command capable of such a feat, he will produce the greater effect. Thus, I remember as a child, in 1858, having heard Frau Schröder-Devrient, then fifty-five years old, sing *Ich grolle nicht*, and never shall I forget the shiver that ran down my spine at the last climax. The beautiful timbre of the voice was of course lacking; but the overwhelming power of the expression was so irresistible that every one was carried away.

To be able to sing Schumann is a special faculty which many excellent singers do not have. I have heard the same singer render Schubert to perfection, and Schumann absolutely badly. For with Schubert the most of what is to be done is explicitly expressed; while with Schumann one must understand the art of reading between the lines—of interpreting a half-told tale. A symphony, too, of Schubert plays itself, as it were; but a symphony of Schumann has to be studied with a subtle perception in order to uncover and bring out what is veiled in the master's intentions. Otherwise it will lose much of its effect. In speaking above of the excessive demands upon the compass of the voice in Schumann's songs, I refer chiefly to those more broadly composed. The smaller and more delicate ones do not usually strain a voice of ordinary register.

It cannot be maintained that Schumann was the first to accord a conspicuous rôle to the accompaniment of his songs. Schubert had anticipated him as no other of his predecessors had done, in making the piano depict the mood. But what Schubert began, Schumann further developed; and woe to the singer who tries to render Schumann without keeping a close watch of what the piano is doing, even to the minutest shades of sound. I have no faith in a renderer of Schumann's songs who lacks appreciation of the fact that the piano has fully as great a claim upon interest and study as the voice of the singer. Nay; I would even venture to assert that, up to a certain point, he who cannot play Schumann cannot sing him either. In his treatment of the piano, Schumann was furthermore the first who, in a modern spirit, utilized the relation between song and accompaniment, which Wagner has later developed to a degree that fully proves what importance he attached to it. I refer to the carrying of the melody by the piano, or the orchestra, while the voice is engaged in the recitative. Heaven preserve me, however, from insinuating that Wagner consciously could have received an

impulse from Schumann! A dyed-in-the-wool Wagnerian would, of course, regard even a hint of such a possibility as an outrageous want of respect for the master of Bayreuth which would amount almost to an insult. But, for all that, it is a fact that contemporaries influence each other whether they want to or not. That is one of nature's eternal laws, to which we are all subject . . .

That gradually increasing conservatism which, in the case of an artist, is usually a mark of failing powers, was never noticeable in Schumann. Even though his creative force went out in the darkness of insanity, this in no wise affected his views of art, which remained fresh and youthful to the very last. His enthusiasm for the young Brahms is a striking proof of that receptivity as regards the new which did not desert him even on the downward incline of his scantily allotted career. We gain hereby a beautiful glimpse of the purity of his character, just as it revealed itself in his younger years in his relation to Mendelssohn and others. And just as Schumann was the first interpreter in modern music of the profounder emotions and true intensity of sentiment who could exclaim with Beethoven, when the latter had finished his *Missa Solemnis*, "From the heart it has come, to the heart it shall go," so now, the spirit of unreason, pettiness, and envy having passed away, all hearts, old and young, respond jubilantly to Schumann's art, and honor him as a man, pioneer, and artist. Schumann's conceptions of art will again come to their right when that army of inflated arrogance which wrongfully have adopted the title of "Wagnerians" and "Lisztians" will have lost their influence. I discriminate, however, expressly between the true and genuine admirers of these two mighty masters and the howling horde which calls itself "—ians." These patentees of speculative profundity do not know the most priceless jewel of art—*naïveté*. How, then, are they to love Schumann, who possessed this rare gift in so rich a measure? Many of the so-called Liszt performers render Schumann in a manner which is most significant. In most cases they will, indeed, give you the genuine Liszt, but, on the other hand, Schumann falsified beyond recognition. All attempts at artistic treatment and a well-studied execution of details cannot compensate for the lack of that warm, deep tone which a real interpreter of Schumann will know how to produce. As different as Mendelssohn's art of orchestration is from that of Wagner, so different is the coloring of Schumann from that of Liszt; and to give this a vivid expression on the piano imposes so great a task upon the performer that it calls his whole personality into play. He must be able to orchestrate upon the piano. Only

then will he become a "Schumann-player" in the sense in which we speak, for instance, of "Chopin-players"—that is to say, performers who, to be sure, are able to play a good deal besides, but play Chopin to perfection. Wagner somewhere expresses the opinion that a sympathetic nature is required even to comprehend his meaning: this is no less true of Schumann, who, in his demands upon the player's comprehension, ventures to propound this postulate, "Perhaps only genius can completely understand genius."

COMMENT ON GRIEG'S ARTICLE

by C. Schumann

GRIEG HAS WRITTEN an article on Robert in an American review and has sent it to me with a very nice letter . . . * A great deal of it is very good, but many other things in it are so wrong that the impression of the whole is spoiled to some extent. What I dislike very much is that he has quoted word for word . . . a number of passages from lampoons which appeared in Bayreuth ten years ago, and by so doing has really shown disrespect for Robert and paid the author an attention which such vulgarity does not deserve . . . He says various contradictory things, e.g., he asserts that one ought to consider only opus 1 to opus 50 of Schumann's works, as later his strength was broken. Can one say that of *Faust* or *Manfred*? As a whole the article has given me more vexation than pleasure . . . and yet it is impossible to realise that Grieg wrote it with real devotion . . . There are but few writers on music who do not mix something that is unjust or stupid with what they say . . .

* From her diary dated February 1894.

JOHANN STRAUSS

by Richard Strauss

OF ALL GOD-GIFTED dispensers of joy, Johann Strauss is to me the most endearing.* That first, comprehensive statement can serve as a text for everything I feel about this wonderful phenomenon. In particular I respect in Johann Strauss his originality, his innate gift. At a time when the whole world around him was tending towards increased complexity, increased reflectiveness, his natural genius enabled him to create from the *whole*. He seemed to me the last of those who worked from spontaneous inspiration. Yes, the primary, the original, the proto-melody, that's it . . .

Also, I saw him and talked with him and visited him in Munich at the *Vier Jahreszeiten*. But I really got to know and to love the whole realm of his wisdom in Meiningen, through Hans von Bülow, who had a beautifully bound collection of all the Strauss waltzes. Once he played them to me for an entire evening. For me alone, an unforgettable evening of waltzes! I also willingly admit to having sometimes conducted the *Perpetuum mobile* with far more pleasure than many a four movement symphony. And as for the *Rosenkavalier* waltzes . . . how could I have done those without a thought of the laughing genius of Vienna?

* From *Recollections and Reflections*, 1925.

RICHARD STRAUSS

by C. Schumann

A SYMPHONY OF Strauss's (from Munich) was performed in the Museum, and surprised me by its cleverness and talent.* The very youthful composer (he is barely twenty) conducted it himself with a skill and certainty which threw the audience into such ecstasies as I have seldom seen aroused by any new work here. Unfortunately I lose so many of the soft parts now† that I cannot follow an entirely new work, and cannot form an opinion after one imperfect hearing. . . .

* From her diary dated Frankfurt, January 7, 1888.

† A reference to the loss of hearing she suffered late in life.

WAGNER

IN DRESDEN

by Liszt

RICHARD WAGNER, a Dresden conductor, has been here since yesterday.* That is a man of wonderful genius, such a brain-splitting genius indeed as befits this country—a new and brilliant appearance in art. Late events in Dresden have forced him to a decision in the carrying out of which I am firmly resolved to help him with all my might. When I have had a long talk with him, you shall hear what we have devised and what must also be thoroughly realised. In the first place, we want to create a success for a grand, heroic, enchanting musical work, the score of which was completed a year ago. [Lohengrin] Perhaps this could be done in London? Chorley, for instance, might be very helpful to him in this undertaking. If Wagner next winter could go to Paris backed up by this success, the doors of the Opera would stand open to him, no matter with what he might knock. It is happily not necessary for me to go into long further discussions with *you*; you understand, and must learn whether there is at this moment in London an English theatre (for the Italian Opera would not help our friend!), and whether there is any prospect that a grand and beautiful work from a master hand could have any success there. Let me have an answer to this as quickly as possible. Later on—that is, about the end of the month—Wagner will pass through Paris. You will see him, and he will talk with you direct about the tendency and expansion of the whole plan, and will be heartily grateful for every kindness. Write soon and help me as ever. It is a question of a noble end, toward the fulfilment of which everything must tend.

WAGNER

by Debussy

THE *Société des Grandes Auditions de France* did not honour me with an invitation to listen to the recent performance of *Parisfal*

* Weimar, May 14, 1849, to G. Belloni, a Parisian well-known in musical circles.

at the Nouveau-Théâtre* under the director, Alfred Cortot. Alfred Cortot is the French conductor who has used to the best advantage the pantomime customary to German conductors. Like Nikisch—who, however, is Hungarian—he has a lock of hair, and that lock is in the highest degree arresting owing to the quivers of passion which agitate it on the slightest provocation. Sometimes it droops sadly and wearily in the tender passages, interposing a complete screen between Cortot and the orchestra. Then again it rears itself proudly in the martial passages. At such moments Cortot advances on the orchestra and aims a threatening baton, like a banderillero when he wants to irritate the bull. The members of the orchestra are as cool as Icelanders: they have been there before. Cortot, like Weingartner, leans affectionately over the first violins, murmuring intimate secrets; he swoops round to the trombones, adjuring them with an eloquent gesture, that might be translated: "Now my lads! Put some go into it! Try to be super-trombones!" and the obedient trombones conscientiously do their best to swallow the brass tubes.

It is only fair to add that Cortot understands the innermost secrets of Wagner and is himself a perfect musician. He is young, his love of music is quite disinterested; and those are good reasons enough for not being too hard on him for gestures that are more decorative than useful.

To return to the *Société des Grandes Auditions*, did it intend to punish me for my Wagnerian iconoclasm by depriving me of *Parsifal*? Did it fear a subversive attitude or a bombshell? I do not know, but I should prefer to think that these private performances are designed for people whose nobility or position in high society entitles them to attend such little entertainments with a well-bred indifference to what is played. The unimpeachable distinction of the name on the programme frees them from the need of any other illumination and makes it possible to listen attentively to the latest scandal or to watch those pretty movements of the heads of women who are not listening to music. But let the *Société des Grandes Auditions* beware! They will turn Wagner's music into a fashionable at home. After all, that phase of Wagnerian art which originally imposed on his votaries costly pilgrimages and mysterious rites is irritating. I am well aware that this Religion of Art was one of Wagner's favorite ideas; and he was right, for such a formula is excellent for capturing and holding the imagination of an audi-

* This was, of course, a concert performance. The first European stage production of *Parsifal* outside of Bayreuth was given at Zurich in April 1913. The pirated production at the Metropolitan Opera had preceded this by ten years.

ence; but it has miscarried by becoming a kind of Religion of Luxury, excluding perforce many people who are richer in enthusiasm than in cash. The *Société des Grandes Auditions*, by carrying on these traditions of exclusiveness seems to me doomed to end in that detestable thing, the art of fashionable society. When Wagner was in a good humor he liked to maintain that he would never be so well understood in France. Was he referring to aristocratic performances only? I do not think so. King Louis II of Bavaria was already annoying him enough with questions of arbitrary etiquette; and Wagner's proud sensitiveness was too acute to miss the fact that true fame comes solely from the masses and not from a more or less gilded and exclusive public. It is to be feared that these performances, directed avowedly at the diffusion of Wagnerian art, may serve only to alienate the sympathy of the masses: a cunning trick to make it unpopular. I do not mean that the performances will hasten a final eclipse; for Wagner's art can never completely die. It will suffer that inevitable decay, the cruel brand of time on all beautiful things; yet noble ruins must remain, in the shadow of which our grandchildren will brood over the past splendour of this man who, had he been a little more human, would have been altogether great.

In *Parsifal*, the final effort of a genius which compels our homage, Wagner tried to drive his music on a looser rein and let it breathe more freely. We have no longer the distraught breathlessness that characterizes Tristan's morbid passion or Isolde's wild screams of frenzy; nor yet the grandiloquent commentary on the inhumanity of Wotan.

Nowhere in Wagner's music is a more serene beauty attained than in the prelude to the third act of *Parsifal* and in the entire Good Friday episode; although it must be admitted that Wagner's peculiar conception of human nature is also shown in the attitude of certain characters in this drama. Look at Amfortas, that melancholy knight of the Grail, who whines like a shop girl and whimpers like a baby. Good heavens! A Knight of the Grail, a king's son, would plunge his spear into his own body rather than parade a guilty wound in doleful melodies for three acts! As for Kundry, that ancient rose of hell, she has furnished much copy for Wagnerian literature; and I confess I have but little affection for such a sentimental draggle-tail. Klingsor is the finest character in *Parsifal*: a quondam Knight of the Grail, sent packing from the Holy Place because of his too pronounced views on chastity. His bitter hatred is amazing; he knows the worth of men and scornfully weighs the strength of their vows of chastity in the balance.

From this it is quite obvious that this crafty magician, this old gaol-bird, is not merely the only human character but the only moral character in this drama, in which the falsest moral and religious ideas are set forth, ideas of which the youthful Parsifal is the heroic and insipid champion.

Here in short is a Christian drama in which nobody is willing to sacrifice himself, though sacrifice is one of the highest of the Christian virtues! If Parsifal recovers his miraculous spear, it is thanks to old Kundry, the only creature actually sacrificed in the story: a victim twice over, once to the diabolical intrigues of Klingsor and again to the sacred spleen of a Knight of the Grail. The atmosphere is certainly religious, but why have the incidental children's voices such sinister harmonies? Think for a moment of the childlike candor that would have been conveyed if the spirit of Palestrina had been able to dictate its expression.

The above remarks only apply to the poet whom we are accustomed to admire in Wagner and have nothing to do with the musical beauty of the opera, which is supreme. It is incomparable and bewildering, splendid and strong. Parsifal is one of the loveliest monuments of sound ever raised to the serene glory of music.

WAGNER

by Tchaikovsky

I HAVE SEEN Wagner's *Walküre*.^{*} The performance was excellent. The orchestra surpassed itself; the best singers did all within their powers—and yet it was wearisome. What a Don Quixote is Wagner! He expends his whole force in pursuing the impossible, and all the time, if he would but follow the natural bent of his extraordinary gift, he might evoke a whole world of musical beauties. In my opinion Wagner is a symphonist by nature. He is gifted with genius which has wrecked itself upon his tendencies; his inspiration is paralysed by theories which he has invented on his own account, and which, *nolens volens*, he wants to bring into practice. In his efforts to attain *reality, truth, and rationalism* he lets *music* slip quite out of sight, so that in his four latest operas it is, more often than not, conspicuous by its absence. I cannot call that music

^{*} This estimate of Wagner was written by Tchaikovsky from Vienna in 1877 to his "Beloved Friend" Nadejda von Meck.

which consists of kaleidoscopic, shifting phrases, which succeed each other without a break and never come to a close, that is to say, never give the ear the least chance to rest upon musical form. Not a single broad, rounded melody, nor yet one moment of repose for the singer! The latter must always pursue the orchestra, and be careful never to lose his note, which has no more importance in the score than some note for the fourth horn.

But there is no doubt Wagner is a wonderful symphonist. I will just prove to you by one example how far the symphonic prevails over the operatic style in his operas. You have probably heard his celebrated *Walkürenritt*? What a great and marvellous picture! How we actually seem to see these fierce heroines flying on their magic steeds amid thunder and lightning! In the concert-room this piece makes an extraordinary impression. On the stage, in view of the cardboard rocks, the canvas clouds, and the soldiers who run about very awkwardly in the background—in a word, seen in this very inadequate theatrical heaven which makes a poor pretence of realising the illimitable realms above, the music loses all its powers of expression. Here the stage does not enhance the effect, but acts rather like a wet blanket.

Finally I cannot understand, and never shall, why the *Nibelungen* should be considered a literary masterpiece. As a national saga—perhaps, but as a libretto—distinctly not!

Wotan, Brünnhilda, Fricka, and the rest are all so impossible, so little human, that it is very difficult to feel any sympathy with their destinies. And how little life! For three whole hours Wotan lectures Brünnhilda upon her disobedience. How wearisome! And with it all, there are many fine and beautiful episodes of a purely symphonic description.

[Despite his disagreement with Wagner's artistic principles and his slight feeling for the end to which that composer aspired, Tchaikovsky was no less able to dismiss him from his thoughts than were Brahms and Verdi. Two years later, from Brailov, Tchaikovsky wrote again to von Meck:]

Yesterday I began to study the score of *Lohengrin*. I know you are no great admirer of Wagner, and I, too, am far from being a desperate Wagnerite. I am not very sympathetic to Wagnerism as a principle. Wagner's personality arouses my antipathy,* yet I must do justice to his great musical gift. This reaches its climax in *Lohengrin*, which will always remain the crown of all his works. After *Lohengrin*, began the deterioration of his talent, which was

* It may be recalled that Wagner did not receive Tchaikovsky when the latter called on him at Bayreuth in 1876.—Ed.

ruined by his diabolical vanity. He lost all sense of proportion, and began to overstep all limits, so that everything he composed after *Lohengrin* became incomprehensible, impossible music which has no future. What chiefly interests me in *Lohengrin* at present is the orchestration. In view of the work which lies before me, I want to study this score very closely, and decide whether to adopt some of his methods of instrumentation. His mastery is extraordinary, but, for reasons which would necessitate technical explanations, I have not borrowed anything from him. Wagner's orchestration is too symphonic, too over-loaded and heavy for vocal music. The older I grow, the more convinced I am that symphony and opera are in every respect at the opposite poles of music. Therefore the study of *Lohengrin* will not lead me to change my style, although it has been interesting and of negative value.

[And again, from Berlin, in 1882 (also to von Meck):]

Yesterday *Tristan und Isolde* (which I had never seen) was being given at the Opera, so I decided to remain another day. The work does not give me any pleasure, although I am glad to have heard it, for it has done much to strengthen my previous views of Wagner, which—until I had seen all his works performed—I felt might not be well grounded. Briefly summed up, this is my opinion: in spite of his great creative gifts, in spite of his talents as a poet, and his extensive culture, Wagner's services to art—and to opera in particular—have only been of a negative kind. He has proved that the older forms of opera are lacking in all logical and aesthetic *raison d'être*. But if we may no longer write opera on the old lines, are we obliged to write as Wagner does? I reply, *certainly not*. To compel people to listen for four hours at a stretch to an endless symphony which, however rich in orchestral colour, is wanting in clearness and directness of thought; to keep singers all these hours singing melodies which have no independent existence, but are merely notes that belong to this symphonic music (in spite of lying very high these notes are often lost in the thunder of the orchestra), this is certainly not the ideal at which contemporary musicians should aim.

Wagner has transferred the centre of gravity from the stage to the orchestra, but this is an obvious absurdity, therefore his famous operatic reform—viewed apart from its negative results—amounts to nothing. As regards the dramatic interest of his operas, I find them very poor, often childishly naïve. But I have never been quite so bored as with *Tristan und Isolde*. It is an endless void, without movement, without life, which cannot hold the spectator, or awaken in him any true sympathy for the characters on the stage.

It was evident that the audience—even though Germans—were bored, but they applauded loudly after each act. How can this be explained? Perhaps by a patriotic sympathy for the composer, who actually devoted his whole life to singing the praise of Germanism.

[Though this would suggest that Tchaikovsky had uttered his last word on Wagner and Wagnerism, he writes in another letter to von Meck, two years later:]

I have realised two intentions since I came here (Plestchievo): the study of two works hitherto unknown to me—Moussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* and Wagner's *Parsifal*. In the first I discovered what I expected: pretensions to realism, original conceptions and methods, wretched technique, poverty of invention, occasionally clever episodes, amid an ocean of harmonic absurdities and affectations. . . .

Parsifal leaves an entirely opposite impression. Here we are dealing with a great master, a genius, even if he has gone somewhat astray. His wealth of harmony is so luxuriant, so vast, that at length it becomes fatiguing, even to a specialist. What then must be the feelings of an ordinary mortal who has wrestled for three hours with this flow of complicated harmonic combinations? To my mind Wagner has killed his colossal creative genius with *theories*. Every preconceived theory chills his incontestable creative impulse. How could Wagner abandon himself to inspiration, while he believed he was grasping some particular theory of music-drama, or musical truth, and, for the sake of this, turned from all that, according to his predecessors, constituted the strength and beauty of music? If the singer may not *sing*, but—amid the deafening clamour of the orchestra—is expected to declaim a series of set and colourless phrases, to the accompaniment of a gorgeous, but disconnected and formless symphony, is that opera?

What really astounds me, however, is the seriousness with which this philosophising German sets the most inane subjects to music. Who can be touched, for instance, by *Parsifal*, in which, instead of having to deal with men and women similar in temperament and feeling to ourselves, we find legendary beings, suitable perhaps for a ballet, but not for a music drama? I cannot understand how anyone can listen without laughter, or without being bored, to those endless monologues in which Parsifal, or Kundry, and the rest bewail their misfortunes. Can we sympathise with them? Can we love or hate them? Certainly not; we remain aloof from their passions, sentiments, triumphs, and misfortunes. But that which is unfamiliar to the human heart should never be the source of musical inspiration. . . .

VERDI

IN GENOA

by Massenet

AS I KNEW that Verdi was at Genoa, I took advantage of passing through that city on the way to Milan to pay him a visit.*

When I arrived at the first floor of the old palace of the Dorias, where he lived, I was able to decipher on a card nailed to the door in a dark passage the name which radiates so many memories of enthusiasm and glory: Verdi.

He opened the door himself. I stood nonplussed. His sincerity, graciousness, and the nobility which his tall stature gave his whole person soon drew us together.

I passed unutterably charming moments in his presence, as we talked with the most delightful simplicity in his bedroom and then on the terrace of his sitting room from which we looked over the port of Genoa and beyond on the deep sea as far as the eye could reach. I had the illusion that he was one of the Dorias proudly showing me his victorious fleets.

As I was leaving, I was drawn to remark that "now I had visited him, I was in Italy."

As I was about to pick up the valise I had left in a dark corner of the large reception room, where I had noticed tall gilt chairs which were in the Italian taste of the eighteenth century, I told him that it contained manuscripts which never left me on my travels. Verdi seized my luggage, briskly, and said he did exactly as I did, for he never wanted to be parted from his work on a journey.

How much I would have preferred to have had his music in my valise instead of my own! The master even accompanied me across the garden of his lordly dwelling to my carriage.

* May 1895.

PART TWO: COMPOSITIONS

BEETHOVEN

NINE SYMPHONIES

by Berlioz

IT IS THIRTY-SIX or thirty-seven years ago, that, at the *Concerts Spirituels** of the Opera, the trial was made of the works of Beethoven, then completely unknown in France. No one could imagine at the present day the reprobation at once heaped upon this admirable music by the majority of artists. It was strange, incoherent, diffuse; studded with crude modulations and wild harmonies, bereft of melody, of an exaggerated expression, and too noisy; besides being horribly difficult.

In order to meet the conditions set down by the men of taste who then controlled the Royal Academy of Music, M. Habeneck found himself obliged to make, in the very same symphonies the execution of which he organized and directed with so much care later on at the Conservatoire, monstrous cuts; such as, at the very most, might be permissible in a ballet by Gallemborg, or an opera by Gaveaux. Without these *corrections* Beethoven would not have been admitted to the honor of figuring in the program of the *Concerts Spirituels* between a bassoon solo and a flute concerto.

At a first hearing of the passages marked with red pencil Kreutzer ran off, stopping his ears; and it required all his courage to make up his mind to listen to the *remaining portion* of the Symphony in D (No. 2), at other rehearsals. Let us not forget that the opinion of M. Kreutzer was, at that time, also that of ninety-nine out of every hundred musicians in Paris; and that, without sus-

* Since *A Travers Chant*, from which these comments on Beethoven symphonies have been taken, was published in 1862, this date would be 1825.—Ed.

tained effort on the part of the insignificant fraction* who held a contrary view, the greatest composer of modern times would most likely be scarce known to us even yet. The mere fact, therefore, of the execution even of fragments of Beethoven at the Opera was one of great importance; to judge of which we have only to reflect that, without it, the Society of the Conservatoire would not have been constituted. It is to this small body of intelligent men, and to the public, that the honor of calling such an excellent institution into existence must be accorded.

The public—that is to say the “real” public, in the sense of *that which does not belong to any coterie* and which judges by sentiment and not according to the narrow ideas and ridiculous theories which it has formed upon the subject of art—this public which, in spite of itself, makes mistakes, as is proved by the fact of its frequently having to alter its decisions was, at the very onset, struck by some of the eminent qualities of Beethoven. It does not ask whether such and such a modulation bears a due relation to some other one; whether certain harmonies are admitted by the *magisters*; or whether *it is permitted* to employ certain rhythms, previously unknown. It simply perceives that these rhythms, these harmonies and modulations, set off by a noble and passionate melody, and clothed in powerful instrumentation, make a strong impression upon it, and in an entirely new way. Could anything further be necessary to excite its applause?

Our French public experiences only at rare intervals the lively and ardent emotion of which musical art is capable; but, when it falls to its lot to become thoroughly agitated thereby, nothing can equal its gratitude to the artist, whoever he may be, to whom this is due. From the moment of its first appearance, the celebrated *allegretto* in A minor of the Seventh Symphony, which had been inserted in the Second in order to help to *pass off the remainder*, was appreciated at its value by the public of the *Concerts Spirituels*. The pit rose in a body with vociferous cries for its repetition; and, at a second performance, the first movement and the scherzo of the Symphony in D, which had not been much enjoyed on the occasion of the first trial, met with an almost equal success.

The manifest interest which from that time the public began to evince with regard to Beethoven doubled the strength of his defenders; and reduced, if not to silence at least to inaction, the majority of his detractors.

* A nineteenth century equivalent, in music, of the “passionate few” to whom Arnold Bennett attributed the establishment of most worth-while literary works in his little book.

Thus, little by little, thanks to those twilight rays which revealed to the far-seeing the direction in which the sun was about to rise, the seed developed and resulted in the foundation, almost expressly for Beethoven, of the magnificent Society of the Conservatoire, at the present day with scarcely a rival in the world.

SYMPHONY NO. 1, IN C MAJOR

This work, by its form, by its melodic style, and by its sobriety of harmony and instrumentation, is altogether distinct from the other compositions of Beethoven by which it was succeeded. The composer evidently remained in course of writing it, under the influence of Mozart's ideas; which he sometimes enlarges, and everywhere imitates with ingenuity. In the first and second parts, however, we note the occasional appearance of rhythms which are sometimes employed, it is true, by the author of *Don Giovanni*; but with great rarity, and in a much less striking fashion. The principal subject of the first allegro is a phrase of six bars; which, without presenting anything very characteristic in itself, acquires a subsequent interest by the skill with which it is treated. It is succeeded by an episodial melody in a style but slightly distinguished; when, by means of a half-cadence repeated three or four times, we arrive at an instrumental design in imitations at a fourth; our astonishment at finding which in such a place is increased by the fact that the same design has been often employed in the overtures of several French operas.

The andante contains an accompaniment for kettledrums, *piano*, which appears nowadays as something very ordinary; but which we may nevertheless recognise as the forerunner of the startling effects which Beethoven produced later on by means of this instrument; one which had been, in general, either sparingly or badly used by his predecessors. This movement is full of charm; its theme being graceful and lending itself well to developments in *fugato*, by means of which the composer has been enabled to evolve both piquant and ingenious results.

The scherzo is the first-born of that family of charming humorous pieces of which Beethoven invented the form, and determined the movement; and which he substituted in nearly all his instrumental works for the minuet of Mozart and Haydn, the speed of which is but half, and the character altogether different. The one in question has an exquisite freshness, agility and grace. It is the only real novelty of the symphony; in which the poetic idea is completely

absent, notwithstanding its being so grand and rich in the greater part of the works which followed. It is music admirably framed; clear, imbued with life, though but slightly accentuated; cold and sometimes mean; as for example in the final rondo—a genuine instance of musical childishness. In a word this is not Beethoven; but we are shortly to discover him.

SYMPHONY NO. 2, IN D

In this work everything is noble, energetic and stately; the introductory largo being a *chef-d'oeuvre*. The most beautiful effects succeed one another without confusion and always in an unexpected manner; the song being of a touching solemnity, which, from the very first bars imposes respect and prepares us for emotion. Already the rhythm becomes more bold, the orchestration richer, more sonorous and varied. Linked with this admirable adagio is an *allegro con brio* of irresistible spirit. The *grupetto* met with in the first bar of the opening theme, and which is given out by violas and violoncellos in unison, is afterwards resumed in isolated form; in order to establish either progressions in crescendo or imitations between the wind and string instruments, which are invariably of a character as new as it is full of life. In the midst of these a melody is met with, the first half of which is given out by clarinets, horns and bassoons, but which concludes *tutti* by the rest of the orchestra; the virile energy of which is further enhanced by a happy choice of accompanying chords. The andante is not treated in the same way as that of the first symphony; it is not composed of a subject worked out in canonic imitations, but of a theme pure and simple stated in the first instance by the strings, and afterwards embroidered with rare elegance by means of light touches, the character of which is always strictly in keeping with the sentiment of tenderness which forms the distinctive trait of the principal idea. It is the delineation of innocent happiness hardly clouded by a few accents of melancholy occurring at rare intervals.

The scherzo is just as frankly gay in its capricious fantasy as the andante was completely happy and calm; for everything in this symphony is genial, even the warlike sallies of the first allegro being exempt from violence, so that one can trace in them no more than the youthful ardour of a noble heart which retains intact the most beautiful illusions of life. The composer still has faith in immortal glory, in love and self-sacrifice. Hence the degree to which he abandons himself to his gaiety, and the felicity of his sallies of

wit. To hear the different instruments disputing the possession of some portion of a motive, which no one of them executes entirely, but of which each fragment becomes in this way coloured with a thousand different tints in passing from one to the other, one might easily indulge the fancy of being present at the fairy gambols of the graceful spirits of Oberon. The finale is of the same nature; it is a second scherzo in duple measure; the playfulness of which is perhaps, to some extent, even more refined and piquant.

SYMPHONY NO. 3, IN E FLAT (THE "EROICA")

It is extremely wrong to tamper with the description placed at the head of this work by the composer himself. The inscription runs: "Heroic Symphony to celebrate the memory of a great man." In this we see that there is no question of battles or triumphal marches such as many people, deceived by mutilations of the title naturally expect; but much in the way of grave and profound thought, of melancholy souvenirs and of ceremonies imposing by their grandeur and sadness—in a word, it is the hero's *funeral rites*. I know few examples in music of a style in which grief has been so consistently able to retain such pure form and such nobleness of expression.

The first movement is in triple time and at a degree of speed nearly equal to that of the waltz. But, nevertheless, what can be more serious or more dramatic than this allegro? The energetic theme which forms its foundation does not at first present itself in its entirety. Contrary to custom the composer, in commencing, has only allowed us a glimpse of his melodic idea; it does not present itself in its full effect until after an exordium of some bars. The rhythm is particularly remarkable by the frequency of syncopation and by combinations of duple measure; thrown, by accentuation of the weak beat, into the triple bar. When, with this disjointed rhythm, rude dissonances come to present themselves in combination, like those we find near the middle of the second repeat, where the first violins strike F natural against E (the fifth in the chord of A minor) it is impossible to repress a sensation of fear at such a picture of ungovernable fury. It is the voice of despair, almost of rage.

Still, it may be asked—why this despair? Why this rage? The motive of it does not appear. The orchestra becomes calm at the following bar; as if, exhausted by the excess to which it had given way, its strength began suddenly to fail. Moreover, the phrases are

now gentle; and we find in them all that remembrance is capable of suggesting to the soul of the nature of sad regrets.

It is impossible to describe or even to indicate, the multitude of melodic and harmonic aspects in which Beethoven reproduces his theme; we will confine ourselves to the mention of one which is extremely strange, which has formed the text of many discussions, and which the French editor corrected in the score, imagining it to be a mistake of the engraver; but which was, later on, reinstated—as the result of more ample information.

The first and second violins alone hold, in tremolo, the major second B flat, A flat (part of the chord of the dominant seventh in E flat); when a horn, having quite the appearance of being at fault and of coming in four bars too soon, starts timidly with the commencement of the principal theme; running exclusively on the notes—E flat, G, E flat, B flat. One may imagine the strange effect produced by this melody, formed of the three notes of the tonic chord, against the two dissonant notes of the chord of the dominant; notwithstanding the harshness being much reduced by separation of the parts. But, at the moment when the ear is inclined to revolt against such an anomaly, a vigorous *tutti* interrupts the horn; and, concluding *piano* on the tonic chord, allows the violoncellos to return; who then state the entire theme with its natural harmony. Looking at things broadly it is difficult to find a serious justification for this musical caprice.* They say, however, that the composer was very strenuous upon the point; and it is even related that, at the first rehearsal of this symphony, M. Ries being present stopped the orchestra by calling out—"Too soon! too soon!—The horn is wrong!" and that the only reward for his zeal was that he received from Beethoven, who was furious, a sharp lecture.

No other eccentricity of this nature is to be found in the rest of the score; and the *Funeral March* is a drama in itself. We seem to trace in it the translation of those beautiful lines of Virgil on the funeral procession of the young Pallas—

Multa que praeterea Laurentis praemia pugnae
 Adgerat, et longo praedam jubet ordine duci.
 Post bellator equus, positus insignibus, Aethon
 It lacrymans, guttis que humectat grandibus ora. †

* To this Berlioz appends the note: "Whichever way we look at it, if the above is really an intention of Beethoven, and if there is any truth in the anecdotes which are current upon the subject, it must be a whim amounting to absurdity."

† And so they gathered the many spoils of the battle of Laurentum and ordered that the booty be paraded in a long procession. When the glorious prizes had been arranged, Aethon the warrior horseman marched and wept, and the earth was soaked with heavy tears.

The end, especially, is profoundly moving. The march-theme reappears; but in fragments, interspersed by silence, and without any other accompaniment than three notes *pizzicato* by the double bass. When these shreds of the lugubrious melody thus alone, bare, broken and effaced, have one by one passed on to the tonic, and the wind instruments raise a cry which is the last adieu of the warriors to their companion in arms the entire orchestra dies away on the organ-point, *pianissimo*.

The third movement is entitled Scherzo, according to custom. In Italian the word signifies "play," or "humorous frolic." At first sight it does not appear obvious how such a style of music can figure in an epic composition. To realize this it must be heard. The rhythm and the movement of the scherzo are, indeed, there. There is also play; but it is play of funereal kind, at every instant clouded by thoughts of mourning—a kind of play, in fact, recalling that which the warriors of the *Iliad* celebrated round the tombs of their chiefs.

Even in the most capricious evolutions of his orchestra Beethoven knew how to preserve the grave and somber tint, as well as the profound sadness which ought naturally to dominate in such a case. The *finale* is nothing but a development of the same poetic idea. One very curious passage of instrumentation is to be remarked at the commencement; showing what effect can be drawn from the opposition of different *timbres*. It is a B flat taken by the violins, and repeated immediately by the flutes and oboes; in the style of an echo. Although the repercussion takes place on the same note of the scale, at the same movement and with equal force, so great a difference results from this dialogue that the nuance which distinguishes the instruments from one another might be compared to that between *blue* and *violet*. Such refinements of tone-color were altogether unknown before Beethoven; and it is to him that we owe them.

The finale, though so varied, consists entirely of a very simple *fugato* theme; upon which the composer afterwards builds, in addition to numerous ingenious details, two other themes; one of the latter being of extreme beauty. The outline of this melody does not enable one to perceive that it has, so to speak, been extracted from another one. Its expression, on the contrary, is much more touching; and it is incomparably more graceful than the first theme, the character of which is rather that of a bass—a function which it fulfills extremely well. This melody reappears shortly before the close, in a slower degree of movement, and with new harmonies, by which the effect of its sadness is increased. The hero causes

many tears; but after the last regrets paid to his memory, the poet turns aside from elegy; in order to intone with transport his hymn of glory. It may be somewhat laconic but this peroration rises to a high effect and worthily crowns the musical monument. Beethoven has written works more striking perhaps than this symphony; and several of his other compositions impress the public in a more lively way. But it must be allowed, notwithstanding, that the *Sinfonia Eroica* possesses such strength of thought and execution, that its style is so emotional and consistently elevated, besides its form being so poetical, that it is entitled to rank as equal to the highest conceptions of its composer.

A sentiment of sadness not only grave but, so to speak, antique takes possession of me whenever I hear this symphony although the public seems indifferently touched by it. We must deplore the misfortune of an artist who, consumed by such enthusiasm, fails to make himself sufficiently well understood, even by a refined audience, to insure the raising of his hearers up to the level of his own inspiration. It is all the more sad as the same audience, on other occasions becomes ardent, excited or sorrowful along with him. It becomes seized with a real and lively passion for some of his compositions; equally admirable, it may be admitted, but nevertheless not more beautiful than the present work. It appreciates at their just value the allegretto in A minor of the Seventh Symphony; the allegretto scherzando of the eighth; the finale of the fifth and the scherzo of the ninth. It even appears to experience emotion at the funeral march of the symphony of which we are now speaking (the *Eroica*); but, in respect of the first movement, it is impossible to indulge in any illusion; for twenty years of observation tend to assure me that the public listens to it with a feeling approaching coldness, and appears to recognize in it a learned and energetic composition, but nothing beyond that.

No philosophy is applicable to this case; for it is useless to say that it has always been so, and that everywhere the same fate has befallen all high productions of the human mind. Also that the causes of poetic emotion are secret and inappreciable, that the conception of certain beauties with which particular individuals are gifted is absolutely lacking in the multitude, or that it is even impossible that it should be otherwise. All that is of no consolation. It does not calm the indignation with which one's heart is filled—an indignation instinctive, involuntary, and it may even be, absurd—at the aspect of a marvel which is misunderstood; of a composition so noble which is regarded by the crowd without being perceived; listened to without being understood; and allowed

to pass by without courting any attention, precisely as if it were a mere case of something mediocre or indifferent.

Oh! it is frightful to be obliged to acknowledge with a pitiless conviction, that what I find beautiful may constitute *beauty* for me, but that it may not do so for my best friend; that he, whose sympathy generally corresponds with my own, may be affected in a totally different way; and that even the work which affords me a transport of pleasure—which excites me to the utmost, and which moves me to tears, may leave him cold; and may even cause him displeasure and annoyance.

The majority of great poets have little feeling for music, and enjoy only trivial and childish melodies. Many highly intellectual people who think they love it have little idea of the emotion it is able to raise. These are sad truths; but they are so palpable and evident that nothing but the illusion caused by certain systems can stand in the way of their recognition. I have observed a dog bark with pleasure on hearing a major third, executed *sostenuto* by double-stopping upon the violin; but the offspring of the same animal were not in the least affected, either by the third, fifth, sixth or octave—or, in fact, by any chord whatever, whether consonant or dissonant. The public, however it may be composed, is always, in respect to great musical conceptions, in a similar position. It has certain nerves which vibrate in sympathy with certain forms of resonance. But this organization, incomplete as it is, is unequally distributed; as well as subject to no end of modifications. It follows that it would be almost foolish to count upon such and such artistic means in preference to others for the purpose of acting upon it. Thus the composer is best advised to follow blindly his own individual sentiment; resigning himself beforehand to the results which chance may have in store.

One day I was coming out of the Conservatoire with three or four amateurs; the occasion being a performance of the *Choral Symphony*.

“What do you think of that work?” said one of them to me.

“Immense! Magnificent! Overpowering!”

“That is singular. For my part, I found it cruelly tiresome. And you?” added the speaker, addressing an Italian.

“Oh! as for me, I find it obscure; or rather unpleasant, for there is no melody.”

But, besides that, note the different views which several journals express about it:

“The *Choral Symphony* of Beethoven represents the culminating point of modern music. Art has hitherto produced nothing to be

compared with it in respect of nobleness of style, grandeur of plan and refinement of detail."

(*Another journal*)—"The *Choral Symphony* of Beethoven is a monstrosity."

(*Another*)—"This work is not altogether lacking in ideas; but they are badly disposed and the general effect is incoherent and devoid of charm."

(*Another*)—"The *Choral Symphony* of Beethoven contains some admirable passages; though it is evident that the composer lacked ideas and that, his exhausted imagination no longer sustaining him, he made considerable effort, and often with some success, in order to replace inspiration by artistic resources. The few phrases which we meet with in it are handled in a superior manner and disposed in a perfectly clear and logical order. On the whole, it is the highly interesting work of a *used-up* genius."

Where shall we find the truth or where the error? Everywhere, and yet in no particular place. Each one is right; for what is beautiful for one is not so for the other. This naturally follows, if only from the fact that one has experienced emotion whilst the other has remained unaffected; that the first has received a lively enjoyment, whilst the second has suffered an intense fatigue. What can be done in such a case? Nothing. But it is distressing, and makes me feel inclined to prefer the foolish view of beauty being absolute.

SYMPHONY NO. 4, IN B FLAT

Here Beethoven entirely abandons ode and elegy; in order to return to the less elevated and less sombre, but not less difficult style of the second symphony. The general character of this score is either lively, alert and gay or of a celestial sweetness. With the exception of the meditative adagio, which serves as its introduction, the first movement is almost entirely given over to joy. The motive in detached notes, with which the allegro opens, is only a background upon which the composer is afterwards enabled to display other melodies of more real character; the effect of the latter being to impart a secondary character to what was apparently the principal idea of the commencement.

