

1891
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University Hall, - Ann Arbor, Mich.

Tuesday Evening, May 5, at 8.

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FIFTH ANNUAL TOUR OF THE



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SEASON OF
1890-91.

Mr. ARTHUR NIKISCH, Conductor.

Tuesday Evening, May 5,
At 8 o'clock.

PROGRAMME.

Beethoven Overture, "Leonore," No. 3

Thomas Aria, from "Mignon"
Mrs. ARTHUR NIKISCH.

Schumann Symphony No. 1, in B-flat
{ Andante un poco maestoso.
{ Allegro molto vivace.
Larghetto.
Scherzo.
Allegro animato e grazioso.

Songs with Piano.

a. Wallnoefer "Lindenbaum"
b. Godard "Florian's Song"
c. Brahms "Vergebliches Staendchen"
Mrs. ARTHUR NIKISCH.

Wagner Prelude, "Lohengrin"

Wagner . . . "Siegfried's Passage to Bruennhilde's Rock, Morning Dawn, and
Rhine Journey," from "Siegfried" and "Die Goetterdaemmerung"

Soloist, Mrs. ARTHUR NIKISCH.

Historical and Descriptive Notes prepared by G. H. WILSON.
The Decker Bros'. Grand Piano is kindly furnished by the State Agents,
Chas. Bobzin & Co., Detroit, Mich.

The chronology of the four overtures to Beethoven's only opera is not indicated by their numbers, and the present would seem a fitting time for some daring publisher to adjust overtures and opus numbers in a manner which shall appear more sane to future generations than it has to present and past. The overture which was written last, in 1814, is known as the "Overture to Fidelio," and is played to introduce the opera. While what was in reality the third "Leonore" overture (which Beethoven wrote for a performance of the opera at Prague, in 1807, which did not come off) is called "Leonore" No. 1; the first "Leonore" (1805) being styled No. 2; the second and greatest "Leonore" (1806) is the one known as No. 3. The three "Leonore" overtures are written in the same key, and have much that is related, especially Nos. 2 and 3, the colossal third being a masterly elaboration of the second.

"An *adagio* begins the overture, and nothing could be more indicative of a lofty purpose than the unisonous crash of the full orchestra on the dominant, followed by a descending scale passage, which, it is often said, might suggest going down into the depths of Florestan's dungeon. The revelation of the F-sharp as the dominant of B major, and then the sudden transition into A-flat major, belong to Beethoven's noblest and most characteristic manner. Thus early the mind of the hearer is filled with wonder and delight, while his imagination is excited to free and powerful action. The clarinet and bassoon then introduce Florestan's dungeon air, 'In des Lebens Frühlingstagen,' the melody of which was such a favorite with Beethoven that it appears in three out of the four overtures. The change to A-flat seems to have been made that the key of the melody in the overture might correspond with its key in the body of the work; and very soon Beethoven returns to B major by means of a gorgeous modulation.

"To do justice to the striking passages that follow would necessitate quoting every bar. Enough that in the last bar the basses slowly ascend from the dominant to the leading note, on which they pause till the *allegro* begins with an agitated theme, given, first of all, to the violins and 'celli in octaves. This is repeated in a grand *tutti*, and very largely developed till a close is made upon the dominant of E major, in which key a lovely melody enters, seeming to speak peace to trouble and to turmoil. But the influence of this is transitory. Agitation soon regains its lost ascendancy; and we are hurried through a succession of passages, each more striking than another, till, after continued iteration by the violins of a section

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of the leading theme, we come upon a prolonged struggle between the passion that verges on despair and the hope that would point to brighter days in store. Mark how the tempest of the heart rages, and how it hushes itself for a moment while the comforter speaks, only to burst forth with renewed impetuosity. Thus it continues, knowing no abatement, till just at its highest the sun shines forth, and darts a ray of light across the gloom (note the unison passage of the strings). This is one of the master-strokes of genius. The rush of the instruments up the scale, as though to express the highest pitch of agony, their sudden drop, and the sound of a distant trumpet telling of relief and deliverance, is not a surprise only: it reveals how a great master can use materials which, in other hands, would lead to clap-trap effects, with perfect safety and astounding success.