This artifice, although fertile in curious and interesting results, had already been employed by Mozart and Haydn with equal success. But we find in the second part of the same allegro, a really new idea, the first few bars of which arrest attention; and

which also, after interesting the listener by its mysterious developments, strikes him with astonishment by its unexpected conclusion. It is composed as follows:

After a fairly vigorous *tutti* the first violins parcel out the original theme, by forming a dialogue in *pianissimo* with their seconds. This terminates with holding notes of the dominant chord of the key of B natural; each instance of such holding notes being followed by two bars of silence interrupted only by a light *tremolo* of the kettledrum; which, being tuned to B flat, plays enharmonically the part of third to the fundamental F sharp. After two such appearances the kettledrum ceases; in order to allow the string instruments an opportunity of sweetly murmuring other fragments of the theme, and of arriving by a new enharmonic modulation to the chord of six-four; second inversion of that of B flat. The kettledrum now returns upon the same sound; which, instead of being a leading note, as upon the first occasion, is now a veritable tonic; and, as such, continues the *tremolo* for some twenty bars. The force of tonality possessed by this B flat, only slightly perceptible at first, becomes greater in the same degree as the *tremolo* proceeds. Afterwards, the other instruments, bestrewing the onward march with slight and unfinished traits, prepare us for a continuous roll of the kettledrum on a general *forte*, in which the perfect chord of B flat is finally stated by the full orchestra in all its majesty. This remarkable *crescendo* is one of the best conceived effects which we know of in all music; and its counterpart can scarcely be found elsewhere than in the similar feature by which the celebrated scherzo of the C minor Symphony is concluded. The latter, however, notwithstanding its immense effect, is conceived upon a scale less vast, starting from *piano* in order to arrive at the final explosion, without departing from the original key. On the other hand, the episode we are now describing starts from *mezzo forte*; and is afterwards lost for a moment in a *pianissimo*, whilst harmonised in a manner constantly vague and undecided. Then, it reappears with chords of a somewhat more settled tonality; and bursts forth only at the moment when the cloud which enshrouded the modulation has completely disappeared. It might be compared to a river, the peaceful waters of which suddenly disappear and only emerge from their subterranean bed to form a furious and foaming waterfall.

As for the adagio, it seems to elude analysis. Its form is so pure and the expression of its melody so angelic and of such irresistible tenderness that the prodigious art by which this perfection is attained disappears completely. From the very first bars we are over-

taken by an emotion which, towards the close, becomes so overpowering in its intensity that only amongst the giants of poetic art can we find anything to compare with this sublime page of the giant of music. Nothing in fact more resembles the impression produced by this adagio than that experienced when reading the touching episode of Francesca di Rimini in the *Divina Comedia*; the recital of which Virgil could not hear without sobbing bitterly; and which, at the last line, causes Dante to fall *like a dead body*. This movement seems as if it had been sadly murmured by the Archangel Michael on some day when, overcome by a feeling of melancholy, he contemplated the universe from the threshold of the Empyrean.

The scherzo consists almost exclusively of phrases in duple rhythm, forcibly forming part of combinations in triple time. This means, which Beethoven uses frequently, imparts verve to the style; the melodic outlines become sharper and more surprising, besides which these rhythms, running counter to the ordinary beat, present an independent charm which is very real, although difficult to explain. A pleasure results from this disturbance of the normal accent, which regains its position at the end of each period; the sense of the musical discourse, which had been for a time suspended, then arriving at a satisfactory conclusion and complete solution.

The melody of the trio, confided to the wind instruments, is of a delicious freshness; its movement being slower than that of the rest of the scherzo, and its elegant simplicity being enhanced by encountering the opposition of short phrases emanating from the violins, which seem cast upon the surface of the harmony like charming traits of innocent mischief. The finale, which is both gay and sprightly, returns to ordinary rhythmic forms. It is one animated swarm of sparkling notes, presenting a continual babble; interrupted, however, by occasional rough and uncouth chords, in which the angry interspersions, which we have already had occasion to mention as peculiar to this composer, are again manifest.

SYMPHONY NO. 5, IN C MINOR

The most celebrated of all is also, without question, in our opinion, the one in which Beethoven gives free scope to his vast imagination; without electing to be either guided or supported by any outside thought; in the first, second and fourth symphonies he more or less extended forms which were already known; investing

them with the poetry of a brilliant and passionate inspiration due to his vigorous youth. In the third (the *Eroica*) the form tends to a greater breadth, it is true; the thought also reaching to a greater height. Notwithstanding all this, however, we cannot fail to recognize therein the influence of one or other of those divine poets to whom, for so long, the great artist had erected a temple in his heart. Beethoven, faithful to the precept of Horace:

Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna,*

used to read Horace habitually; and, in his magnificent musical epic which, rightly or wrongly, is said to have been inspired by a modern hero, remembrances of the antique Iliad play an admirable and beautiful, but no less evident part.

The Symphony in C minor, on the other hand, appears to us to emanate directly and solely from the genius of Beethoven. It is his own intimate thought which is there developed; and his secret sorrows, his pent-up rage, his dreams so full of melancholy oppression, his nocturnal visions and his bursts of enthusiasm furnish its entire subject; whilst the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and orchestral forms are there delineated with an essential novelty and individuality, endowing them also with considerable power and nobleness.

The first movement is devoted to the expression of the disordered sentiments which pervade a great soul when prey to despair. It is not that calm and concentrated despair which bears the outward appearance of resignation; or the grief, so somber and silent, which Romeo evinces on hearing of the death of Juliet. Rather is it the terrible fury of Othello, when receiving from the mouth of Iago the empoisoned calumnies which persuade him of Desdemona's crime. Sometimes it is a frenzied delirium, bursting forth in fearful cries. Sometimes it is an excessive depression, expressing itself only in accents of regret and seeming to hold itself in pity. Listen to those orchestral gasps; to those chords in dialogue between wind and strings, which come and go whilst gradually growing weaker, like the painful respiration of a dying man. These at last give place to a phrase full of violence; in which the orchestra seems to rise again reanimated by a spark of fury. See that quivering mass; which hesitates for an instant, and then precipitates itself, bodily divided, into two ardent unisons, resembling two streams of lava. And, then having done this, say whether this passionate style is not both beyond and above anything which had yet been produced in instrumental music.

* Study carefully by night and day.

This movement presents a striking example of the effect produced by the excessive doubling of parts under certain circumstances, and of the wild aspect of the chord of the fourth on the second note of the scale; otherwise described as the second inversion of the chord of the dominant. It is met with frequently without preparation or resolution, and it even occurs once without the leading note and on an organ point; the D forming the bass of the strings, whilst the G forms the discordant summit of a few parts assigned to the wind.

The adagio presents some characteristic relation with the *allegretto* in A minor of the Seventh Symphony; and with that in E flat of the fourth. It offers equally the melancholy gravity of the first and the touching grace of the second. The theme, first stated by the violoncellos and violas, together with a simple *pizzicato* double-bass accompaniment, is followed by a certain phrase for wind instruments which recurs continually in the same form and in the same key from one end to the other of the movement, whatever may be the successive modifications to which the original theme is subject. This persistence of one and the same phrase, in adhering always to its original simplicity, is so profoundly sad that it produces, little by little, upon the soul of the listener an impression impossible to describe, but which is certainly the most powerful of its kind which we have ever experienced.

Among the boldest harmonic effects of this sublime elegy may be quoted:

(1) The *sostenuto* of an upper part on the dominant B flat whilst the strings move rapidly below; passing by the chord of the sixth (D flat, F, B flat), to which the said upper part does not belong.

(2) The incidental phrase executed by flute, oboe and two clarinets, proceeding in contrary motion and giving rise from time to time, to unprepared discords of the second between G, the leading note, and F, as major sixth in the key of A flat. This third inversion of the chord of the seventh on the leading note is forbidden by most theorists, precisely as the upper pedal just mentioned; though it does not, on that account, present any less delightful effect. There is also, at the last entry of the original theme, a *canon in the unison at one bar distance* between violins and flutes, clarinets and bassoons. This would give to the melody thus treated a new interest, were it possible to hear the imitation of the wind instruments; but, unfortunately, just then the entire orchestra is playing so loud as to render it inaudible.

The scherzo is a strange composition, the first bars of which,

though presenting nothing terrible, cause that strange emotion we are accustomed to experience under the magnetic glance of certain individuals. Everything in it is mysterious and somber; the orchestral devices, with more or less sinister aspect, seeming to belong to the same order of ideas which created the famous Bloksberg scene in Goethe's *Faust*. Tints of *piano* and *mezzo-forte* prevail throughout. The middle part, or trio, is remarkable for a bass passage executed with all the force of the bow; the uncouth weight of which shakes the very feet of the players' desks and resembles somewhat the gambols of a delighted elephant.* But the monster departs, and the noise of his mad careering gradually dies away. The motive of the scherzo now reappears in *pizzicato*; peace is gradually restored; until nothing more is heard than a few notes, daintily plucked by the violins, and the faint clucking produced by the bassoons, giving their high A flat, closely opposed by G, as octave in the chord of the dominant minor ninth. Then, interrupting the cadence, the stringed instruments *col arco* softly take the chord of A flat, upon which they repose for a length of time. The rhythm is entirely dependent upon the kettledrums, by which it is sustained in the form of light strokes given by sponge-covered sticks; its design thus appearing in dull form against the general stagnation of the rest of the orchestra.

The kettledrum note is C, and the key of the movement that of C minor; but the chord of A flat, long sustained by the other instruments, seems, on the one hand, to introduce a different tonality, whilst, on the other, the isolated *martellato* of the kettledrum on C tends to preserve the sentiment of the original key. The ear hesitates, uncertain as to the way in which this harmonic mystery is about to issue; when the dull pulsations of the kettledrum, becoming more and more intense, meet the violins who have now rejoined the rhythmic movement and changed the harmony. The chord is now that of the dominant seventh (G, B, D, F) throughout which the kettledrums obstinately continue their roll upon C tonic. And then it is that the entire orchestra, reinforced by the trombones which have hitherto not appeared, bursts forth in the major mode upon a triumphal march-theme, and the *finale* begins. Everybody knows the effect of this thunder stroke; and it is, therefore, useless to detain the reader with any account of it.

The critics have nevertheless tried to detract from the merit of the composer by declaring that, in the above, he had resorted

* Saint-Saëns had, perhaps, this remark in mind when he utilized the *Dance of the Sylphs* (from Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*) on the double-basses in his *Carnival of the Animals* to suggest elephants.—Ed.

to a mere vulgar procedure; the brightness of the major mode pompously succeeding the obscurity of the minor *pianissimo*. Also, that the triumphal theme was lacking in originality, and that the interest grew less as the end was approached, instead of following a contrary order.

To this we may reply by asking:

Was less genius necessary to create such a work because the passage from *piano* to *forte* and that from *minor* to *major* were means already known?

How many other composers have resorted to the same means, and how far can the results which they have obtained be compared to this gigantic song of victory; in which the soul of the poet-musician, henceforth free from all hindrance and earthly suffering, seems to rise beaming towards the very heavens? The first four bars of the theme are, it is true, not of great originality; but the forms of the fanfare are naturally restricted; and we do not believe it would be possible to discover new ones without altogether emerging from the simple, grand and pompous character which is proper to it. Beethoven, therefore, required only a fanfare entrance for his *finale*; and, throughout the rest of the movement, and even in the part succeeding the principal phrase, he retains the elevation and novelty of style which never abandons him. As to the reproach of not having proceeded with an increasing interest to the conclusion the following may be replied:

Music cannot, at all events in the state in which we know it, produce a more violent effect than that of the transition from the scherzo to the triumphal march. It was, therefore, quite impossible to proceed with any augmentation of it.

To *sustain* such a height of effect is, in fact, already a prodigious effort. Notwithstanding the amplitude of the developments in which Beethoven has indulged, he has succeeded in accomplishing this. But this very equality between the commencement and conclusion suffices to cause a *suspicion* of decrease, on account of the terrible shock which the nerves of the listener experience at the opening. Nervous emotion, thus raised to its most violent paroxysm, becomes immediately afterwards so much the more difficult to effect. In a long row of columns of similar height an optical illusion causes those which are most removed to appear smaller than the rest. Possibly our feeble organization would be better suited to a laconic peroration such as:

Notre général vous rapelle,

by Gluck. The audience would, in this way, not have time to grow cold; and the symphony would finish before fatigue had intervened to prevent the possibility of accompanying the author in his advance. This observation, however, only applies, so to speak, to the *mise-en-scène* of the work; and by no means prevents this finale from being in itself of a magnificence and richness in comparison with which there are few pieces which could appear without being completely crushed.

PASTORAL SYMPHONY AND SYMPHONY NO. 7, IN A

The Seventh Symphony is celebrated for its allegretto. This does not arise because the other three parts are any less worthy of admiration; far from it. But the public does not generally judge by any other measure than that of effect produced; and, as it only measures this effect by the amount of applause, it follows that whatever is most applauded always passes for being the most beautiful, notwithstanding that there are beauties of infinite worth which are not of a nature to excite any demonstrations of approval. Then it happens, that, in order to promote still further the object of this predilection, all the rest is sacrificed to it. Such is, at all events, in France the universal custom. That is why in speaking of Beethoven, one says: the "Storm" of the *Pastoral Symphony*; the "finale" of the Symphony in C minor; the "andante" of the Symphony in A, and so on.

It does not appear to be certain that the latter was composed after the *Pastoral* or *Eroica* symphonies. Several authorities hold, on the contrary, that it preceded these symphonies by a certain period of time. The mere number which designates it as the *seventh* would, consequently, should this opinion be well founded, refer merely to the order of publication.*

The first movement opens with a broad and pompous introduction, in which melody, modulations and orchestral designs successively compete for the hearer's interest; besides commencing with one of those effects of instrumentation of which Beethoven is uncontestedly the creator. The entire mass, striking a chord both loud and short, discovers an oboe during the silence which succeeds. The entrance of this oboe, hidden by the orchestral attack, had not been previously perceived; and it now states the opening melody in *sostenuto*. No more original mode of opening could be imagined.

* There is no basis for this conjecture in the knowledge of Beethoven that we now possess.—Ed.

At the end of the introduction the note E (as dominant of A), recalled after several excursions into neighboring keys, becomes the object of a play of tone-color between violins and flutes somewhat analogous to that met with in the first few bars of the finale of the *Eroica Symphony*. The E comes and goes without accompaniment during six bars; changing its aspect each time it passes from string to wind. Finally, retained by the flute and oboe, it serves to join the introduction to the allegro; and becomes the first note of the principal theme, of which it gradually outlines the rhythmical form. I have heard this subject ridiculed on account of its rustic simplicity. Probably the reproach of lack of nobleness would never have been applied to it had the author, as in the *Pastoral Symphony*, placed at the head of his allegro in plain letters the inscription: "RONDE DE PAYSANS" (*Peasants' Rondo*).

We therefore see that, if there are listeners who prefer *not* to be warned of the subject treated by the musician, there are others, on the contrary, indisposed to welcome any idea presented to them in an unaccustomed dress, unless they are told beforehand of the reason of the anomaly. In default of being able to decide between two such dissimilar opinions it seems that the artist, in such a case, can do no better than follow his own sentiment; without foolishly straining after the chimera of popular suffrage.

The phrase in question is of a rhythm extremely marked; which, afterwards passing to the harmony, is reproduced in a multitude of aspects without arresting its cadenced march until the end. The employment of a rhythmic form in *ostinato* has never been attempted with so much success; and this allegro, the extensive development of which runs constantly upon the same idea, is treated with such inconceivable sagacity, the changes of tonality are so frequent and ingenious, the chords are formed into groups and enchainments of such novelty, that the movement concludes before the attention and ardent emotion which it excites in the listener have had time to lose anything of their extreme vivacity.

The harmonic effect most seriously blamed by the partisans of scholastic discipline, and at the same time the most successful one, is that of the resolution of the discord in the chord of six, five, on the subdominant in the key of E natural. This discord of the second, placed in an upper part against a loud *tremolo* between the first and second violins, is resolved in a way altogether new. One resolution might have allowed the E to remain, and have caused the F sharp to rise to G; whilst another might have kept the F, whilst causing the E to fall to D. Beethoven uses neither one nor the other of these. Without changing his bass he brings the two

parts of the discord together, in an octave on F natural, by making the F sharp descend a semitone and the E a major seventh. The chord, therefore, which was previously one of six, five, now becomes a minor sixth; its fifth having disappeared from F natural. The sudden change from *forte* to *piano* at the precise moment of this singular harmonic transformation both gives it a more decided aspect and renders its grace twofold.

Let us not forget, before passing to the next movement, to mention the curious crescendo by means of which Beethoven reintroduces his favorite rhythm, which he had for an instant abandoned. It is produced by a two-bar phrase:

D, C sharp, B sharp, B sharp, C sharp

in the key of A major; repeated, eleven times in succession at a low pitch, by the basses and violas; whilst the wind instruments hold E, above, below, and in the middle, in quadruple octave; and whilst the violins keep on delivering, as a sort of chime, the notes:

E, A, E, C sharp,

the percussions of which continually increase in speed and are combined in such a way as to present the dominant when the basses are at D or B sharp; and the tonic whenever they play C sharp. This is absolutely new; and no imitator has, I think, yet tried very happily to apply this beautiful discovery.

The rhythm, which is one as simple as that of the first movement, although of different form, is equally the principal cause of the incredible effect produced by the allegretto. It consists exclusively of a dactyl followed by a spondee; which occur without ceasing, sometimes in three parts, sometimes in a single one, and sometimes in the whole of the parts together. Sometimes they serve as an accompaniment, often attracting a concentrated attention to themselves, or furnishing the first theme of a small episodic double fugue for the stringed instruments. It appears at first for the lower strings of the violas, violoncellos and double basses, marked with a simple *piano*; with the intention of being soon afterwards repeated in a *pianissimo* full of melancholy and mystery. From there it passes to the second violins; whilst the violoncellos chant a sort of lamentation in the minor mode; the rhythmical phrase continuing to rise from octave to octave, and thus arriving at the pitch of the first violins. These, by a crescendo, transmit it to the wind instruments in the upper region of the orchestra; where it then bursts forth in all its force. Thereupon, the melodious plaint being stated with greater energy, assumes

the character of a convulsive lamentation; irreconcilable rhythms painfully agitate one against another; for these are tears, and sobs and supplications—in short, the expression of a grief without limit and of a devouring form of suffering. But a gleam of hope has just appeared; these agonizing accents being succeeded by a vaporous melody, pure, simple, soft, sad and resigned; like *patience smiling at grief*. Only the basses continue their inexorable rhythm under this rainbow of melody; and it seems, if I may borrow a quotation from English poetry, like:

*One fatal remembrance, one sorrow, that throws
Its black shade alike o'er our joys and our woes*

After a few alternations remindful of anguish and resignation the orchestra, as if fatigued by such a painful struggle, presents only fragments of the original theme, and dies away exhausted. The flutes and oboes take up the theme, with a murmuring voice, but strength fails them to finish it; and it is the violins to which the termination falls, in a few notes of *pizzicato*, scarcely perceptible. Afterwards, with a flicker of fresh animation, remindful of the flame of a lamp which is about to die out, the wind instruments exhale a profound sigh upon an indecisive harmony, and *all is silence*. This plaintive exclamation, with which the *andante* both commences and concludes, is produced by a chord (that of the 6-4) which has a continual tendency to resolve upon some other; and the incomplete harmonic sense of which is the only one which could permit its use for the purpose of finishing in such a way as to leave the hearer with a vague impression and to augment the feeling of dreamy sadness in which the whole of the preceding must necessarily have plunged him.

The subject of the scherzo is modeled in quite a new style. It is in F major; and instead of concluding its first section in C, or B flat, or D minor, or A minor, or A flat, or D flat, after the habit of the great majority of pieces of this kind, it is upon the key of its *third*—or in other words upon A natural major—that the modulation falls. The scherzo of the *Pastoral Symphony*, which is also in F, modulates into D major, a third lower. There is some resemblance in the color presented by this contrast of keys; but this is not the only affinity to be observed as existing between the two works. The trio of the present movement (*presto meno assai*), in which the violins hold the dominant almost continually, whilst the oboes and clarinets execute a genial rustic melody below, is altogether within the sentiment of the landscape and the idyll. We meet in it also a new form of crescendo, stated in a lower part of the sec-

ond horn, which murmurs the two notes, A, G sharp, in duple rhythm, although the bar is of three beats; and accentuates the G sharp, although A is the integral note. The public seems always struck with astonishment on hearing this passage.

The finale is at least as rich as the preceding movements in new combinations, piquant modulations and capricious charm. The theme presents a certain relation with that of the overture of *Armide*; but it is only in the arrangement of the first few notes, and is more evident to the eye than to the ear; for, when executed, nothing can be more dissimilar than these two ideas. We should better appreciate the freshness and coquetry of Beethoven's phrase, so different from the cavalier-spirit of Gluck's theme, if the chords taken in upper parts by the wind instruments were less dominating over the first violins singing in the medium register, whilst the second violins and violas accompany the melody below with a *tremolo* in double-stopping. Throughout the course of this *finale* Beethoven has drawn effects as graceful as they are unforeseen from the sudden transition from the key of C sharp minor to that of D major. One of his happiest bold harmonic strokes is unquestionably the great pedal on the dominant E; set off by a D sharp of a value equal to that of the principal note. The chord of the seventh is also sometimes introduced above in such a way that the D natural of the upper parts falls precisely upon the D sharp of the basses. One might expect the result of this to be a horrible discord; or at all events, a deficiency of clearness in the harmony. Nothing of the kind happens, however; for the tonal force of this dominant is such that the D sharp does not affect it in any way, and the bourdon (bass) of E continues exclusively to be heard. Beethoven did not write his music for the mere purpose of being looked at.

The *coda* which is introduced by this threatening pedal is of extraordinary brightness, and well worthy of terminating such a masterpiece—alike of technical ability, taste, fantasy, knowledge and inspiration.

SYMPHONY NO. 8, IN F

This symphony is in F, like the *Pastoral*; but conceived within proportions less vast than its predecessors. However, if it scarcely surpasses in respect of amplitude of form the first symphony in C, it is, at all events, far superior to it in the threefold respect of instrumentation, rhythm and melodic style.

The first movement contains two subjects; both being gentle and calm in character. The second, which, in our opinion, is the more remarkable, seems continually to avoid the perfect cadence; by modulating first of all, in a totally unexpected manner (the phrase begins in D and finishes in C), and afterwards, in disappearing, without any conclusion, on the chord of the diminished seventh.

To hear this melodic caprice it would almost seem as if the author, though desiring a gentle emotion, had been suddenly prevented from continuing his joyous song by the intervention of some sad idea.

The *andante scherzando* is one of those productions for which it would be equally vain to seek either a model or a counterpart; which seem to have fallen from heaven, and to have straightway entered the author's mind; which he therefore writes, as it were, at a stroke; and which we can only listen to, amazed. The wind instruments here play a part which is the opposite of that which usually falls to their lot. In other words they accompany, with added chords, repeated eight times *pianissimo* in each bar, the lightsome dialogue *a punta d'arco* of the violins and basses. It is soft and ingenuous, besides being of an indolence specially graceful; like the song of two children gathering flowers in a meadow on a beautiful spring morning.

The principal phrase is formed of two sections of three bars each, the symmetrical disposition of which is disturbed by the silence which follows the bass reply. It thus happens that the first section finishes upon a weak, and the second upon a strong, beat. The chord-repetitions of oboe, clarinets, horns and bassoons are so interesting that the listener seems to be prevented from noticing the symmetrical defect produced in the *cantabile* of the string instruments by the amount of added silence.

The addition alluded to evidently exists only for the purpose of allowing the delightful chord from which the happy melody is next to take its flight, to be somewhat longer heard alone. We see again, by this example, that the law of strict outline may sometimes be infringed with success; but can it be believed that this ravishing idyll concludes by the very one of all common features for which Beethoven had the greatest aversion? *viz.*, by the Italian cadence. At the moment when the instrumental conversation of the two little orchestras, wind and string, is most attractive, the composer, as if he had been suddenly *compelled* to finish, makes the violins play in *tremolo* the four notes: G sixth, F dominant, A leading note, B flat tonic—repeats them several times precipitately, for all the world as the Italians do when they sing *Fe-li-ci-tà*, and

then—stops short! I have never been able to explain to myself this comical wind-up.

A minuet, with all the cut and precise movement of the minuets of Haydn, here takes the place of the scherzo in quick triple time which Beethoven invented; and of which he made such ingenious and attractive use in all his other symphonic compositions. To speak truly, this movement is but ordinary; and the antiquity of the form seems somehow to have stifled the composer's thought.

The finale, on the contrary, sparkles with life; its ideas being brilliant, new and luxuriously developed. There are to be found diatonic progressions, in two parts and in contrary motion, serving the composer as means for a crescendo of immense extent and grand effect for his peroration. The harmony merely includes a few cases of harshness; produced by the resolution of passing-notes not being sufficiently prompt, and by the passing-notes occasionally stopping short before a rest.

By somewhat straining the mere letter of theoretical law these passing discords can easily be explained; but, in performance, they always produce a more or less unpleasant effect. A contrary instance is afforded by the high pedal of the flutes and oboes on F; whilst the drums, tuned in the octave, hammer out the same note below, at the re-entry of the theme; the violins playing: C, G, B flat, of the chord of the dominant seventh, preceded by the third—F, A, fragment of the tonic chord. I hold that this sustained upper note, which is forbidden theoretically, as it forms no part of the harmony, gives no offence. Far from that, thanks to an adroit disposition of the instruments and to the peculiar character of the phrase the result of this aggregation of sound is excellent, and of remarkable sweetness.

We must not omit to mention, before concluding, a certain orchestral effect—the one of all perhaps which most surprises the listener at the performance of this finale. We allude to the note, C sharp, which is loudly struck by the entire mass of instruments in unison and octave after a diminuendo which has just died away upon C natural. This roar of sound is immediately followed, on the first two occasions, by a return of the theme in F. This shows that the C sharp was enharmonically really a D flat, chromatically altered from the sixth note of the scale. But the third appearance of this strange return bears a different aspect. The orchestra having modulated to C, as before, now strikes a *genuine* D flat; followed by a fragment of the theme in that key. Then comes an equally *genuine* C sharp; succeeded by another portion of the theme in C sharp minor. Resuming now the same C sharp, and repeating it

three times with increase of force, the entire theme now enters—in F sharp minor.

The same sound, therefore, which had figured at the beginning as a minor sixth, becomes successively at its last appearance:

1. Tonic, major, flattened.
2. Tonic, minor, flattened.
3. Dominant.

All this is very curious.

SYMPHONY NO. 9, IN D (THE "CHORAL")

To analyze such a composition is a difficult and dangerous task, and one which we have long hesitated to undertake. It is a hazardous attempt, excuse for which can only lie in persevering efforts to place ourselves at the composer's point of view and thus perceive the inner sense of his work, feel its effect, and study the impressions which it has so far produced; both upon privileged organizations and upon the public at large. Amongst the many judgments which have been passed upon this work there are perhaps not even two which are identical. It is regarded by some critics as a *monstrous folly*. Others can only see in it the parting gleams of an expiring genius. A few, more prudent, confess that they do not yet understand it; but are hopeful of being able to appreciate it, at least approximately, later on. The great bulk of artists deem it to be an extraordinary conception; though some of its parts are not yet explained, and appear to have no direct object.

But there are a few musicians who are impelled by their nature to bestow every care in examining whatever may tend to increase the field of art. These have ripely reflected upon the general plan of the *Choral Symphony*; and after having read it and attentively listened to it on many occasions they are firm in the conviction that this work forms the most magnificent expression of Beethoven's genius. That opinion, as we have already hinted in these pages, is the one to which we adhere.

Without prying into what the composer may have wished to express in the way of ideas personal to himself in this vast musical poem, this being a search in favor of which the field of conjecture is equally open to everyone, let us see if the novelty of form is not here justified by an intention altogether independent of philosophic or religious thought, an intention as reasonable and beautiful

for the fervent Christian as for the Pantheist or Atheist—an intention, in fact, purely musical and poetical.

Beethoven had already written eight symphonies before this. What means were open to him, in the event of his purposing to go beyond the point at which he had already arrived, by the unaided resources of instrumentation? *The junction of vocal with instrumental forces.* But in order to observe the law of crescendo, and to place the power of the auxiliary which he wished to give the orchestra in effective relief in the work itself, was it not necessary still to allow the instruments to occupy the foreground of the picture which he proposed to unfold? This proposition being once admitted, we can easily imagine him induced to adopt a style of mixed music capable of serving as connecting link between the two great divisions of the symphony. It was the instrumental recitative which thus became the bridge which he ventured to throw out between chorus and orchestra; and over which the instruments passed to attain a junction with the voices.

The passage being decided on, the author was obliged to make his intention clear by announcing the fusion which he was about to effect. Then it was that, speaking by the mouth of a Coryphée, he himself cried out, in employing the very notes of the instrumental recitative which he had just employed:

*“O Freunde, nicht diese Töne! sondern lasst uns augenhemmere anstimmen, und freudenvollere.”**

In the above lies, so to speak, the “treaty of alliance” entered into between chorus and orchestra; the same phrase of recitative pronounced by one and the other seeming to be the form of an oath mutually taken. From that point, the musician was free in the choice of the text of his choral composition. It is to Schiller that Beethoven applies. He takes the poet’s *Ode to Joy*, colors it with a thousand tints which the unaided poetry could never have conveyed, and, right up to the end, he pursues one continual road of increasing pomp and grandeur and *éclat*.

Such is, probably, the reason, more or less plausible, of the general arrangement of this immense composition; the several parts of which we are now to study.

The first movement, with its imprint of somber majesty, does not resemble any which Beethoven had previously written. The harmony is sometimes of an excessive boldness; and designs of the most original kind as well as features of the most expressive order meet, cross and interlace in all ways without producing either ob-

* “O Friends, not tones like these! But let us turn to others, more pleasant and full of joy.”

scurity or encumbrance. On the contrary, the general result is *one* effect which is perfectly clear. The multitude of orchestral voices may complain or threaten, each one in its own peculiar way or special style. But they all seem to unite in forming one single voice; so great is the force of the sentiment by which they are animated.

This *allegro maestoso*, written in D minor, commences, however, upon the chord of A without its third; or, in other words, with a continuation of the notes A, E, placed as a fifth, and arpeggiated above and below by the first violins, violas and double basses, so that the listener does not know whether what he hears is the chord of A minor, that of A major, or that of the dominant of D. This prolonged indecision as regards tonality gives much force and dignity of character to the entry of the *tutti* on the chord of D minor. The peroration contains accents which move the soul completely; and it would be difficult to find anything more profoundly tragic than this song of the wind instruments under which a chromatic phrase in *tremolo* for the stringed instruments gradually swells and rises—grumbling the while, like the sea at approach of a storm. This is indeed a magnificent inspiration.

We shall have more than one occasion in the course of this work to draw attention to aggregations of notes to which it is really impossible to give the name of chords, and it is as well to admit that the reason of these anomalies escapes us completely. Thus, at page 17 of the admirable movement of which we have just spoken, there is a melodic design for clarinets and bassoons, in the key of C minor, which is accompanied in the following way:

1. The bass takes F sharp (with diminished seventh harmony).
2. Then, A flat (with chord of three, four and augmented sixth).
3. Lastly, G (above which the flutes and oboes strike the notes, E flat, G, C, yielding a chord of six, four).

No. 3 would thus correctly resolve No. 2 if the second violins and violas did not persist in adding to the harmony the two notes, F and A flat; which so pervert it as to produce a very disagreeable confusion, though happily very short.

This passage is but lightly instrumented and is of a character altogether free from roughness; for which reason I cannot understand this quadruple discord, so strangely introduced without cause. One might suspect an engraver's error; but on examining these two bars and those which precede them, all doubt disappears; and the conviction arises that such was really the intention of the composer.

The *scherzo vivace* which follows contains nothing similar. We

find in it, it is true, several pedals, both high and medium on the tonic; and which pass through the chord of the dominant. But I have already made my profession of faith on the subject of these holding-notes foreign to the harmony, and there is no need of this new example to prove the excellent help which can be drawn therefrom when they are naturally induced by the musical sense. It is by means of the rhythm especially that Beethoven has been able to imbue this charming *badinage* with so much interest. The theme, so full of vivacity when it presents itself with its fugal reply at a distance of four bars, literally sparkles with life, later on; when, the answer coming in a bar sooner than expected, by that means forms a three-bar rhythmic design, in lieu of the duple rhythm of the commencement.

The middle of the scherzo is taken up by a *presto à deux temps* (alla breve) of quite a country-like joviality, and of which the theme unfolds itself upon the intermediary pedals, either of tonic or dominant, and with accompaniment of a counter-melody which also harmonizes equally well with one or other of these two holding-notes. The song is introduced for the last time by an oboe phrase of delightful freshness; which, after having toyed for some time with the chord of the major ninth (dominant of D) disports itself in the key of F in a manner as graceful as it is unexpected. In this may be perceived a reflection of those gentle impressions so dear to Beethoven—impressions produced by the aspect of Nature smiling and calm, the purity of the air, or the first rays of dawn on a spring morning.

In the *adagio cantabile* the principle of unity is so little observed that it might rather be regarded as two distinct pieces than as one. The first melody, in B flat and in common time, is succeeded by another melody, absolutely different from it, in triple time, and in D. Then the first theme, slightly altered and varied by the first violins, makes a second appearance in the original key, for the purpose of reintroducing the triple melody. This now appears without either alteration or variation in the key of G; after which the first theme definitively installs itself, and does not again permit its rival to share with it the attention of the listener.

Several hearings are necessary before one can altogether become accustomed to so singular a disposition of this marvelous adagio. As to the beauty of all these melodies, the infinite grace of the ornaments applied to them, the sentiments of melancholy tenderness, of passionate sadness and of religious meditation which they express, if my prose could give of all this even an approximate idea, music would have found in the "written word" such a competitor

as even the greatest of all poets was never able to oppose to it. It is an immense work; and, when once its powerful charm has been experienced, the only answer for the critic who reproaches the composer for having violated the law of unity is:

So much the worse for the law!

We are now approaching the moment when the vocal and orchestral elements are to be united. The violoncellos and double basses intone the recitative, of which we have already spoken, after a *ritornello* of the wind instruments as violent and rough as a cry of anger. The chord of the major sixth (F, A, D) with which this presto starts off is intruded upon by an *appoggiatura* on the B flat, struck at the same time by flutes, oboes and clarinets. This sixth note of the key of D minor grates horribly against the dominant and produces an excessively harsh effect. This is well expressive of fury and rage; but I still do not quite see what it was that excited the composer to this sentiment, unless, before saying to his Coryphée:

"Let us turn to other tones more pleasant and full of joy,"

he wanted, in virtue of some odd whim, to calumniate instrumental harmony.

He seems to regret it, however, for, between each phrase of the bass recitative, he quotes, as souvenirs held in affection, fragments of the three preceding movements;* and, moreover, after this same recitative, he places in the orchestra, amid an exquisite choice of chords, the beautiful theme which all the voices are shortly about to sing to the ode of Schiller. This chant, of calm and gentle character, becomes gradually more animated and brilliant in passing from the basses, who first announce it, to the violins and wind instruments. After a sudden interruption, the entire orchestra resumes the furious *ritornello* already mentioned, which now announces the vocal recitative.

The first chord is again placed on F; which is supposed to carry third and sixth. It does really carry them; but, this time, the composer is not contented with the *appoggiatura* B flat, for he adds E, G, and C sharp, so that ALL THE NOTES OF THE MINOR DIATONIC SCALE are played together, and produce the frightful assemblage:

F, A, C sharp, E, G, B flat, D.

* The conception of a "rejection section," in which Beethoven tries in turn the basic idea of each previous movement before settling on the chorale theme, had apparently not been established in Berlioz's time.—Ed.

The French composer Martin, says Martini, wanted, in his opera of *Sappho*, about forty years ago, to produce an analogous effect, by employing, all at once, every diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic interval. This happens at the moment when Phaon's lover is about to throw herself into the waves; and without troubling about the suitability of such an attempt, and without asking whether or no this venture was an infringement on the dignity of art, we may be sure, at all events, that his object was not misunderstood. My efforts to discover that of Beethoven would, however, be completely useless. I perceive a formal intention—a calculated and thought-out project—to produce two discords at the two instants which precede the successive appearances of vocal and instrumental recitative. But, though I have sought high and low for the reason of this idea, I am forced to avow that it is unknown to me.

The Coryphée, after having sung his recitative, the words of which, as we have said, are by Beethoven himself, alone delivers the theme of the *Ode to Joy*, to the light accompaniment of two wind instruments and strings *pizzicato*.

This theme appears right up to the end of the symphony; and is always recognizable, although its aspect changes continually. The study of these various transformations presents an interest so much the more powerful as each one of them gives a new and decided tint to the expression of one and the same sentiment—that of joy. This joy is, at first, full of gentleness and peace; but becomes somewhat more lively at the moment when the female voices make themselves heard. The time changes; the phrase first sung in common time now appears in 6-8 and, with continual syncopation; when it assumes a stronger character; becomes more agile; and, generally, approaches a war-like style.

This is the song of the hero sure of victory; we can almost see his armor sparkle and hear the sound of his measured step. A *fugato* theme, in which the original melodic design may still be traced, serves for a while as material for orchestral disportment—this representing the various movements of a crowd, active and full of ardor.

But the chorus soon returns, forcibly chanting the joyous hymn in its first simplicity; aided by the wind, which repeats the chords in following the melody; and traversed, in many ways, by a diatonic design, executed by the entire mass of strings, in unison and octave.

The *andante maestoso* which follows is a kind of chorale; first intoned by the tenors and basses of the chorus with one trombone, violoncellos and basses. The joy is now religious, grave and immense. The choir ceases for a moment, in order to resume its wide

harmony with a lesser strength, after an orchestral solo producing an organ effect of great beauty. The imitation of the majestic instrument of Christian churches is produced by the flute lower register, the clarinet *chalumeau*, the lower sounds of the bassoon, the violas divided into high and medium parts, and the violoncellos playing upon their open strings G, D or upon C open string with its octave.

This movement begins in G; passing into C and then into F, and finishing by an organ-point on the dominant seventh of D. Following it is a grand allegro in 6-4 in which, from the very beginning, the first theme, already so variously produced, and the chorale of the preceding andante appear united. The contrast of these two ideas is rendered even more salient by a rapid variation of the joyous song, which is executed below the long notes of the chorale, not only by the first violins, but also by the double basses.

Now, it is impossible for double basses to execute a succession of notes so rapid; and no one has yet been able to explain how a man so skillful as Beethoven in the art of instrumentation could possibly forget himself so far as to write for this heavy instrument a feature of this kind.

There is less manliness, less grandeur and more lightness of style in the next movement; the substance of which presents a simple gaiety, first expressed by four voices alone, and afterwards warmly coloured by addition of the chorus.

Some tender and religious accents alternate, twice successively, with this gay melody; but the movement increases in precipitation. The whole orchestra breaks out; and percussion instruments, including kettledrums, cymbals, triangle and bass drum rudely mark the strong beats of the bar. Joy resumes dominion—popular and tumultuous joy, which would even resemble an orgy did not the whole of the voices, in terminating, pause anew upon a solemn rhythm, in order to send their last salute of love and respect to religious joy by an ecstatic exclamation. The orchestra finishes alone; but not without projecting from its ardent course fragments of the first theme, of which one cannot tire. . . .

This symphony is the most difficult of all by this composer; its performance necessitating study, both patient and repeated; but, above all, well directed. It requires, moreover, a number of singers greater than would otherwise be necessary; as the chorus is evidently supposed to cover the orchestra in many places; and, also, because the manner in which the music is set to the words and the excessive height of some of the vocal parts render voice production difficult, and diminish the volume and energy of the sounds produced.

Whatever may be said, it is certain that Beethoven, when finishing his work, and when contemplating the majestic dimensions of the monument he had just erected, might very well have said to himself:

Let Death come now, my task is accomplished.

BEETHOVEN/FIDELIO OVERTURES
AND A-MAJOR SYMPHONY

by Schumann

IT SHOULD BE written in gold letters, that on last Thursday the Leipzig orchestra performed—all the four overtures to "*Fidelio*" one after another. Thanks to ye, Viennese of 1805, that the first did not please ye, and that Beethoven, in divine rage therefore poured forth the three others. If he ever appeared powerful to me, he did so on that evening, when, better than ever, we were able to listen to him, forming, rejecting, altering, in his own workshop, and ever glowing with inspiration.

He was most gigantic in his second onset.* The first overture was not effective; hold! thought he, the second shall upset all your calculations,—and so he set himself to work anew, and allowed the thrilling drama to pass by, and again sang the joys and sorrows of his heroine. This second overture is diabolical in its boldness, still bolder, in certain details, than the third, the well known great C-major. But it did not satisfy him; he laid this also aside, merely retaining certain passages, from which, already artistically quieter, he formed the third. This was afterwards followed by the more easy and popular one in E-major, which is generally heard at the theatre as an opening piece.

Such is the great Four-Overture work. Formed after the manner of Nature's formations, we first find in it the root basis, from which, in the second, the giant trunk arises, stretching its arms to the right and to the left, and finally completed by its airy crown of blossoms.

FLORESTAN†

* Schumann obviously wrote without the knowledge, now widely disseminated, that the overture known as the *Leonore No. 2* was actually written first, and the "first" *Leonore* after it.—Ed.

† For explanation of Florestan, see footnote page 155.

A-MAJOR SYMPHONY

Florestan began to talk, at the same time commencing the A-major Symphony. Said he: "I must laugh when I think of the dry old registrar, who discovered in this a battle of the giants, with a very effective annihilation of them all in the last movement, while he slyly passed over the allegretto, because it did not fall in with his fancy; and I must laugh at those who eternally preach about the innocence and absolute beauty of music; to be sure, art has no business to imitate the unlucky octaves and fifths of life—it should rather conceal them; yet in some consecrated arias (of Marchner's, for example) I often find beauty without truth, and in Beethoven (though seldom) sometimes truth without beauty. But I shiver to the finger-tips when I hear some people declaring that Beethoven gave himself up, while writing his symphonies, to the greatest sentiments—lofty thoughts of God, immortality and the course of the spheres; the genial man certainly pointed to heaven, with his flowery crown, but his roots spread broadly over his beloved earth.