“After the storm a calm; and now the wind instruments in long-drawn notes speak the relief of one who sees the end of the trial. Again the trumpet, now near at hand, proclaims the good tidings of rescue and safety, and again the music expresses in gentle strains a feeling of happiness too great for noisy demonstrations. This is followed by a resumption of the original theme, as though the relieved mind’s first instinct was to recall the trouble now happily past, in order to heighten the joy of the present. The second subject also reappears; and, when all the exciting drama has been reviewed, gratitude rises higher and higher. A change to *presto* takes place, the first violins lead off with a rush of scale passages, which the seconds presently join in octaves, followed by the violas, and then by the basses, till at last the full orchestra bursts into an overwhelming song of gladness. Let this wonderful *coda* speak for itself. In language plainer than the plainest words, and more powerful than the most powerful eloquence of tongue and lips, it speaks of a happy issue out of trouble and the beginning of a new and joyous life.”

Symphony No. 1, in B-flat, Op. 38.

Schumann.

Andante un poco maestoso.
Allegro molto vivace.
Larghetto.
Scherzo, molto vivace with Trio I. and Trio II.
Allegro animato e grazioso.

This is Schumann’s “Spring” symphony. It emanates from the happiest period of his life. The obstacles to his marriage had been overcome, and he had won a high position as a composer and an authority in music. In a letter to Dorn in 1839, Schumann complains of the pianoforte as “too narrow a field for his thoughts,” and announces his intention of applying himself to orchestral writing to make up for his want of practice. The B-flat symphony is the first published essay in the new (to him) and larger field. Years before, in 1829, when a Heidelberg student, undecided between the professions of law and music, he wrote to Wieck, his old pianoforte

teacher and future father-in-law: "I detest theory pure and simple, as you know; and I have been living very quietly, improvising a good deal, but not playing much from notes. I have begun many a symphony, but finished nothing, and every now and then have managed to edge in a Schubert waltz between Roman law and the pandects, etc." Of these juvenile student attempts in the symphonic form, one at least, in G minor, was played in public (in Schneeberg in 1833).

Schumann's love for Clara Wieck was the incentive which led him to persistent work in mastering the science of music, in overcoming his youthful "detestation of theory." The earliest of the four published symphonies was first performed at the Gewandhaus, Leipzig, Mendelssohn conducting, on March 31, 1841, having been composed but shortly before. A few weeks after the performance he wrote to a friend: "I have now a household of my own, and my circumstances are different from what they were. The time since you last heard from me has passed in happiness and work. I wished for you to hear my symphony. How happy I was at the performance!—I, and others also, for it had such a favorable reception as I think no symphony has had since Beethoven."

This state of things, as Grove says, the music reflects very characteristically. So full of it was Schumann's mind that the composition of the entire work—without the scoring—is said to have taken only four days.

The title "Spring Symphony," which, however, is not adopted upon the printed title-page, is Schumann's own. In the volume of letters ("Robert Schumann's *Briefe, neue Folge*," new series, B. & H., Leipzig), the first mention of it occurs: "Fancy," he says, "a whole symphony,—and a 'Spring' symphony, too!" Schumann has also put on record the fact that its connection with the bursting season of spring was his original idea; for an inscription on a portrait of himself, which follows the first two bars of the symphony, reads: "Beginning of a symphony, occasioned by a poem of Adolf Böttger's. To the poet, in remembrance, from Robert Schumann, Leipzig, 1842."

It is conceded that the buoyant symphony played to-day witnesses, in a truly astonishing manner, Schumann's forward stride in the technique of composition. Purists point out its "lovely imperfections," but few of these are unwilling to say, with Ehlert: "It possesses all the charm of a first creation; it is imbued with the fragrant breath of a young pine grove, in which the sun plays at hide-and-seek; it embodies as much of a bridal air as if Schumann were celebrating his symphonic honeymoon." Joseph Bennett points out the distinctions which marked the approach to composition in the higher forms between Schubert and Schumann. The former "worked up to higher manifestations of the symphonic forms through his larger pieces for the chamber, such as the octet; but Schumann passed at a step from the pianoforte to the orchestra, from the sonata to the symphony."