"But—to return to the symphony. The idea is not mine, but taken from an old number of the musical paper, the *Cecilia*; and was perhaps suggested by delicacy of feeling towards Beethoven, who was to be spared from entering some courtly hall or other.

"It is the merriest wedding, the bride, a heavenly maid with one rose in her hair. If I do not err, in the introduction the guests arrive, greeting each other with many bows; and the airy flutes remind us, that in the village gay with May bloom and ribbon favours, everyone rejoices for and with the bride, Rosa. And if I am not mistaken her pale mother asks her, with a tremulous glance, 'Knowest thou not that we must part?' and then Rosa, overcome, throws herself in her mother's arms, yet draws the hand of her bridegroom with her. And now all is still in the village" (here Florestan broke into the allegretto) "only the butterflies float past, or a cherry blossom falls. The organ sounds; the sun rises high; the bells ring loudly; church-goers enter, one after the other; pew doors are opened and shut; countrymen study their hymn books; others look up to the choir; the procession comes nearer—first the choir boys, with lighted tapers and the incense, then friends, often turning round to look at the bridal pair accompanied by the priest, the parents, the bridesmaids, and all the young people of the village at last. They range themselves in order, the priest ascends the altar, and talks, now to the bride, then to the happiest of men; he tells them of the duties and aims of the sacred bond, he paints to them the joy that is found in virtuous love and peace—and as he demands 'yes' that

embraces in it an eternity, and they respond, firmly, slowly—I cannot continue the picture—fancy the finale as you will!” Florestan broke off, and finished the allegretto so that it rang as though the sexton threw the door to, and it echoed throughout the church.

BEETHOVEN/FIDELIO

by Moscheles

FIRST REPRESENTATION* of *Fidelio* for the début of Schröder-Devrient: she and Haizinger inimitable, and the public so enthusiastic during the whole evening that the *Overture*, the *Canon*, the *Prisoners' Chorus*, and the whole *Finale* were encoired.

The following comic episode will perhaps be new to some of our readers:—In that deeply tragic scene where Madame Schröder (*Fidelio*) has to give Haizinger (*Florestan*) a piece of bread which she has kept hidden for three days for him in the folds of her dress, he does not respond to the offer; she in rather strong language whispers to him, with a coarse epithet: “Why don’t you take it? Do you want it buttered?” All this time, the audience, ignorant of the by-play, was intent solely on the pathetic situation.

BEETHOVEN/FIDELIO

by Weber

HOW DIFFERENTLY HE judged, even at this time, of Beethoven is expressed in a letter to Gänsbacher, where he says—“I brought out, on the 26th,† Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, which went splendidly. The music is indeed replete with magnificent things, but they don’t understand it: it is enough to make one frantic. Punch and Judy would suit them better—”

* London, May 18, 1832.

† October 1814 in Prague. Quoted by Sir Julius Benedict in his biography *Life of Weber*.

BEETHOVEN/C SHARP MINOR

QUARTET

by Tchaikovsky

ALL THAT IS good, but superfluous, we call *padding*.^{*} Can we say we find this padding in Beethoven's works? I think most decidedly we do not. On the contrary, it is astonishing how equal, how significant and forceful, this giant among musicians always remains, and how well he understands the art of curbing his vast inspiration, and never loses sight of balanced and traditional form. In his last quartets, which were long regarded as the productions of an insane and deaf man, there seems to be some padding, until we have studied them thoroughly. But ask someone who is well acquainted with these works, a member of a quartet who plays them frequently, if there is anything superfluous in the C sharp minor Quartet. Unless he is an old-fashioned musician, brought up upon Haydn, he would be horrified at the idea of abbreviating or cutting any portion of it. In speaking of Beethoven I was not merely thinking of his latest period. Could anyone show me a bar in the *Eroica*, which is very lengthy, that could be called superfluous, or any portion that could really be omitted as padding? So everything that is long is not *too long*; many words do not necessarily mean empty verbiage, and terseness is not, as Fet† asserts, the essential condition of beautiful form. Beethoven, who in the first movement of the *Eroica* has built up a superb edifice out of an endless series of varied and ever new architectural beauties upon so simple and seemingly poor a subject, knows on occasion how to surprise us by the terseness and exiguity of his forms. Do you remember the Andante of the Piano-forte Concerto in B flat? I know nothing more inspired than this short movement; I go cold and pale every time I hear it.

Of course, the classical beauty of Beethoven's predecessors, and their art of keeping within bounds, is of the greatest value. It must be owned, however, that Haydn had no occasion to limit himself, for he had not an inexhaustible wealth of material at command. As to Mozart, had he lived another twenty years, and seen the beginning of our century, he would certainly have sought to express his prodigal inspiration in forms less strictly classical than those with which he had to content himself.

* To the Grand Duke Constantin, October 3, 1888. For Wagner's comments on this Quartet, see page 39.

† A celebrated Russian poet.

While defending Beethoven from the charge of long-windedness, I confess that the post-Beethoven music offers many examples of prolixity which is often carried so far as to become mere padding. That inspired musician who expresses himself with such breadth, majesty, force, and even brusqueness, has much in common with Michelangelo. Just as the Abbé Bernini has flooded Rome with his statues, in which he strives to imitate the style of Michelangelo, without possessing his genius, and makes a caricature of what is really powerful in his model, so Beethoven's musical style has been copied over and over again. Is not Brahms in reality a caricature of Beethoven? Is not this pretension to profundity and power detestable, because the content which is poured into the Beethoven mould is not really of any value? Even in the case of Wagner (who certainly has genius), wherever he oversteps the limits it is the spirit of Beethoven which prompts him.

As regards your humble servant, I have suffered all my life from my incapacity to grasp form in general. I have fought against this innate weakness, not—I am proud to say—without good results; yet I shall go to my grave without having produced anything really perfect in form. There is frequently *padding* in my works; to an experienced eye the stitches show in my seams, but I cannot help it. As to *Manfred*, I may tell you—without any desire to pose as being modest—that this is a repulsive work, and I hate it, with the exception of the first movement. I intend shortly, with the consent of my publisher, to destroy the remaining three movements and make a symphonic poem out of this long-winded symphony. I am sure my *Manfred* would then please the public. I enjoyed writing the first movement, whereas the others were the outcome of strenuous effort, in consequence of which—as far as I remember—I felt quite ill for a time. I should not think of being offended at what your Highness says about *Manfred*. You are quite right and even too indulgent.

BIZET

CARMEN

by Tchaikovsky

YESTERDAY EVENING—to take a rest from my own work—I played through Bizet's *Carmen* from cover to cover.* I consider it a *chef-d'oeuvre* in the fullest sense of the word: one of those rare compositions which seems to reflect most strongly in itself the musical tendencies of a whole generation. It seems to me that our own period differs from earlier ones in this one characteristic: that contemporary composers *are engaged in the pursuit of charming and piquant effects*, unlike Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann. What is the so-called New Russian School but the cult of varied and pungent harmonies, of original orchestral combinations and every kind of purely external effect? Musical ideas give place to this or that union of sounds. Formerly there was *composition, creation*; now (with few exceptions) there is only research and invention. This development of musical thought is naturally purely intellectual, consequently contemporary music is clever, piquant, and eccentric; but cold and lacking the glow of true emotion. And behold, a Frenchman comes on the scene, in whom these qualities of piquancy and pungency are not the outcome of effort and reflection, but flow from his pen as in a free stream, flattering the ear, but touching us also. It is as though he said to us: "You ask nothing great, superb, or grandiose—you want something *pretty*, here is a *pretty opera*"; and truly I know of nothing in music which is more representative of that element which I call *the pretty (le joli)* . . . I cannot play the last scene without tears in my eyes; the gross rejoicings of the crowd who look on at the bull-fight, and, side by side with this, the poignant tragedy and death of the two principal characters, pursued by an evil fate, who come to their inevitable end through a long series of sufferings.

I am convinced that ten years hence *Carmen* will be the most popular opera in the world. But no one is a prophet in his own land. In Paris *Carmen* has had no real success.

* To von Meck, July 30, 1880.

BRAHMS

PAGANINI VARIATIONS AND

ALTO RHAPSODY

by C. Schumann

THANK YOU FOR your dear letter.* Unfortunately it came the day after I had sent your *Variations*† and the choral work to Spina.

I will willingly tell you exactly what I think of the *Variations*, as you wish it. I have gone through them carefully several times, and, as you may imagine, with the greatest interest. I did not know the first finale before, or some of the variations, and each time I came to the conclusion that I should like them to be in one volume but I should like some of them to be omitted and the finale from the first volume to be used, as that is far more interesting and full of life and bold sweep than the second. I cannot rightly understand the reason for making two volumes; artistically speaking it could be justified only if they were of an entirely different character, and it does not seem to me advisable from the publisher's point of view. Who, except musicians who take a special interest in such things, would buy two volumes of variations on one theme? But, if you do keep to it, I would not make the variation in thirds the first of the second volume, for it carries one at once to dizzy heights, and interesting as that would be later it is not pleasant at the beginning when one has hardly had time to find one's bearings. Otherwise I like this particular variation very much, it is so bold. If I were you, I should make only one volume of them, leaving out the eighth in Vol. I, which does not sound at all well, and nos. 4, 11, 12, 7a, and 16 (which runs away in triplets) in Vol. II, and then the one volume would not be too long, and if anyone likes to leave out this or that variation when playing them in public, they can do so. The variations always make me think of the title: *Études en forme de Var* which would suit them very well. I shall be glad when I am able to study them again.

I like the chorus from the *Requiem* very much; it must sound beautiful. I specially like it up to the figures passage, but not so much the way in which it is worked out afterwards—this is a trifle. I hope you will not let the *Requiem* vanish into thin air, indeed you

* To Brahms dated London, May 1, 1865.

† On a Theme of Paganini.

cannot after so good a beginning. Of course I like the beautiful German words better than the Latin—Thank you for them also . . .

I have played three times in public, with very great success. All the papers (they send them all to one, here) are full of the highest praise, on all sides I am pressed to play Robert's works etc. etc. But engagements are few; it is impossible to get on here without putting oneself into the hands of an agent, that is if one really wants to earn anything. Well, something is sure to come, and be this as it may, if I hold out till the end of May, I can say that I have not shirked anything, and in any case, this will make the summer easier for me.

ALTO RHAPSODY

Johannes brought me a wonderful piece, a few days ago,* the words from Goethe's *Harzreise*, for alto, male chorus, and orchestra. He called it his bridal song.† It is long since I remember being so moved by a depth of pain in words and music . . . This piece seems to me neither more nor less than the expression of his own heart's anguish. If only he would for once speak as tenderly! . . .

BRAHMS/VIOLIN CONCERTO

by Tchaikovsky

THE CONCERTO [Violin Concerto, Op. 77] of Brahms does not please me better than any other of his works.‡ He is certainly a great musician, even a master, but, in his case, his mastery overwhelms his inspiration. So many preparations and circumlocutions for something which ought to come and charm us at once—and nothing does come, but boredom. His music is not warmed by any genuine emotion. It lacks poetry, but makes great pretensions to profundity. These depths contain nothing: they are void. Take the opening of the Concerto, for instance. It is an introduction, a preparation for something fine; an admirable pedestal for a statue; but the

* End of September 1869.

† A reference to the current wedding of Clara's daughter, Julie, to Count Marmariton.

‡ This is a longer expression of opinion about Brahms than Tchaikovsky ordinarily confided to von Meck (the letter was written from Rome in March, 1880).

statue is lacking, we only get a second pedestal piled upon the first. I do not know whether I have properly expressed the thoughts, or rather feelings, which Brahms' music awakens in me. I mean to say that he never expresses anything, or, when he does, he fails to express it fully. His music is made up of fragments of some indefinable *something*, skilfully welded together. The design lacks definite contour, color, life.

But I must simply confess that, independent of any definite accusation, Brahms, as a musical personality, is antipathetic to me. I cannot abide him. Whatever he does—I remain unmoved and cold. It is a purely instinctive feeling.

[*In his diary of October 1886, Tchaikovsky writes:*]

Played Brahms. It irritates me that this self-conscious mediocrity should be recognised as a genius. In comparison with him, Raff was a giant, not to speak of Rubinstein, who was a much greater man. And Brahms is so chaotic, so dry and meaningless!

[*However, his personal impression of Brahms (to be found in the diary of a tour to Germany in 1888), was not unfavorable:*]

Brahms is rather a short man, suggests a sort of amplitude, and possesses a very sympathetic appearance. His fine head—almost that of an old man—recalls the type of a handsome, benign, elderly Russian priest. His features are certainly not characteristic of German good looks, and I cannot conceive why some learned ethnographer (Brahms himself told me this after I had spoken of the impression his appearance made upon me) chose to reproduce his head on the first page of his books as being highly characteristic of German features. A certain softness of outline, pleasing curves, rather long and slightly grizzled hair, kind grey eyes, and a thick beard, freely sprinkled with white—all this recalled at once the type of pure-bred Great Russian so frequently met with among our clergy. Brahms' manner is very simple, free from vanity, his humor jovial, and the few hours spent in his society left me with a very agreeable recollection.

[*Later in the same year, Tchaikovsky replied to a letter of the Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch:*]

As regards Brahms, I cannot at all agree with your Highness. In the music of this master (it is impossible to deny his mastery) there is something dry and cold which repulses me. He has very little melodic invention. He never speaks out his musical ideas to the end. Scarcely do we hear an enjoyable melody, than it is engulfed in a whirlpool of unimportant harmonic progressions and modulations, as though the special aim of the composer was to be unintelligible. He excites and irritates our musical senses without wishing to sat-

isfy them, and seems ashamed to speak the language which goes straight to the heart. His depth is not real: *c'est voulu*. He has set before himself, once and for all, the aim of trying to be profound, but he has only attained to an appearance of profundity. The gulf is void.

It is impossible to say that the music of Brahms is weak and insignificant. His style is invariably lofty. He does not strive after mere external effects. He is never trivial. All he does is serious and noble, but he lacks the chief thing—beauty. Brahms commands our respect. We must bow before the original purity of his aspirations. We must admire his firm and proud attitude in the face of triumphant Wagnerism; but to love him is impossible. I, at least, in spite of much effort, have not arrived at it . . . I will own that certain early works (the Sextet in Bb) please me far more than those of a later period, especially the symphonies, which seem to me indescribably long and colourless . . .

Many Brahms lovers (Bülow,* among others) predicted that some day I should see clearer, and learn to appreciate beauties which do not as yet appeal to me. This is not unlikely, for there have been such cases. I do not know the *German Requiem* well. I will get it and study it. Who knows?—perhaps my views on Brahms may undergo a complete revolution.

* Tchaikovsky was similarly impervious to von Bülow's enthusiasm for the youthful Richard Strauss. Writing to his brother Modeste from Berlin in January 1888, he said: "Bülow has taken him up just now, as formerly he took up Brahms and others. To my mind such an astounding lack of talent, united to such pretentiousness, never before existed."

CHOPIN

OPUS 2

by Schumann

EUSEBIUS ENTERED, NOT long ago.* You know his pale face, and the ironical smile with which he awakens expectation. I sat with Florestan at the pianoforte. Florestan is, as you know, one of those rare musical minds that foresee, as it were, coming, novel or extraordinary things. But he encountered a surprise today. With the words, "Off with your hats, gentlemen,—a genius!" Eusebius laid down a piece of music. We were not allowed to see the title-page. I turned over the leaves vacantly; the veiled enjoyment of music which one does not hear, has something magical in it. And besides this, every composer presents a different character of note-forms to the eye; Beethoven looks very different from Mozart, on paper; the difference resembles that between Jean Paul's and Goethe's prose.

But here it seemed as if eyes, strange to me, were glancing up at me,—flower eyes, basilisk eyes, peacock's eyes, maiden's eyes; in many places it looked yet brighter—I thought I saw Mozart's "*La ci darem la mano*" wound through a hundred chords, Leporello seemed to wink at me, and Don Juan hurried past in his white mantle. "Now play it," said Florestan. Eusebius consented; and in the recess of a window we listened. Eusebius played as though he was inspired, and led forward countless forms, filled with the liveliest, warmest life; it seemed that the inspiration of the moment gave to his fingers a power beyond the ordinary measure of their cunning.

It is true that Florestan's whole applause was expressed in nothing more than a happy smile, and the remark that the variations might have been written by Beethoven or Franz Schubert, had either of these been a pianoforte virtuoso; but how surprised he was, when, turning to the title-page, he read, "*La ci darem la mano, variété pour le pianoforte par Frédéric Chopin, Oeuvre 2,*" and with what astonishment we both cried out "An Opus 2!" How our faces

* This celebrated essay, in which an appraisal of Chopin's genius was first given to the world, was published in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1831. It marks the first appearance of Florestan and Eusebius, the names which Schumann gave to the two conflicting aspects of his own nature. The first he visualized as representing the bold, impetuous impulses of his character; the latter, the more contemplative, fanciful tendencies.—Ed.

glowed, as we wondered, exclaiming: "That is something reasonable once more—Chopin—I never heard of the name—who can he be?—in any case a genius—"

I could not describe the scene. Heated with wine, Chopin, and our own enthusiasm, we went to Master Raro,* who, with a smile, and displaying but little curiosity for Opus 2, said, "Bring me the Chopin! I know you and your new-fangled enthusiasms!" We promised to bring it the next day. Eusebius soon bade us goodnight; I remained a short time with Master Raro; Florestan, who had been for some time without a habitation, hurried through the moonlit streets to my house. At midnight I found him lying on the sofa with his eyes closed. "Chopin's variations," he began as if in a dream, "are constantly running through my head; the whole is dramatic and Chopin-like; the introduction is so self-concentrated—do you remember Leporello's springs, in thirds?—that seems to me somewhat unfitted to the whole: but the thema—why did he write it in B flat?—The variations, the finale, the adagio, these are indeed something; genius burns through every measure. Naturally, dear Julius, Don Juan, Zerlina, Leporello, and Masetto are the *dramatis personae*; Zerlina's answer in the thema has a sufficiently enamoured character; the first variation expresses a kind of coquettish courteousness,—and the Spanish grandee flirts most amiably with the peasant girl in it.

"This leads of itself into the second, which is at once comic, confidential, disputatious, as though two lovers were chasing each other, and laughing more than usual about it. How all this is changed in the third! It is filled with moonshine and fairy magic; Masetto keeps at a distance, swearing audibly, without making any effect on Don Juan. And now the fourth, what do you think of that? Eusebius played it altogether correctly—how boldly, how wantonly it springs forward to meet the man, though the adagio (it seems quite natural to me that Chopin repeats the first part) is in B-flat minor, as it should be, for in its commencement it presents a moral warning to Don Juan.

"It is at once mischievous and beautiful that Leporello listens behind the hedge, laughing and jesting, that oboes and clarinets enchantingly allure, and that the B-flat major, in full bloom, correctly designates the first kiss of love.

"But all this is nothing compared to the last";—have you any more wine, Julius?—"that is the whole of Mozart's finale, popping champagne corks, ringing glasses! Leporello's voice between, the grasping, torturing demons, the fleeing Don Juan—and then the

* Wieck, whose daughter became Schumann's wife.

end, that beautifully soothes, and closes all." Florestan concluded by saying that he had never experienced feelings similar to those awakened by this finale, except in Switzerland. "When the evening sunlight of a beautiful day gradually creeps up towards the highest peaks, and when the last beam vanishes, there comes a moment when we think we see the white Alpine giants close their eyes. We feel that we have beheld a heavenly apparition."

"And now awake to new dreams, Julius, and sleep!" "Dear Florestan," I answered, "these confidential feelings are perhaps praiseworthy, although somewhat subjective; but as deeply as yourself I bend before Chopin's spontaneous genius, his lofty aims, his mastership!"—and after that we fell asleep.

LISZT

SONATA IN B MINOR

by Wagner

KLINDWORTH HAS JUST played your great sonata to me.*

We passed the day alone together; he dined with me, and after dinner I made him play. Dearest Franz, you were with me; the sonata is beautiful beyond anything, grand and sweet, deep and noble, sublime as you are yourself. It moved me most deeply, and the London misery was forgotten all at once. More I cannot say, not just after having heard it, but of what I say I am as full as man can be. Once more, you were with me! Ah, could you soon be with me wholly and bodily, then we might support life beautifully.

Klindworth astonished me by his playing; no lesser man could have ventured to play your work to me for the first time. He is worthy of you. Surely, surely, it was beautiful.

Good-night. Many thanks for this pleasure vouchsafed to me at last.

* London, April 5, 1855, 8:30 evening.

MOZART

DON GIOVANNI AND DIE

ZAUBERFLÖTE

by Tchaikovsky

WHY DO YOU not care for Mozart?* In this respect our opinions differ, dear friend. I not only like Mozart, I idolize him. To me the most beautiful opera ever written is *Don Juan*. You, who possess such a fine musical taste, must surely love this pure and ideal artist. It is true Mozart used up his forces too generously, and often wrote without inspiration, because he was compelled by want. But read his biography by Otto Jahn, and you will see that he could not help it. Even Bach and Beethoven have left a considerable number of inferior works which are not worthy to be spoken of in the same breath as their masterpieces. Fate compelled them occasionally to degrade their art to the level of a handicraft. But think of Mozart's operas, of two or three of his symphonies, his *Requiem*, the six quartets dedicated to Haydn, and the D minor† string quintet. Do you feel no charm in these works? True, Mozart reaches neither the depths nor heights of Beethoven. And since in life, too, he remained to the end of his days a careless child, his music has not that subjectively tragic quality which is so powerfully expressed in that of Beethoven. But this did not prevent him from creating an objectively tragic type, the most superb and wonderful human presentment ever depicted in music. I mean Donna Anna, in *Don Juan*. Ah, how difficult it is to make anyone else see and feel in music what we see and feel ourselves! I am quite incapable of describing to you what I felt on hearing *Don Juan*, especially in the scene where the noble figure of the beautiful, proud, revengeful woman appears on the stage. Nothing in any opera ever impressed me so profoundly. And afterwards, when Donna Anna recognises in Don Juan the man who has wounded her pride and killed her father, and her wrath breaks out like a rushing torrent in that wonderful recitative, or in that later aria, in which every note in the orchestra seems to speak of her wrath and pride and actually to quiver with horror—I could cry out and weep under the overwhelming stress of the emotional impression. And her lament

* To von Meck from Clarens, March 16, 1878.

† Possibly G minor or D major. There is no D minor quintet.—Ed.

over her father's corpse, the duet with Don Ottavio, in which she vows vengeance, her arioso in the great sextet in the churchyard—these are inimitable, colossal operatic scenes!

I am so much in love with the music of *Don Juan* that even as I write to you I could shed tears of agitation and emotion. In his chamber music, Mozart charms me by his purity and distinction of style and his exquisite handling of the parts. Here, too, are things which can bring tears to our eyes. I will only mention the adagio of the D minor string quintet. No one else has ever known as well how to interpret so exquisitely in music the sense of resigned and inconsolable sorrow. Every time Laub played the adagio I had to hide in the farthest corner of the concert-room, so that others might not see how deeply this music affected me . . .

I could go on to eternity holding forth to you upon this sunny genius, for whom I cherish a cult. Although I am very tolerant to other people's musical views, I must confess, my dear, that I should like very much to convert you to Mozart. I know that would be difficult. I have met one or two others, besides yourself, who have a fine feeling for music, yet nevertheless failed to appreciate Mozart. I should have tried in vain to make them discover the beauties of his music. Our musical sympathies are often affected by purely external circumstances. The music of *Don Juan* was the first which stirred me profoundly. It roused in me a divine enthusiasm which was not without after-results. Through its medium I was transplanted to that region of artistic beauty where only genius dwells. Previously I had only known the Italian opera. It is thanks to Mozart that I have devoted my life to music. All these things have probably played a part in my exclusive love for him—and perhaps it is foolish of me to expect those who are dear to me to feel towards Mozart as I do. But if I could do anything to change your opinion—it would make me very happy. If ever you tell me that you have been touched by the adagio of the D minor quintet I shall rejoice.

DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE

I am doing nothing whatever, only wandering through the forests and fields all day long.* I want to take a change from my own work, with its eternal proof-correcting, and to play as much as possible of other people's music; so I have begun to study Mozart's *Zauberflöte*. Never was so senselessly stupid a subject set to such captivating music. How thankful I am that the circumstances of my musical

* To von Meck, from Kamenka, September 4, 1880.

career have not changed by a hair's breadth the charm Mozart exercises for me! You would not believe, dear friend, what wonderful feelings come over me when I give myself up to his music. It is something quite different from the stressful delight awakened in me by Beethoven, Schumann, or Chopin.

MOZART/COSI FAN TUTTE

by R. Strauss

WRITTEN ON THE occasion of the new production from the original in Munich:

The great Mozart's last opera buffa *Così fan tutte* has had a curious fate,* and, of all the dramatic works of the master, it has so far been the most neglected by producers as well as audiences. On the whole it would, I suppose, be true to say that the average opinion of *Così fan tutte*, is that this opera, although it contains a number of extremely beautiful pieces such as the famous Addio quintet, the finale of the first act and two very popular arias of Despina, is, taken as a whole, a comparatively weak work of Mozart. Even Richard Wagner considered that Mozart's usually so elastic wings had been clipped, especially in the second act, by this bad libretto. Although I agree with Richard Wagner that the fable as such is not particularly intelligent, I would point out that, quite apart from the almost impossible hypothesis demanded by the action, the psychological development of the plot is not by any means without interest, particularly if one considers the time at which the libretto was written. Works by great masters, handicapped by weaknesses in the dramatic structure or in the libretto, have always fallen an easy prey to "intelligent" directors and producers. The harmless ones amongst them are content to refrain from performing those works which are bound to be financial failure, whereas the more dangerous are in the habit of editing them: a process referred to in the language of the stage as "making" a play. In the case of *Così fan tutte* in particular, conductors have usually, following the old traditions of the stage, found a way out by cutting all the numbers and any *recitativo secco* which did not seem to represent Mozart at his best to those music enthusiasts who, departing from the usual custom, applied the standards of the stage to Mozart's operas. It was especially amongst the *recitativo secco* passages which, since they belonged

* From *Recollections and Reflections* dated Garmisch, December 16 [1910].

purely to the action of the play, did not provide the musical feast the above-mentioned music enthusiasts expected, although in *Così fan tutte* more than elsewhere Mozart treated them with the greatest possible diligence and provided them with the most charming of touches, that the blue pencil was allowed to run amok.

To have given Mozart an opportunity of evolving this particular style is the great merit of Lorenzo da Ponte, the author of *Così fan tutte*, which notwithstanding a few improbabilities, occupies a fairly high position amongst the libretti of the time, as already pointed out by Otto Jahn, and which excels by a long way, especially as far as the careful evolution of a purely psychological plot is concerned, most of the other libretti of Mozart's operas with the sole exception of *Figaro*. In this particular use of the language of sound contrasting the exaggerated, almost comic, but quite genuine pathos of the two ladies on the one hand with the hollow phrases of the two lovers in disguise on the other who, whilst singing inspired love-duets with their vanquished fiancées, are consumed in their very vitals by seething anger at the inconstancy of these same fiancées, Mozart's art of characterization reached its zenith. Not only is *Così fan tutte* unique amongst Mozart's dramatic masterpieces, it is also one of the gems of the whole of operatic comedy prior to Richard Wagner's *Meistersinger*. Why, then, has it not won the same public acclaim as *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*? It may be that at a time when, to satisfy the purely musical tastes of the audience, singers concentrated their attention on doing justice to the musical style of an opera, the peculiar parodic style of Mozart's comedy did not achieve the dramatic effect intended by its author and composer. The very pieces which expressed this style most clearly, namely the E flat major aria of Dorabella in the first act, Fernando's B flat major aria and Guglielmo's aria in G major in the second act with their connecting and extremely charming *recitativos*, were invariably cut because they were obviously considered as musically inferior, although in reality they are all the most interesting and important from the dramatic point of view.

SCHUBERT

C MAJOR SYMPHONY

by Schumann

THE MUSICIAN WHO visits Vienna for the first time, awhile delights in the festive life of the streets, and often stands admiringly before the door of St. Stephen's Tower; but he soon remembers how near to the city lies a cemetery, containing something more worthy—for him—of regard than all the city boasts,—the spot where two of the glorious ones of his art rest, only a few steps apart.

No doubt, then, many a young musician has wandered like me (1838) to the Währinger Cemetery, after the first few days of excitement in Vienna, to lay his flowery gift on those graves, even were it but a wild rosebush, such as I found planted on Beethoven's grave. Franz Schubert's resting place was undecorated. One warm desire of my life was fulfilled; I gazed long on those sacred graves, almost envying the one buried between them—a certain Earl O'Donnell, if I am not mistaken.*

The first time of gazing on a great man, of pressing his hand, is for every one an earnestly-desired moment. It had never been possible for me to meet either of the two whom I venerate most highly among all modern artists; but after this visit to their graves, I wished I could have stood by the side of a man who loved either one of them most dearly—if possible, his own brother. On the way home, I remembered that Schubert's brother Ferdinand, to whom he had been much attached, was still living. I sought him out, and found that he bore a strong resemblance to the bust that stands beside Schubert's grave; shorter than Franz, but strongly built, with a face expressive of honesty as well as of musical ability. He knew me from that veneration for his brother which I have so often publicly professed; † told me and showed me many things, of which, with his permission, I have already spoken in our paper, under the heading

* According to other sources, the grave that occupied the exalted position between Beethoven and Schubert was that of one Hardmuth. However, the Währinger Cemetery has in modern times been converted to a park named in honor of Schubert, following the removal of the remains of the two composers (in 1888) to "graves of honor" in the vast Central Cemetery.—Ed.

† Nearly ten years before (in 1829) in a letter from Heidelberg to Friedrich Wieck, Schumann wrote rapturously of "my only Schubert," and continued with a comparison to Jean Paul Richter which we find him making again later in this article.—Ed.

Reliques. Finally, he allowed me to see those treasures of Schubert's composition, which he still possesses. The sight of this hoard of riches thrilled me with joy; where to begin, where to leave off! Among other things, he directed my attention to the scores of several symphonies, many of which have never yet been heard, but are laid on the shelf and prejudged as too heavy and turgid.

One must understand Vienna, its peculiar circumstances with regard to concerts, and the difficulties attendant on bringing together the necessary material for great performances, before one can forgive the city where Schubert lived and labored, that only his songs, but his grand instrumental works seldom or never, are brought before the public. Who knows how long the symphony of which we speak today, might not have lain buried in dust and darkness, had I not at once arranged with Ferdinand Schubert, to send it immediately to the direction of the Gewandhaus concerts in Leipzig, or rather, to the directing artist himself, whose fine glance perceives even the most timid of new budding beauties,—and necessarily, therefore, the dazzling splendors of masterly perfection. My hopes were fulfilled. The symphony went to Leipzig, was listened to, understood, again heard, and received with joyous and almost universal admiration. The busy publishing house of Breitkopf and Haertel purchased the work, and now it lies before me in separate parts; for the benefit of the world, I hope it will soon appear in score also.*

I must say at once, that he who is not yet acquainted with this symphony, knows very little about Schubert; and this, when we consider all that he has given to art outside of this work, will appear to many as too exaggerated praise. Partly, no doubt, because composers have been so often advised, to their own injury, that it is better for them—after Beethoven—to abstain from symphonic plans; which advice, notwithstanding, with the state of feeling that has given rise to it, we can scarcely consider as unreasonable. For we have lately had few orchestral works of consequence; and those few have interested us rather as illustrations of their composer's progress, than that of art or as creations of decided influence with the masses.

Many have been absolute reflections of Beethoven; and it is scarcely necessary to mention those tiresome manufacturers of symphonies, with power enough to shadow forth the powder and peruques of Mozart and Haydn, but not indeed the heads that wore

* It was not until twenty-seven years later that the work by which Schubert is best known to the world—the *Unfinished* symphony—had its first performance. During all this time it remained in the possession of Anselm Hüttenbrenner, a lifelong friend of the composer, who finally relinquished it for performance by the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* of Vienna in 1865.—Ed.

them. Berlioz is thoroughly French, and we are too much accustomed to regard him merely as an interesting foreigner and rattle-pate.

The hope I had always entertained—and many no doubt, with me—that Schubert, who had shown himself through many other kinds of composition, so firm in form, so rich in imaginativeness, so many sided, would also treat the symphony and find the mode of treatment certain to impress the public, is here realized in the noblest manner. Assuredly he never proposed to excel Beethoven's Ninth Symphony but, an industrious artist, he continually drew forth his creations from his own resources, one symphony after another.

The only thing that seems to us objectionable in the publication of this seventh symphony, or that may lead even to a misunderstanding of the work, is the fact that the world now receives it without having followed its creator's development of this form through its forerunners. Perhaps, however, the bolts may now be drawn from the others; the least of them must possess Schubertian significance. Viennese symphony writers did not need to wander very far in search of the laurel they are so much in need of, for in a suburb of Vienna, in Ferdinand Schubert's study, they might have found sevenfold richer booty, leaf heaped on leaf. And here, too, was the place of all others which they should have crowned with the laurel! But it often happens in the world that such opportunities are neglected! Should the conversation turn upon—, the Viennese never know how to finish with their praise of their own Franz Schubert; when they are among themselves, it does not seem as if they thought much of one or the other.

But let us leave these things, and refresh ourselves with the wealth of mind that in its fullness overflows this glorious work! Vienna, with its tower of St. Stephen, its lovely women, its public pageantry, its Danube that garlands it with countless watery ribbons; this Vienna spreading over the blooming plain, and reaching toward the higher mountains; Vienna, with its reminiscences of the great German masters, must be a fertile domain for the musician's fancy to revel in. Often when gazing on the city from the heights above, I have thought how frequently Beethoven's eyes may have glanced restlessly over the distant line of the Alps; how Mozart may have dreamily followed the course of the Danube, as it seems to vanish amid bush and wood; and how Haydn may have looked up to the tower shaking his head at its dizzy height. If we draw together the tower, the Danube, and the distant Alps, casting over the whole a soft Catholic incense vapour, we shall have a fair pic-

ture of Vienna; and when the charming, living landscape stands before us, chords will vibrate that never resounded within us before.

On leaving Schubert's symphony, the bright, blooming romantic life of Vienna appears to me clearer than ever; such works ought to be born amid precisely such surroundings. But I shall not attempt to set the symphony in its fitting soil; different ages select different bases for their texts and pictures; where the youth of eighteen hears a world famous occurrence in a musical work, a man only perceives some rustic event, while the musician probably never thought of either, but simply gave the best music that he happened to feel within him just then.

But every one must acknowledge that the outer world, sparkling today, gloomy tomorrow, often deeply impresses the inward feeling of the poet or the musician; and all must recognise, while listening to this symphony, that it reveals to us something more than mere fine melody, mere ordinary joy and sorrow, such as music has already expressed in a hundred ways—that it leads us into a region which we never before explored, and consequently can have no recollection of. Here we find, besides the most masterly technicalities of musical composition, life in every vein, coloring down to the finest grade of possibility, sharp expression in detail, meaning throughout, while over the whole is thrown that glow of romanticism that everywhere accompanies Franz Schubert. And then the heavenly length* of the symphony, like that of one of Jean Paul's romances in four thick volumes, never able to come to an end, for the very best reason—in order to leave the reader able to go on romancing for himself. How refreshing is this feeling of overflowing wealth! With others we always tremble for the conclusion, troubled lest we find ourselves disappointed.

It would be incomprehensible whence Schubert had all at once acquired this sparkling, sportive mastery of the orchestra, did we not know that this symphony had been preceded by six others, and that it was written in the ripest years of manly power (on the score is the date, "March, 1828"; Schubert died in November). We must grant that he possessed an extraordinary talent, in attaining to such peculiar treatment of separate instruments, such mastery of orchestral masses—they often seem to converse like human voices and

* This famous phrase first occurs in a letter written by Schumann to Clara Wieck (soon to be his wife) on the day of the first rehearsal in Leipzig of the C major symphony (Dec. 11, 1839). "All the instruments are like human voices" he writes, "and it is all so intellectual; and then the instrumentation, in spite of Beethoven! And the length of it—such a heavenly length, like a four volume novel; why, it is longer than the Ninth Symphony."—Ed.

choruses—although he scarcely heard any of his own instrumental works performed during his life. Save in some of Beethoven's works, I have not observed so striking and deceptive a resemblance to the voice, in the treatment of instruments; Meyerbeer, in his treatment of the human voice, attains precisely the opposite effect. Another proof of the genuine, manly inspiration of this symphony, is its complete independence of the Beethoven symphonies. And how correct, how prudent in judgment, Schubert's genius displays itself here! As if conscious of his more modest power, he avoids imitating the grotesque forms, the bold proportions that meet us in Beethoven's later works; he gives us a creation of the most graceful form possible, which, in spite of its novel intricacies never strays from the happy medium, but always returns again to the central point.

Every one who closely studies this symphony, must agree with me. At first, every one will feel a little embarrassed by the brilliancy and novelty of the instrumentation, the length and breadth of form, the charming variety of vital feeling, the entirely new world that opens to us—just as the first glance at any thing to which we are unaccustomed, embarrasses us; but a delightful feeling remains, as though we had been listening to a lovely tale of enchantment, we feel that the composer was master of his subject, and after a time, its intricacies and connections all become clear to us. The feeling of certainty is produced at once by the splendid, romantic introduction, over which, notwithstanding, a mysterious veil seems to have been drawn here and there. The passage from this into the allegro is wholly new; the tempo does not seem to change, yet we reach the port, we know not how. It would not give us or others any pleasure to analyse the separate movements; for to give an idea of the novel-like character that pervades the whole symphony, the entire work ought to be transcribed.

Yet I cannot take leave of the second movement—which speaks to us with such touching voices—without a few words. There is a passage in it, where a horn calls from a distance, that seems to have descended from another sphere. And every other instrument seems to listen, as if aware that a heavenly guest had glided into the orchestra.

The symphony produced such an effect among us as none has produced since Beethoven's. Artists and connoisseurs united in its praise, and I heard a few words spoken by the master who had studied it with the utmost care for its perfect success, that I should have been only too happy, had such a thing been possible to report to the living Schubert, as the gladdest of glad tidings. Years must pass, perhaps, before the work will be thoroughly made at home in

Germany; but there is no danger that it will ever be overlooked or forgotten; it bears within it the core of everlasting youth.

And thus my visit to those honored graves, reminding me of a relation of one of the great departed, became doubly a reward to me. I received my first recompense on the day itself; for I found, on Beethoven's grave, a steel pen which I have treasured up carefully ever since. I never use it save on festal occasions, as to-day; I trust that good things may have proceeded from it!

SCHUMANN

KINDERSCENEN

by Liszt

AT THE RISK of appearing very monotonous, I must again tell you that the last pieces you were so kind as to send me to Rome appear to me admirable both in inspiration and composition.* The *Fantaisie* dedicated to me is a work of the highest kind—and I am really proud of the honour you have done me in dedicating to me so grand a composition.† I mean, therefore, to work at it and penetrate it through and through, so as to make the utmost possible effect with it.

As to the *Kinderscenen*, I owe to them one of the greatest pleasures of my life. You know, or you don't know, that I have a little girl of three years old, whom everybody agrees in considering *angelic* (did you ever hear such a commonplace?). Her name is Blandine-Rachel, and her surname Moucheron.‡ It goes without saying that she has a complexion of roses and milk, and that her fair golden hair reaches to her feet just like a savage. She is, however, the most silent child, the most sweetly grave, the most philosophically gay in the world. I have every reason to hope also that she will not be a musician, from which may Heaven preserve her!

Well, my dear Monsieur Schumann, two or three times a week (on fine and good days!) I play your *Kinderscenen* to her in the evening; this enchants her, and me still more, as you may imagine, so that often I go over the first repeat twenty times without going any further. Really I think you would be satisfied with this success if you could be a witness of it!

I think I have already expressed to you, in one of my former letters, the desire I felt to see you write some *ensemble* pieces, trios, quintets, or septets. Will you pardon me for pressing this point again? It seems to me that you would be more capable of doing it

* Albano, June 5, 1839.

† Op. 17, C major. With the motto:

*“Durch alle Töne tönest
Im bunten Erdentraum
Ein leiser Ton gezogen
Für den, der heimlich lauschet.”*

(“Through all the sounds of nature,
In earth's fair dream of joy,
An under-current soundeth
For him whose ears can hear.”)

‡ Literally, “little fly.”

than any one else nowadays. And I am convinced that success, even *commercial success*, would not be wanting.

If between now and next winter you could complete some *ensemble* work, it would be a real pleasure to me to make it known in Paris, where that sort of composition, when well played, has more chance of success than you perhaps think. I would even gladly undertake to find a publisher for it, if you liked, which would moreover in no wise prevent you from disposing of it *for Germany*.

In the interim I mean to play in public your *Carnaval*, and some of the *Dauidsbündlertänze* and of the *Kinderscenen*. The *Kreisleriana*, and the *Fantaisie* which is dedicated to me, are more difficult of digestion for the public. I shall reserve them till later.

Up to the present time I only know the following works of yours: *Impromptus* on a theme by Clara Wieck.

Pianoforte Sonata, dedicated to Clara.

Concerto without orchestra.

Études Symphoniques: Dauidsbündlertänze; Kreisleriana.

Carnaval. Kinderscenen and my *Fantaisie*.

If you would have the kindness to complete your works to me it would be a great pleasure to me; I should like to have them bound all together in three or four volumes. Haslinger, on his side, will send you my *Études* and my other publications as they come out.

What you tell me of your private life has interested and touched me deeply. If I could, I know not how, be in the least pleasant or useful to you in these circumstances, dispose of me as you will. Whatever happens, count on my absolute discretion and sincere devotion. *If I am not asking too much*, tell me if it is *Clara* of whom you speak. But if this question should seem to you *misplaced*, do not answer it . . .

SCHUMANN/MASS AND REQUIEM

by Brahms

. . . JOACHIM AND I have repeatedly gone through your Robert's *Mass and Requiem*.* As far as I am concerned, I think you ought to publish them if you have anyone to take them. I can only state the reasons for and against. There is always the chief point of all: the works are of such a character that in my opinion it would be too great a piece of arrogance, if my judgment and my advice hindered

* To Clara Schumann, [Bonn], August 6, 1860.

their publication. They do not belong to the latter years, and Schumann himself intended them to be printed and had fully prepared them, who then has the right to interfere? But on the other hand, it is excusable, and by no means to be considered offensive, if in the case of a man loved and honoured as he is, one should lift perhaps too bold a hand to ensure that his crown of *immortels* consists only of flowers which can never fade. All that we do is but the work of human hands. The world likes to see the weaknesses of its great men, and sooner or later it is sure to discover them . . .

SAINT-SAËNS

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

by Liszt

YOUR KIND LETTER promised me several of your compositions; I have been expecting them, and, while waiting, I want to thank you again for your second Concerto, which I greatly applaud.* The form of it is new and very happy; the interest of the three portions goes on increasing, and you take into just account the effect of the pianist without sacrificing anything of the ideas of the composer, which is an essential rule in this class of work.

At the very outset the *prelude* on the pedal G is striking and imposing: after a very happy inspiration you do wisely to reproduce it at the end of the first movement and to accompany it this time with some chords. Among the things which particularly please me I note: the chromatic progression (*last line of the prelude*) and that which alternates between the piano and orchestra (from the last bar of page 5—repeated then by the piano alone, page 15); the arrangement of thirds and sixths in demisemiquavers, charmingly sonorous, pages 8 and 9, which opens superbly on the entry of the subject fortissimo; the piquant rhythm of the second subject of the *allegro scherzando*, page 25. Possibly this would have gained somewhat by more combination and development, either of the principal subject or of some secondary subject; for instance, a little anodyne counterpoint, it seems to me, would not be out of place on pages 26, 27 and so on. *Item* for pages 50 to 54, in which the simple breadth of the period with the holding on of the accompaniment chords leaves rather a void; I should like there to be some incidence and polyphonic entanglement, as the Germanic *Polyphemuses* say. Pardon me this detailed remark, dear Monsieur Saint-Saëns, which I only venture to make while assuring you in all sincerity that the *total* of your work pleases me singularly. I played it again the day before yesterday to Sgambati, of whom Planté† will speak to you, as of an artist above the common run and even more than ordinarily *distingué*. He will let the public hear your Concerto next winter, which ought to meet with success in every country.

* Rome, July 19, 1869.

† A celebrated contemporary pianist.

R. STRAUSS

SALOME

by Mahler

MY DEAR, GOOD ALMSCHLILI, I went to the Strauss's yesterday afternoon.* *She* greeted me with: "Sh-sh! Richard's asleep," and pulled me into her (very untidy) boudoir. . . . She would not hear of my going, told me Richard had had an exhausting rehearsal yesterday morning in Leipzig, then had returned to Berlin to conduct *Götterdämmerung* at night, and today, being reduced to pulp, had lain down to sleep in the afternoon, while she kept strictest watch. I was quite touched. Suddenly she leaped up: "But now to wake the brute." Before I could stop her, she dragged me by both hands into his room, and roused him with a stentorian shout: "Get up. Gustav's here. . . ."

It (*Salome*) is emphatically a work of genius, very powerful and decidedly one of the most important works of our day. A Vulcan who lives and labors under a heap of slag, a subterranean fire—not merely a firework! It is exactly the same with Strauss's whole personality. That is why it is so difficult in his case to sift the chaff from the grain. But I have an immense respect for the whole phenomenon he presents, and it has been confirmed afresh. This is an immense pleasure to me, for it puts me entirely at one with him . . .

Grand Hotel, Berlin

January 14, 1907

MY ALMSCHL! *Salome* then, yesterday.† The impression it made was stronger than ever and I am firmly convinced that it is one of the greatest masterpieces of our time. I cannot make out the drift of it, and can only surmise that it is the voice of the "earth-spirit" speaking from the heart of genius, a spirit which does not indeed make a dwelling-place for itself to suit human taste but in accordance with its own unfathomable needs. Perhaps in time I shall gain a clearer understanding of this "cocoon" it has spun for itself.

Your

Gustl

* To Alma Mahler from Hotel Bristol, Berlin, January 1907.

† From Grand Hotel, Berlin, January 14, 1907.

TCHAIKOVSKY

PIANO CONCERTO NO. I

by N. Rubinstein

IT WAS ON Christmas Eve, 1874.* We were invited to Albrecht's house, and, before we went, Nicholas Rubinstein proposed I should meet him in one of the classrooms at the Conservatoire to go through the concerto. I arrived with my manuscript, and Rubinstein and Hubert soon appeared. The latter is a very worthy, clever man, but without the least self-assertion. Moreover, he is exceedingly garrulous, and needs a string of words to say "yes" or "no." He is incapable of giving his opinion in any decisive form, and generally lets himself be pulled over to the strongest side. I must add, however, that this is not from cowardice, but merely from lack of character.

I played the first movement. Never a word, never a single remark. Do you know the awkward and ridiculous sensation of putting before a friend a meal which you have cooked yourself, which he eats—and holds his tongue? Oh, for a single word, for friendly abuse, for *anything* to break the silence! For God's sake say *something*! But Rubinstein never opened his lips. He was preparing his thunderbolt, and Hubert was waiting to see which way the wind would blow. I did not require a judgment of my work from the artistic side; simply from the technical point of view. Rubinstein's silence was eloquent. "My dear friend," he seemed to be saying to himself, "how can I speak of the details, when the work itself goes entirely against the grain?" I gathered patience, and played the concerto straight through to the end. Still silence.

"Well?" I asked, and rose from the piano. Then a torrent broke from Rubinstein's lips. Gentle at first, gathering volume as it proceeded, and finally bursting into the fury of a Jupiter-Tonans. My concerto was worthless, absolutely unplayable; the passages so broken, so disconnected, so unskillfully written, that they could not even be improved; the work itself was bad, trivial, common; here and there I had stolen from other people; only one or two pages were worth anything; all the rest had better be destroyed, or entirely rewritten. "For instance, *that*?" "And what meaning is there

* Tchaikovsky's letter to von Meck, written from San Remo, January 21, 1878, recalls a happening of four years before.

in *this?*" here the passages were caricatured on the piano. "And look there! Is it possible that anyone could?" etc., etc., etc. But the chief thing I cannot reproduce: the *tone* in which all this was said. An independent witness of this scene must have concluded I was a talentless maniac, a scribbler with no notion of composing, who had ventured to lay his rubbish before a famous man. Hubert was quite overcome by my silence, and was surprised, no doubt, that a man who had already written so many works, and was professor of composition at the Conservatoire, could listen calmly and without contradiction to such a jobation, such as one would hardly venture to address to a student before having gone through his work very carefully. Then he began to comment upon Rubinstein's criticism, and to agree with it, although he made some attempt to soften the harshness of his judgment. I was not only astounded, but deeply mortified, by the whole scene. I require friendly counsel and criticism; I shall always be glad of it, but there was no trace of friendliness in the whole proceedings. It was a censure delivered in such a form that it cut me to the quick. I left the room without a word and went upstairs. I could not have spoken for anger and agitation. Presently Rubinstein came to me and, seeing how upset I was, called me into another room. There he repeated that my concerto was impossible, pointed out many places where it needed to be completely revised, and said if I would suit the concerto to his requirements, he would bring it out at his concert. "I shall not alter a single note," I replied, "I shall publish the work precisely as it stands." This intention I actually carried out.

TCHAIKOVSKY/PIANO CONCERTO

by Bülow

BÜLOW WAS FLATTERED by the dedication, and, in a long and grateful letter,* praised the concerto very highly—in direct opposition to Rubinstein—saying, that of all Tchaikovsky's works with which he was acquainted this was "the most perfect."

"The ideas," he wrote, "are so lofty, strong, and original. The details, which although profuse, in no way obscure the work as a whole, are so interesting. The form is so perfect, mature, and full of style—in the sense that the intention and craftsmanship are everywhere concealed. I should grow weary if I attempted to enumerate

* January 1875.

all the qualities of your work—qualities which compel me to congratulate, not only the composer, but all those who will enjoy the work in future, either actively or passively (*réceptivement*).”

TCHAIKOVSKY/FRANCESCA DA

RIMINI

by Saint-Saëns

PIQUANT CHARMS AND dazzling fireworks abound in Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*, which bristles with difficulties, and shrinks from no violence of effect.* The gentlest and kindest of men has let loose a whirlwind in this work, and shows as little pity for his interpreters and hearers as Satan for sinners. But the composer's talent and astounding technique are so great that the critic can only feel pleasure in the work. A long melodic phrase, the love-song of Paolo and Francesca, soars above this tempest, this *bufera infernale*, which attracted Liszt before Tchaikovsky, and engendered his *Dante Symphony*. Liszt's *Francesca* is more touching and more Italian in character than that of the great Slavonic composer; the whole work is so typical that we seem to see the profile of Dante projected in it. Tchaikovsky's art is more subtle, the outlines clearer, the material more attractive; from a purely musical point of view the work is better. Liszt's version is perhaps more to the taste of the poet or painter. On the whole, they can fitly stand side by side; either of them is worthy of Dante, and as regards noise, both leave nothing to be desired.

* From Saint-Saëns' *Portraits et Souvenirs*.

VERDI

AÏDA

by C. Schumann

I SAW VERDI'S AÏDA* . . . it is curious to see the old composer venturing along new paths. Many parts of it pleased me very much, but many others I did not like. But I must say it fills me with respect for Verdi. It is extraordinary to see a composer striking out on a new path in his old age, and what talent he shows in it . . .

VERDI/AÏDA

by Tchaikovsky

. . . VERY PROBABLY YOU† are quite right in saying that my opera is not effective for the stage. I must tell you, however, I do not care a rap for such effectiveness. It has long been an established fact that I have no dramatic vein, and now I do not trouble about it. If it is really not fit for the stage, then it had better not be performed! I composed this opera because I was moved to express in music all that seems to cry out for such expression in *Eugene Onegin*. I did my best, working with indescribable pleasure and enthusiasm, and thought very little of the treatment, the effectiveness, and all the rest. I spit upon "effects!" Besides, what are effects? For instance, if *Aïda* is effective, I can assure you I would not compose an opera on a similar subject for all the wealth of the world; for I want to handle human beings, not puppets. I would gladly compose an opera which was completely lacking in startling effects, but which offered characters resembling my own, whose feelings and experiences I shared and understood. The feelings of an Egyptian Princess, a Pharaoh, or some mad Nubian, I cannot enter into, or comprehend. Some instinct, however, tells me that these people must have felt, acted, spoken, and expressed themselves quite differently from ourselves. Therefore my music, which—entirely against my will—is impregnated with Schumannism, Wagnerism, Chopinism, Glinkaism, Ber-

* From her diary dated Frankfurt, November 25, 1880.

† To Laneiev from San Remo, January 2, 1878.

liozism, and all the other "isms" of our time, would be as out of keeping with the characters of *Aïda* as the elegant speeches of Racine's heroes—couched in the second person plural—are unsuited to the real Orestes or the real Andromache. Such music would be a *falsehood*, and all falsehoods are abhorrent to me. Besides, I am reaping the fruits of my insufficient harvest of booklearning. Had I a wider acquaintance with the literatures of other countries, I should no doubt have discovered a subject which was both suitable for the stage and in harmony with my taste. Unfortunately I am not able to find such things for myself, nor do I know anyone who could call my attention to such a subject as Bizet's *Carmen*, for example, one of the most perfect operas of our day. You will ask what I actually require. I will tell you. Above all I want no kings, no tumultuous populace, no gods, no pompous marches—in short, none of those things which are the attributes of "grand opera." I am looking for an intimate yet thrilling drama, based upon such a conflict of circumstance as I myself have experienced or witnessed, which is capable of touching me to the quick. I have nothing to say against the fantastic element, because it does not restrict one, but rather offers unlimited freedom. I feel I am not expressing myself very clearly. In a word, *Aïda* is so remote, her love for Radames touches me so little—since I cannot picture it in my mind's eye—that my music would lack the vital warmth which is essential to good work. Not long since I saw *L'Africaine* in Genoa. This unhappy African, what she endures! Slavery, imprisonment, death under a poisoned tree, in her last moment the sight of her rival's triumph—and yet I never once pitied her! But what effects there were: a ship, a battle, all manner of dodges! When all is said and done, what is the use of these effects?

WAGNER

LOHENGRIN

by Moscheles

LISZT DIRECTED THE admirably trained orchestra, the singers were excellent.* From the very first note of the introduction, with its high violin passages and gradation effects, the instrumentation seemed to me to be strikingly original, in fact rather too original in its harshness. There is much dramatic life in this music, but I do not like the predominance of recitatives; I should prefer more rhythmical melodious phrases or movements in the ordinary form. Wagner's treatment frequently wearied me, from being too monotonous and too overloaded; for one leading theme well-worked out, for one well-sustained vein of thought, I would gladly have bartered many of his bright but transient effects; for all that the work interested me extremely. One must have heard it, and one must hear it again, to form a correct judgment.

WAGNER/MUSIC OF THE FUTURE

by Berlioz

AFTER A VAST amount of trouble, enormous expense, and numerous but insufficient rehearsals, Richard Wagner has succeeded in bringing forward some of his compositions at the *Théâtre-Italien*.† Fragments taken from dramatic works lose, more or less, by being performed away from the surroundings for which they were destined. Overtures and instrumental introductions, however, gain by such removal; because when performed by a concert orchestra, they are rendered with more pomp and brilliancy than when played by an ordinary opera-orchestra, which is much less numerous, and less advantageously disposed.

The result of the experience ventured in connection with the Parisian public by the German composer was easy to be foreseen. A

* Weimar, May 1851.

† An account of a concert given by Wagner in Paris as reported in *Journal des Débats* on February 9, 1860.

certain number of listeners, without either prepossession or prejudice, quickly recognised both the powerful qualities of the artist, and the pernicious tendency of his system. A far greater number seemed unable to perceive in Wagner anything more than a violent will-power; and, in his music, nothing but a fastidious and irritating noise. The foyer of the *Théâtre-Italien* formed a curious sight, on the evening of the first concert, on account of the turmoil, the cries, and the discussions which seemed, at every moment, on the point of degenerating into blows. In such an event, the artist who has provoked such public emotion would like to see it go farther still; and would not be sorry to be present at a hand-to-hand fight between his partisans and his detractors; on the condition, of course, that his partisans gained the upper hand. Such a victory would have been improbable on this occasion, God being always on the side of the biggest battalions. The amount of nonsense, absurdity and even falsehood uttered on such occasions is truly prodigious; and proves incontestibly that, in France at any rate, when the question touches a kind of music other than that which runs the streets, passion and partisanship prompt every word; and neither good-sense nor taste has any chance of making itself heard.

Prepossessions, whether favourable or hostile, form the basis of most judgments, even upon the works of recognised and consecrated masters. A composer, once reputed to be a great melodist, is free, upon occasions, to write a work entirely deprived of melody; without risk of not being admired, for that same work, by people who would have hissed it had it borne another name. The great, sublime and entrancing overture of *Leonora*, by Beethoven, is classed by many critics as an unmelodious work, although it is full of *cantabile* and melodious effects in the allegro as well as in the andante. The very same judges who disparage it applaud, and often encore the overture of *Don Giovanni*, by Mozart; in which there is not a trace of what can properly be called melody, but the latter is by Mozart, the great melodist!

They rightly admire, in this same opera of *Don Giovanni*, the sublime expression of the sentiments, passions and characters. But, at the allegro of the last air of Donna Anna, not one of these severe critics who pose as appreciating musical expression, and are so sensitive about dramatic suitability, is shocked at the abominable vocalisation which Mozart has had the misfortune to let fall from his pen, being incited thereby by some demon whose name remains a mystery. The poor injured girl exclaims:

Peut-être un jour le ciel encore sentira quelque pitié pour moi.
and, thereupon, the composer has formed a series of high notes in

vocalisation, of staccato, cackling and leaping character, which have not even the merit of yielding the singer any applause. If there had ever been, in any part of Europe, a public truly intelligent and sensitive, this crime (for it is no less) would not have remained unpunished; and the guilty allegro would have been removed from the score.

I should be able to quote a multitude of similar examples to prove that, with very rare exceptions, music is judged on the basis of prepossession only; and under the influence of a deplorable prejudice.

This will be my excuse for the liberty which I am about to take in speaking of Richard Wagner, according to my own personal feeling, and without taking any account of the various opinions expressed with regard to him.

He has ventured to compose the programme of his first concert exclusively of collective pieces; either choruses or symphonies. This was, to begin with, a defiance of the habits of our public, who love variety. Under this pretext, they often show themselves ready to manifest a noisy enthusiasm for a little song, well sung; for an empty cavatina, well vocalised; for a violin solo, well bowed upon the fourth string; or for variations, well-tongued upon some wind instrument; after having given a kindly, but cold, welcome to some great work of genius. They evidently think that the king and the shepherd are equal during their lifetime.

There is nothing like doing boldly such things as are practicable at all. Wagner has just proved it; for his programme, although deprived of the sweets which allure children of every age at our musical festivals, was none the less listened to with a constant and very lively interest.

He began with the overture, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, which is that of an opera, in two acts, which I saw performed at Dresden, under the direction of the composer in 1841; and in which Madame Schroeder-Devrient played the principal part. This piece produced upon me the same impression then which it has just now done. It starts off with an overpowering orchestral burst, in which we fancy we at once recognise the howlings of the tempest, the cries of the sailors, the wind whistling through the rigging, and the stormy noises of the sea in fury. This commencement is magnificent; and it imperiously seizes the listener, and carries him along. But, the same method of composition being afterwards constantly employed, one tremolo succeeding another, and one chromatic-scale only ceasing in order to be immediately continued by another effect of the same kind, without a single ray of sunlight coming to break through these dark clouds charged with electric fluid, and incessantly pouring

down their merciless torrents without the slightest melodious design coming to the relief of their black harmonies, the attention of the listener begins to wane, is then discouraged, and finishes by giving way. This overture, the development of which appears to me excessive, already manifests the tendency of Wagner and of his school not to take account of the *sensation*; and to recognise nothing but the poetical or dramatic idea required to be expressed, without troubling whether the expression of that idea obliges the composer or not to transgress musical conditions.

The overture, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, is vigorously instrumented; and the composer has secured, at the onset, an extraordinary effect with the chord of the naked fifth. Presented in this way this sonority takes an aspect which is both strange and thrilling.

The grand scene from *Tannhäuser* (march and chorus) is of superb brilliancy and pomp—qualities which are augmented by the special sonority of the key of B major. The rhythm, which is never troubled or complicated in its action by being combined with rhythmic dispositions of another kind, here assumes a knightly, august and virile aspect. Even without the aid of scenic representation, we feel that such music must accompany the movements of men who are valiant and strong; and are covered with brilliant armour. This piece contains an elegant melody, clearly designed; though not very original, as it recalls, by its form, if not by its accent, a celebrated theme from *Der Freischütz*.

The last return of the vocal phrase at the grand *tutti* is still more energetic than the preceding, thanks to the intervention of a bass-figure, consisting of eight notes in the bar, and contrasting with the upper part which contains only two or three. There are, certainly, a few modulations which are rather hard and somewhat crowded together; but the orchestra imposes them upon the listener with such vigour and authority, that they are at once accepted without resistance. In short, this piece must be recognised as masterly; and instrumented, like all the rest, by a skilful hand. Both wind instruments and voices are, throughout, sustained by a powerful propelling force; and the violins, written for with admirable ease in the upper part of their scale, produce the effect of dazzling sparks illumining the whole sonority.

The overture to *Tannhäuser* is, in Germany, the most popular of Wagner's orchestral pieces. Force and grandeur still reign supreme; but the effect of the method which the composer has chosen in this instance is, in my case at any rate, to produce an extreme fatigue. The overture commences by an *andante maestoso*—a sort of chorale of beautiful character, which, later on, towards the end of the alle-

gro, reappears against a high accompaniment consisting of an *ostinato* violin passage. The theme of this allegro, composed of two bars only, is but slightly interesting in itself. The developments to which it afterwards gives rise bristle with chromatic successions, and with modulations and harmonies of extreme harshness; precisely as in the case of the overture to the *Fliegende Holländer*. When, finally, the chorale reappears, its theme being slow and of considerable breadth, the violin passage which accompanies it right to the end is necessarily repeated so persistently as to be terrible to hear. It has already occurred twenty-four times in the andante; but, in the peroration of the allegro, we have it for one hundred and eighteen times more. This "obstinate," or rather "desperate," design figures, therefore, altogether, no less than one hundred and forty-two times in the overture. Is this not too much? It reappears again very often in the course of the opera, however; so that I am tempted to suppose that the author attributes to it some expressive signification relative to the action of the drama, which I am unable to guess.

The fragments from *Lohengrin* are distinguished by more striking qualities than the preceding works. It seems to me that they contain more novelty than those from *Tannhäuser*. The introduction, which takes the place of an overture for that opera, is an invention of Wagner producing a most remarkable effect. A visible idea of it is presented by the figure:



TRUMPETS AND HORNS IN B FLAT.

as it is, in reality, a slow and immense *crescendo*; which, after having attained its climax, follows the reverse progression and returns to the point from which it started, concluding with a harmonious murmur, scarcely perceptible. I do not know what relations exist between this form of overture and the dramatic idea of the opera, but, without concerning myself with this question, and considering it only as a symphonic piece, I find it admirable in every respect. There are no periods, properly so called, it is true; but the harmonic sequences which it contains are melodious and charming, whilst the interest never for a moment wanes, notwithstanding the extreme slowness of the *crescendo*, and that of the *diminuendo*. It is also a marvel of instrumentation, both in soft tints as well as in brilliant colours; and, towards the end, a remarkable feature is presented by the bass, which continues to rise diatonically whilst the other

parts descend, and thus presents an idea which is most ingenious. This fine piece, moreover, does not contain the least harshness; being as suave and harmonious as it is grand, strong and sonorous. I regard it as a masterpiece . . .

I have not yet spoken of the instrumental introduction to Wagner's last opera, *Tristan und Isolde*. It is singular that the composer should have chosen to produce this at the same concert as the introduction to *Lohengrin*, considering that, in both, he has followed the same plan. Here, again, we have a slow movement, begun *pianissimo*, increasing gradually to *fortissimo*, and returning to the nuance of its starting point, without any other theme than a sort of chromatic sigh; but full of dissonant chords, the harshness of which is still further increased by extensive modifications of the real notes of the harmony. I have read this again and again, besides listening to it with profound attention and an earnest wish to discover what it means, but am constrained to admit that I have still not the least idea of what the composer wanted to do.

The above sincere account brings out sufficiently the grand musical qualities of Wagner, and seems to me to carry the conclusion that he possesses the rare intensity of feeling, the interior warmth and power of will, as well as the faith which subjugates, moves and convinces. But it also implies that these qualities would have worked more effectively had they been united to more invention, less research, and to a more just appreciation of certain constituent elements of art.

WAGNER/DIE MEISTERSINGER

by Cosima Von Bülow

MY DAUGHTER, Frau von Bülow, writes to me* that Wagner's new work *Die Meistersinger* is a marvel, and amongst other things she says—

"This *Meistersinger* is, to Wagner's other conceptions, much the same as the *Winter's Tale* is to Shakespeare's other works. Its phantasy is found in gaiety and drollery, and it has called up the Nuremberg of the Middle Ages, with its guilds, its poet-artisans, its pedants, its cavaliers, to draw forth the most fresh laughter in the midst of the highest, the most ideal, poetry. Exclusive of its sense and the destination of the work, one might compare the artistic work of it

* A letter written by Liszt to Dr. Franz Brendel from Rome, August 10, 1862.

with that of the *Sacraments-Häuschen* of St. Lawrence (at Nuremberg). Equally with the sculptor, has the composer lighted upon the most graceful, most fantastic, most pure form,—boldness in perfection; and as at the bottom of the *Sacraments-Häuschen* there is Adam Kraft, holding it up with a grave and collected air, so in the *Meistersinger* there is Hans Sachs, calm, profound, serene, who sustains and directs the action," etc.

WAGNER/DIE MEISTERSINGER

by Brahms

. . . THE MEISTERSINGER HAS* to be set up and knocked down five times. But the repetitions met with just as many obstacles. This in itself naturally prevents the audience from becoming enthusiastic, as it takes a certain amount of go to arouse enthusiasm. I find them less sympathetic than I expected. I am not enthusiastic myself—either about this work or about Wagner in general. But I listen to it as attentively as possible and as often—as I can stand it. All the same I am glad I have not got to say all I think, quite clearly and loudly etc., etc. One thing I know: in all else that I try my hand at, I tread on the heels of my predecessors, whom I feel in my way—but I could write an opera with the greatest pleasure without feeling Wagner in the least in my way. . . .

WAGNER/TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

by C. Schumann

WE WENT TO *Tristan und Isolde* this evening.† It is the most repulsive thing I ever saw or heard in my life. To have to sit through a whole evening watching and listening to such love-lunacy till every feeling of decency was outraged, and to see not only the audience but the musicians delighted with it was—I may well say—the saddest experience of my whole artistic career. I held out till the end, as I wished to have heard it all. Neither of them does anything but sleep and sing during the second act, and the whole of act III—

* To Clara Schumann from Vienna, March 28, 1870.

† From her diary dated Munich, September 8, 1875.

quite forty minutes—Tristan occupies in dying—and they call that dramatic!!! Levi says Wagner is a better musician than Gluck . . . Are they all fools or am I a fool? The subject seems to me so wretched: a love-madness brought about by a potion—how is it possible to take the slightest interest in the lovers? It is not emotion, it is a disease, and they tear their hearts out of their bodies, while the music expresses it all in the most repulsive manner. I could go on lamenting over it for ever, and exclaiming against it . . .

WEBER

DER FREISCHÜTZ

by Wagner

SUCH IS THE legend of the *Freischütz*.^{*} It seems to be the very poem for those Bohemian forests, whose dark and gloomy aspect makes it easily conceivable that the isolated beings that live among them think themselves—if not positively the prey of some demoniac power of nature—at least hopelessly under its control. And in this very characteristic is to be found the specifically German character of this and similar traditions; it is so sharply defined by natural surroundings, that to it alone is to be attributed the origin of that demoniac imagery, which, among other peoples, not equally subject to the influence of nature, rather takes on forms derived from human society, or from ruling religions and metaphysical ideas. Though it may not be wanting in the elements of horror, such imagery is not in the latter case *altogether* horrible; pathos appears through its horror; and regret for the lost paradise of a purely natural life somewhat mitigates the dread of the deserted Mother Nature's vengeance.

What we have described is purely German. Everywhere else we find the devil going about among mankind; forcing witches and enchanters to obey his will and then arbitrarily giving them over to the stake or saving them from death. We even see him appear as a *paterfamilias*, and guard his son with suspicious scrupulousness. But even the roughest peasant no longer believes all this nowadays, for such proceedings are pictured too bluntly as taking place in everyday life—in which he knows they no longer happen; while the secret, mysterious relations of the human heart to the strange nature around it, have not yet come to an end. In its eloquent silence, this latter still speaks to the heart just as it did a thousand years ago; and what was told in the very gray of antiquity is understood today as easily as then. For this reason it is that the legend of *nature* ever remains the inexhaustible resource of the poet in his intercourse with his people.

But only from this very people that invented the legend of the *Freischütz*, and feels itself today under its influence, could come a musical poet of true genius, who could hit upon the idea of creating

^{*} From Wagner's *Art Life and Theories*.

a great musical work upon a dramatic basis derived from that legend. If he understood truly the fundamental spirit of the popular poem here presented to him, and felt himself able to call by his music into full and mystic life what was indicated in this characteristic creation,—he knew that he should be fully understood in turn by his people, from the mystic sounds of his overture to the childlike and simple fashioning of the *Jungfernkranz*.

And indeed, in glorifying the old folk-legend of his home, the artist assured himself an unprecedented success. His countrymen both from north and south, from the disciple of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* to the readers of the Viennese fashionable journals, united in admiration of the melodies of this pure and deep elegy. The Berlin philosopher stammered out "We twine for thee the maiden's wreath" (*Jungfernkranz*); the police director repeated enthusiastically "Through the forest, through the meadows"; while the court lackey sang, in hoarse voice, "What is fitting on earth." And I can remember how I studied as a boy, to get the demon-like expression in gesture and voice necessary for the proper harsh performance of "Here in this earthly vale of woes." The Austrian grenadiers marched to the *Hunter's Chorus*; Prince Metternich danced to the music of the Bohemian peasants' *Ländler*; and the students of Jena sang the scoffing chorus after their professors. The most opposing tendencies of political life met here in a single point of union; *Der Freischütz* was heard, sung, and danced from one end of Germany to the other.

And you too, promenaders of the Bois de Boulogne,—you too have hummed the melodies of the *Freischütz*; the hand-organs played the *Hunter's Chorus* in the streets; the *Opéra Comique* did not scorn the *Jungfernkranz*; and the delicious air "How did slumber come upon me?" has repeatedly enchanted the audiences of your salons. But do you understand what you sing? I doubt it greatly. On what my doubt rests, however, it is difficult to say;—not less difficult, certainly, than to explain to you that thoroughly foreign German nature, from which those melodies proceeded. I should almost think myself compelled to begin at the forest—which, by the way, is just what you don't understand. The Bois is something quite different; as different as your *rêverie* is from our *Empfindsamkeit*.

We are truly a singular people! "Through the forests, through the meadows," moves us to tears; while we look with dry eyes on thirty-four principalities around us, instead of one united fatherland! You who only go into enthusiasm when "la France" is concerned, must look on this as a decided weakness; but it is precisely

this weakness that you must share if you would rightly understand "Through the forests, through the meadows"; for it is this very weakness that you have to thank for the wonderful score of *Der Freischütz*, which you are about to have performed before you with the greatest accuracy—unquestionably for the purpose of learning to understand it in just the way in which it is *impossible* for you to understand it.

You will not forsake Paris and its customs by one hair's-breadth for this purpose; the *Freischütz* must come *there* and exhibit himself to you; you encourage him to make himself at ease, to do precisely as though he were at home; for you want to hear and see him as he *is*,—no longer in the costume of *Robin des Bois*,* but honest and open-hearted—something like the *Postillon de Longjumeau*. So you say. But all this is to be done in the *Académie royale de musique*, and that worthy establishment has ordinances which must make the feeling of unembarrassed ease decidedly difficult for the poor *Freischütz*.

It is written there:—Thou shalt dance! But that he does not do; he is far too heavy-spirited for that, and he lets the peasants and maidens do it for him at the tavern. It is written also:—Thou shalt not speak, but shalt sing recitative! But here is a dialogue of the most complete naïveté. It's all very well; but you can't free him from ballet-dancing and singing recitative,—for he is to present himself at the grand opera!

There might be, it is true, a simple method of getting out of the difficulty; and this would be to make an exception for once for the sake of this glorious work. But you will not adopt this means;—for you are only free when you want to be; and in this case, unfortunately, you *don't* want to be. You have heard of the Wolfsschlucht and of a devil, Samiel; and forthwith the machinery of the grand opera comes into your minds; the rest is of no consequence to you. You want ballet and recitative, and you have chosen the most remarkable of your composers to make the music for it. That you have chosen such a one does you honor, and shows that you know how to value our masterpiece. I know no one of the contemporary French musicians who could understand the score of the *Freischütz* so well as the author of the *Symphonie fantastique*, and would be so capable as he of completing it, if that were necessary. He is a man of

* A hopelessly butchered version of *Der Freischütz* had been given in Paris under this title several years before. Its charming tunes alone were responsible for a run of nearly three hundred performances. It is Wagner's insinuation in a later essay (*Der Freischütz: A Report to Germany*) that this success, and the hope of duplicating it, was the inspiration for the production at the Opéra.—Ed.

genius, and no one recognizes more fully than I the irresistible strength of his poetic force. He has conscientious principles, that permit him to follow the strong bent of his talent, and in every one of his symphonies there is revealed the inner compulsion which the author could not escape. But precisely because of the distinguished capabilities of M. Berlioz, I lay before him with confidence my remarks upon his work.*

The score of *Der Freischütz* is a finished whole, perfectly rounded in every part, as well in thought as in form. Would not the omission of the smallest part be to maim or distort the master's work? Have we to deal here with the re-construction, to suit the needs of our time, of a score that had its origin in the childhood of art? The re-arrangement of a work which its author failed to develop sufficiently, through his ignorance of the technical means that are today at our disposal? Every one knows that there is nothing of this kind to be done; M. Berlioz would repel with indignation a proposition of this character.—No. What is in question now, is to bring perfect and original work into concord, with conditions that are exterior to it—foreign to it. And how shall this be done?

A score sanctified by twenty years of success, in favor of which the royal academy of music proposes for once to deviate from the strict rules that exclude foreign music from its repertoire, in order to take its part in the most brilliant triumph that any piece ever won in any theatre,—such a score cannot control a few rules of precedent and routine? May it not be demanded that it shall be produced in that primal form that makes up so great a part of its originality?—Yet this is the sacrifice that is asked of us, is it not? Or do you think I am mistaken? Do you think that the ballet and recitative introduced by you would *not* distort the physiognomy of Weber's work? If you replace a simple—often times witty and lively dialogue—by a recitative which always becomes heavy in the mouths of the singers, do you not believe that the characteristic of cordial heartiness will altogether disappear from it—that characteristic that makes the very soul of the Bohemian peasant-scenes? Must not the confidential chat of the two girls in the lovely forest-house necessarily lose its freshness and truth? And however well

* In his *À Travers Chants*, Berlioz offers his defense for assisting in this production, asserting that only the fear that a less qualified musician would be assigned to the task in any case, led him to write the recitatives and provide for a ballet. This last need, incidentally, resulted in his orchestration of Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*, which, ironically, has far outlived the controversy of its first performance. Berlioz also has a bitter note on the carpentry that was done with his version after it was established in the repertory of the Opéra.—Ed.

these recitatives might be arranged, however artistically they might harmonize with the general coloring of the work, they would not the less destroy its symmetry. It is plain that the German composer constantly had regard to the dialogue. The song-pieces embrace but little; and, if utterly overwhelmed by the gigantic recitative that is added, they would lose in sense and consequently in effect.

In this drama, where the *song* has so deep a significance and so important a meaning, you will find none of those noisy combination passages, of those deafening finales, to which the grand opera has accustomed you. In the *Muet de Portici*, in the *Huguenots*, in the *Jewess*, it is necessary that the intermediate passages between the pieces, on account of the considerable dimensions of the latter, should be filled out by recitative; in this case dialogue would seem petty, ridiculous, and exactly like a parody. How extraordinary it would be, for instance, if between the grand duet and the finale of the second act of the *Muet*, Masaniello should suddenly begin to talk; or if, after the combination passages of the fourth act of the *Huguenots*, Raoul and Valentine should prepare the way for the grand duet that follows, by a dialogue, even though it were in the most carefully chosen phraseology! Of course this would jar upon you; and rightly.

Very good. But what is an aesthetic necessity for these operas of greater extent, would be, for precisely the contrary reasons, ruinous for *Der Freischütz*, in which the song passages embrace so much less.

In regard to this matter, I foresee that where the scenes conveyed by the dialogue need a dramatic accent, M. Berlioz will give the reins to his fertile fancy; I can imagine the expression of gloomy energy which he will give to the scene in which Kaspar tries to weave his devilish web about his friend, as he presses him to test the magic bullet, and that he may further win him over to the standard of hell, asks him the fearful question—"Coward, dost thou believe the sin is not already upon thee? Dost think this eagle has been *given* to thee?"—I am certain that at this passage deafening applause will reward the excellent additions of M. Berlioz; but I am not less certain, that after this recitative Kaspar's energetic, short aria at the close of the act, will pass for a piece of music unworthy of any particular consideration.

Thus you will have something entirely new—something remarkable, if you will; and we, who know *Der Freischütz*, and need no recitative to complete it, shall with pleasure see the works of M. Berlioz enriched by a new creation; but we shall still doubt whether you can be taught by this means to *understand* our *Frei-*

schütz. You will delight yourselves with varying music, now cheerful, now wild and spirit-like, that will please your ears, yet at the same time affect you with a sense of horror; you will hear songs performed with wonderful perfection, that up to this time have only been sung moderately well for you; a well arranged dramatic declamation will lead you smoothly from one vocal passage to another; and yet you will feel with annoyance the absence of many things to which you are accustomed, and which you can with difficulty do without. The anticipations which will have been nourished with regard to Weber's work, can and must only awaken in you the desire for some new excitement of the senses—just such a desire as the works generally brought before you with such a preparation really fulfil. But your expectations will find themselves disappointed; for this work was created by its author with quite another purpose, and by no means to satisfy the demands of the Royal Academy of Music.

In the passage where, upon our stage, five musicians take up their fiddles and horns at the door of a tavern, and a few sturdy peasant lads whirl their ungraceful sweethearts in the circle of the dance—in this passage *you* will suddenly behold the choreographic celebrities of the day appear before you; you will see that smiling cutter of capers who but yesterday strutted in his fine gold-colored costume, receiving the graceful sylphs one after the other in his arms. The latter will do their best to show you Bohemian peasant dances,—but in vain; you will continually miss their pirouettes and artistic caperings. Yet they will still give you enough of this sort of thing to transport you, in fancy, to the sphere of your customary enjoyments; they will recall to you the brilliant works of your own famous authors, in which you have so often revelled, and you will demand at least a piece like *William Tell* in which also hunters, shepherds, and various other charming things appropriate to country life, appear.

But after these dances you will have nothing more of that kind; in the first act you have nothing but the air "Through the forests, through the meadows," a drinking song of twenty to eighty bars, and, instead of a noisy finale, the singular musical outpourings of a hellish rascal, which you certainly will not receive as an aria.

Yet no!—I am mistaken. You will have whole scenes of recitative of such strong musical originality as (I am convinced) few have had before; for I know how the brilliant invention of your distinguished composer will feel itself stimulated to add nothing but beautiful and strong passages to the masterpiece that he so honors and admires. It is precisely for this reason that you will not learn

to understand *Der Freischütz*; and—who knows?—perhaps what you do hear of it will destroy in you the wish to make acquaintance with it in its simple and primitive form.

If it could really appear before you in its purity and simplicity; if, instead of the complicated, intricate dances that on your stage will accompany the modest bridal procession, you could only hear the little song that, as I said, the Berlin philosophical student hums as he goes; if, instead of the exquisite recitative, you could hear the simple dialogue that every German student knows by heart—would you even then gain a *true* comprehension of *Der Freischütz*? Would it excite among you the unanimous applause which the *Muet de Portici* called forth with us? Ah—I doubt it greatly; and perhaps the same doubt passed like a dark cloud over M. Berlioz's spirit when the director of your grand opera commissioned him to provide *Der Freischütz* with ballet and recitative.

It is a great piece of good fortune that it was precisely M. Berlioz, who was entrusted with this task; certainly no German musician would have ventured, out of regard for the work and the master, to undertake such a matter; and in France no one but M. Berlioz is capable of such an attempt. At least we have the certainty that everything down to the seemingly least important note, will be respected; that nothing will be struck out, and only exactly so much added as is necessary to satisfy the demands of the Grand Opera's regulations—rules which you think you must not dare to violate, even in a single instance.*

And it is precisely this that gives me such gloomy presentiments with regard to our beloved *Freischütz*.—Ah!—if you would and could but hear and see our *true Freischütz*,—you might feel the anxiety that now oppresses me, in the form of a friendly appreciation on your own part of the peculiarity of that spiritual life, which belongs to the German nation as a birthright; you would look kindly upon the silent attraction that draws the German away from the life of his large cities,—wretchedly and clumsily imitative of foreign influences, as it is,—and takes him back to nature; attracts him to the solitude of the forests, that he may there reawaken those emotions for which your language has not even a word,—but which those mystic, clear tones of our Weber explain to us as thoroughly as your exquisite decorations and enervating music must make them lifeless and irrecognizable for you.

* It is interesting to note that the Metropolitan Opera succumbed to this same procedure when *Der Freischütz* was last revived there in 1923-24. The recitatives were by the late Artur Bodanzky, and the *Invitation to the Waltz* was again interpolated. At a previous revival, under Alfred Hertz in 1909-10, the spoken dialogue was used.—Ed.

And yet—attempt it! Try to breathe the fresh air of our forests through this strange and heavy atmosphere. I only fear that, even at the best, the unnatural mixture that results will disagree with you.

WEBER/EURYANTHE

by Moscheles

AT THIS PERIOD,* C. M. von Weber came to Vienna, for the purpose of bringing out his *Euryanthe*; already after the rehearsals the most dissentient voices of the German and Italian factions were heard, warning notes were given of a serious battle at the first performance—nay, some ill-disposed persons had presumed to rechristen *Euryanthe* by the name of *Ennuyante*. Moscheles would not on any account miss the first performance, in order to raise his voice for the German master, and against “the shallow Italian jingle,” as he called it. Thus his melancholy was overcome. “The opera is not suited for uninitiated ears,” said he, after he had heard it: “it is too bold in rhythm and harmony; the text so terribly far-fetched that the music must, to some extent, be of the same kind; it has, however, very many beauties, and the airs *Glöcklein im Thale* and *Unter Blühenden Mandelbäumen*, but before all, the finale of the first act, must insure the success of the opera, even with the pit and galleries.” The cast was faultless. The charming, youthful Sontag, the excellent tenor singer Haitzinger, the admirable Madame Grünbaum, and the equally good Forti, represented the leading characters. At the subsequent representations, when the house would no longer fill, the Italian faction began to triumph. Moscheles writes: “Ludlam (the healthy art-fraternity whose acquaintance we have already made) succeeded in infusing the orthodox German spirit into the press.” Besides this, the society was anxious to honor Weber, and gave him a festive evening after the first representation of *Euryanthe*. Among those present were Castelli, Jeitteles, Gyrowetz, Bäuerle, Benedict, Grillparzer, and many others. Poems, written for the occasion, extolling Weber’s genius, were recited, and the most jovial *Ludlamslieder* sung.