"Schumann," writes Wasielewski, "conceived and treated the sym-

phonic form in a peculiar spirit, based on the study of masterpieces, especially those of Beethoven. The ideas are thoroughly Schumannic; higher artistic value is bestowed on them by the fact that these ideas are expressed in the old established form. They seldom reveal the arbitrary enormities which so often occur in his earlier works."

Grove points out that the trombone passage in the second portion of the *finale*, while, perhaps, containing a reminiscence of the first movement of Schubert's C major symphony,—heard by Schumann (who brought the MSS. from Vienna) at Leipzig, only a few months before the composition of the work,—is yet treated in his own way, producing a solemn effect not easily forgotten. An instance of Schumann's imperfect acquaintance with the orchestra of that date, also pointed out by Grove, is shown in the original score of the introduction. The energetic phrase for horns and trumpets, with which it begins, was first written a third lower (the corrected notes are D, B-flat, C, D); but, when the work came to rehearsal, under Mendelssohn, it appeared that the notes G and A, being stopped notes, could hardly be heard, and the change had to be made. This was for a long time a great joke with Schumann.

Writing to Mendelssohn from Dresden, in 1845, he says: "You are now in the middle of my symphony (rehearsing for the Gewandhaus concert). You remember the first rehearsal, in 1841, and the stopped notes in the trumpets and horns, at the beginning? It was exactly as if they had caught cold; and I am obliged to laugh now whenever I think of it."

There follows an analysis of the B-flat symphony from the pen of Mr. Joseph Bennett:—

First Movement.

"The first *allegro* is introduced by an *andante un poco maestoso*, which begins with a kind of motto phrase, stated in unison by horns and trumpets without accompaniment. Mendelssohn had an exactly parallel idea at the opening of his 'Hymn of Praise' symphony, which was performed a few months before Schumann wrote his symphony. That the credit of origination belongs to the author of the 'Hymn of Praise' is thus settled by dates, but Mendelssohn's friend and admirer may claim the merit of recognizing and frankly turning to account a very happy thought. The two musicians worked out the idea in different ways. Mendelssohn uses his 'motto' in the *allegro* simply as a tributary, whereas Schumann makes his enter into the principal theme.

"The *allegro molto vivace* opens, as just stated, with the 'motto' phrase of the introduction, which now forms part of a very energetic, bustling, and well-marked leading subject. Schumann does not develop his theme at length. His studies of great masterpieces, particularly, mayhap, of Beethoven's 'C minor,' inclined him to a concise first part. Very soon, therefore, the horns, with their reiterated and unaccompanied notes, give warning of the second subject, which the clarinets proceed to state. The new melody is as plaintive and tender as its predecessor was bold and

vigorous, and thus the composer obtains the by no means slight advantage of a good contrast. He is otherwise happy in his themes, which, as well as having melodic character, lend themselves freely to effective orchestral treatment.

“In the second part of the movement, Schumann, yields himself unreservedly to the work of exhaustive development. He shrinks neither from elaboration nor length, but he never becomes obscure. Indeed, this ‘working out,’ if not technically quite above criticism, reveals most remarkable power for a first effort in symphonic writing. It should be observed that interest is augmented by the use of several subsidiary themes, which are cleverly associated with the principals. After the usual recapitulation, and when the *coda* is reached, a novel feature presents itself in the shape of a passage for strings only, of a hymn-like character. It has been called ‘a little song of thankfulness,’ and might be that or anything else poetic and engaging.”

Second Movement.

“The slow movement, *larghetto*, E-flat, is one of the effusions by this master which set the fancy at work in efforts to explain it through reference to circumstances or emotions all can appreciate. One thing quite certain is that here we have a delicious and expressive tune, which no man in whose soul is music can listen to without emotion. The form of the movement is that of variations wherein the theme remains unaltered, and only the accessories change. Three times does the melody appear: first, from the violins; next from the violoncellos; and, lastly, from the oboes and horns, the accompaniment becoming more elaborate with each repetition.”

Third Movement.