* Fall 1823.

PART THREE : INTERPRETERS AND INTERPRETATION

CONDUCTING

by Berlioz

MUSIC APPEARS to be the most exacting of all the arts, the most difficult to cultivate, and that of which the productions are most rarely presented in a condition which permits an appreciation of their real value, a clear view of their physiognomy, or discernment of their real meaning and true character.* Of producing artists, the composer is almost the only one, in fact, who depends upon a multitude of intermediate agents, either intelligent or stupid, devoted or hostile, active or inert, capable—from first to last—of contributing to the brilliancy of his work, or of disfiguring it, misrepresenting it, and even destroying it completely.

Singers have often been accused of forming the most dangerous of these intermediate agents; but in my opinion, without justice. The most formidable, to my thinking, is the conductor of the orchestra. A bad singer can spoil only his own part; while an incapable or malevolent conductor ruins all. Happy, also, may that composer esteem himself when the conductor into whose hands he has fallen is not at once incapable and inimical. For nothing can resist the pernicious influence of this person. The most admirable orchestra is then paralyzed, the most excellent singers are perplexed and rendered dull; there is no longer any vigor or unity; under such direction the noblest daring of the author appears extravagance, enthusiasm beholds its soaring flight checked, inspiration is violently brought down to earth, the angel's wings are broken, the man of genius passes for a madman or an idiot, the divine

* The dissertation of which this is an excerpt was added to Berlioz's classic work on *Instrumentation* when it was re-issued in 1856.—Ed.

statue is precipitated from its pedestal and dragged in the mud. And, what is worse, the public, and even auditors endowed with the highest musical intelligence, are reduced to the impossibility (if a new work be in question, and they are hearing it for the first time) of recognizing the ravages perpetrated by the orchestral conductor—of discovering the follies, faults, and crimes he commits. If they clearly perceive certain defects of execution, not he but his victims are in such cases made responsible. If he have caused the chorus-singers to fail in taking up a point in a finale, if he have allowed a discordant wavering to take place between the choir and the orchestra, or between the extreme sides of the instrumental body, if he have absurdly hurried a movement, if he have allowed it to linger unduly, if he have interrupted a singer before the end of a phrase they exclaim: "The singers are detestable! The orchestra has no firmness; the violins have disfigured the principal design; everybody has been wanting in vigor and animation; the tenor was quite out, he did not know his part; the harmony is confused; the author is no accompanist; the voices are—" etc.

Except in listening to great works already known and esteemed, intelligent hearers can hardly distinguish the true culprit, and allot to him his due share of blame; but the number of these is still so limited that their judgment has little weight; and the bad conductor—in presence of the public who would pitilessly hiss a *vocal accident* of a good singer—reigns, with all the calm of a bad conscience, in his baseness and inefficiency. Fortunately, I here attack an exception; for the malevolent orchestral conductor—whether capable or not—is very rare.

The orchestral conductor full of goodwill, but incapable, is, on the contrary, very common. Without speaking of innumerable mediocrities directing artists who, frequently, are much their superiors, an author, for example, can scarcely be accused of conspiring against his own works. Yet how many are there who, fancying they are able to conduct, innocently injure their best scores!

Beethoven, it is said, more than once ruined the performance of his symphonies; which he would conduct, even at the time when his deafness had become almost complete. The musicians, in order to keep together, agreed at length to follow the slight indications of time which the concertmeister (first violin-player) gave them; and not to attend to Beethoven's conducting-stick. Moreover, it should be observed, conducting a symphony, an overture or any other composition whose movements remain continuous, vary little, and contain few nice gradations, is child's play in comparison with conducting an opera, or like work, where there are recitatives, airs,

and numerous orchestral designs preceded by pauses of irregular length.

The example of Beethoven, which I have just cited, leads me at once to say that if the direction of an orchestra appears to me very difficult for a blind man, it is indisputably impossible for a deaf one, whatever may have been his technical talent before losing his sense of hearing.

The orchestral conductor should *see* and *hear*; he should be *active* and *vigorous*, should know the *composition* and the *nature* and *compass* of the instruments, should be able to *read* the score, and possess—besides the special talent of which we shall presently endeavor to explain the constituent qualities—other almost indefinable gifts, without which an invisible link cannot establish itself between him and those he directs; the faculty of transmitting to them his feeling is denied him, and thence power, empire, and guiding influence completely fail him. He is then no longer a conductor, a director, but a simple beater of the time—supposing he knows how to beat it, and divide it, regularly.

The performers should feel that he feels, comprehends, and is moved: then his emotion communicates itself to those whom he directs, his inward fire warms them, his electric glow animates them, his form of impulse excites them; he throws around him the vital irradiations of musical art. If he be inert and frozen on the contrary, he paralyzes all about him, like those floating masses of the polar seas the approach of which is perceived through the sudden cooling of the atmosphere.

His task is a complicated one. He has not only to conduct, in the spirit of the author's intentions, a work with which the performers have already become acquainted, but he has also to give them this acquaintance when the work in question is new to them. He has to criticize the errors and defects of each during the rehearsals, and to organize the resources at his disposal in such a way as to make the best use he can of them with the utmost promptitude. For, in the majority of European cities nowadays, musical artisanship is so ill distributed, performers so ill paid, and the necessity of study so little understood, that *economy of time* should be reckoned among the most imperative requisites of the orchestral conductor's art.

Let us now see what constitutes the mechanical part of this art.

The power of *beating the time*, without demanding very high musical attainments, is nevertheless sufficiently difficult to secure, and very few persons really possess it. The signs that the conductor should make—although generally very simple—nevertheless become

complicated, under certain circumstances, by the division and even the subdivision of the time of the bar.

The conductor is, above all, bound to possess a clear idea of the principal points and character of the work of which he is about to superintend the performance or study; in order that he may, without hesitation or mistake, at once determine the time of each movement desired by the composer. If he have not had the opportunity of receiving his instructions directly from the composer or if the *times* have not been transmitted to him by tradition, he must have recourse to the indications of the metronome, and study them well; the majority of composers, nowadays, taking the precaution to write them at the head, and in the course of, their pieces. I do not mean to say by this that it is necessary to imitate the mathematical regularity of the metronome; all music so performed would become of freezing stiffness, and I even doubt whether it would be possible to observe so flat a uniformity during a certain number of bars. But the metronome is none the less excellent to consult in order to know the original time, and its chief alterations.*

If the conductor possess neither the author's instructions, tradition, nor metronome indications,—which frequently happens in the ancient master-pieces, written at a period when the metronome was not invented,—he has no other guide than the vague terms employed to designate the time to be taken, and his own instinct, his feeling—more or less distinguishing, more or less just—of the author's style. We are compelled to admit that these guides are too often insufficient and delusive. Of this we have proof in seeing how old operas are given in towns where the traditional mode of performance no longer exists. In ten different kinds of time, there will always be at least four taken wrongly. I once heard a chorus of *Iphigenia in Tauride* performed in a German theatre *allegro assai*, two in the bar, instead of *allegro non troppo*, four in the bar; that is to say, exactly twice too fast. Examples might be multiplied of such disasters, occasioned either by the ignorance or the carelessness of conductors of orchestras; or else by the real difficulty which exists for even the best-gifted and most careful men to discover the precise meaning of the Italian terms used as indications of the time to be taken. Of course no one can be at a loss to distinguish a largo from a presto. If the presto be two in a bar, a tolerably sagacious conductor, from inspection of the passages and melodic designs contained in the piece, will be able to discern the degree of quickness intended by the author. But if the largo be four in a bar,

* Wagner's opinion on this point provides an interesting contrast. See page 205.—Ed.

of simple melodic structure and containing but few notes in each bar, what means has the hapless conductor of discovering the true time? And in how many ways might he not be deceived? The different degrees of slowness that might be assigned to the performance of such a largo are very numerous; the individual feeling of the orchestral conductor must then become the sole authority; and, after all, it is the author's feeling, not his, which is in question. Composers therefore ought not to neglect placing metronome indications in their works; then orchestral conductors will be bound to study them closely. The neglect of this study on the part of the latter is an act of dishonesty.

CONDUCTING

by Wagner

LOOKING BACK UPON my earliest youth I remember to have had unpleasant impressions from performances of classical orchestral music.* At the piano or whilst reading a score, certain things appeared animated and expressive, whereas, at a performance, they could hardly be recognised, and failed to attract attention. I was puzzled by the apparent flabbiness of Mozartian melody (*cantilena*) which I had been taught to regard as so delicately expressive. Later in life I discovered the reasons for this, and I have discussed them in my report on a "German music school to be established at Munich," to which I beg to refer readers who may be interested in the subject. Assuredly, the reasons lie in the want of a proper conservatorium of German music—a *conservatory*, in the strictest sense of the word, in which the traditions of the *classical masters' own* style of execution are preserved in practice—which, of course, would imply that the masters should once, at least, have had a chance personally to supervise performances of their works in such a place. Unfortunately German culture has missed all such opportunities; and if we now wish to become acquainted with the spirit of a classical composer's music, we must rely on this or that conductor, and upon his notion of what may, or may not, be the proper *tempo* and style of execution.

In the days of my youth, orchestral pieces at the celebrated Leipzig Gewandhaus Concerts were not conducted at all; they

* Originally published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and the *New-Yorker Musik-zeitung* in 1869.

were simply played through under the leadership of Concertmeister Mathai, like overtures and *entr'actes* at a theatre. At least there was no "disturbing individuality," in the shape of a conductor! The principal classical pieces which presented no particular technical difficulties were regularly given every winter; the execution was smooth and precise; and the members of the orchestra evidently enjoyed the annual recurrence of their familiar favorites.

With Beethoven's Ninth Symphony alone they could not get on, though it was considered a point of honor to give that work every year. I had copied the score for myself, and made a pianoforte arrangement for two hands; but I was so much astonished at the utterly confused and bewildering effect of the Gewandhaus performance that I had lost courage, and gave up the study of Beethoven for some time. Later I found it instructive to note how I came to take true delight in performances of Mozart's instrumental works: it was when I had a chance to conduct them myself, and when I could indulge my feelings as to the expressive rendering of Mozart's *cantilena*.

I received a good lesson at Paris in 1839, when I heard the orchestra of the Conservatoire rehearse the enigmatical Ninth Symphony. The scales fell from my eyes: I came to understand the value of *correct* execution and the secret of a good performance. The orchestra had learned to look for Beethoven's *melody* in every bar—that melody which the worthy Leipzig musicians had failed to discover; and the orchestra *sang* that melody. *This was the secret.*

Habeneck, who solved the difficulty, and to whom the great credit for this performance is due, was not a conductor of special genius. Whilst rehearsing the symphony, during an entire winter season, he had felt it to be incomprehensible and ineffective (would German conductors have confessed as much?) but he persisted throughout a second and a third season, until Beethoven's new *melos** was understood, and correctly rendered by each member of the orchestra. Habeneck was a conductor of the old stamp; *he* was the master—and everyone obeyed him. I cannot attempt to describe the beauty of this performance. However, to give an idea of it, I will select a passage by the aid of which I shall endeavor to show the reason why Beethoven is so difficult to render as well as the reason for the indifferent success of German orchestras when confronted by such difficulties. Even with first-class orchestras I have never been able to get the passage in the first movement:

* Wagner's inclusive term for the continuous, pervasive melodic line of a work.—Ed.



performed with such equable perfection as I then (thirty years ago) heard it played by the musicians of the Paris Orchestre du Conservatoire. Often in later life have I recalled this passage, and tried by its aid to enumerate the desiderata in the execution of orchestral music; it comprises *movement* and *sustained* tone, with a *definite degree of power*. The masterly execution of this passage by the Paris orchestra consisted in the fact that they played it *exactly* as it is written. Neither at Dresden, nor in London when in after years I had occasion to prepare a performance of the symphony, did I succeed in getting rid of the annoying irregularity which arises from the change of bow and change of strings. Still less could I suppress an involuntary accentuation as the passage ascends; musicians, as a rule, are tempted to play an ascending passage with an increase of tone, and a descending one with a decrease. With the fourth bar of the above passage we invariably got into a crescendo so that the sustained G flat of the fifth bar was given with an involuntary yet vehement accent, enough to spoil the peculiar tonal significance of that note.

The composer's intention is clearly indicated; but it remains difficult to prove to a person whose musical feelings are not of a refined sort, that there is a great gap between a commonplace reading, and the reading meant by the composer; no doubt both readings convey a sense of dissatisfaction, unrest, longing—but the *quality* of these, the true sense of the passage, cannot be conveyed unless it is played as the master imagined it, and as I have not hitherto heard it given except by the Parisian musicians in 1839.

In connection with this I am conscious that the impression of dynamical monotony (if I may risk such an apparently senseless expression for a difficult phenomenon) together with the unusually varied and ever irregular movement of intervals in the ascending figure entering on the prolonged G flat to be sung with such in-

finite delicacy, to which the G natural answers with equal delicacy, initiated me as by magic to the incomparable mystery of the spirit. Keeping my further practical experience in view, I would ask how did the musicians of Paris arrive at so perfect a solution of the difficult problem? By the most conscientious diligence. They were not content with mutual admiration and congratulation nor did they assume that difficulties must disappear before them as a matter of course. French musicians in the main belong to the Italian school; its influence upon them has been beneficial inasmuch as they have thus been taught to approach music mainly through the medium of the human voice. The French idea of playing an instrument well is to be able to *sing* well upon it. And (as already said) that superb orchestra *sang* the symphony.

The possibility of its being well sung implies that the *true tempo* had been found: and this is the second point which impressed me at the time. Old Habeneck was not the medium of any abstract aesthetical inspiration—he was devoid of “genius”: *but he found the right tempo whilst persistently fixing the attention of his orchestra upon the melos of the symphony.*

The right comprehension of the melos is the sole guide to the right tempo; these two things are inseparable: the one implies and qualifies the other.

As a proof of my assertion that the majority of performances of instrumental music with us are faulty it is sufficient to point out that *our conductors so frequently fail to find the true tempo because they are ignorant of singing.* I have not yet met with a German capellmeister or musik-director, who, be it with good or bad voice, can really sing a melody. These people look upon music as a singularly abstract sort of thing, an amalgam of grammar, arithmetic and digital gymnastics; to be an adept in which may fit a man for a mastership at a conservatory or musical gymnasium; but it does not follow from this that he will be able to put life and soul into a musical performance.

The whole duty of a conductor is comprised in his ability always to indicate the *right tempo*. His choice of *tempi* will show whether he understands the piece or not. With good players, again, the *true tempo* induces correct phrasing, and expression will induce the conception of the *true tempo*.

This, however, is by no means so simple a matter as it appears. Older composers probably felt so, for they are content with the simplest general indications. Haydn and Mozart made use of the term “andante” as the mean between allegro and adagio, and

thought it sufficient to indicate a few gradations and modifications of these terms.

Sebastian Bach, as a rule, does not indicate *tempo* at all, which in a truly musical sense is perhaps best. He may have said to himself: whoever does not understand my themes and figures, and does not feel their character and expression, will not be much the wiser for an Italian indication of *tempo*.

Let me be permitted to mention a few facts which concern me personally. In my earlier operas I gave detailed directions as to the *tempi*, and indicated them (as I thought) accurately, by means of the metronome. Subsequently, whenever I had occasion to protest against a particularly absurd *tempo*, in *Tannhäuser* for instance, I was assured that the metronome had been consulted and carefully followed. In my later works I omitted the metronome and merely described the main *tempi* in general terms, paying, however, particular attention to the various modifications of *tempo*. It would appear that general directions also tend to vex and confuse capellmeisters, especially when they are expressed in plain German words. Accustomed to the conventional Italian terms these gentlemen are apt to lose their wits when, for instance, I write *mässig* (moderate).

Not long ago a capellmeister complained of that term which I employed in the score of *Das Rheingold*; the music (it was reported) lasted exactly two hours and a half at rehearsals under a conductor whom I had personally instructed: whereas at the performances and under the beat of the official capellmeister, it lasted fully three hours! (according to the report of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*). Wherefore, indeed, did I write *mässig*?

To match this I have been informed that the overture to *Tannhäuser*, which, when I conducted it at Dresden, used to last twelve minutes, now lasts twenty. No doubt I am here alluding to thoroughly incompetent persons who are particularly shy of *alla breve* time, and who stick to their correct and normal crotchet beats, four in a bar, merely to show they are present and conscious of doing something. Heaven knows how such "quadrupeds" find their way from the village church to our opera theatres. But "dragging" is not a characteristic of the elegant conductors of these latter days; on the contrary they have a fatal tendency to hurry and to run away with the *tempi*. *This tendency to hurry* is so characteristic a mark of our entire musical life latterly, that I propose to enter into some details with regard to it.

Robert Schumann once complained to me at Dresden that he

could not enjoy the Ninth Symphony at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Concerts because of the quick *tempi* Mendelssohn chose to take, particularly in the first movement. I have, myself, only once been present at a rehearsal of one of Beethoven's symphonies when Mendelssohn conducted: the rehearsal took place at Berlin, and the symphony was No. 8 (in F major). I noticed that he chose a detail here and there—almost at random—and worked at it with a certain obstinacy, until it stood forth clearly. This was so manifestly to the advantage of the detail that I could not but wonder why he did not take similar pains with other nuances. For the rest, this incomparably bright symphony was rendered in a remarkably smooth and genial manner. Mendelssohn himself once remarked to me, with regard to conducting, that he thought most harm was done by taking a *tempo* too slow; and that, on the contrary, he always recommended quick *tempi* as being less detrimental. Really good execution, he thought, was at all times a rare thing, but shortcomings might be disguised if care was taken that they should not appear very prominent; and the best way to do this was "to get over the ground quickly." This can hardly have been a casual view, accidentally mentioned in conversation. The master's pupils must have received further and more detailed instruction; for subsequently I have, on various occasions, noticed the consequences of that maxim, "take quick *tempi*," and have, I think, discovered the reasons which may have led to its adoption.

I remembered it well, when I came to lead the orchestra of the Philharmonic Society in London, 1855. Mendelssohn had conducted the concerts during several seasons, and the tradition of his readings was carefully preserved. It appears likely that the habits and peculiarities of the Philharmonic Society suggested to Mendelssohn his favorite style of performance—certainly it was admirably adapted to meet their wants. An unusual amount of instrumental music is consumed at these concerts; but as a rule, each piece is rehearsed only once. Thus in many instances I could not avoid letting the orchestra follow its traditions, and so I became acquainted with a style of performance which called up a lively recollection of Mendelssohn's remarks.

The music gushed forth like water from a fountain, there was no arresting it, and every allegro ended as an undeniable presto. It was troublesome and difficult to interfere; for when correct *tempo* and proper modifications of these were taken, the defects of style which the flood had carried along or concealed became painfully apparent. The orchestra generally played *mezzo forte*; no real *forte*, no real *piano* was attained. Of course in important cases I took care

to enforce the reading I thought the true one, and to insist upon the right *tempo*. The excellent musicians did not object to this, on the contrary they showed themselves sincerely glad of it; the public also approved, but the critics were annoyed, and continued so to brow-beat the directors of the society that the latter actually requested me to permit the second movement of Mozart's Symphony in E flat to be played in the flabby and colorless way they had been accustomed to—and which, they said, even Mendelssohn himself had sanctioned.

The fatal maxims came to the front quite clearly when I was about to rehearse a symphony by a very amiable elderly contrapuntist, Mr. Potter, if I mistake not. The composer approached me in a pleasant way, and asked me to take the andante rather quickly as he feared it might prove tedious. I assured him that his andante, no matter how short its duration might be, would inevitably prove tedious if it was played in a vapid and inexpressive manner; whereas if the orchestra could be got to play the very pretty and ingenious theme, as I felt confident he meant it and as I now sang it to him, it would certainly please. Mr. Potter was touched; he agreed, and excused himself, saying that latterly he had not been in the habit of reckoning upon this sort of orchestral playing. In the evening, after the andante, he joyfully pressed my hand.

I have often been astonished at the singularly slight sense for *tempo* and execution evinced by leading musicians. I found it impossible, for instance, to communicate to Mendelssohn what I felt to be a perverse piece of negligence with regard to the *tempo* of the third movement in Beethoven's Symphony in F major, No. 8. This is one of the instances I have chosen out of many to throw light upon certain dubious aspects of music amongst us.

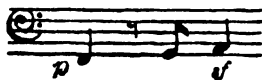
We know that Haydn in his principal later symphonies used the form of the minuet as a pleasant link between the adagio and the final allegro, and that he thus was induced to increase the speed of the movement considerably, contrary to the character of the true minuet. It is clear that he incorporated the *Ländler*, particularly in the trio—so that with regard to the *tempo*, the designation menuetto is hardly appropriate, and was retained for conventional reasons only. Nevertheless, I believe Haydn's minuets are generally taken too quickly: undoubtedly the minuets of Mozart's symphonies are. This will be felt very distinctly if, for instance, the menuetto in Mozart's Symphony in G minor, and still more that of his Symphony in C major be played a little slower than at the customary pace. It will be found that the latter minuet, which is usually

hurried, and treated almost as a presto will now show an amiable, firm and festive character, in contrast with which, the trio, with its delicately sustained



is reduced, as usually given, to an empty hurry-scurry. Now Beethoven, as is not uncommon with him, meant to write a true minuet in his F major Symphony; he places it between the two main allegro movements as a sort of complementary antithesis to an *allegretto scherzando* which precedes it, and to remove any doubt as to his intentions regarding the *tempo*, he designates it *not* as a menuetto but as a *tempo di menuetto*. This novel and unconventional characterization of the two middle movements of a symphony was almost entirely overlooked: the *allegretto scherzando* was taken to represent the usual andante, the *tempo di menuetto*, the familiar scherzo, and, as the two movements thus interpreted seemed rather paltry, and none of the usual effects could be got with them, our musicians came to regard the entire symphony as a sort of accidental *hors d'oeuvre* of Beethoven's muse—who after the exertions with the A major Symphony had chosen "To take things rather easily."

Accordingly after the *allegretto scherzando*, the time of which is invariably "dragged" somewhat, the *tempo di menuetto* is universally served up as a refreshing *Ländler*, which passes the ear without leaving any distinct impression. Generally, however, one is glad when the tortures of the trio are over. This loveliest of idylls is turned into a veritable monstrosity by the passage in triplets for the violoncello; which if taken at the usual quick pace, is the despair of violoncellists, who are worried with the hasty staccato across the strings and back again, and find it impossible to produce anything but a painful series of scratches. Naturally, this difficulty disappears as soon as the delicate melody of the horns and clarinets is taken at the proper *tempo*; these instruments are thus relieved from the special difficulties pertaining to them, and which, particularly with the clarinet, at times render it likely to produce a "quack" even in the hands of skilful players. I remember an occasion when all the musicians began to breathe at ease on my taking this piece at the true moderate pace: then the humorous *sforzato* of the basses and bassoons



at once produced an intelligible effect; the short *crescendi* became clear, the delicate *pianissimo* close was effective, and the gentle gravity of the returning principal movement was properly felt. Now, the late Capellmeister Reissiger, of Dresden, once conducted this symphony there, and I happened to be present at the performance together with Mendelssohn; we talked about the dilemma just described, and its proper solution, concerning which I told Mendelssohn that I believed I had convinced Reissiger who had promised that he would take the *tempo* slower than usual. We listened. The third movement began and I was terrified on hearing precisely the old *Ländler tempo*; but before I could give vent to my annoyance Mendelssohn smiled, and pleasantly nodded his head, as if to say "Now it's all right! Bravo!" So my terror changed to astonishment. Reissiger, for reasons which I shall discuss presently, may not have been so very much to blame for persisting in the old *tempo*; but Mendelssohn's indifference, with regard to this queer artistic contretemps, raised doubts in my mind whether he saw any distinction and difference in the case at all. I fancied myself standing before an abyss of superficiality, a veritable void.

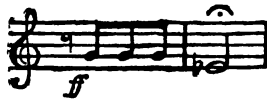
Soon after this had happened with Reissiger, the very same things took place with the same movement of the Eighth Symphony at Leipzig. The conductor, in the latter case, was a well-known successor of Mendelssohn at the Gewandhaus Concerts.* He also had agreed with my views as to the *tempo di menuetto*, and had invited me to attend a concert at which he promised to take it at the proper *moderato* pace. He did not keep his word and offered a queer excuse: he laughed, and confessed that he had been disturbed with all manner of administrative business, and had only remembered his promise after the piece had begun; naturally he could not then alter the *tempo*, etc. The explanation was sufficiently annoying. Still I could, at least, flatter myself that I had found somebody to share my views as to the difference between one *tempo* and another. I doubt, however, whether the conductor could be fairly reproached with a want of forethought and consideration; unconsciously, perhaps, he may have had a very good reason for his "forgetfulness." It would have been very indiscreet to risk a change of *tempo* which had not been rehearsed. For the orchestra, accustomed to play the piece in a quick *tempo*, would have been disturbed by the sudden imposition of a more moderate pace; which, as a matter of course, demands a totally different style of playing.

We have now reached an important and decisive point, an ap-

* Ferdinand Hiller.

preciation of which is indispensable if we care to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion regarding the execution of classical music. Injudicious *tempi* might be defended with some show of reason inasmuch as a factitious style of delivery has arisen in conformity with them, and to the uninitiated such conformity of style and *tempo* might appear as a proof that all was right. The evil, however, is apparent enough, if only the right *tempo* is taken, in which case the false style becomes quite unbearable.

To illustrate this, in the simplest possible way, let us take the opening of the C minor Symphony.



Usually the fermata of the second bar is left after a slight rest; our conductors hardly make use of this fermata for anything else than to fix the attention of their men upon the attack of the figure in the third bar. In most cases the note E flat is not held any longer than a *forte* produced with a careless stroke of the bow will last upon the stringed instruments. Now, suppose the voice of Beethoven was heard from the grave admonishing a conductor: "Hold my fermata firmly, terribly! I did not write fermatas in jest, or because I was at a loss how to proceed; I indulge in the fullest, the most sustained tone to express emotions in my adagio; and I use this full and firm tone when I want it in a passionate allegro as a rapturous or terrible spasm. Then the very life blood of the tone shall be extracted to the last drop. I arrest the waves of the sea, and the depths shall be visible; or, I stem the clouds, disperse the mist, and show the pure blue ether and the glorious eye of the sun. For this I put fermatas, sudden long sustained notes in my allegro. And now look at my clear thematic intention with the sustained E flat after the three stormy notes, and understand what I meant to say with other such sustained notes in the sequel."

Suppose a conductor was to attempt to hold the fermata as here directed, what would be the result? A miserable failure. After the initial power of the bow of the stringed instruments had been wasted, their tone would become thin and thinner, ending in a weak and timid *piano*: for (and here is one of the results of indifferent conducting) our orchestras nowadays hardly know what is meant by *equally sustained tone*. Let any conductor ask any orchestral instrument, no matter which, for a full and prolonged *forte*, and he will find the player puzzled, and will be astonished at the trouble it takes to get what he asks for.

Yet *tone sustained with equal power* is the basis of all expression, with the voice as with the orchestra: the manifold modifications of the power of tone, which constitute one of the principal elements of musical expression, rest upon it. Without such basis an orchestra will produce much noise but no power. And this is one of the first symptoms of the weakness of most of our orchestral performances. The conductors of the day care little about a sustained *forte*, but they are particularly fond of an *exaggerated piano*. Now the strings produce the latter with ease, but the wind instruments, particularly the wood winds, do not. It is almost impossible to get a delicately sustained *piano* from wind instruments.

The players, flutists particularly, have transformed their formerly delicate instruments into formidable tubes. French oboists, who have preserved the pastoral character of their instrument, and our clarinetists, when they make use of the "Echo effect," are the exceptions.

This drawback, which exists in our best orchestras, suggests the question: why, at least, do not conductors try to equalize matters by demanding a somewhat fuller *piano* from the strings? But the conductors do not seem to notice any discrepancy.

To a considerable extent the fault lies not so much with the wind instruments, as in the character of the *piano* of the strings; for we do not possess a *true piano*, just as we do not possess a *true forte*; both are wanting in fullness of tone—to attain which our stringed instruments should watch the tone of the winds. Of course it is easy enough to produce a buzzing vibration by gently passing the bow over the strings; but it requires great artistic command of the breath to produce a delicate and pure tone upon a wind instrument. Players of stringed instruments should copy the full-toned *piano* of the best winds, and the latter, again, should endeavor to imitate the best vocalists.

The sustained soft tone here spoken of, and the sustained powerful tone mentioned above, are the two poles of orchestral expression.

But what about orchestral execution if neither the one nor the other is properly forthcoming? Where are the modifications of expression to come from if the very means of expression are defective? Thus the Mendelssohnian rule of "getting over the ground" suggested a happy expedient; conductors gladly adopted the maxim, and turned it into a veritable dogma; so that, nowadays, attempts to perform classical music correctly are openly denounced as heretical!

I am persistently returning to the question of *tempo* because,

as I said above, this is the point at which it becomes evident whether a conductor understands his business or not.

Obviously the proper pace of a piece of music is determined by the particular character of the rendering it requires; the question, therefore, comes to this: does the sustained tone, the vocal element, the *cantilena* predominate, or the rhythmical movement (figuration)? The conductor should lead accordingly.

The adagio stands to the allegro as the sustained tone stands to the *rhythmical movement*. The sustained tone regulates the tempo adagio; here the rhythm is, as it were, dissolved in pure tone, the tone *per se* suffices for the musical expression. In a certain delicate sense it may be said of the pure adagio that it cannot be taken too slow. A rapt confidence in the sufficiency of pure musical speech should reign here; the *languor* of feeling grows to ecstasy; that which in the allegro was expressed by changes of figuration, is now conveyed by means of variously inflected tone. Thus the least change of harmony may call forth a sense of surprise; and again, the most remote harmonic progressions prove acceptable to our expectant feelings.

None of our conductors are courageous enough to take an adagio in this manner; they always begin by looking for some bit of figuration, and arrange their *tempo* to match. I am, perhaps, the only conductor who has ventured to take the adagio section of the third movement of the Ninth Symphony at the pace proper to its peculiar character. This character is distinctly contrasted with that of the alternating andante in triple time; but our conductors invariably contrive to obliterate the difference, leaving only the rhythmical change between square and triple time. This movement (assuredly one of the most instructive in the present respect), finally (in the section in twelve-eight time), offers a conspicuous example of the breaking up of the pure adagio by the more marked rhythms of an independent accompaniment, during which the *cantilena* is steadily and broadly continued. In this section we may recognize, as it were, a fixed and consolidated reflex of the adagio's tendency towards infinite expansion; there, limitless freedom in the expression of sound, with fluctuating, yet delicately regulated movement; here, the firm rhythm of the figured accompaniments, imposing the new regulation of a steady and distinct pace—in the consequences of which, when fully developed, we have got the law that regulates the movement of the allegro in general.

We have seen that sustained tone with its modification is the basis of all musical execution. Similarly the adagio developed, as Beethoven has developed it in the third movement of his Ninth

Symphony, may be taken as the basis of all regulations as to musical time. In a certain delicate sense, the allegro may be regarded as the final result of a refraction of the pure adagio character by the more restless moving figuration. On careful examination of the principal motives of the allegro it will be found that the melody derived from the adagio predominates. The most important allegro movements of Beethoven are ruled by a predominant melody which exhibits some of the characteristics of the adagio; and in this wise Beethoven's allegros receive the *emotional sentimental* significance which distinguishes them from the earlier naïve species of allegro. However, Beethoven's



and Mozart's



or:



are not far asunder. And with Mozart, as with Beethoven, the exclusive character of the allegro is only felt when the figuration gets the upper hand of the melody; that is, when the reaction of the rhythmical movement against the sustained tone is entirely carried out. This is particularly the case of those final movements which have grown out of the rondo, and of which the finales to Mozart's Symphony in E flat, and to Beethoven's in A, are excellent examples. Here the purely rhythmical movement, so to speak, celebrates its orgies; and it is consequently impossible to take these movements too quickly. But whatever lies between these two extremes is *subject to the laws of mutual relationship and interdependence; and such laws cannot be too delicately and variously applied*, for they are fundamentally identical with the laws which modify all conceivable nuances of the sustained tone . . . execution are more carefully

attended to, etc. But it is a very different thing to allow the necessity for reticence, and for the suppression of certain personal characteristics, to be converted into a principle for the treatment of our art! Germans are stiff and awkward when they want to appear mannerly: *but they are noble and superior when they grow warm*. And are we to suppress our fire to please those reticent persons? In truth, it looks as though they expected us to do so.

In former days, whenever I met a young musician who had come in contact with Mendelssohn, I learnt that the master had admonished him not to think of effect when composing, and to avoid everything that might prove meretriciously impressive. Now, this was very pleasant and soothing advice: and those pupils who adopted it and remained true to the master, have indeed produced neither "impression nor meretricious effect"; only, the advice seemed to me rather too negative, and I failed to see the value of that which was positively acquired under it. I believe the entire teaching of the Leipzig Conservatorium was based upon some such negative advice, and I understand that young people there have been positively pestered with warnings of a like kind; whilst their best endeavors met with no encouragement from the masters unless their taste in music fully coincided with the tone of the orthodox psalms. The first result of the new doctrine, and the most important for our investigations, came to light in the execution of classical music. Everything here was governed by the fear of exaggeration (*etwa in das Drastische zu fallen*). I have, for instance, hitherto not found any traces that those later pianoforte works of Beethoven in which the master's peculiar style is best developed, have actually been studied and played by the converts to that doctrine.

For a long time I earnestly wished to meet with someone who could play the great sonata in B flat (Op. 106) as it should be played. At length my wish was gratified—but by a person who came from a camp wherein those doctrines do *not* prevail. Franz Liszt, also, gratified my longing to hear Bach. No doubt Bach has been assiduously cultivated by Liszt's opponents, they esteem Bach for teaching purposes, since a smooth and mild manner of execution apparently accords better with his music than "modern effect" or Beethovenian strenuousness (*Drastik*).

I once asked one of the best-reputed older musicians, a friend and companion of Mendelssohn (whom I have already mentioned *à propos* of the *tempo di menuetto* of the Eighth Symphony*), to play the eighth prelude and fugue from the first part of *Das Wohl-*

* Ferdinand Hiller.

temperirte Klavier (E flat minor), a piece which has always had a magical attraction for me. He very kindly complied, and I must confess that I have rarely been so much taken by surprise. Certainly, there was no trace here of sombre German gothicism and all that old-fashioned stuff: under the hands of my friend, the piece ran along the keyboard with a degree of "Greek serenity" that left me at a loss whither to turn; in my innocence I deemed myself transported to a *neo-hellenic* synagogue, from the musical *cultus* of which all old testamentary accentuations had been most elegantly eliminated. This singular performance still tingled in my ears, when at length I begged Liszt for once to cleanse my musical soul of the painful impression; he played the fourth Prelude and Fugue (C sharp minor). Now, I knew what to expect from Liszt at the piano; but I had not expected anything like what I came to hear from Bach, though I had studied him well; I saw how study is eclipsed by genius. By his rendering of this single fugue of Bach's, Liszt revealed Bach to me; so that I henceforth knew for certain what to make of Bach, and how to solve all doubts concerning him. I was convinced, also, that *those* people know *nothing* of Bach; and if anyone chooses to doubt my assertion, I answer: "request him to play a piece of Bach's."

I would like further to question any member of that musical temperance society, and, if it has ever been his lot to hear Liszt play Beethoven's great B flat Sonata, I would ask him to testify honestly whether he had before really known and understood that sonata. I, at least, am acquainted with a person who was so fortunate; and who was constrained to confess that he had not before understood it. And to this day, who plays Bach, and the great works of Beethoven, in public, and compels every audience to confess as much? a member of that "school for temperance?" No! it is Liszt's chosen successor, Hans von Bülow.

So much for the present on this subject. It might prove interesting to observe the attitude these reticent gentlemen take up with regard to performances such as Liszt's and Bülow's.

The successes of their policy, to which they are indebted for the control of public music in Germany, need not detain us; but we are concerned in an examination of the curious religious development within their congregation. In this respect the earlier maxim, "beware of effect"—the result of embarrassment and cautious timidity—has now been changed from a delicate rule of prudence and security to a positively aggressive dogma. The adherents of this dogma hypocritically look askance if they happen to meet with a true man in music. They pretend to be shocked, as though they had

come across something improper. The spirit of their shyness, which originally served to conceal their own impotence, now attempts the defamation of other people's potency. Defamatory insinuations and calumny find ready acceptance with the representatives of German Philistinism, and appear to be at home in that mean and paltry state of things which, as we have seen, environs our musical affairs.

The principal ingredient, however, is an apparently judicious caution in presence of that which one happens to be incapable of, together with detraction of that which one would like to accomplish one's self. It is sad, above all things, to find a man so powerful and capable as Robert Schumann concerned in this confusion, and in the end to see his name inscribed on the banner of the new fraternity. The misfortune was that Schumann in his later days attempted certain tasks for which he was not qualified. And it is a pity to see that portion of his work, in which he failed to reach the mark he had set himself, raised as the insignia of the latest guild of musicians. A good deal of Schumann's early endeavor was most worthy of admiration and sympathy, and it has been cherished and nurtured by us (I am proud here to rank myself with Liszt's friends) in a more commendable and commending way than by his immediate adherents. The latter, well aware that Schumann had herein evinced true productivity, knowingly kept these things in the background, perhaps because they could not play them in an effective way. On the other hand, certain works of Schumann conceived on a larger and bolder scale, and in which the limits of his gifts become apparent are now carefully brought forward.* The public does not exactly like these works, but their performance offers an opportunity to point out how commendable a thing it is to "make no effect." Finally, a comparison with the works of Beethoven in his third period (played as they play them) comes in opportunely.

Certain later, inflated (*schwülstig*) and dull productions of R. Schumann, which simply require to be played smoothly (*glatt herunter gespielt*) are confounded with Beethoven; and an attempt is made to show that they agree in spirit with the rarest, boldest and most profound achievements of German music! Thus Schumann's shallow bombast is made to pass for the equivalent of the inexpressible purport of Beethoven—but always with the reservation that strenuous eccentricity such as Beethoven's is

* Such as the overtures to *Faust*, *Die Braut von Messina*, *Julius Caesar*; the *Balladen*, *Das Glück von Edenhall*, *Des Sängers Fluch*, *Vom Pagen und der Königstochter*, etc.

hardly admissible; whereas, vapid emptiness (*das gleichgiltig nichtssagende*) is right and proper: a point at which Schumann properly played, and Beethoven improperly rendered, are perhaps comparable without much fear of misunderstanding! Thus these singular defenders of musical chastity stand towards our great classical music in the position of eunuchs in the Grand-Turk's Harem; and by the same token German Philistinism is ready to entrust them with the care of music in the family—since it is plain that anything ambiguous is not likely to proceed from that quarter.

But now what becomes of our great and glorious German music? It is the fate of our music that really concerns us. We have little reason to grieve if, after a century of wondrous productivity, nothing particular happens to come to light for some little time. But there is every reason to beware of suspicious persons who set themselves up as the trustees and conservators of the "true German spirit" of our inheritance.

Regarded as individuals, there is not much to blame in these musicians; most of them compose very well. Herr Johannes Brahms once had the kindness to play a composition of his own to me—a piece with very serious variations—which I thought excellent, and from which I gathered that he was impervious to a joke. His performance of other pianoforte music at a concert gave me less pleasure. I even thought it impertinent that the friends of this gentleman professed themselves unable to attribute anything beyond "extraordinary technical power" to "Liszt and his school," whilst the execution of Herr Brahms appeared so painfully dry, inflexible and wooden. I should have liked to see Herr Brahms's technique anointed with a little of the oil of Liszt's school; an ointment which does not seem to issue spontaneously from the keyboard, but is evidently got from a more ethereal region than that of mere "technique." To all appearances, however, this was a very respectable phenomenon: only it remains doubtful how such a phenomenon could be set up in a natural way as the Messiah, or at least the Messiah's most beloved disciple; unless, indeed, an affected enthusiasm for mediaeval wood-carvings should have induced us to accept those stiff wooden figures for the ideals of ecclesiastical sanctity. In any case we must protest against any presentation of our great warm-hearted Beethoven in the guise of such sanctity. If *they* cannot bring out the difference between Beethoven whom they do not comprehend and therefore pervert, and Schumann, who, for very simple reasons, *is* incomprehensible, they shall, at least, not be permitted to assume that no difference exists.

I have already indicated sundry special aspects of this sancti-

moniousness. Following its aspirations a little further we shall come upon a new field, across which our investigation on and about conducting must now lead us.

CONDUCTING

by R. Strauss

TEN GOLDEN RULES FOR THE ALBUM OF A YOUNG CONDUCTOR*

1. Remember that you are making music not to amuse yourself but to delight your audience.
2. You should not perspire when conducting: only the audience should get warm.
3. Conduct *Salome*, and *Elektra* as if they were by Mendelssohn: Fairy Music.
4. Never look encouragingly at the brass, except with a short glance to give an important cue.
5. But never let the horns and woodwind out of your sight: if you can hear them at all they are still too strong.
6. If you think that the brass is not blowing hard enough, tone it down another shade or two.
7. It is not enough that you yourself should hear every word the soloist sings—you know it off by heart anyway: the audience must be able to follow without effort. If they do not understand the words they will go to sleep.
8. Always accompany a singer in such a way that he can sing without effort.
9. When you think you have reached the limits of *prestissimo*, double the pace.†
10. If you follow these rules carefully you will, with your fine gifts and your great accomplishments, always be the darling of your listeners.

DEAR HERR DIESTEL, ‡

When from 1886 to 1889 I first conducted operas as Royal Director of Music in the Court Theatre at Munich (such things still

* From *Recollections and Reflections* (ca. 1922).

† Today (1948) I should like to amend this as follows: Go twice as slowly (addressed to the conductors of Mozart!).

‡ This letter, contained in *Recollections and Reflections*, formed the Preface to *Ein Orchestermusiker Über Das Dirigieren* by Hans Diestel and was written by Strauss from Verenauf, Baden b. Zürich, July 15, 1931.

existed in those days with unlimited subsidies and singers without contractual holidays) my father, who was then 65, still occupied his seat as first hornplayer as he had done for 45 years, always arriving from a fabulous sense of duty one hour before the performance was due to begin, concerned not only lest he should bungle his own difficult solo passages in *Così fan Tutte*, but also worried lest his inexperienced son at the conductor's rostrum should make a blunder.

It was at this time that he, who had admired Lachner and opposed Bülow, remarked with some irony: "You conductors who are so proud of your power! When a new man faces the orchestra—from the way he walks up the steps to the rostrum and opens his score—before he even picks up the baton we know whether he is the master or we."

Using this remark as a motto, as it were, for your book, I would say to my esteemed colleagues: Don't be too proud of your three curtain calls after the third *Leonora* overture. Down there in the orchestra amongst the first violins, in the back amongst the horns or even at the other end of the timpani there are argus-eyed observers, who note each of your crotchets or quavers with critical regard, who groan if you wave your baton furiously in their faces conducting *Tristan* "alla breve" in four, or when you celebrate the movement *By the Brook* or the second variation in the adagio movement of the Ninth by beating twelve complete quavers. They even revolt if you constantly shout "ssh" and "piano, gentlemen" at them during the performance, whilst your right hand constantly conducts forte. They wink if you say at the beginning of a rehearsal "the woodwind is out of tune" but cannot indicate which instrument is playing too high or too low. The conductor up there may imagine that they follow reverently each movement of his baton, but in reality they go on playing without looking at him when he loses his beat and they blame his "individualist interpretation" for every false tempo when he is, let us say, conducting a symphony for the first time which they have played a hundred times before under better conductors.

During one rehearsal when my baton had been mislaid and I was just about to pick up another, the first solo viola player of the Vienna Philharmonic called out to me, "Not that one, Doctor,—it's got no rhythm."

CONDUCTORS

BERLIOZ

by Moscheles

BERLIOZ WAS VERY cordially received,* his desk was wreathed with laurels; my expectations were not at a high pitch but he certainly has surpassed them. A great deal is no doubt over-eccentric and disconnected, but there is much that is grandly conceived and carried out. In the *Faust*, his introduction of the *Rákoczy March* is electrifying; this was repeated, as well as the soldier's song, and the waltz. The music given to Queen Mab in *Romeo and Juliet*, is not only effective and charming, but worthy of being placed by the side of Mendelssohn's works of a similar kind. Berlioz's conducting inspired the orchestra with fire and enthusiasm, he carried everything as it were by storm; I am glad to have made acquaintance with him, both as a composer and conductor.

CONDUCTORS/BÜLOW

by Liszt

FOR THIRTY YEARS Hans von Bülow has been expressing and actively furthering everything that is noble, right, high-minded and free-minded in the regions of creative art.† As virtuoso, teacher, conductor, commentator, propagandist—indeed even sometimes as a humorous journalist—Bülow remains the *Chief* of musical progress, with the initiative born in and belonging to him by the grace of God, with an impassioned perseverance, incessantly striving heroically after the Ideal, and attaining the utmost possible.

His conducting of the Meiningen Court orchestra is a fresh proof of this. To that same orchestra this *Bülow March* is dedicated in high esteem for their model symphonic performances, by

F. Liszt

* Weimar, November 1852.

† Weimar, January 1884.

At seven o'clock people were at the rehearsal of the Beethoven concert.* Under Bülow's conducting the Meiningen orchestra accomplishes wonders. Nowhere is there to be found such intelligence in different works; precision in the performance with the most correct and subtle rhythmic and dynamic *nuances*. The fact of the opera having been abolished at Meiningen by the Duke some twenty years ago is most favourable to the concerts. In this way the orchestra has time to have a fair number of partial and full rehearsals without too much fatigue, as the opera work has been done away with. Bülow is almost as lavish of rehearsals as Berlioz would have been if he had had the means to be . . . The result is admirable and in certain respects matchless, not excepting the Paris *Conservatoire* and other celebrated concert-institutions. The little Meiningen phalanx, thanks to its present General, is in advance of the largest battalions. It is said that Rubinstein and some others have expressed themselves disapprovingly about some of the unusual *tempi* and *nuances* of Bülow, but to my thinking their criticism is devoid of foundation . . .

Besides the programme of the Beethoven concert, in the morning there was an *extra séance* of the orchestra for the performance of the overtures to *King Lear* (Berlioz) and to the *Meistersinger*, my march *Vom Fels zum Meer*, the *Ideales*, and Brahms' *Variations on a theme of Haydn*. Always the same and complete understanding in the *ensemble* and the details of the scores,—the same vigour, energy, refinement, accuracy, *relief*, vitality and superior *characteristics* in the interpretation.

An extraordinary thing! the most difficult Quartet of Beethoven, one which on account of its complications never figures on any programme, the grand fugue, Op. 133, is played by the Meiningen orchestra with a perfect *ensemble*. On a previous occasion I also heard at Meiningen Bach's celebrated *Chaconne* played *in unison* with a real virtuosity by some ten violins.

In case my *Faust Symphony* is given at the fifth concert (as your programme announces), † I beg you to ask Bülow to be conductor. This work has become his property since he conducted it so magnificently at the Weimar *Tonkünstler-Versammlung* ('61), when the whole orchestra was amazed and astounded at his fabulous memory. You will remember that not only did he not use a

* Meiningen, December 1883.

† To Professor Carl Riedel, apropos a festival in Halle, written from Pest, April 17, 1874.

score, but at the rehearsal referred to the numberless *letters* and *double letters* with unerring accuracy.

CONDUCTORS/MAHLER

by Schoenberg

IT SEEMS TO me almost petty that I should speak of the conductor Mahler in the same breath as the composer.* Not only was he always appreciated as a conductor even by the most stupid opponents, but one might also consider that the purely reproductive activity would be of merely secondary importance in comparison with the creative activity. But there are two reasons which induce me to take up this discussion. In the first place, nothing about a great man is secondary. Actually, every one of his acts is somehow productive. In this sense, I should even have liked to observe how Mahler knotted his tie, and should have found that more interesting and instructive than learning how one of our musical bigwigs composes on a "sacred subject." But, in the second place, it seems to me as if even this activity has not yet been completely comprehended in its most important aspect. Certainly, many have extolled his demonic personality, his unheard-of sense of style, the precision of his performances as well as their tonal beauty and clarity. But, for example, among other things, I heard one of his "colleagues" say that there is no special trick to bringing off good performances when one has so many rehearsals. Certainly there is no trick to it, for the oftener one plays a thing through, the better it goes, and even the poorest conductors profit from this. But there is a trick to feeling the need for a tenth rehearsal during the ninth rehearsal because one still hears many things that can become better, *because one still knows something to say in the tenth rehearsal*. This is exactly the difference: a poor conductor often does not know what to do after the third rehearsal, he has nothing more to say, he is more easily satisfied, because he does not have the capacity for further discrimination, and because nothing in him imposes higher requirements. And this is the cause: the productive man conceives within himself a complete image of what he wishes to reproduce; the performance, like everything else that he brings forth, must not be less perfect than the image. Such re-creation is only slightly different from creation; virtually, only the approach is different. Only when

* From *Style and Idea*.

one has clarified this point to oneself does one comprehend how much is meant by the modest words with which Mahler himself characterized his highest aim as a conductor: "I consider it my greatest service that I force musicians to play exactly what is in the notes." That sounds almost too simple, too slight, to us; and in fact it is so, for we might ascribe the effects which we knew to far more profound causes. But if one imagines how precise must be the image engendered by the notes in one who is creative, and what sensitivity is necessary in order to distinguish whether the reality and the image correspond to one another; if one thinks of what is necessary in order to express these fine distinctions so understandably that the performing musician, while merely playing the right notes, now suddenly participates in the spirit of the music as well—then one understands that with these modest words everything has been said.

This modesty was so characteristic of Mahler. Never a movement which was not exactly consistent with its cause! It was just as large as it had to be; it was executed with temperament, with life, energetically, powerfully, for temperament is the executive of conviction, and it will never be inactive. But there were no outbreaks without cause—none of that false temperament which today brings such great success to those who imitate Mahler's earlier manner of conducting. When he conducted thus, turning with violent movements to individual instrumental groups, really acting out for them the power and force which they were to express, he had arrived at the boundary of manly maturity which still permits that sort of thing. When he had crossed the boundary, the change set in, and he conducted the orchestra with unexampled composure. All exertion took place in the rehearsals, the violent gestures disappeared, even greater clarity of the power of verbal expression replaced them. Here a young man had passed into maturity, and did not strive to retain the gestures of youth, because he never deceived, but always did what was fitting to his situation. But he would never have conducted quietly while he was young; the rubato corresponded to his youth, the steadiness to his maturity. And let it be said to those younger conductors who today imitate Mahlerian composure that this is not in his spirit. His was a different concept. To emulate him means always to be as one's own feelings dictate. The other thing is mere aping. For him there were no other rules than these, and no models for him to imitate. One has to live up to one's models. But that takes courage. This Mahler possessed in the highest degree. Nothing could keep him from taking the utmost risks for what he deemed to be necessary. This was

shown by his direction of the Vienna Opera, and by the enemies whom he won for himself because of it. He unified all the worst people in Vienna; the most unreliable ones were tied down, became fighters against him for a dead certainty. But he also had the courage to endure, to be patient. He was innocently involved in an affair, in spite of which he took the assaults of the press without batting an eyelash, because in order to answer them he would have had to sacrifice a younger friend, and he did not want to do that. Smiling, he took the whole thing as a matter of course, and never breathed a word of it later.

INTERPRETATION

MOZART

by Gounod

A VACATION OF several days arrived (that of the New Year), of which my mother took advantage to procure for me a pleasure that was at the same time a great and impressive lesson.* They were giving Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, at the *Italiens*, to a hearing of which she took me herself; and that heavenly evening spent with her in a little box on the fourth floor of that theater is one of the most memorable and delightful of my life. I cannot say if my memory is correct, but I think it was Reicha who advised her to take me to hear *Don Giovanni*.

Before describing the emotion produced in me by that incomparable *chef-d'oeuvre*, I ask myself if my pen can ever transcribe it—I do not say faithfully, as that would be impossible—but at least in a manner to give some idea of what went on in my mind during those few hours, the charm of which has dominated my life like a luminous apparition, or a kind of vision of revelation.

From the very beginning of the overture I felt myself transported into an absolutely new world, by the solemn and majestic chords of the final scene of the *Commandant*. I was seized with a freezing terror; and when came the threatening progression over which are unrolled those ascending and descending scales, fatal and inexorable as a sentence of death, I was overcome with such a fright that I hid my face upon my mother's shoulder, and thus enveloped in the double embrace of the beautiful and the terrible, I murmured the following words:

"Oh! Mamma, what music! that is, indeed, real music!"

The hearing of Rossini's *Othello* stirred in me the fibers of musical instinct, but the effect produced by *Don Juan* had quite another significance, and an entirely different result. It seemed to me that between these two kinds of impressions there must be something analogous to that felt by a painter in passing directly from contact with the Venetian masters to that with Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo. Rossini gave me to know the intoxication of

* This excerpt from Gounod's *Mémoires* concerns an impression of, approximately, his eighteenth year—1836—when he was a student at the Conservatoire.

purely musical delight; he charmed me, delighted my ear. Mozart did more; to that enjoyment so complete, from an exclusively musical and emotional point of view, was then added the profound and penetrating influence of true expression united to perfect beauty.

It was, from one end to the other of the score, a long and inexpressible delight. The pathetic tones of the trio at the death of the Commandant, and of Donna Anna's lament over the body of her father, the charming grace of Zerlina, the supreme and stately elegance of the trio of the Masks, and of that which begins the second act under Donna Elvira's window—all, finally (for in this immortal work all must be mentioned), created for me that beatitude one feels only in the presence of the essentially beautiful things that hold the admiration of the centuries, and serve to fix the height of the esthetic level of perfection in art.

This representation counts as one of the most cherished holiday gifts of my childhood, and later, when I had won the *prix de Rome* it was the full score of *Don Juan* that my dear mother gave me as a reward.

ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MOZART

Mozart's music, so clear, true, natural, and penetrating, is, notwithstanding, seldom perfectly performed.*

What is the reason?

This is the question I propose to examine, and, if possible, to make comprehensible to my readers. In the execution of the works of Mozart, it is necessary, before everything, to avoid *seeking for effect*. I mean here by the word *effect*, not the impression produced on the listener by the work itself, an impression of charm, grace, tenderness, terror—in a word, all the feelings which the musical text offers, or, at least, should offer, *by itself* in the form and portrayal—but that *exaggeration* of accent, light and shade, and time which too often leads the executants to substitute their own ideas for those of the author, and to distort the nature of his thoughts instead of reproducing them simply and faithfully. When a great musician has written a work, and *such* a musician as Mozart, the least that one can do him the honor to suppose is that he has *wished* to write *what* he has written, and there are very strong

* Apropos the hundredth anniversary of the first performance of *Don Giovanni* in Prague in 1787, Gounod wrote a commentary on the score, of which this is the final section.

presumptive reasons for saying that in trying to express *more* than Mozart has done they would express *less*.

What would be thought of an engraver who should replace by outlines and figures of his own those of a picture by Raphael?

Does an actor dare to introduce a phrase, a verse, a word of his own invention in a work of Racine or Molière?

Why should the language of *sounds* be treated with less respect than that of words?

Is the truth of expression less an obligation in one than the other?

What remains of a musical thought if executants distort accents, nuances, and the respective values of notes? Absolutely nothing. Many singers do not give the least thought to these matters. Pre-occupied as they too often are with the idea of gaining admiration for their voices, they sacrifice without scruple *the demands of expression to the success of the virtuoso*, and the lasting triumph of truth to the empty and evanescent gratification of vanity.

It is hardly necessary to say that in thus permitting personal whims to replace obedience to the text, a gulf is created between the author and the auditor. What meaning is there, for example, in a prolonged pause on certain notes, to the detriment of the rhythm and the balance of the musical phrase? Do they reflect for an instant on the perpetual irritation caused to the listener—to say nothing of the insupportable monotony of the proceeding itself? And then what becomes of the orchestral design in this constant subordination to the singer's caprice? It is impossible to draw up a complete catalogue of abuses and licenses of all sorts which in the execution alter the nature of the sense, and compromise the impression of a musical phrase.

One may be permitted to remind musicians that want of attention to the following points causes nearly all the infractions of the rules of art and of good taste:

- The rate of movement.
- The light and shade.
- The breathing.
- The pronunciation.
- The conductor.

The Rate of Movement

Whenever the real expression, the true character, the just sentiment of a piece depends upon the ensemble, the most important,

the most indispensable condition is, undoubtedly, the exact and scrupulous observance of the time in which the composer has conceived it. The speed determines its general *character*, and, as this *character* is an essential part of the idea, to alter the time is to alter the idea itself to such a degree as to destroy sometimes the sense and the expression.

It cannot be denied that a musical phrase may be absolutely travestied and disfigured by an excess of slowness or rapidity of the time in which it is performed. I could quote many examples. Here is one which I shall never forget, it shocked me so much. At a ball given by the Minister of State during the winter of 1854-55, if I mistake not, the old *contredanse* (quadrille) was still in existence, or rather, was just dying out. All of a sudden I heard the orchestra strike up the first figure. Horror! abomination! sacrilege! It was the sublime air of the High Priest of Isis in Mozart's *Il Flauto Magico* falling from the height of its solemn and sacred rhythm into the grotesque stamping of satin shoes and patent leather boots. I fled as if I had the devil at my heels!

However, a very incomplete idea of the importance of the musical movement would be formed if it were considered purely from a mathematical point of view only, and I shall now endeavor to consider the circumstances which might cause mathematical differences in the time, the music nevertheless retaining its identity of character and expression.

1st. The size of the building in which the performance is held. This is a question of acoustics and proportion. In a very large hall, a movement would bear to be taken less quickly than if executed in a smaller one.

2nd. The style of the executant, and the amplitude of delivery, and the production of the voice.

I will cite here two famous examples—Duprez and Faure. When Duprez came to the Opera and filled the place which Nourrit had occupied with so much brilliancy and distinction for fifteen years, it was a complete revolution in lyrical declamation. Nourrit was a great artist; the dignity of his character, the culture of his intelligence, a constant care of truth in his varied and numerous roles of the *répertoire* of that period—these qualities obtained for him not only the favor and esteem of the public, but an influence at the theater which was felt by all around him. With rare talent as an artist he played the principal parts in all the grand operas, from *La Vestale*, *Masaniello*, and *Guillaume Tell*, to *Robert le Diable*, *La Juive* and the *Les Huguenots*, in the last of which he created the part of Raoul de Nangis, stamping it with an ineffaceable impres-

sion. His powerful acting so held his audience, that he succeeded in making them forget that his voice was a little thin and guttural, and that he used the falsetto register too frequently. The coming of Duprez took everybody by storm. I was present at his début, which took place in the part of Arnold (*Guillaume Tell*). Duprez returned from Italy preceded by a great reputation and the well known story of the chest C, which was to raise a tempest of applause at the end of the celebrated air of the last act. It was unnecessary to wait till then to know that the success of the great singer was assured. In two bars it was made. From the first verse of the recitative, "*Il me parle d'hymen! Jamais, jamais le mien!*" one felt that this was a transformation in the art of singing, and when Duprez finished the phrase of the duet in the second act "*Oh, Mathilde! idole de mon âme,*" there was a frenzy of enthusiasm throughout the house. He had a breadth of declamation and volume of tone which captivated the hearer, and the admirable melodies of the great Italian master shone with a new luster owing to the marvelous notes of his voice. The use of the chest voice and the amplitude of his declamation permitted Duprez to take the time slower than his illustrious predecessor had done without appearing to alter it, so well did he know how to captivate the ear by the fullness of his voice, and to move the audience by his dramatic powers.

Faure in our day has been a new and striking example of the same thing. He produces the sounds with such richness and fullness, he gives them such interest by a continual modulation of the tone (and occasionally, perhaps, a little more than is necessary), that one forgets the duration which he gives them, and which is hidden under his admirable method and his unrivalled pronunciation. To these illustrious names must be added those of Pauline Viardot, Miolan Carvalho, Gabrielle Krauss, the brothers De Reszke, Lassalle, and others who have understood the importance of declamation. But the preceding remarks on time have nothing to do with the accent, which is also, from an entirely different point of view, a matter of great importance. Unfortunately, many singers of today do not sufficiently consider this subject, great detriment being caused to the music and considerable annoyance to both composer and conductor.

Much might be said upon this topic. I must be satisfied to touch lightly upon it, as this is not the place to set forth a complete course of musical education.

The Bar (La Mésure)

Disregard of the accent is one of the modern faults, for it entirely destroys the musical equilibrium. Many singers regard the bar as an insupportable yoke, and as an obstacle to feeling and expression. They think that it makes machines of them, and that it takes away all grace, charm, warmth, and freedom in performance. Now it is exactly the reverse. The bar, instead of being the enemy to the musical phrase, gives protection and freedom to it. It is not difficult to demonstrate this. Let us consider it first as a principle of unanimity of performance. The essential character of the bar is the equality of the duration of the beats which compose it. If, then, inequality is introduced, the unity which is essential to the phrase, and which alone permits one to feel it, is destroyed.

2nd. If the misrepresentation of the bar is injurious to such an extent upon an isolated phrase, what confusion will it not bring in the execution of an ensemble? The effect would be indescribable.

3rd. There is still the orchestra to be considered. It presents a multitude of figures of accompaniment subjected to the laws of accent, and from which laws there can be no deviation under penalty of abominable confusion. Sixty or eighty musicians cannot be left in a state of constant uncertainty. Deprived of the word of command, they will not know what to do in order to avoid disorder and cacophony.

But the bar, which is a principle of order with regard to the rhythm, is no less essential to the expression. The idea of the bar includes that of rhythm, which is its characteristic sub-division.

To neglect the bar and its regulating influence injures the rhythm and the prosody.

These few reflections are sufficient to give an idea of the detrimental effects which disregard of the accent may cause to musical works. Another question of extreme importance in the matter of musical expression is that of light and shade. . . .

The Nuances

We understand by the word "nuance" the degree of intensity of any sound, whether it be produced by a voice or instrument. That is to say, the gradations of tone play in musical art a part analogous to that of proportion in the art of painting.

We see by this how the true observation of the nuances is indispensable to the faithful rendering of a musical phrase, and to

what degree the thoughtless caprice of the executant can alter the sense and character to such an extent as to make it unrecognizable by substituting for the author's intentions and indications the nuances and accents of pure fancy. It is here that the independence of the singer most frequently finds the opportunity of giving free scope to his imagination, and Heaven knows how he uses it.

It matters little whether the accent be neglected, whether the prosody be sacrificed, whether the melodic figure be altered, or whether affectation destroys the logical and natural movement of the musical phrase, provided that the *sound* be noticed and applauded for *itself*. These performers are entirely mistaken as to the function and role of the *voice*. They take the *means* for the *end* and the servant for the master. They forget that fundamentally there is but one art, the *word*, and one function, *to express*, and that consequently a great singer ought to be first of all a great *orator*, and that is utterly impossible without absolutely truthful accent. When singers, especially on the stage, think only of displaying the voice, they should be reminded that that is a sure and infallible means of falling into monotony; truth alone has the privilege of infinite and inexhaustible variety.

The Breathing

This important question of the breathing may be regarded under two distinct aspects—the one purely expressive. Under the first it devolves upon the composer to write in such a way as not to exceed the power of the respiratory organs, under the penalty of seeing his musical phrase divided into fragments, which would disfigure it. But as regards the expression, it is another thing. Here it is prosody and punctuation which determine and regulate the expression. Unfortunately this rule is seldom observed. A singer does not scruple to divide a section of a phrase, often even a word, in order to take breath, for the sake of a sound to which they wish to give exaggerated power and duration, to the detriment of the musical sense and the prosody, which ought to be the first consideration. It is ridiculous to introduce, for example, a respiration between “my” and “love” in the phrase

“To thee I give my love”

—a respiration which nothing can justify; but then the singer has had the pleasure of showing off on a short syllable until all the breath has been used, just for the sake of gaining a noisy demon-

stration of conventional applause. Such licenses simply disfigure the form of the musical idea, and are revolting to common sense.

The Pronunciation

There are two special points to observe in the pronunciation.

1st. It should be clear, neat, distinct, exact; that is to say, the ear ought not to be left in any uncertainty as to the word pronounced.

2nd. It should be expressive, that is to say, *to paint in the mind the feeling* enunciated by the word itself. All that concerns clearness, neatness, and exactness may be more properly classed as *articulation*. Articulation relates to the due formation of every sound in the word. Everything else may be described as *pronunciation*. It is by the latter that we make the word picture the thought, the feeling, the passion which it envelops. In short, the function of articulation is to form the material sounds of a word, whereas that of pronunciation is to reveal its inner meaning. Articulation gives clearness to the word; pronunciation gives it eloquence. True instinct, though lacking culture, can make all these distinctions apparent. One cannot insist too much upon the value and interest which clear articulation and expressive pronunciation give to singing, so important are they. By the force of expression, they exercise such a power over the listener that they make him forget the insufficiency or the mediocrity of the vocal organ; whilst the absence of these qualities, though the voice may be the most beautiful in the world, leaves him unmoved.

The foregoing considerations show how much depends upon simplicity, sincerity, and freedom from all preoccupation as to personal success.

Can there be a higher ambition for a performer than to be an artist capable and worthy of interpreting Mozart's music, so pure and so true; or a more noble dream than to inspire love for the works of such a master, and thus contribute to the sacred and salutary devotion to the true and the beautiful? But, alas, in art, as in everything else, the abnegation of self is rare, although it is the condition of all true greatness.

The Conductor

The conductor is the *center* of the musical performance. This word, in itself, shows the importance and responsibility of his functions.

First of all, the unity of the movement, without which there is no possible ensemble, is in the hands of the conductor. That is self-evident, and does not need demonstration. It is on this point most necessary, and at the same time most easy, for the conductor to make his authority felt; his baton is one of command.

But, apart from the ensembles, how often does this command degenerate into servitude? What compliance there is to the caprices of the singers, and what fatal neglect of the interests of art and the real value of the works performed!

However, it is not necessary that the rule of the conductor should amount to an unyielding and mechanical rigidity, which would be the absurd triumph of the *letter* over the *spirit*.

A conductor who would be like an inflexible metronome throughout a musical composition would be guilty of an excess of strictness as unbearable as an excess of laxity.

The great art of the conductor is that power which may be called suggestive, and which elicits from the singer an unconscious obedience, whilst making him believe that it is his own will that he follows. In short, the singer must be persuaded and not constrained. Power is not in the will, but in the intelligence; it is not questioned, but it is felt. It behoves the conductor then, to understand, and to make others understand how much he will concede to them in the matter of time without altering the character of the movement. It is his duty to seize upon the difference between elasticity and stiffness, and to atone, without abruptness, for any momentary retardation by an imperceptible return to the normal and regular time.

It is also essential that the conductor should not mistake precipitation for warmth—the result would be to sacrifice the rhythmic power of the declamation and the fullness of tone. It is commonly imagined that a *crescendo* ought to be *hurried*, and a *diminuendo* gradually slackened. Now, it is precisely the contrary which is nearly always the case. It stands to reason that one feels inclined to lengthen a sound in augmenting its intensity, and vice versa. But this is not all.

It is an error to think that the conductor can make himself entirely understood by means of the baton or the bow which he holds in his hand. His whole demeanor should instruct and animate those who obey him. His attitude, his physiognomy, his glance should prepare the singers for that which is demanded of them; his expression should cause them to anticipate his intentions, and should enlighten the executants.

Yet it is not necessary for him to indulge in wild gesticulations.

True power is calm, and when the poet of antiquity wished to express the might of Jupiter, he represented him as making the whole of Olympus tremble at his nod. In short, the conductor is the ambassador of the master's thought; he is responsible for it to the artists and to the public, and *ought to be* the living expression, the faithful mirror, the incorruptible depository of it. One could write volumes upon the important duties of a conductor, and I certainly hold that these duties should be made the object of a regular course of lectures, the plan for which might be clearly indicated in the general musical education given by our conservatoires. Here is a want which I hope may be supplied in the future. Besides the considerable benefit which would accrue to the musical works, this would be an opening offered to a whole group of special aptitudes, which are as rare as they are necessary; it would also be a serious guarantee of authority to the artists.

INTERPRETATION/ART OF SINGING

by Mozart

EVERYTHING YOU SAY about Mlle. Weber is true,* except one thing—that “she sings like a Gabrielli”; for I should not at all like her to sing in that style. Those who have heard Gabrielli are forced to admit that she was an adept only in runs and roulades; she adopted, however, such an unusual interpretation that she won admiration; but it never survived the fourth time of hearing. In the long run she could not please, as people soon get tired of coloratura passages. Moreover she had the misfortune of not being able to sing. She was not capable of *sustaining* a *breve* properly, and as she had no *mesa di voce*, she could not dwell on her notes; in short, she sang with skill but without understanding. Mlle. Weber's singing, on the other hand, goes to the heart, and she prefers to sing *cantabile*. Lately I have made her practise the passages in my grand aria,† because, if she goes to Italy, she will have to sing bravura arias. Undoubtedly she will never forget how to sing *cantabile*, for that is her natural bent. Raaff himself (who is certainly no flatterer), when asked to give his candid opinion, said “She sang, not like a student, but like a master.”

* Written to his father from Mannheim, February 19, 1778.

† *Lucio Silla*.

I must now say something about our Raaff.* You will remember, no doubt, that I did not write too favourably about him from Mannheim, and was by no means pleased with his singing—*enfin*, that I did not like him at all. The reason, however, was that I scarcely heard him properly, as it were, at Mannheim. I heard him for the first time in the rehearsal of Holzbauer's *Günther*, when he was in his everyday clothes, with his hat on and a stick in his hand. When he was not singing he stood there like a child at stool: when he began to sing the first recitative, it went quite tolerably, but every now and then he gave a kind of shout, which I could not bear. He sang the arias in a way so obviously careless—and some notes he sang with too much emphasis—which did not appeal to me. This has been a constant habit of his—and perhaps it is a characteristic of the Bernacchi school—for he was a pupil of Bernacchi's. At court, too, he always sang arias which, in my opinion, by no means suited his voice; so that I did not like him at all. But when he made his *début* here in the Concert Spirituel, he sang Bach's† scena *Non so d'onde viene*, which, by the way, is a favourite of mine—and then for the first time I really heard him sing—and he pleased me—that is, in his particular style of singing, although the style itself—the Bernacchi school—is not to my taste. Raaff is too much inclined to drop into the *cantabile*. I admit that, when he was young and in his prime, this must have been very effective and have taken people by surprise. I admit also that I like it. But he overdoes it and so to me it often seems ridiculous. What I do like is when he sings short pieces, as, for example, some *andantinos*; and he has also certain arias, which he renders in his peculiar style. Well, each in his own way. I fancy that his forte was bravura singing—and, so far as his age permits, you can still tell this from his manner; he has a good chest and long breath; and then—these *andantinos*. His voice is beautiful and very pleasant. If I shut my eyes and listen to him, he reminds me very much of Meisner, only that Raaff's voice seems to me even more pleasing. I am talking about their voices as they are at present, for I have never heard them in their prime. So all that I can discuss is their style or method of singing, which a singer always retains. Meisner, as you know, has the bad habit of making his voice tremble at times, turning a note that should be sustained into distinct crotchets, or even quavers—and this I never could endure in him. And really it is a detestable habit and one which is quite contrary to nature. The human voice trembles naturally—but in its

* Written to his father from Paris, June 12, 1778.

† J. C. Bach.

own way—and only to such a degree that the effect is beautiful. Such is the nature of the voice; and people imitate it not only on wind instruments, but on stringed instruments too and even on the clavier. But the moment the proper limit is overstepped, it is no longer beautiful—because it is contrary to nature. It reminds me then of the organ when the bellows are puffing. Now Raaff never does this—in fact, he cannot bear it. Yet, so far as real *cantabile* is concerned, I prefer Meisner to Raaff (though not quite unconditionally, for he too has his mannerisms). In bravura singing, long passages and roulades, Raaff is absolute master and he has moreover an excellent, clear diction, which is very beautiful; and as I have already said, his *andantinos* or little *canzonette* are charming.

INTERPRETATION/JENNY

LIND

by Moscheles

WHAT SHALL I say of Jenny Lind? I can find no words adequate to give you any real idea of the impression she has made.* Independent of the fact that the language of panegyric is exhausted, this wonderful artiste stands far too high in my judgment to be dragged down by commonplace complimentary phrases, such as newspaper writers so copiously indulge in. This is no short-lived fit of public enthusiasm. Everybody wants to see and hear her, or, having seen her, to see her and hear her again. I wanted to know her off the stage as well as on; but as she lives some distance from me, I asked her in a letter to fix upon an hour for me to call. Simple and unceremonious as she is, she came the next day herself, bringing her answer verbally. So much modesty and so much greatness united, are seldom if ever to be met with, and although her intimate friend Mendelssohn had given me an insight into the noble qualities of her character, I was surprised to find them so apparent at first acquaintance. I had to play her my *Fantasia* on her Swedish songs. Mendelssohn had chosen the subjects with me; and she said many pretty things about my characteristic treatment of these national airs. We returned her visit in Old Brompton, where she lives, far from the noise of the capital and the arena of her brilliant performances.

* Written during a visit to London, 1847.

INTERPRETATION/LISZT AS
PIANIST

by Schumann

WOULD THAT I could, ye distant ones and foreigners, who can scarcely hope ever to see this surpassing artist, and who therefore search out every word that is spoken or written concerning him,—would that I could give you a correct idea of him! It is more easy to speak of his outward appearance. People have often tried to picture this by comparing Liszt's head to Schiller's or Napoleon's; and the comparison so far holds good, in that extraordinary men possess certain traits in common, such as an expression of energy and strength of will in the eyes and mouth. He has some resemblance to the portraits of Napoleon as a young general—pale, thin, with a remarkable profile, the whole significance of his appearance culminating in the head. But his resemblance to the deceased Ludwig Schunke is remarkable, and this resemblance extends to their art. While listening to Liszt's playing, I have often imagined myself listening again to one I heard long before. But this art is scarcely to be described. It is not this or that style of pianoforte playing; it is rather the outward expression of a daring character, to whom fate has given, as instruments of victory and command, not the dangerous weapons of war, but the peaceful ones of art.

No matter how many great artists we may possess, or have seen pass before us during recent years, though some of them equal him in single points, all must yield to him in energy and boldness. People have been very fond of placing Thalberg in the lists beside him, and drawing comparisons. But it is only necessary to look at both heads to come to a conclusion. I remember the remark of a Viennese designer, who said, not inaptly, of his countryman's head, that it resembled "that of a handsome countess with a man's nose;" while of Liszt he observed, that "he might sit to every painter for a Grecian god." There is a similar difference in their art. Chopin stands nearer Liszt as a player, for at least he loses nothing beside him in fairylike grace and tenderness; next to him, Paganini, and, among women, Madame Malibran; from these Liszt himself acknowledges that he has learned the most.

Liszt is now probably about thirty years old.* Everyone knows well that he was a child-phenomenon, how he was early transplanted

* Since this visit occurred in 1840, and Liszt was born in 1811, Schumann's impression was accurate enough.—Ed.

to foreign lands; that his name afterwards appeared here and there among the most distinguished; that then the rumour of it occasionally died away, until Paganini appeared, inciting the youth to new endeavours; and that he suddenly appeared in Vienna two years ago, rousing the Imperial city to enthusiasm.

Since the establishment of our paper, we have followed Liszt's career, concealing nothing that has been publicly said for or against his art, though by far the greater number of voices, especially those of all great artists, have sounded his praise. Thus he appeared among us of late, already honoured with the highest honours that can be bestowed on an artist, and his fame firmly established. It would be difficult to raise this, or to say anything new about him, though it would be easy enough to try to unsettle and injure it, as pedants and rascals are fond of doing at all times. This was lately tried here. Not from any fault of Liszt, the public had been made restless with previous announcements, and rendered ill-humoured by mistakes in the concert arrangements. A writer, notorious here for his lampoons, made use of this to attack Liszt anonymously, on account of his visit to us,—“Made with no object except to satisfy his insatiable avarice.” Such vileness is unworthy of further thought.

The first concert, on the 17th, was a remarkable one. The multitudinous audience was so crowded together, that even the hall looked altered. The orchestra was also filled with listeners, and among them Liszt.

He began with the scherzo and finale of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*. The selection was capricious enough, and on many accounts, not happy. At home, in a *tête-à-tête*, a highly-careful transcription may lead one almost to forget the orchestra; but in a large hall, in the same place where we have been accustomed to hear the symphony played frequently and perfectly by the orchestra, the weakness of the pianoforte is striking, and the more so the more an attempt is made to represent masses in their strength. A simpler arrangement, a mere sketch, would perhaps have been more effective here. Let it be understood, with all this, that we had heard the master of the instrument; people were satisfied; they had at least seen him shake his mane. To hold to the same illustration, the lion presently began to show himself more powerful. This was in a fantasia on themes by Pacini, which he played in a most remarkable manner. But I would sacrifice all the astonishing, audacious bravura that he displayed here for the sake of the magical tenderness that he expressed in the following *étude*; with the sole exception of Chopin, as I have already said, I know not one who equals him in this quality. He closed with the well-known chromatic galop; and as

the applause this elicited was endless, he also played his equally well-known bravure waltz.

Fatigue and indisposition prevented the artist from giving the concert promised for the next day. In the meanwhile, a musical festival was prepared for him, that will never be forgotten by Liszt himself, or by the other persons present. The giver of the festival (F. Mendelssohn) had selected for performance some compositions yet unknown to his guest: Franz Schubert's symphony;* his own psalm, "As the hart pants"; the overture, "A calm sea and a prosperous voyage"; three choruses from *St. Paul*; and, to close with the D minor concerto for three pianos by Sebastian Bach. This was played by Liszt, Mendelssohn, and Hiller. It seemed as though nothing had been prepared, but all improvised instantaneously. Those were three such happy musical hours as years do not always bring. At the end, Liszt played alone, and wonderfully. The assembly broke up amid the most joyful excitement, and the gaiety and happiness that sparkled in all eyes must have sufficiently attested the guests' gratitude toward the giver of a festival offered by him in homage to the artistic talents of another.

Liszt's most genial performance was yet to come—Weber's *Concertstück*, which he played at his second concert. Virtuoso and public seemed to be in the freshest mood possible on that evening, and the enthusiasm during and after his playing almost exceeded anything hitherto known here. Although Liszt grasped the piece from the beginning, with such force and grandeur of expression that an attack on a battlefield seemed to be in question, yet he carried this on with continually increasing power, until the passage where the player seems to stand at the summit of the orchestra leading it forward in triumph. Here indeed he resembled that great commander to whom he has been compared, and the tempestuous applause that greeted him was not unlike an adoring *Vive l'Empereur!* He then played a fantasia on themes from the *Huguenots*, the *Ave Maria*, and *Serenade*, and, at the request of the public, the *Erlking* of Schubert. But the *Concertstück* was the crown of this evening.

I do not know who originated the idea of the present of flowers handed to him at the close of the concert by a favourite songstress, but the crown was certainly not undeserved; and how spiteful, how envious a nature is necessary to disparage such a friendly attention in the way this was done by a "critic" in one of the papers here! The artist has devoted his whole life to procure for you the joy you receive from him; you know nothing of the fatigue his art has cost him; he gives you the best he has—his heart's blood, the es-

* Presumably the C major.—Ed.

sence of his being; and shall we then grudge him even a simple crown of flowers? But Liszt was determined not to remain a debtor. With visible delight in the enthusiastic reception he had received at his second concert, he declared himself at once ready to give one for the benefit of any charitable institution, the selection to be left to the decision of experienced persons.

So for the third time, he played again last Monday night for the benefit of the pension fund for aged or invalid musicians, though he had given a concert for the poor in Dresden the day before. The hall was completely crowded; the object of the concert, the programme, the assistance of our most famous songstress, and, above all, Liszt himself, had created the highest interest in the concert. Still fatigued with his journey and from his recent playing in concerts, Liszt arrived in the morning, and went at once to the rehearsal, so that he had little time to himself before the concert hour. It was impossible for him to take any rest. I would not leave this unmentioned: a man is not a god, and the visible effort with which Liszt played on that evening was but a natural consequence of what preceded the concert.

With pieces by composers residing here,—Mendelssohn, Hiller, and myself; Mendelssohn's latest concerto, *études* by Hiller, and several numbers from an early work of mine entitled *The Carnival*—to the astonishment of many timid virtuosos, I must state that Liszt played these compositions almost at sight. He had a slight former acquaintance with the *études* and *The Carnival*, but he had never seen Mendelssohn's concerto until a few days before the concert. He was, however, so continually occupied, that he had been unable to find time, at such short notice, for private study. He met my doubt as to whether such rhapsodical sketches as mine of carnival life would make any impression on the public, with the assurance that he hoped they would. I think he was mistaken.

Here I may perhaps be allowed to make a few observations regarding this composition, which owed its origin to chance. The name of a city, in which a musical friend of mine lived consisted of letters belonging to the scale which are also contained in my name; and this suggested one of those tricks that are no longer new, since Bach gave the example. One piece after another was completed during the carnival season of 1835, in a serious mood of mind, and under peculiar circumstances. I afterwards gave titles to the numbers, and named the entire collection *The Carnival*. Though certain traits in it may please certain persons, its musical moods change too rapidly to be easily followed by a general public that does not care to be roused anew every moment.

My amiable friend did not consider this; and though he played the work with such great sympathy and geniality that it could not fail to strike a few, the masses were not excited by it. It was different with Hiller's *études*, that belong to a more recognized form; one in D flat major, another in C minor, both very tender yet characteristic, awakened warm interest. Mendelssohn's concerto was already well known through its composer's clear, masterly, reposeful playing.

As I have already observed, Liszt played these pieces almost at sight; no one will be very well able to imitate him in this. He displayed his virtuosity in its fullest force, however, in the closing piece, the *Hexameron*, a cyclus of variations by Thalberg, Herz, Pixis, and Liszt himself. Everybody wondered where he found the strength to repeat half of the *Hexameron*, and then his own galop, to the delight of the enraptured public. How much I hoped that he would give us some of Chopin's compositions, which he plays incomparably, with the deepest sympathy! But in his own room he amiably plays anything that is asked from him. How often have I thus listened to him in admiration and astonishment!"

INTERPRETATION/LISZT AS
PIANIST

by Mendelssohn

THE TURMOIL OF the last few weeks was overpowering.* Liszt was here for a fortnight, and caused quite a paroxysm of excitement among us, both in a good and evil sense. I consider him to be in reality an amiable warm-hearted man, and an admirable artist. That he plays with more execution than all the others, does not admit of a doubt; yet Thalberg, with his composure and within his more restricted sphere, is more perfect, taken as a virtuoso; and this is the standard which must also be applied to Liszt, for his compositions are inferior to his playing, and, in fact, are only calculated for virtuosi. A fantasia by Thalberg (especially that on the *Donna del Largo*) is an accumulation of the most exquisite and delicate effects, and a continued succession of difficulties and embellishments that excite our astonishment; all is so well devised and

* In this letter to his mother, Mendelssohn discusses the same visit of Liszt to Leipzig treated by Schumann in the foregoing essay. It is dated March 30, 1840.—Ed.

so finished, carried out with such security and skill, and pervaded by the most refined taste.

On the other hand, Liszt possesses a degree of velocity and complete independence of finger, and a thoroughly musical feeling, which can scarcely be equalled. In a word, I have heard no performer whose musical perceptions, like those of Liszt, extended to the very tips of his fingers, emanating directly from them. With this power, and his enormous technicality and practice, he must have far surpassed all others, if a man's own ideas were not, after all, the chief point, and these, hitherto at least, seem denied to him, so that in this phase of art most of the great virtuosi equal, and indeed excel him.

But that he, along with Thalberg, *alone* represents the highest class of pianists of the present day, is I think undeniable. Unhappily, the manner in which Liszt has acted towards the public here has not pleased them. The whole misunderstanding is, in fact, as if you were listening to two persons disputing, who are both in the wrong, and whom you would fain interrupt at every word. As for the citizens in general, who are angry at the high prices, and do not wish to see a clever fellow prosper too much, and grumble accordingly, I don't in the least care about them; and then the newspaper discussions, explanations, and counter-explanations, criticisms and complaints, and all kinds of things are poured down on us, totally unconnected with music; so that his stay here has caused us almost as much annoyance as pleasure, though the latter was, indeed, often great beyond measure.

It occurred to me that this unpleasant state of feeling might be most effectually allayed, by people seeing and hearing him in private; so I suddenly determined to give him a *soirée* in the Gewandhaus, of three hundred and fifty persons, with orchestra, choir, mulled wine, cakes, my *Meeresstille*, a Psalm, a triple concerto by Bach (Liszt, Hiller and I), choruses from *St. Paul*, fantasia on *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the *Erl King*, the "*devil and his grandmother*," and goodness knows what else; and all the people were delighted, and played and sang with the utmost enthusiasm, and vowed they had never passed a more capital evening; so my object was thus happily effected in a most agreeable manner.

INTERPRETATION/PAGANINI

by Moscheles

THE IMPRESSION MADE by Paganini at his first concert* was overwhelming. "The crowd in the Opera House was wild with excitement. He had to play nearly everything twice over, and was not only greeted with vehement clapping of hands, but every lady leaned forward out of her box to wave her handkerchief at him; people in the pit stood up on the benches, shouting 'Hurrah! Bravo!' Neither Sontag nor Pasta made such an impression here, much less any other artist."

Moscheles complains in his diary of his utter inability to find language capable of conveying a description of Paganini's wonderful performance. "Had that long-drawn, soul-searching tone lost for a single second its balance, it would have lapsed into a discordant cat's-mew; but it never did so, and Paganini's tone was always his own, and unique of its kind. The thin strings of his instrument, on which alone it was possible to conjure forth those myriads of notes and trills and cadenzas, would have been fatal in the hands of any other violin player, but with him they were indispensable adjuncts, and lastly, his compositions were so ultra original, so completely in harmony with the weird and strange figure of the man, that, if wanting in depth and earnestness, the deficiency never betrayed itself during the author's dazzling display of power."

The fever of enthusiasm continued, and to enable Paganini to understand the rapturous phrases in the newspapers, Mrs. Moscheles translated them into Italian for him; these encomiums, high-flown as they were, were outdone by Paganini's own letters of gratitude. Paganini is frequently at friends' houses, where he plays both violin and tenor alternately in his own quartets. Mori commissions Moscheles to write for him a piece, *Gems à la Paganini*, but takes the precaution of first securing Paganini's consent. A day and a half suffice to complete the composition, and then Mori and Moscheles go together to the wily Italian. Moscheles plays to him his *Musical Portrait*, a piece written in close imitation of Paganini's roulades and cadenzas. Paganini falls on his neck and smothers him with compliments. "This wonderful imitation, this manner, this accurate rendering of his cadenzas, he found 'stupendous.'" At that moment of course there was but one Moscheles. What was Hummel in comparison? Hummel and others had also written fantasias

* London, 1831.

à la Paganini, but they had displeased him; he had protested against them. This arrangement was the only right one, a real honor to him, etc. etc. He went on in this strain: but we shall see further on what amount of sincerity and truth lay beneath it.

Of course Moscheles heard him frequently, in order to study his manner and style more accurately. After the sixth concert he makes the following admission: "My mind is peculiarly vacillating about this artist. First of all, nothing could exceed my surprise and admiration; his constant and venturesome flights, his newly discovered source of flageolet tones, his gift of fusing and beautifying subjects of the most heterogeneous kind; all these phases of genius so completely bewildered my musical perceptions, that for several days afterwards my head seemed on fire and my brain reeled. I never wearied of the intense expression, soft and melting like that of an Italian singer, which he could draw from his violin, and dazzled as I was, I could not quarrel with him for adopting the *maniera del gatto*, a term of opprobrium, showing how averse the Italians are to this style, which I dislike so intensely that I should only like to hear it once in every leap year. Suffice it to say, my admiration of this phenomenon, equally endowed by nature and art, was boundless. Now, however, after hearing him frequently, all this is changed; in every one of his compositions I discover *the same* effects, which betrays a poverty of invention; I also find both his style and manner of playing monotonous. His concertos are beautiful, and have even their grand moments; but they remind me of a brilliant firework on a summer's eve, one flash succeeding the other—effective, admirable—but always the same. His *Sonate Militaire*, and other pieces have a southern glow about them, but this hero of the violin cannot dispense with the roll of the drum; and completely as he may annihilate his less showy colleagues, I long for a little of Spohr's earnestness, Baillot's power, and even Mayseder's piquancy. It may possibly be that the man, who grows more and more *anti-pático* to me every day, prejudices my judgment of the artist. He is so disgracefully mean. I can't vouch for the truth of the story, that he gave his servant a gallery ticket on the condition of his serving him gratuitously for one day, but this at all events is certain, that Lablache offered him £100. to play at his benefit, but Paganini refused, and the great singer had to allow him one-third of the receipts of his concert. When the Opera concerts, thirteen in number, ceased to command full attendances, he began a series in the London Tavern, in the City. This was thought unworthy of a great artist; but it was all one to him, for he makes money there."

The letter which supplies these extracts was written in July. A

few weeks later, immediately after the publication of the second and the third book of the *Gems*, Paganini made a legal protest, declaring the work a musical piracy. Of course this was a question concerning the publisher. Moscheles however went to Paganini and asked him: "Why, didn't you give me your permission?" Answer: "Yes, for the first book, but not for the second and the third." The conversation led to nothing; Paganini went to Scotland, and the lawsuit continued. On his return Paganini visited Moscheles, and, after a great deal of circumlocution, offered him the free sale of the three books of *Gems*, if he would consent to make a piano-forte accompaniment for twelve small violin pieces of his own. Moscheles gave a rather unwilling consent; refusing, however, Paganini's further demand that he should put his name to the title-page. This point Paganini gave up, and then a discussion ensued about the law costs. At last Mori was glad to be moderately victimized, Paganini having at first talked about no less than £500. damages, and Moscheles rejoiced "at being quit of an episode so little worthy of an artist, and having done with those dreadful lawyers."

INTERPRETATION/TASTE IN PERFORMANCE

by Moscheles

I KNOW MANY think me old-fashioned, but the more I consider the tendency of modern taste, and the abrupt and glaring contrasts indulged in by many composers of the present day,* the more strenuously will I uphold that which I know to be sound art, and side with those who can appreciate a Haydn's playfulness, a Mozart's *Cantilena*, and a Beethoven's surpassing grandeur. What antidotes have we here for all these morbid moanings and overwrought effects! When I hear one of old Sebastian Bach's glorious fugues in the midst of all these fantasias, I accept it as a kind of musical peace-offering; not that I am completely reconciled, for it is usually taken prestissimo. Here as elsewhere I miss the right *tempi*, and look in vain for the traditions of my youth. That tearing speed which sweeps away many a little note; that spinning out of an *andante* until it becomes an *adagio*, an *andante con moto*, in which

* Written in 1861.

there is no moto at all, an allegro comodo which is anything but comfortable—all such anomalies mar my enjoyment.

At Boulogne, the other evening, a pianoforte player brought me a Notturmo of so restless a description that it threatened to disturb my nocturnal rest; he calls it too learned for Paris, I call it not learned enough for Germany. I gladly allow that he and his colleagues have a special aptitude for transferring the melodious Italian element to pianoforte pieces, but such music becomes very wearisome to the genuine musician, and can only be tolerated by those whose ears and feelings are accustomed to the *dolce far niente*. When he told me he thought the German music was too dry and learned, I played him scraps from Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn; there I had him. At last he said, "But those were men of genius," to which I replied, "No doubt, and only men of genius ought to compose; others should study the great masters until a portion of their spirit falls upon them."

In Gounod I hail a real composer. I have heard his *Faust* both at Leipzig and Dresden, and am charmed with that refined piquant music. Critics may rave, if they like, against the mutilation of Goethe's masterpiece, the Opera is sure to attract, for it is a fresh, interesting work, with a copious flow of melody and lovely instrumentation.

PART FOUR : FROM THE
COMPOSER'S WORKSHOP

BERLIOZ

“FRANCS-JUGES” OVERTURE

by the Composer

I AM MUCH INDEBTED to you for the interest you have been good enough to take up to this time in several of my compositions.* I am told that, thanks to you, the overture to the *Franco-Juges* has been heard at Leipsig, and that the superior manner in which it was performed contributed in no slight degree to the favourable reception accorded to it by the public. Will you kindly convey my acknowledgments to the artists concerned. The patience displayed by them in studying this difficult work has all the more value in my eyes on account of the small reason I have, as yet, to be satisfied with the various musical societies who have thought fit to make the same experiment. Apart from those of Douai and Dijon, the remainder have been discouraged after a single rehearsal, and the work, after having been mutilated in a thousand different ways, has been consigned to the shade of the libraries as worthy, at most, of a place in a collection of monstrosities. It seems also that an experiment, conducted after a similar fashion, has furnished considerable amusement to the Philharmonic Society of London; several Parisian artists with whom the English virtuosi did not disdain to associate themselves on the occasion, and who knew my work perfectly through having performed it in Paris, have confessed to me that they joined heartily in the British merriment, but from a totally different motive.

Imagine the effect of the movements in the adagio taken twice as fast as they ought to have been, with a corresponding slowness in the allegro, the result being to produce that monotonous

* To Schumann from Paris, February 19, 1837.

mezzo termine so insupportable to any one possessing the slightest musical sentiment; conceive the violins reading at sight still more difficult passages, in spite of the *tempo confortabile* given to the allegro, the trombones commencing ten or twelve bars too soon, and the drummer losing his head in the three-time rhythm, and you will have some idea of the charming confusion which ensued. I do not dispute the cleverness of the philharmonic gentlemen of the Argyle Rooms. God forbid! I merely point out the strange system upon which the rehearsals are conducted. Here, too, we certainly evolve very indifferent music out of the first trial of a new piece; but as, in our opinion, science is not inherent in anybody, not even in English artists, and there is nothing to be ashamed of in attentively and courageously studying what is difficult of comprehension at first sight, we begin over again three times, four times, ten times if necessary, and day after day for several days. In this way we succeed in producing a performance which is nearly always correct, and occasionally impressive. You have, doubtless, acted thus at Leipsig, and, I repeat, such perseverance, in the absence of the author interested in ensuring the success of his work, is as honourable to the executants as it is flattering to the composer and deserving of his gratitude. It is so rare a thing, however, that I have a thousand times repented of having so thoughtlessly permitted the publication of the work in question. While on this subject, I owe you a confession, and I beg you will convey it also to the publisher, M. Hoffmeister; it will serve as my reply to the offers he has made me in connection with the publication of my symphonies. Last year I received letters, almost simultaneously, from Vienna and Milan, asking for manuscript copies of these two works, not for the purpose of having them printed, but merely to allow of their being heard. A few months ago a similar letter reached me from New Orleans. The very advantageous terms which accompanied these requests had no effect upon me; I refused invariably, and for the same reason, the fear of being misrepresented through an incorrect or incomplete performance. If I owe it to my good fortune that the overture to the *Francs-Juges* found at Leipsig interpreters as conscientious as they are clever, and a leader like yourself to animate their zeal, you yourself can see that, so far from my having had the same experience everywhere, what happened in England savoured somewhat of brutality; and I ought to add that, as this overture is the first piece of instrumental music I ever wrote, the compositions which have succeeded it have very naturally been calculated to admit of broader treatment, to assimilate to themselves a greater amount of musical substance, and to rest upon a greater number of

points of support. These naturally furnish so many additional chances against the work being easy of performance. A very rare genius is necessary for the creation of such works as the artists and the public alike comprehend at first sight, and whose simplicity brings them home to the masses, like the Pyramids of Gizeh. Unfortunately, I am not one of those geniuses; I require an abundance of means to produce any effect, and I should be afraid of forfeiting the good opinion of my musical friends forever if, through any premature publication, I were to expose my symphonies, which are too young to travel without me, to a more cruel mutilation even than has befallen my old overture. That fate, you may be quite sure, will befall them everywhere, except in hospitable and artistic towns like your own.

And, moreover, I will confess to you, I love these poor children of mine with a paternal love which has no Spartan element in it, for I would a thousand times rather that they should remain obscure, but intact, than send them far afield in search of glory or frightful wounds and death . . .

I cannot bring my letter to a close without telling you of the many pleasant hours I have lately spent in the perusal of your admirable pianoforte works; there appears to me to have been no exaggeration whatever in their having been described to me as the logical continuation of those by Weber, Beethoven, and Schubert. Liszt, who so described them to me, will, by means of his incomparable playing, be always giving me a more complete idea of them, and will make me more intimately acquainted with them. He has an idea of introducing your sonata, called *Clara*, at one of those magnificent evenings when he assembles round him the *élite* of our musical public. I shall then be able to speak to you with more confidence about the *ensemble*, as well as the details of those essentially new and progressive compositions.

GLUCK

A SYSTEM OF COMPOSITION

by the Composer

WHEN I UNDERTOOK to set the opera of *Alceste* to music I proposed to myself to avoid all the abuses that the mistaken vanity of singers and the excessive complaisance of composers had introduced into Italian opera, and which had converted the most stately and beautiful of all spectacles into one of the most tiresome and ridiculous.* I sought to confine the music to its true function, that of assisting the poetry, by strengthening both the expression of the sentiments and the interest of the situations; and this without either interrupting the action or chilling it by the introduction of superfluous ornaments. I thought that music should add to the poetry precisely what is added to a correct and well conceived drawing, when the vivacity of the colors and the happy harmony of light and shade serve to animate the figures, without changing their outline.

I have taken particular care not to interrupt an actor, in the warmth of dialogue, in order to make him wait for the end of a *ritornello*; or to stop him in the middle of his discourse upon a favourable vowel; either for the purpose of providing a long passage for the display of his beautiful voice, or, in order that he should wait for the orchestra to give him time to take breath for a cadence. I have not thought it necessary to pass rapidly over the second part of an air, although it might be one of the most passionate and important; and finish the air, notwithstanding that there is no conclusion in the sense, merely to give the singer an opportunity of showing his capability, by capriciously rendering a passage in different ways. In short, I have tried to banish all these abuses, against which good sense and reason have protested so long in vain.

I have imagined that the overture should warn the spectators of the character of the action to be submitted to them, as well as indicate its subject; and that the instruments should only be requisitioned in proportion to the degree of interest or passion; and that it was necessary to avoid, in the dialogue, too violent a distinction between the air and the recitative; to secure that the period should

* This so-called *manifesto* of a new order in operatic composition was published as a preface to *Alceste* 1767. Certainly Gluck was faithful to its tenets, but it can hardly be said that its effect was universal.—Ed.

not be marked off abruptly, in interruption of the sense; and that the movement and the warmth of the scene should not be inappropriately intruded upon. My belief has also been that the work should, above all things, aim at a beautiful simplicity; and I have thus avoided all parade of difficulties, at the expense of clearness. I have not attached the least value to the discovery of a novelty, unless naturally suggested by the situation and wedded to its expression. Finally, there is no rule which I have not felt I ought willingly to sacrifice in favor of effect.

LISZT

ON CRITICS AND E FLAT

PIANO CONCERTO

by the Composer

I HAVE READ with attention and interest the discussions in the Vienna papers, to which the performance of the *Préludes* and the concert gave rise. As I had previously said to you,* the *doctrinaire* Hanslick could not be favourable to me; his article is perfidious, but on the whole seemly. Moreover it would be an easy matter for me to reduce his arguments to *nil*, and I think he is sharp enough to know that. On a better opportunity this could also be shown to him, without having the appearance of correcting him. I suppose the initials C. D. in the Vienna paper mean Dörffl—or Drechsler? No matter by whom the critique is written, the author convicts himself in it of such intense narrowness that he will be very welcome to many other people less *narrow* than himself. His like has already often existed, but is constantly in demand. The musician nowadays cannot get out of the way of all the buzzing. Twenty years ago there were hardly a couple of musical papers in Europe, and the political papers referred only in the most rare cases, and then only very briefly, to musical matters. Now all this is quite different, and with my *Préludes*, for instance (which, by the way, are only the *prelude* to my path of composition), many dozen critics *by profession* have already pounced on them, in order to ruin me through and through as a composer. I by no means say that present conditions, taken as a whole, are more unfavourable to the musician than the earlier conditions, for all this talk in a hundred papers brings also much good with it, which would not otherwise be so easy to attain;—but simply the thinking and creative artist must not allow himself to be misled by it, and must go his own gait quietly and undisturbed, as they say the hippopotamus does, in spite of all the arrows which rebound from his thick skin. An original thinker says, “As one emblem and coat of arms I show a tree violently blown by the storm, which nevertheless shows its red fruit on all the boughs, with the motto, *Dum convellor mitescunt*; or also, *Conquassatus sed ferax* . . .”

* Written to his brother Eduard, from Weimar, March 26, 1857.

I have, as usual, thought over your musical remarks and reflections. The fourth movement of the Concerto,* from the allegro marziale, corresponds with the second movement, adagio. It is only an urgent recapitulation of the earlier subject-matter with quickened, livelier rhythm, and contains *no* new motive, as will be clear to you by a glance through the score. This kind of *binding together* and rounding off a whole piece at its close is somewhat my own, but it is quite maintained and justified from the standpoint of musical form.

The trombones and basses take up the second part of the motive of the adagio (B major). The pianoforte figure which follows is no other than the reproduction of the motive which was given in the adagio by flute and clarinet, just as the concluding passage is a *variante* and working up in the major of the motive of the scherzo, until finally the first motive on the dominant pedal B flat, with a shake accompaniment, comes in and concludes the whole.

The scherzo in E flat minor, from the point where the triangle begins, I employed for the effect of contrast.

As regards the triangle I do not deny that it may give offense, especially if struck too strong and not precisely. A preconceived disinclination and objection to instruments of percussion prevails, somewhat justified by the frequent misuse of them. And few conductors are circumspect enough to bring out the rhythmic element in them, without the raw addition of a coarse noisiness, in works in which they are deliberately employed according to the intention of the composer. The dynamic and rhythmic spicing and enhancement, which are effected by the instruments of percussion, would in more cases be much more effectually produced by the careful trying and proportioning of insertions and additions of that kind. But musicians who wish to appear serious and solid prefer to treat the instruments of percussion *en canaille*, which must not make their appearance in the seemly company of the symphony. They also bitterly deplore, inwardly, that Beethoven allowed himself to be seduced into using the big drum and triangle in the finale of the Ninth Symphony. Of Berlioz, Wagner, and my humble self, it is no wonder that "like draws to like," and, as we are treated as impotent *canaille* amongst musicians, it is quite natural that we should be on good terms with the *canaille* among the instruments. Certainly here, as in all else, it is the right thing to seize upon and hold fast [the] mass of harmony. In face of the most wise proscription of the learned critics I shall, however, continue to employ instruments of

* No. 1, in E flat major.

percussion, and think I shall yet win for them some effects little known.

I hear from Paris that at all the street corners there they are selling a little pamphlet for a *sou* entitled "*Le seul moyen de ne pas mourir le 13 Juin à l'apparition de la Comète.*" * The only means is to drown oneself on the 12th of June. Much of the good advice which is given to me by the critics is very like this *seul moyen*. Yet we will not drown ourselves—not even in the lukewarm waters of criticism—and will also for the future stand firm on our own legs with a good conscience.

* "The only means how not to die on the 13th of June at the appearance of the comet."

MOZART

THE COMPOSITION OF "DIE ENTFÜHRUNG" AND COMMENTS ON CONTEMPORARIES

by the Composer

AS THE ORIGINAL text began with a monologue,* I asked Herr Stephanie to make a little *arietta* out of it—and then to put in a duet instead of making the two chatter together after Osmin's short song. As we have given the part of Osmin to Herr Fischer, who certainly has an excellent bass voice (in spite of the fact that the Archbishop told me that he sang too low for a bass and that I assured him that he would sing higher next time), we must take advantage of it, particularly as he has the whole Viennese public on his side. But in the original libretto Osmin has only this short song and nothing else to sing, except in the trio and the finale; so he has been given an aria in Act I, and he is to have another in Act II. I have explained to Stephanie the words I require for this aria—indeed I had finished composing most of the music for it before Stephanie knew anything whatever about it. I am enclosing only the beginning and the end, which is bound to have a good effect. Osmin's rage is rendered comical by the accompaniment of the Turkish music. In working out the aria I have given full scope now and then to Fischer's beautiful deep notes (in spite of our Salzburg Midas†). The passage *Drum beim Barte des Propheten* is indeed in the same tempo, but with quick notes; but as Osmin's rage gradually increases, there comes (just when the aria seems to be at an end) the *allegro assai*, which is in a totally different measure and in a different key; this is bound to be very effective. For just as a man in such a towering rage oversteps all the bounds of order, moderation and propriety and completely forgets himself, so must the music too forget itself. But as passions, whether violent or not, must never be expressed in such a way as to excite disgust, and as music, even in the most terrible situations, must never offend the ear, but must please the hearer, or in other words must never cease to be *music*, I have gone from F (the key in which the aria is written), not into a remote

* Written from Vienna to his father, September 26, 1781.

† The Archbishop.

key, but into a related one, not, however, into its nearest relative D minor, but into the more remote A minor. Let me now turn to Belmonte's aria in A major, *O wie ängstlich, o wie feurig*. Would you like to know how I have expressed it—and even indicated his throbbing heart? By the two violins playing octaves. This is the favourite aria of all those who have heard it, and it is mine also. I wrote it expressly to suit Adamberger's voice. You feel the trembling—the faltering—you see how his throbbing breast begins to swell; this I have expressed by a crescendo. You hear the whispering and the sighing—which I have indicated by the first violins with mutes and a flute playing in unison.

The Janissary chorus is, as such, all that can be desired, that is, short, lively and written to please the Viennese. I have sacrificed Constanze's aria a little to the flexible throat of Mlle. Cavalieri, *Trennung war mein banges Los und nun schwimmt mein Aug' in Tränen*. I have tried to express her feelings, as far as an Italian bravura aria will allow it. I have changed the *Hui* to *schnell*, so it now runs thus—*Doch wie schnell schwand meine Freude*. I really don't know what our German poets are thinking of. Even if they do not understand the theatre, or at all events operas, yet they should not make their characters talk as if they were addressing a herd of swine. *Hui*, sow!

Now for the trio at the close of Act I. Pedrillo has passed off his master as an architect—to give him an opportunity of meeting his Constanze in the garden. Bassa Selim has taken him into his service. Osmin, the steward, knows nothing of this, and being a rude churl and a sworn foe to all strangers, is impertinent and refuses to let them into the garden. It opens quite abruptly—and because the words lend themselves to it, I have made it a fairly respectable piece of real three-part writing. Then the major key begins at once pianissimo—it must go very quickly—and wind up with a great deal of noise, which is always appropriate at the end of an act. The more noise the better, and the shorter the better, so that the audience may not have time to cool down with their applause.

Belmonte's aria (*O wie ängstlich*) could hardly be better written for music.* Except for *Hui* and *Kummer ruht in meinem Schoss* (for sorrow cannot rest), the aria too is not bad, particularly the first part. Besides, I should say that in an opera the poetry must be altogether the obedient daughter of the music. Why do Italian comic operas please everywhere—in spite of their miserable li-

* Also from Vienna, October 13, 1781.

bretti—even in Paris, where I myself witnessed their success? Just because there the music reigns supreme and when one listens to it all else is forgotten. Why, an opera is sure of success when the plot is well worked out, the words written solely for the music and not shoved in here and there to suit some miserable rhyme (which, God knows, never enhances the value of any theatrical performance, be it what it may, but rather detracts from it)—I mean, words or even entire verses which ruin the composer's whole idea. Verses are indeed the most indispensable element for music—but rhymes—solely for the sake of rhyming—the most detrimental. Those high and mighty people who set to work in this pedantic fashion will always come to grief, both they and their music. The best thing of all is when a good composer, who understands the stage and is talented enough to make sound suggestions, meets an able poet, that true phoenix; in that case no fears need be entertained as to the applause even of the ignorant. Poets almost remind me of trumpeters with their professional tricks! If we composers were always to stick so faithfully to our rules (which were very good at a time when no one knew better), we should be concocting music as unpalatable as their libretti.

COMMENTS ON CONTEMPORARIES

I MUST BE quite brief today,* as I have no more paper in the house. Yesterday, Wednesday, the 19th, the gala began again. I went to the service, brand new music composed by Vogler. I had already been to the afternoon rehearsal the day before yesterday, but went off immediately after the Kyrie. I have never in my life heard such stuff. In many places the parts simply do not harmonise. He modulates in such a violent way as to make you think that he is resolved to drag you with him by the scruff of the neck; not that there is anything remarkable about it all to make it worth the trouble; no, it is all clumsy plunging. I will not say anything about the way in which the ideas are worked out. I will only say that it is impossible that a mass of Vogler's should please any composer who is worthy of the name. To put it briefly, if I hear an idea which is not at all bad—well—it will certainly not remain *not at all bad* for long, but will soon become—beautiful? God forbid!—bad and thoroughly bad; and that in two or three different ways. Either the idea has scarcely been introduced before another comes along and ruins it; or he does not round it off naturally enough to preserve

* To his father, from Mannheim, November 20, 1777.

its merit; or it is not in the right place; or, finally, it is ruined by the instrumentation. That's Vogler's music. Cannabich is now a much better composer than he was when we knew him in Paris.* But what Mamma and I noticed at once about the symphonies here is that they all begin in the same manner, always with an introduction in slow time and in unison.

The organ in the Lutheran church which has just been tried to-day† is very good, both in the full and in single stops. Vogler played it. He is, to put it bluntly, a trickster pure and simple. As soon as he tries to play *maestoso*, he becomes as dry as dust; and it is a great relief that playing upon the organ bores him and that therefore it doesn't last long. But what is the result? An unintelligible muddle. I listened to him from a distance. He then began a fugue, in which one note was struck six times and presto. Whereupon I went up to him. Indeed I would much rather watch him than hear him.

* In 1766, when Mozart was ten years old.

† To his father from Mannheim, December 18, 1777.

SULLIVAN

ON SETTING A TEXT

by the Composer

"THE FIRST THING I* have to decide upon is the rhythm, and I arrange the rhythm before I come to the question of melody. As an instance let us take

Were I thy bride,
Then all the world beside
Were not too wide
To hold my wealth of love
Were I thy bride!

Upon thy breast
My loving head would rest,
As on her nest
The tender turtle-dove—
Were I thy bride!

You will see that as far as the rhythm is concerned, and quite apart from the unlimited possibilities of melody, there are a good many ways of treating those words," and that I might not be unconvinced Sir Arthur sat down at his table and worked out the little exercises in rhythm, in the form of dummy bars, reproduced in this chapter.† This essay in rhythm will be of interest to musicians, and it will be seen that the rhythm given last, as being that ultimately selected, is best suited to the sentiment and construction of the lines.

"You see that five out of six methods were commonplace, and my first aim has always been to get as much originality as possible in the rhythm, approaching the question of melody afterwards. Of course, melody may come before rhythm with other composers, but it is not so with me. If I feel that I cannot get the accent right in any other way, I mark out the metre in dots and dashes, and it is only after I have decided the rhythm that I proceed to notation.

"My first work—the jotting down of the melodies—I term 'sketches.' They are hieroglyphics which, possibly, would seem undecipherable. It is my musical shorthand, and, of course, it means much to me. When I have finished these sketches the creative part of my work is completed. After that comes the orchestration, which is, of course, a very essential part of the whole work, and entails some severe manual labour. Apart from getting into the swing of composition, it is often an hour before my hand is steady

* From *Sir Arthur Sullivan's Life Story* published in 1899.

† See page 262.

Enlarge in eighth

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Enlarge in eighth". The score is written on ten staves, each with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes. The text is as follows:

Verse 1: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 2: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 3: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 4: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 5: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 6: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 7: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 8: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 9: Verse of thy faith thou art all the
 Verse 10: Verse of thy faith thou art all the

The musical notation consists of rhythmic patterns of eighth notes, often beamed together in groups of four or six. There are various musical markings such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings (e.g., *mf*, *ff*) throughout the score. The lyrics are written in a cursive hand, and the overall appearance is that of a working draft or a composer's sketch.

enough to shape the notes well and with sufficient rapidity. When I have made a beginning, however, I work very rapidly.

"You must remember that a piece of music which will only take two minutes in actual performance—quick time—may necessitate two or three days' hard work in the mere manual labour of orchestration, apart from the question of composition. The literary man can avoid sheer manual labour in a number of ways, but you cannot dictate musical notation to a secretary. Every note must be written in your own hand, there is no other way of getting it done; and every opera means four or five hundred folio pages of music, every crotchet and quaver of which has to be written out by the composer. Then, again, your ideas are pages and pages ahead of your poor, over-worked fingers."

To carry on the description of the method of work adopted for the operas, Sir Arthur continues:

"When the 'sketch' is completed, which means writing, re-writing, and alterations of every description, the work is drawn out in so-called 'skeleton score,' that is, with all the vocal parts, rests for symphonies, etc., completed, but without a note of accompaniment or instrumental work of any kind, although, naturally, I have all that in mind.

"Then the voice parts are written out by the copyist, and the rehearsals begin. On those occasions I vamp an accompaniment, or, in my absence, the accompanist of the theatre does so. It is not until the music has been thoroughly learnt, and the rehearsals on the stage, with the necessary action and 'business,' are well advanced, that I begin orchestration.

"As soon as the orchestration is finished, the band parts are copied, two or three rehearsals of the orchestra only are held, then the orchestra and the voices together without any stage business or action; and, finally, three or four full rehearsals of the complete work on the stage are enough to prepare the work for presentation to the public."

Meanwhile the full score has been taken in hand, and from it an accompaniment for the voice parts has been "reduced" for the piano, so that the "words and music," that is to say, music for the piano as an accompaniment to the voice parts, is ready for the public simultaneously with the production.

R. STRAUSS

PROBLEMS OF FORM

by the Composer

I THINK IT would be in vain to try the F minor symphony again in Karlsruhe, after Mottl sending back the score last year with his regrets that he could not perform it.* At the risk of a flop I shall have to try No. 2 there, which I think of sending shortly to Mottl with a polite dedication. *Macbeth* meanwhile lies silent and buried in my desk, the dissonances thus put to rest devouring one another there. Perhaps *Don Juan* will join him soon. Perhaps one day there will come into bloom on both graves that sage little flower to whose quiet poetry of the double wood I am gradually trying to reconcile myself. But seriously: I promise you double woodwind in my future work for certain! I'll also take the greatest trouble imaginable to limit the big technical difficulties. But whether I can immediately reverse the direction in which I have been moving by way of development from the F minor symphony is something about which I cannot yet give an assurance. A linking up with the Beethoven of *Coriolan*, *Egmont*, the *Leonore III Overture*, of *Les Adieux*, above all with late Beethoven, whose complete *oeuvre*, in my opinion, could never have been created without a poetic subject, seems to me the only course for the time being by which an *independent further* development of our instrumental music is yet possible. If I lack the artistic power and talent to achieve something worthwhile in this direction, then it is certainly better to let it rest with the big nine and their four distinguished offshoots;† I don't understand why, before we have tried our strength to see whether we are capable of independent creativity and perhaps advancing our art by a tiny step, we immediately want to talk ourselves into decadence and assume the attitude of decadence in advance; if nothing comes of it—well: I still think it is better perhaps to have taken a wrong turning and said something wrong, but in pursuit of one's genuine artistic conviction, than to have said something superfluous on the old, well trodden high road.

Allow me one further brief unburdening, in which I may per-

* Written to Bülow from Munich, August 24, 1888.

† The Fourth of Brahms was only three years old at the time.

haps succeed in clarifying my point of view, perhaps I can say to you in writing what I could never have said verbally.

From the F minor symphony onwards I have found myself in a gradually ever increasing contradiction between the musical-poetic content that I want to convey [and] the ternary sonata form that has come down to us from the classical composers. In the case of Beethoven the musical-poetic content was for the most part completely covered by this very *sonata form*, which he raised to its highest point, wholly expressing in it what he felt and wanted to say. Yet already there are to be found works of his (the last movement of the A flat major sonata, adagio of the A minor quartet, etc.), where for a new content he had to devise a new form. Now, what was for Beethoven a *form* absolutely in congruity with the highest, most glorious content, is now, after 60 years, used as a formula inseparable from our instrumental music (which I strongly dispute), simply to accommodate and enclose a "pure musical" (in the strictest and narrowest meaning of the word) content, or worse, to stuff and expand a content with which it does not correspond.

If you want to create a work of art that is unified in its mood and consistent in its structure, and if it is to give the listener a clear and definite impression, then what the author wants to say must have been just as clear and definite in his own mind. This is only possible through the inspiration by a *poetical idea*, whether or not it be introduced as a programme. I consider it a legitimate artistic method to create a correspondingly new form for every new subject, to shape which neatly and perfectly is a very difficult task, but for that very reason the more attractive. Of course, purely formalistic, Hanslickian music-making will no longer be possible, and we cannot have any more random patterns, that mean nothing either to the composer or the listener, and no symphonies (Brahms excepted, of course) that always give me the impression of being giant's clothes, made to fit a Hercules, in which a thin tailor is trying to comport himself elegantly.

WAGNER

THE COMPOSITION OF "TRISTAN UND ISOLDE"

by the Composer

I HAVE DETERMINED to finish at once *Tristan und Isolde* on a moderate scale, which will make its performance easier, and to produce it next year at Strassburg with Niemann and Madame Meyer.* There is a beautiful theatre there, and the orchestra and the other not very important characters I hope to get from a neighbouring German court-theatre. In that manner I must try (D.V.) to produce something myself and in my own way which will once more restore freshness and artistic conscientiousness to me. Apart from this, such an undertaking offers me the only possible chance of sustaining my position. It was only by a somewhat frivolous proceeding—the sale of *Tannhäuser* to the Josephstadt Theatre at Vienna—that I succeeded in preserving my equilibrium, and this will soon again be threatened, or, at least, is so absolutely insecure, that I had to think of something which would free me from care. For so much I may assume that a thoroughly practicable work, such as *Tristan* is to be, will quickly bring me a good income, and keep me afloat for a time. In addition to this, I have a curious idea. I am thinking of having a good Italian translation made of this work in order to produce it as an Italian opera at the theatre of Rio de Janeiro, which will probably give my *Tannhäuser* first. I mean to dedicate it to the Emperor of Brazil, who will soon receive copies of my last three operas, and all this will, I trust, realise enough to keep me out of harm's way for a time. Whether, after that, my *Nibelungen* will appeal to me again I cannot foresee; it depends upon moods over which I have no control. For once I have used violence against myself. Just as I was in the most favourable mood I have torn Siegfried from my heart, and placed him under lock and key as one buried alive. There I shall keep him, and no one shall see anything of him, as I had to shut him out from myself. Well, perhaps this sleep will do him good; as to his awaking I decide nothing. I had to fight a hard and painful battle before I got to this point. Well, it is settled so far.

* Written to Liszt from Zurich, May 8, 1857.

P A R T F I V E : A U D I E N C E S

THE CLAQUE

by Berlioz

A VERY FLAT MODERN opera is played.* An *habitué* of the parquet-stalls, who seemed deeply interested in the readings and stories of the musicians on previous evenings, leans over into the orchestra and addresses me: "Sir, you commonly live in Paris, do you not?" "Yes, sir, I even live there uncommonly, and often more than I could wish." "In that case you must be familiar with the singular dialect spoken there, and which your papers also use sometimes. Will you please explain to me what they mean, when in describing certain occurrences that seem to be pretty frequent at dramatic performances, they talk about the Romans?" "Yes," say several musicians at once, "what is meant by that word in France?" "Why, gentlemen, you ask me for no less than a course of Roman history." "Well, why not?" "I fear that I have not the talent of being brief." "Oh, if that is all, the opera is in four acts, and we are with you up to eleven o'clock."

So, to bring myself at once into relations with the great men of this history, I will not go back to the sons of Mars, nor to Numa Pompilius; I will jump with my feet well under me over the kings, the dictators, and the consuls; and yet I must entitle the first chapter of my history: *DE VIRIS ILLUSTRIBUS ROMÆ*.

Nero—(you see that I pass without transition to the time of the emperors), Nero having formed a corporation of men whose duty it

* This is the seventh of Berlioz's *Evenings in the Orchestra*, originally published in 1852. Its modernity and appropriateness remain amazing today, save if one recalls that two things have not changed—the operas and the audience.—Ed.

was to applaud him when he sang in public, the name of *Romans* is given in France to-day to professional applauders, vulgarly called *claqueurs*, or bouquet-throwers, and in general to all undertakers of success and enthusiasm. There are several kinds.

The mother who courageously calls everybody's attention to the wit and beauty of her daughter, who is moderately beautiful and very silly; that mother who, in spite of her extreme love for her child, will make up her mind at the soonest possible moment to a cruel separation and place her in the arms of a husband, is a Roman.

The author who, foreseeing the need he will be in next year of the praise of a critic whom he detests, vehemently sings the praises of that same critic on every occasion, is a Roman.

The critic who is little enough of a Spartan to be caught in that clumsy trap becomes a Roman in his turn.

The husband of the *cantatrice* who . . . you understand. But the vulgar Romans, the crowd, the Roman people, in a word is especially composed of those men whom Nero was the first to enlist. They go in the evening to the theatres, and even elsewhere, to applaud, under the direction of a leader and his lieutenants, the artists and works that that leader has pledged himself to uphold.

There are many ways of applauding.

The first, as you all know, consists in making as much noise as possible by striking one hand against the other. And in this first way there are varieties and different shades: the tip of the right hand struck against the palm of the left produces a sharp, reverberating sound that most artists prefer; both hands struck together, on the contrary, have a dull and vulgar sonority; it is only pupil *claqueurs* in their first year, or barbers' apprentices that applaud so.

The gloved *claqueur* dressed like a dandy, stretches his arms affectedly out of his box and claps slowly, almost without noise, and for the eye merely; he thus says to the whole house: "See! I condescend to applaud."

The enthusiastic *claqueur* (for there are such) claps quick, loud, and long; his head turns to the right and left during this applause; then, these demonstrations not being enough, he stamps, he cries: "Bravó! Bravó!" (note well the circumflex over the *o*) or "Bravà!" (that one is learned, he has frequented the Italiens, he knows the difference between masculine and feminine) and redoubles his clamor in the ratio that the cloud of dust raised by his stamping increases in density.

The *claqueur* disguised as an old gentleman of property, or as a

colonel, strikes the floor with the end of his cane with a paternal air, and in moderation.

The violinist-*claqueur*, for we have many artists in the Paris orchestras, who either to pay their court to the director of the theatre, or their conductor, or to some beloved and powerful *cantatrice*, enlist for the time being in the Roman army; the violinist-*claqueur*, I say, taps the body of his violin with the back of his bow. This applause, rarer than the other kinds, is consequently more sought after. Unfortunately, cruel disenchantments have taught the gods and goddesses that they can hardly ever tell when the applause of the violins is ironical or serious. Hence the anxious smile of the divinities when they receive this homage.

The kettle-drummer applauds by beating his drums; which does not happen once in fifteen years.

The Roman ladies applaud sometimes with their gloved hands, but their influence has its full effect only when they cast their bouquets at the feet of the artist they uphold. As this sort of applause is rather expensive, it is commonly the nearest relation, the most intimate friend of the artist, or the artist himself who bears the expense. So much is given to the flower-throwers for their flowers, and so much for their enthusiasm; besides, a man or a nimble boy must be paid to go behind the scenes after the first shower of flowers, pick them up and bring them back to the Roman ladies in the stage-boxes, who use them a second and often a third time.

We have also the sensitive Roman, who weeps, has nervous attacks, faints away. A very rare species, nearly extinct, closely related to the family of the giraffes.

But to confine ourselves to the study of the Roman people, properly so called, here is how and under what conditions they work:

Given a man who, either from the impulse of a natural vocation, or by long and arduous studies, has succeeded in acquiring a real talent as a Roman: he goes to the director of a theatre and says to him pretty much as follows: "Sir, you are at the head of a dramatic enterprise the strong and weak points of which are known to me; you have as yet nobody to direct the *success*; intrust me with that; I offer you 20,000 francs down, and 10,000 francs per annum." "I want 30,000 francs down," the director usually answers. "Ten thousand francs ought not to stand in the way of our bargain; I will bring them to-morrow." "You have my word. I shall require a hundred men for ordinary occasions, and at least five hundred for

first performances and important first appearances." "You shall have them, and more too."

"What!" said one of the musicians, interrupting me, "is it the director that is payed! . . . I always thought it was the other party!" Yes, sir, those offices are bought, like the business of an exchange, or the practice of a lawyer or a notary.

When he once holds his *commission*, the head of the bureau of success, the emperor of the Romans, easily recruits his army among hair-dressers' apprentices, commercial travelers, cab-drivers *on foot*,* poor students, aspirants to the supernumerariat etc., etc., who have a passion for the theatre. He usually chooses a place of meeting for them, which is some obscure café, or a drinking place near to the centre of operations. There he counts them, gives them his instructions and tickets to the pit, or the third gallery, for which the poor devils pay thirty or forty sous, or less, according to the round of the theatrical ladder their establishment is on. The lieutenants alone always have free tickets. On great days they are paid by their chief. It even happens when a new work is to be *made to foam up from the bottom* (if it costs the direction of the theatre a great deal of money) that the chief not only does not find enough paying Romans, but cannot even find any devoted soldiers ready to give battle for the love of art. He is then obliged to pay the complement of his troupe, and to give each man as much as three francs and a glass of brandy.

But in that case the emperor, on his part, does not only receive pit-tickets; it is bank-notes that fall into his pocket, and in almost incredible numbers. One of the artists who is to appear in the new piece wishes to be *supported* in an exceptional manner; he offers a few tickets to the emperor. The latter puts on his coldest look, and pulling a handful of square bits of paper from his pocket: "You see," says he, "that I do not want for them. What I want this evening is men, and to get them I must pay for them." The artist takes the hint, and slips a scrap of five hundred francs into Caesar's hand. The superior of the actor who has thus looked out for himself is not long in hearing of this piece of generosity; then the fear of not being *cared for* in proportion to his merit, considering the extraordinary *care* that is to be taken of his second, makes him offer the undertaker of successes a real note of 1,000 francs, and sometimes more. And so on from the head to the foot of the *dramatis per-*

* When a cab-driver has incurred the displeasure of the Prefect of Police, the latter forbids him to work at his trade of coachman for two or three weeks, in which case the unlucky fellow does not make anything, and does not, certainly, drive in a carriage. He is on foot. At such times he often enlists in the Roman infantry.—(Author's note.)

sonae. You understand now why and how the director of the theatre is paid by the director of the *claque* and how easy it is for the latter to make money.

The first great Roman that I knew at the Opera in Paris was called Auguste: the name is a lucky one for a Caesar. I have rarely seen more imposing majesty than his. He was a good prince, nevertheless; and an habitu  of the pit, as I was then, I was often the object of his benevolence. Besides, my fervor in applauding spontaneously Gluck and Spontini, Madame Branchu and D rivis, gained for me his particular esteem. Having brought out at that time my first score (a high-mass) at the Church of Saint-Roch, the old *d vot s*, the leaser of chairs, the man who passes around the holy water, the beadle and all the loungers of the quarter showed themselves very well satisfied, and I had the simplicity to think I had had a success at the very most; I was not long in finding it out. Seeing me again two days after that performance: "Well!" said the emperor Auguste to me, "So you came out at Saint-Roch day before yesterday? Why in the devil didn't you let me know of it beforehand? We should have all been there." "Ah! are you so fond of sacred music as that?" "Why no, what an ideal but we would have warmed you up well." "How so? but you cannot applaud in church." "You cannot applaud, no; but you can cough, and blow your nose, and hitch your chair, and scrape with your feet, and say: Hm! Hm! and raise your eyes to heaven; all that sort of thing, hey! we would have made you foam up a bit; an *entire success* just like a fashionable preacher."

Two years later I again forgot to notify him when I gave my first concert at the Conservatoire, but Auguste came, notwithstanding, with two of his aides-de-camp; and in the evening when I re-appeared in the pit at the Opera, he gave me his mighty hand, saying in paternal accents that carried conviction with them (in French of course): "Tu Marcellus eris!"

(At this point Bacon, the viola, nudges his neighbor with his elbow and asks him softly what those three words mean. "I don't know," answers the other. "It is from Virgil," says Corsino, the first violin, who has heard the question and answer. "It means: 'You shall be Marcellus!'" "Well . . . what is the good of being Marcellus?" "Not being a fool, be quiet!")

But the masters of the *claque* are not very fond, in general, of such ebullient amateurs as I was; they profess a distrust that amounts to antipathy for such adventurers, *condottieri*, lost children of enthusiasm, who come in all giddiness and *without rehearsals*, to applaud in their ranks. One day of a first performance at which there

was to be, to use the Roman phrase, a *famous pull*, that is to say, great difficulty for Auguste's soldiers in conquering the public, I had happened to sit down on a bench in the pit that the emperor had marked on his plan of operations as belonging by rights exclusively to himself. I had been there a good half hour under the hostile glances of all my neighbors, who seemed to be asking themselves how to get rid of me, and I was asking myself with a certain anxiety, in spite of the purity of my conscience, what I could have done to those officers, when the emperor Auguste, rushing into the midst of his staff, came to tell me, speaking with a certain sharpness but without violence (I have already said that he was my patron): "My dear sir, I am obliged to disturb you; you cannot stay there." "Why not?" "Well because! . . . it is impossible; you are in the middle of my first line, and you *cut me in two*." I hastened, you may believe, to leave the field free for this great tactician.

Any other stranger, mistaking the urgencies of the position, would have resisted the emperor, and thus compromised the success of his combinations. Hence the opinion, founded on a long series of learned observations, an opinion openly professed by Auguste and his whole army: *the public is of no use in a theatre; it is not only of no use, but it spoils everything. As long as the public comes to the Opéra, the Opéra will not get on*. The directors in those days called him a madman when he uttered these proud words. Great Auguste! He did not dream that, in a few years after his death, such brilliant justice would be done to his doctrines! His lot was that of all men of genius, to be misunderstood by their contemporaries, and taken at an advantage by their successors.

No, never did a more intelligent and worthy dispenser of glory sit enthroned under the chandelier of a theatre.

In comparison with Auguste, he who now reigns at the Opéra is but a Vespasian, a Claudius. His name is David. And who would give him the title of emperor? Nobody. His flatterers dare to call him king at the very most, on account of his name solely.

The illustrious chief of the Romans at the Opéra-Comique is Albert; but in speaking of him, as of his old namesake, they call him Albert the Great.

He was the first to put Auguste's daring theory in practice, by pitilessly excluding the public from first performances. On those days, if we except critics, who also for the most part belong in one way or another *viris illustribus urbis Romae*, the house is now filled from top to bottom with *claqueurs*.

It is to Albert the Great that we owe the touching custom of re-

calling all the actors at the end of a new piece. King David was quick to imitate him in this; and, emboldened by the success of this first improvement, he added that of recalling the tenor as many as three times in an evening. A god who should be recalled like a simple mortal only once at the end of a state performance, would *get into an oven*. Hence it is followed that if David, in spite of all his efforts, could not obtain more than this slim result for a generous tenor, his rivals of the Théâtre-Français and the Opéra-Comique would laugh at him the next day, saying: "David *warmed up the oven* yesterday." I will give an explanation of these Roman technicalities by and by. Unfortunately, Albert the Great, tired of power, no doubt, saw fit to lay down his sceptre. In giving it into the hands of his obscure successor, he would willingly have said, like *Sulla* in M. de Jouy's tragedy:

"J'ai gouverné sans peur et j'abdique sans crainte" (I have ruled without fear, and I abdicate without dread), if the verse had only been better. But Albert is a man of wit, he execrates mediocre literature; which might in the end explain his anxiety to leave the Opéra-Comique.

Another great man whom I did not know, but whose reputation in Paris is immense, ruled, and I believe still rules, at the Gymnase-Dramatique. His name is Sauton. He has furthered the progress of art on a broad and new path. He has established friendly relations of equality and fraternity between the Romans and authors; a system which David too, that plagiarist, was quick to adopt. You now find the chief of the *claque* seated familiarly at the table not only of Melpomene, or Thalia, or Terpsichore, but even of Apollo and Orpheus. He pledged his signature for them, he helps them from his own purse in their secret embarrassments, he protects them, he loves them from his heart.

The following admirable speech of the emperor Sauton to one of our cleverest authors, and one of the least inclined to save up money, is quoted:

At the end of a cordial breakfast, at which the cordials had not been spared, Sauton, red with emotion, twisting up his napkin, at last found enough courage to say, without too much stuttering, to his host:—"My dear D***, I have a great favor to ask of you . . ." "What is that? speak out!" "Allow me to . . . thee-and-thou you . . . let us thee-and-thou each other!" "Willingly. Sauton, lend me (*prête-moi*) a thousand crowns." "Ah! my dear friend, you (*tu*) enchant me!" And, pulling out his pocket-book: "Here they are!"

I cannot draw for you, gentlemen, the portrait of all the illustrious men of the city of Rome; I have neither the time nor the

biographical knowledge. I will only add to what I have said of the three heroes I have just had the honor to entertain you with, that Auguste, Albert, and Sauton, though rivals, were always united. They did not imitate, during their triumvirate, the wars and perfidy that dishonor that of Antony, Octavius and Lepidus. Far from it; whenever there was at the Opéra one of those terrible performances at which a shining, formidable, epic victory must positively be won, a victory that Pindar and Homer would be powerless to sing, Auguste, disdainful of raw recruits, would make an appeal to his triumvirs. They, proud to rush into hand to hand conflict by the side of so great a man, would consent to acknowledge him as a leader, and bring him, Albert his indomitable phalanx, Sauton his light troops, all filled with that ardor that nothing can resist, and which begets prodigies. These three select bodies were united in a single army, on the eve of the performance, in the pit of the Opéra. Auguste, with his plan, libretto in his hand, would put his troops through a laborious rehearsal, profiting at times by the remarks of Antony and Lepidus, who had but few to make; so rapid and sure was the glance of Auguste, such penetration had he to divine the enemy's intentions, such genius to thwart them, such judgment not to attempt the impossible. And then, what a triumph on the morrow! What acclamations, what *spolia optima!* which indeed were not offered to Jupiter Stator, but came from him, on the contrary, and from twenty other gods.

Such are the priceless services rendered to art and artists by the Roman Nation.

Would you believe, gentlemen, that there has been some talk of dismissing them from the Opéra? Several newspapers announce this reform, which we shall not believe in, even if we ourselves are witnesses to it. The *claque*, in fact, has become a necessity of the times; it has introduced itself everywhere, under all forms, under all masks, under every pretext. It reigns and governs at the theatres, in the concert-room, at the clubs, in church, in industrial societies, in the press, even in the drawing-room. As soon as twenty assembled individuals are called to decide upon the deeds, actions or ideas of any one individual who attitudinizes before them, you may be sure that at least one-quarter of the Areopagus is put by the side of the remaining three-quarters to *set fire* to them, if they are inflammable, and to show its ardor alone if they are not. In the latter very frequent case, this isolated and already determined upon enthusiasm is still enough to flatter most self-loves. Some succeed in deceiving themselves about the real value of a suffrage so obtained; others do not in the least, and desire it notwithstanding.

These have got to the point that, if they had no live men at command to applaud them, would yet be happy at the applause of a troupe of manikins, even at the sight of a clapping machine; they would turn the crank themselves.

The *claqueurs* at our theatres have become learned practitioners; their trade has raised itself to an art.

People have often admired, but never enough, as I think, the marvelous talent with which Auguste used to *direct* the great works of the modern *repertoire*, and the excellence of the advice he often gave their authors. Hidden in his parquet-box, he was present at every rehearsal of the artists, before having his own with his army. Then when the *maestro* said to him: "Here you will give three rounds, there you will call out *encore*," he would answer with imperturbable assurance, as the case might be: "Sir, it is *dangerous*," or else: "It shall *be done*," or: "I will think about it, my mind is not yet made on that point. Have some *amateurs to attack with*, and I will follow them if it *takes*." It even happened sometimes that Auguste would nobly resist an author who tried to get *dangerous* applause from him, and answer him with: "Sir, I cannot do it. You would compromise me in the eyes of the public, in the eyes of the artists and those of my people, who know very well that that *ought not to be done*. I have my reputation to guard; I, too, have some self-love. Your work is very difficult to *direct*; I will take all possible pains, but I do not want to *get hissed*."

By the side of the *claqueurs*, by profession, well-taught, sagacious, prudent, inspired, in a word artists, we also have the occasional *claqueur*, the *claqueur* from friendship or interest; and these will not be banished from the Opéra. They are: simple friends, who admire in good faith all that is to be done on the stage *before the lamps are lighted* (it is true that this species of friend is becoming more rare; those, on the other hand, who disparage everything beforehand, at the time and afterwards, multiply enormously); relations, *those claqueurs given by nature*; editors, ferocious *claqueurs*; and especially lovers and husbands. That is why women, besides the host of other advantages they have over men, have still one more chance of success than they. For a woman can hardly applaud her husband or lover to any purpose in a theatre or a concert room; besides she always has something else to do; while the husband or lover, provided he has the least natural capacity or some elementary notions of the art, can often, by a clever stroke, bring about a *success of renewal* at the theatre, that is to say, a decided success capable of forcing the director to renew an engagement. Husbands are better than lovers for this sort of operation. The

latter usually stand in fear of ridicule; they also fear *in petto* that a too brilliant success may make too many rivals; they no longer have any pecuniary interest in the triumphs of their mistresses; but the husband, who holds the purse-strings, who knows what can be done by a well-thrown bouquet, a well-carried recall, a well taken up salvo, a well-communicated emotion, he alone dares to account what faculties he has. He has the gift of ventriloquism and of ubiquity. He applauds for an instant from the amphitheatre, crying out: "*Brava!*" in a tenor voice, in chest tones; thence he flies to the lobby of the first boxes, and sticking his head through the opening cut in the door, he throws out an "*Admirable!*" in a voice *basso profundo* while passing by, and then he bounds breathless up to the third tier, from whence he makes the house resound with exclamations: "Delicious! ravishing! Heavens! what talent! it is too much!" in a *soprano* voice, in shrill feminine tones stifled with emotion. There is a model husband for you, and a hard-working and intelligent father of a family. As for the husband who is a man of taste, reserved, staying in his seat through a whole act, not daring to applaud even the most superb efforts of his better-half, it may be said without fear of mistake that he is a . . . lost husband, or that his wife is an angel.

Was it not a husband who invented the *hiss of success*; the hiss of enthusiasm, the hiss at high pressure? which is done in the following manner:

If the public, having become too familiar with the talent of a woman who appears before them every day, seems to fall into the apathetic indifference that is brought on by satiety, a devoted and little-known man is stationed in the house to wake them up. At the precise moment when the *diva* has just given manifest proof of her talent, and when the artistic *claqueurs* are doing their best together in the centre of the pit, a shrill and insulting noise starts out from some obscure corner. Then the audience rises like one man, a prey to indignation, and the avenging plaudits burst forth with indescribable frenzy. "What infamy!" is shrieked on every hand. "What a shameful cabal! *Brava! Bravissima!* charming! intoxicating! etc., etc." But this daring feat has to be skillfully performed; there are, moreover, very few women who consent to submit to the fictitious affront of a hiss, however productive it may be afterwards.

Such is the impression that approving or disapproving noises make upon almost all artists, even when these noises express neither admiration nor blame. Habit, their imagination and a little weakness of mind make them feel joy or pain, according as the air in a theatre is set in vibration in one or the other way. The

physical phenomenon is enough, independently of any idea of glory or shame. I am certain that there are actors who are childish enough to suffer when they travel on the railway, on account of the locomotive-whistle.

The art of the *claque* even reacts upon musical composition. It is the numerous varieties of Italian *claqueurs*, either amateurs or artists, that have brought composers to finish all their pieces by that redundant, trivial, ridiculous period that is called *cabaletta*, little cabal, which provokes applause, and is always the same. When the *cabaletta* was no longer enough for them, they introduced the big-drum, the big cabal, which at the present day destroys both music and singers. When they got blasé with the big-drum and found themselves powerless to *carry* the success by the old means, they at last demanded of the poor *maestri* duets, trios and choruses in unison. In some passages they even had to put both voices and orchestra in unison, thus producing an *ensemble* piece in *one* single part, but in which the enormous sonority seems preferable to all harmony, to all instrumentation, to every musical idea, in a word, for *carrying away* the public, and making it believe itself electrified.

Analogous examples abound in the manufacture of literary works.

As for the dancers, their business is perfectly simple; it is agreed upon with the *impresario*: "You will give me so many thousand francs per month, so many *passes* per performance, and the *claque* will give me a *reception* and *exit*, and two rounds at each of my *echos*."

By means of the *claque*, directors make or unmake at will what is still called a success. A single word to the chief of the parterre is enough to undo an artist who has not a talent out of the common run. I remember Auguste saying one evening at the Opéra, passing through the ranks of his army before the curtain rose: "Nothing for M. Dérivis! nothing for M. Dérivis!" The order went round, and during the whole evening Dérivis did not get a single bit of applause. When the director wishes to get rid of a member of his company for some reason or other, he employs this ingenious method, and, after two or three performances at which there *has been nothing* for M*** or Madame***: "You see," says he to the artist, "I cannot keep you; your talent is not sympathetic to the public." It happens, on the other hand, that these tactics miscarry sometimes in the case of an artist of the first rank. "Nothing for him!" has been said at the official centre. But the public, astonished at first at the silence of the Romans, soon begins to see where the

shoe pinches, and sets itself to work most officiously, and with all the more warmth, now that it has a hostile cabal to thwart. The artist then has an exceptional success, a *circular* success, the centre of the pit having no hand in it. But I should not dare to say whether he is more proud of this spontaneous enthusiasm of the public, or angry at the inaction of the *claque*.

To dream of suddenly destroying such an institution in the largest of our theatres, seems to me to be as impossible and insane, as to try to annihilate a religion between this evening and to-morrow.

Can people imagine the disarray of the Opéra? the discouragement, the melancholy, the atrophy, the spleen into which the whole dancing, singing, walking, running, painting and composing people would fall? the disgust of life that would seize hold upon the gods and demi-gods, if a frightful silence should follow every *cabaletta* that was not irreproachably sung or danced? Do people think of the rage of all mediocrity at the sight of true talent getting some applause, while it, that always used to be applauded, cannot now get a hand? It would be as much as recognizing the principle of inequality, and giving a palpable proof of it; and we are a Republic; the word *Equality* is written upon the pediment of the Opéra! Besides, who would recall the leading artist after the third and fifth acts? Who would laugh when some character actor said something silly? Who would cry out: "All! All!" at the end of a performance? Who would cover up the bad note of a bass or tenor with obliging applause, and thus prevent the public from hearing it? It is fit to make a man shudder. Besides, the manoeuvres of the *claque* add interest to the spectacle; people enjoy seeing them at work. This is so true that, if the *claqueurs* were expelled at certain performances, not a person would remain in the house.

No, the suppression of the Romans in France is fortunately a mad dream. The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but Rome is immortal, and the *claque* shall not pass away.

Just listen! . . . *our prima-donna* has taken it into her head to sing with soul, simplicity and good taste the only distinguished melody that is to be found in this poor opera. You will see, she will not get any applause. . . . Ah! I was wrong; yes, they are applauding her; but how? How badly it is done! What an abortion of a salvo, badly attacked, and badly taken up! There is good will enough in the audience, but no science, no *ensemble*, and consequently no effect. If Auguste had had that woman to *care for*, he would have carried the whole house in a trice, and you yourselves, who have no notion of applauding, would have been drawn into his enthusiasm willy-nilly.

I have not yet drawn for you the portrait of a Roman woman; I will do that during the last act of our opera, which will begin soon. Let us have a short *entr'acte*; I am tired.

(The musicians go off a few steps, talking over their reflections in a low voice, while the curtain falls. But three raps of the conductor's *baton* upon his desk announcing the continuation of the performance, my audience groups itself attentively about me.)

Madame Rosenhain

Another Fragment of Roman History

An opera in five acts was *ordered* some years ago of a French composer, whom you do not know, by M. Duponchel. While the last rehearsals were going on, I was reflecting, at my fireside, upon the anguish the unfortunate composer of this opera was then *occupied* in experiencing. I thought of the ever-renewed torments of every description that no one escapes in Paris in such cases, neither the great nor the small, the patient nor the irritable, the humble nor the proud, neither German, Frenchman, nor even Italian. I pictured to myself the atrociously slow rehearsals at which the sad composer thinks himself bound to laugh heartily while death is in his soul, ridiculous sallies which he bestirs himself to answer with the heaviest and dullest stupidities he can think of, that those of the singers may have more point and so seem something akin to wit. I heard the director's voice reprimanding him, treating him like a child, reminding him of the extreme honor they did his work in troubling themselves about it so long; threatening him with its utter and complete abandonment if all were not ready on the fixed day; I saw the slave paralyzed with fear, and blushing at the eccentric reflections of his master (the director) upon music and musicians, at his nonsensical theories of melody, rhythm, instrumentation and style; theories in the exposition of which the director, as usual, treated the great masters like idiots, and idiots like great masters, and mistook the Piraeus for a man. Then the mezzo soprano's leave of absence, and the illness of the bass were announced; they proposed a new beginner to take the part of the artist, and to have a chorus-singer rehearse the leading role. And the composer felt himself choking, but took care not to complain. Oh! the hail, the rain, the icy wind, the woods stripped of their foliage by the winter's breeze, the dark squalls, the muddy sloughs, the ditches covered over by a treacherous crust, the gnawings of hunger, the frights of solitude and night, how sweet it is to think of them in some lodging-

place, were it even as poor as that of the hare in the fable, in the repose of luke-warm inaction; to feel one's sense of comfort *redouble at the far-off noise of the tempest*, and to repeat, while stroking one's beard and luxuriously closing one's eyes like a priest's cat, that prayer of the German poet Heinrich Heine, a prayer, alas! that is so seldom heard: "O Lord! thou knowest that I have an excellent heart, that I am full of pity and sympathy for the woes of others; grant then, if it please thee, that my neighbor may have my ills to endure; I will surround him with such care, such delicate attentions; my pity will be so active, so ingenious, that he will bless Thy right hand, Lord, while receiving such sweet consolation. But to load me with the weight of my own sufferings! to make me suffer myself! Oh! it would be frightful take away from my lips, great God, this cup of bitterness!"

I was thus plunged in pious meditations, when somebody rapped lightly at the door of my oratory. My *valet-de-chambre* being on a mission to a foreign court, I asked myself if I were at home, and, on my reply in the affirmative, I opened the door. A lady appeared, very well dressed and, faith, not too young; she was in all the bloom of her forty-fifth year. I saw at once that she was an artist; there are infallible signs by which these unhappy victims of inspiration are to be known. "Sir, you have lately conducted a grand concert at Versailles, and, up to the last day, I hoped to take part in it . . . ; but what is done is done." "Madame, the program was drawn by the committee of the Association of Musicians; I am not to blame for it. Besides, Madame Dorus-Gras and Madame Widemann . . ." "Oh! those ladies, no doubt, said nothing; but it is no less true that they were probably very much displeased." "With what, if you please?" "That I was not engaged." "You think so?" "I am sure of it. But let us not recriminate on that head. I came, sir, to beg you to be kind enough to recommend me to MM. Roqueplan and Duponchel; my intention is to get an engagement at the Opéra. I was attached to the Théâtre-Italien until last season, and certainly, I can only be proud of the excellent behavior of M. Vatel; but since the revolution of February . . . , you understand that such a theatre cannot do for me." "Madame has, no doubt, good reasons for being severe in her choice of co-workers; but if I might express an opinion . . ." "Useless, sir, my mind is made up, irrevocably made up; it is impossible for me to remain at the Théâtre-Italien under any conditions whatever. Every thing there is profoundly antipathetic to me—the public that comes there, and the public that does not come there; and, although the present condition of the Opéra is hardly brilliant, as my son and both my daughters were engaged there last year by the

new direction, I should be very glad to be admitted there, and shall not haggle about the appointments." "You forget, I see, that as the directors of the Opéra have an excessively superficial knowledge, and a very vague sentiment for music, they naturally have fixed ideas concerning our art, and consequently attach very little value to recommendations, to mine especially. But still, be so good as to tell me what your voice is." "I do not sing." "Then I shall have still less credit since it concerns the ballet." "I do not dance." "Then it is only among walking ladies that you wish admittance?" "I do not walk, sir; You strangely misunderstand me" (*smiling with a touch of irony*). "I am Madame Rosenhain." "Any relation to the pianist?" "No, but Mesdames Persiane, Grisi, Alboni, MM. Mario and Tamburini must have spoken to you about me, seeing that I have, for six years, played a prominent part in their triumphs. I had thought for an instant of going to London to give lessons, as they tell me that they are very moderately advanced over there; but I repeat as my children are at the Opéra . . . , and then the size of the theatre thrown open to my ambition . . ." "Excuse my want of sagacity madam, and be so good as to tell me at last what your special talent is!" "Sir, I am an artist who has made M. Vatel make more money than Rubini himself, and I flatter myself that I can bring about the most favorable reaction in the receipts of the opera, if my two daughters, who have already attracted attention, profit by my example. I am, sir, a *flower-thrower*." "Ah! very well! you are in the Enthusiasm?" "Precisely. This branch of musical art has hardly begun to flourish. Formerly it was the ladies of the upper circles who practiced it, and that nearly gratuitously. You may remember the concerts of M. Liszt and the first appearances of M. Duprez. What volleys of bouquets! What applause! You saw young girls, and even married women, become enthusiastic without regard for modesty; several among them gravely compromised themselves more than once. But what a tumult! what disorder! what quantities of beautiful flowers lost! it was a fearful pity! To-day, as the public no longer put their finger into the pie at all, thanks to heaven and the artists, we have regulated all ovations according to my system, and it is quite another thing.

"Under the last direction of the Opéra our art came near being lost, or at the very least, going backward. They intrusted the part of Enthusiasm to four young, inexperienced dancers, who were personally known to all the *habitués* into the bargain; these children, new to the business, as girls are at that age, took their stations in the house always in the same places, and always threw the same bouquets at the same moment to the same *cantatrice*; so that at last

people began to turn the eloquence of their flowers to derision. My daughters, profiting by my lessons, have reformed that, and I think that now the administration has reason to be entirely satisfied."

"Is your son also in the flower business?" "Oh, as for my son, he excites enthusiasm in another way: he has a superb voice."

"Then why is his name not known to me?"

"He is never down on the posters."

"But he sings?"

"No, sir, he screams, and in difficult cases his voice has often sufficed to carry away the most recalcitrant masses; my son, sir, is for the *recalls*."

"What can he be, a countryman of O'Connell? I do not know that actor."

"My son is for the recall of the leading artists when the audience remains cold and does not recall anybody. You see that he has no sinecure, and that he earns his money well. He had the good fortune, when he made his first appearances at the Théâtre-Français, to find a tragedian there whose name begins with an excellent syllable, the syllable Ra! God knows all the account this Ra! can be turned to! I should have been very anxious about his success at the Opéra when I heard of the retirement of the famous *cantatrice* whose single *O* resounded so well, in spite of the five Teutonic consonants that surround it, if there had not come another *prima-donna*, whose still more advantageous syllable, the syllable Ma, placed my son upon the very pinnacle of success at the first dash. Now you know all."

"Completely. I will tell you, madam, that your talent is the best of all recommendations; that the direction of the Opéra will know how to appreciate it, but that you must present yourself as soon as possible, for they are on the lookout for artists like yourself, and for eight days they have been engaged in the composition of a grand enthusiasm for a third act, in which they take a lively interest."

"Thank you, sir, thank you; I fly to the Opéra."

And the young artist vanished. I have not heard of her since, but I got a proof of the entire success of her application, and the certainty of her making an excellent engagement with the direction of the Opéra. At the first performance of the new work which M. Duponchel had ordered, a perfect avalanche of flowers fell after the third act, and it was easily to be seen by all that they fell from practiced hand. Unfortunately this gracious ovation did not prevent both piece and music from doing as much. ("From doing . . . what?" said Bacon, the simple asker of questions. "From falling flat, you idiot," answered Corsino, roughly. "Come now! your wit is

enormously more obtuse than usual this evening! Go to bed, Basilio.”)

I have now, gentlemen, to explain to you the technical terms most frequently used in the Roman language, terms which only Parisians understand:

TO GET INTO AN OVEN (*faire four*) means to produce no effect, to fall flat on the indifference of the audience.

TO HEAT AN OVEN (*chauffer un four*) is to applaud to no purpose an artist whose talent is powerless to move an audience; this expression is the pendant to that of: *Beating the air*.

TO BE COMFORTABLE (*avoir de l'agrément*) is to be applauded both by the *claque* and by part of the public. Duprez was extraordinarily *comfortable* the day of his first appearance in *Guillaume Tell*.

TO CHEER UP (*égayer*) anybody is to hiss him. This irony is cruel, but it has a hidden meaning that gives it still more edge. No doubt the unlucky artist who gets hissed only experiences a very questionable cheerfulness from the fact, but his rival in the business is cheered up by hearing him hissed, and many other people laugh, *in petto*, at the accident. So that, taken all in all, when any one is hissed, there is always some one cheered up, too.

A PULL (*tirage*) means, in the Roman language, difficulty, work, trouble. Thus the Roman says: “It is a fine work, but we shall have a *pull* to make it go.” Which means that, in spite of all its merit, the work is tiresome, and that it will be only by great efforts that the *claque* can give it the semblance of success.

TO MAKE A RECEPTION (*faire une entrée*) is to applaud an actor as soon as he comes upon the stage, before he has opened his mouth.

TO MAKE AN EXIT (*faire une sortie*) is to pursue him with plaudits and bravos when he leaves the stage, no matter what his last gesture, his last word or scream may have been.

TO SHELTER (*mettre à couvert*) a singer is to applaud him with violent acclamations at the exact moment when he is about to give out a false or cracked note, that the bad note may be thus covered by the noise of the *claque* and that the public may not hear it.

TO SHOW CONSIDERATION (*avoir des égards*) for an artist is to applaud him moderately, even when he has not been able to give any money to the *claque*. It means to encourage him *from friendship*, or *for love*. These last two expressions are equivalent to *gratis*.

TO MAKE FOAM UP WELL, OR FROM THE BOTTOM (*faire mousser solidement*, or, *à fond*) is to applaud with frenzy, with hands, feet, voice and speech. During the *entr'actes*, in such cases, the work or artist must be extolled in the lobbies, in the refreshment rooms, at

the neighboring café, at the cigar-shop, everywhere. One must say: "It is a masterpiece; he has an unique talent, perfectly bewildering! an unrivaled voice! nothing like it has ever been heard!" There is a well-known professor whom the directors of the Paris Opéra always have come from abroad on solemn occasions, to make great works *foam up from the bottom*, by *kindling* the lobbies in a masterly manner. The talent of this Roman master is serious; his seriousness is admirable.

Both these last operations combined are expressed by the words CARE, to CARE FOR (*soins, soigner*).

TO GET . . . LAID HOLD OF (*faire empoigner*) is to applaud a weak thing or artist at the wrong time, which provokes the anger of the public. It sometimes happens that a mediocre *cantatrice*, but one who has power over the director's heart, sings most deplorably. Seated in the centre of the pit, with a sad, overpowered air, the emperor bows his head, thus indicating to his praetorians that they must keep silence, give no sign of satisfaction, unite, in a word, in his sorrowful reflections! But the *diva* does not at all appreciate this prudent reserve; she leaves the stage in a fury, and runs to complain to the director of the stupidity or treason of the *claque*. The director then gives the order that the Roman army shall work vigorously in the next act. To his great regret Caesar sees himself forced to obey. The second act begins, the angry goddess sings more false than before; three hundred pairs of devoted hands applaud her all the same; the public, in a fury, answers these manifestations by a symphony of hisses and Kentish fire, instrumented in the modern style, and of the most ear-splitting sonority.

I think that the use of this expression only goes back to the reign of Charles X, and the memorable *séance* of the Chamber of Deputies, at which a parliamentary thunder-storm broke out, when Manuel allowed himself to say that France had seen the return of the Bourbons with *repugnance*, and M. de Foucault called his *gendarmes* and said to them, pointing out Manuel: "Lay hold of that man there!"

They also say, to denote this disastrous calling forth of hisses, GET AZOR CALLED (*faire appeler Azor*); from the custom of old ladies whistling when they call their dog, who always bears the name of *Azor*.

I have seen Auguste, in despair after one of these catastrophes, ready to kill himself, like Brutus at Philippi. . . . One consideration alone restrained him: he was necessary to his art and country; he must live for them.

TO CONDUCT (*conduire*) a work, is to direct the operations of the Roman army during the performances of such work.

BRRRRR! This noise, which the emperor makes with his mouth in directing certain movements of his troops, and which all his lieutenants can hear, is a signal for them to give extraordinary rapidity to their clapping, and to accompany it with stamping. It is the command to make *foam up well*.

The motion from right to left and from left to right of the imperial head, illumined with a smile, is the signal for moderate laughter.

Caesar's two hands clapped together vigorously and raised for a moment in the air, command a sudden burst of laughter.

If the hands stay in the air longer than usual, the laugh must be prolonged and followed by a round of applause.

HM! thrown out in a certain way, provokes emotion in Caesar's soldiers; they must at such times put on a mollified look, and let fall, with some tears, a murmur of approbation.

There, gentlemen, is all that I can tell you about the illustrious men and women of the city of Rome. I have not lived long enough among them to know more. Excuse the short-comings of the historian.

The amateur in the stalls thanks me most overwhelmingly; he has not lost a word of my story, and I have noticed him furtively taking notes. The gas is put out, and we go away. In coming down stairs: "You do not know who the inquisitive old boy is who asked you about the Romans?" said Dimsky, the first doublebass, with an air of mystery. "No." "He is the director of the theatre in*****; you may be sure that he will profit by all he has heard this evening, and will found an institution in his own town similar to that in Paris." "All right! in that case I am sorry that I did not call his attention to rather an important fact. The directors of the Opéra, those of the Opéra-Comique and of the Théâtre-Français, have gone into partnership to found a Conservatoire, so as to have an experienced young man, a real Caesar, or, at the very least, a young Octavius, at the head of the institution."

"I will write him that; I know him."

"You had better, my dear Dimsky."

"Let us all *care* for our art, and watch over the safety of the empire. Good night!"

AUDIENCES IN VIENNA

by Wolf

TWO WHISPERING NEIGHBORS seated behind me managed, by their inconsiderate behavior, to deprive me of all enjoyment of the overture.* "Lackey-souls" is what Kreisler, the conductor, once termed these disturbers of the peace, these creatures who whimper while the music is played, rattle their fans, stare stupidly around them, greet their acquaintances, wave to their friends, slam their seats, snap their opera-glass cases open and shut, keep time to the music with their stamping feet, or drum out the tempo with their fingers, and perform countless other stupidities. One of these lackey-souls (what a wonderfully fitting phrase) behind me turned to his fellow lackey-soul to pronounce the following memorable words—while the great *Leonora Overture* was being played: "Just look! The audience is as attentive as if it were at a concert!"

I was overwhelmed by this bit of unblushing naïveté. There it was—at last. The natural and obvious behavior of a civilized audience considered curious and abnormal, even though a Zulu Island native could not be anything but absolutely quiet and attentive once the first notes of the overture filled the hall!

Is it any the less music if it is played in a theater instead of a concert hall? Does the quality of the music depend upon the room in which it is played? What hair-raising nonsense! Do Mozart, Wagner and Gluck cease to be music once they are heard in an opera? Are the great pieces of these masters to be used as mere incidents to the tableaux, for the benefit of those bored, dirty, loose lackey-souls, who flitter from box to box, and loge to loge? Truly a dishonorable role for the Muse of our composers—to be riding pack-mules and camels. It is enough to turn a dove into a tiger to see the abandonment of the true, pure and only Muse of our dramatic composers, Gluck, Mozart, Weber, Marschner, and Wagner, to the cold scorn and disdainful stupidity of those who betray their lackey-souls in theaters and concert halls.

What is to be inferred from the above-quoted words of my dear neighbors? That one attends the opera to hear music? Heavens, no—anything but that! Even the best, most sensitive, most thoughtful of these lackey-souls attends the opera only to feed upon the striking scenery, the luscious hips of the ballerina, or the pretty

* This article was written apropos a performance of *Fidelio* in Vienna with Sucher and Vogl in June 1884.

voice of a singer. They have an eye for everything that is insignificant and unimportant. Everything is sympathetically observed but the music. For that they have only a cold and menacing attitude. And these are the best of the lot! Second to them are those theater-goers who attend the opera only to observe Society, fashions, and the latest coiffures, all of which are best visible during the prelude and certain well-lighted scenes.* These people maintain a shatter-proof indifference to even the most sensational and colorful events on the stage. Singers are unimportant. For them the chief role in the opera is played by the virtuosos of opera-glass twirling and handling.

But bad as they are, these lackey-souls are not the worst—the ultimate in the whole category of the species is achieved by those who attend the opera for no other reason than to let themselves be seen. They come regularly only after the last notes of the overture fade away, as noisy in their entrance as poorly mannered children, slamming their seats and snapping their inevitable opera-glass cases open with as much noise as possible before beginning to talk. The conversation is usually lively, and beneath the gaiety and laughter a distinct undertone of business is discerned. "It's going up," "it's going down" are as frequently heard and exchanged in their talk as piano and forte in the orchestra. Figures are sprayed throughout the words, etc., etc., and if ladies are along family matters, too, are not omitted. The cook has a novel way of preparing roast goose; the children are growing up to be *so* talented, clever, and promising. Elsie, the little five-year-old, can already play all of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* by heart! And little Sigismund, or it may be Siegfried, is writing poetry—.

"Too much," I say, agreeing with Tannhäuser, "it's too much."

AUDIENCES IN RUSSIA

by Bülow

I HOPE to be able to think about your symphony† in the second half of the season; if only it were less difficult, or I had more rehearsal time at my disposal. But I have in the first place an orchestra to

* Wolf's outburst is merely a confirmation—if one compares the comments of Berlioz on the Paris audience or those of Newman on the Metropolitan's public—of the opinion that it is the surroundings rather than the city that determine behaviour.

† To Richard Strauss from St. Petersburg, December 18, 1885.

discipline and a public to educate: splendid material in both, but raw, neglected in fact, as a result of the dilettante leadership since Rubinstein's retirement. For the time being I shall have to give up Brahms here; furthermore, the grossly prejudiced attitude of the Asiatic Bruckners is a particular hindrance. To make Brahms acceptable to the masses I should have to add cor anglais, harp and the whole of the percussion, so it is better left unviolated.

PART SIX : MISCELLANEOUS

CREDO

by Wagner

I BELIEVE IN GOD, Mozart, and Beethoven, and in their disciples and apostles;* I believe in the Holy Ghost and the truth of art—one and indivisible; I believe that this art proceeds from God and dwells in the hearts of all enlightened men; I believe that whoever has revelled in the glorious joys of this high art must be forever devoted to it and can never repudiate it; I believe that all may become blessed through this art, and that therefore it is permitted to any one to die of hunger for its sake; I believe that I shall become most happy through death; I believe that I have been on earth a discordant chord, that shall be made harmonious and clear by death. I believe in a last judgment, that shall fearfully damn all those who have dared on this earth to make profit out of this chaste and holy art—who have disgraced it and dishonored it through badness of heart and the coarse instincts of sensuality; I believe that such men will be condemned to hear their own music through all eternity. I believe, on the other hand, that the true disciples of pure art will be glorified in a divine atmosphere of sun-illumined, fragrant concords, and united eternally with the divine source of all harmony. And may a merciful lot be granted me! Amen!

* From the fictional sketch *An End in Paris* published in 1840.

JOURNALISTS

by Brahms

BY WHICH I merely mean that a journalist is in much the same case as a parson.* If you must protest, why stop at defending Heinrich and abusing Fritzscht? Look at your Berlin papers and your Berlin public next time the latest filth from Paris arrives, and then look at the interest and attention men like Heyse, Keller†—and greater than they—receive! And do you really believe they would play one note of my music in Berlin if French composers of today had a shade more talent?—and so on, and so on. I only wish to persuade you to let it pass, remembering that Fritzscht is a decent, well-meaning fellow in himself, and that by going over to the *Hochschule* you have, after all, come within his legitimate line of fire . . .

But I cannot write any more, and would much rather have written of other matters.

Fortunately my sheet is full, and I must not spoil the sweet picture.‡

TALENT AND GENIUS

by Schoenberg

I HAVE TRIED to define the difference between genius and talent as follows:§

Talent is the capacity to learn, genius the capacity to develop oneself. Talent grows by acquiring capacities which already existed outside of itself; it assimilates these, and finally even possesses them. Genius already possesses all its future faculties from the very beginning. It only develops them; it merely unwinds, unrolls, unfolds them. While talent, which has to master a limited material (namely, what is already given) very soon reaches its apex and then usually subsides, the development of the genius, which seeks new pathways into the boundless, extends throughout a lifetime.

* To Elisabeth von Herzogenberg from Vienna, March 1887.

† Paul Heyse and Gottfried Keller were among Brahms' favorite poets.

‡ A portrait of Hans von Bülow adorning the note-paper.

§ From *Style and Idea*.

And therefore it comes about that no one single moment in this development is like another. Each stage is simultaneously a preparation for the next stage. It is an eternal metamorphosis, an uninterrupted growth of new shoots from a single kernel. It is then clear why two widely separated points in this development are so strangely different from each other that at first one does not recognize how much they belong together. Only on closer study does one perceive in the potentialities of the earlier period the certainties of the later one.

CADENZAS

by Moscheles

MEANWHILE I EMPLOY MYSELF, writing cadenzas for Beethoven's concertos, which Sneff intends to publish.* Of course, self-reliant artists, able to write for themselves, have no need of these; they can follow their own inspirations. I hope, however, to make myself useful to less gifted executants . . .

Ernst Pauer is here, a star in our musical firmament; with his light touch and light heart, he is very sympathetic to us. His stay of eight-and-forty hours was much too short for us; but how can a great London professional devote more time to an appearance at the Gewandhaus? In Beethoven's *Concerto in G*, he developed his full technical powers, and I was much interested to find that Haslinger has allowed him to copy the original Manuscript Cadenzas by Beethoven which he had lent me on a former occasion, although he would never publish them. I do not think them up to the exalted level of the grand concerto, and discard them in consequence. Pauer played one, without making any marked effect with it, not a soul asked who wrote it; in fact the cadenzas do not bear the stamp of Beethoven's genius. . . . †

* From a letter of 1854.

† Written in 1856.

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