“The *scherzo*, *molto vivace*, G minor, is remarkable for two *trios*,—an innovation which Schumann was the first to make. In his symphonies in B-flat and A, Beethoven repeats the trio; and from this Schumann may have taken an idea to be developed as we now have it. The trios are well contrasted, differing, as they do, in key, rhythm, and character.”

Fourth Movement.

“The *finale*, *allegro animato e grazioso*, resembles the first *allegro* in opening with a motto phrase. But here the whole force of the orchestra is employed; and the phrase is an ascending scale, beginning on the dominant, and having a broken rhythm which imparts great character. After one statement, a light and lively principal theme is entered upon. The term ‘principal theme’ strictly appertains, however, to the ‘motto,’ which forms by far the most conspicuous, striking, and effective part of the movement. The *finale* should be heard with the closest attention to this phrase, Schumann’s treatment of it being always masterly and impressive, and such as more than warrants the composer in risking the close of his work upon a *motif* apparently wanting in adaptiveness.”

"Lohengrin" followed "Tannhäuser" after a brief interval, though five years elapsed from the date of the first performance of the latter before the public heard the new opera, which was given for the first time at Weimar, Aug. 28, 1850. At this period of his life Wagner had become so dissatisfied with the artistic life of the time that he concluded that a reform in theatric affairs could only be attained through a general political convulsion; and he accordingly took part in the Revolution of May, 1849, and was in consequence obliged to leave the country as a fugitive. On his way to Paris he stopped at Weimar, where he heard a rehearsal of "Tannhäuser" under Liszt, in whom he at once recognized his second self, as he expresses himself. "What I had felt in conceiving this music, he felt in executing it; what I wished to express in writing it, he announced in making it sound." For two years and five months after its completion "Lohengrin" remained unknown to the world, when Wagner's eye fell on the "forgotten" manuscript. His previous scores had been so often returned to him, sometimes unopened, that he had almost lost hope that the world would ever understand his new language.

Writing to Liszt from Paris, in April, 1850, Wagner said: "Dear friend, I have just been looking through the score of my 'Lohengrin.' I very seldom read my own works. An immense desire has sprung up in me to have my work performed. I address this wish to your heart. Perform my 'Lohengrin.' *You are the only one* to whom I could address this prayer; to none but you I should intrust the creation of this opera; to you I give it with perfect and joyous confidence. Perform 'Lohengrin,' and let its existence be *your* work." The published Wagner-Liszt correspondence shows how ardently and lovingly and successfully Liszt labored for his friend, both with his pen and bâton.

The poetic purport of the prelude — which Liszt aptly characterized as "a sort of magic formula, which, like a mysterious initiation, prepares our souls for the sight of unaccustomed things, and of a higher signification than that of our terrestrial life" — has been thus explained by Wagner. Regarded in its musical and formal aspect, the orchestral prelude to "Lohengrin," allowing for four introductory bars, some interludial matter, and an extended *coda*, might be defined as consisting of four presentations of a single theme (the Grail motive), each of which is subjected to a richly varied and highly colored treatment.

**Siegfried's Passage to Bruennhilde's Rock, Morning Dawn, and Rhine Journey,
from "Siegfried" and "Die Goetterdaemmerung."**

Wagner.

The arrangement from the final dramas of the Nibelungen played to-day is one of the several Wagner contemplated for concert purposes, which were not completed till after his death. It was, however, fully discussed by him

and Dr. Hans Richter, and was ultimately finished under the supervision of the latter. Though drawn from the last two dramas of the trilogy,—“Siegfried” and “Götterdämmerung,”—the scene of action remains the same; namely, the summit of the rocky mountain upon which the walküre Brünnhilde sleeps. It begins at the moment when Siegfried, having thrust Wotan from his path, turns to seek the fire-encircled rock and Brünnhilde,—that moment in the progress of the drama where, with the breaking of Wotan’s spear, all the gloom of the orchestra is changed in a twinkling to glorious expectancy. The first motive the ear hears (bassoons and low strings) is the Wälsungen motive, symbolical of Siegfried’s love for his parents. Joined with this are four others; namely, “Siegfried, the Walsung” (first horn), the “Rhinegold Song” (horns), “Glow of the Brightening Glare” (flute and clarinet), one of the versions of the “Voice of the Bird” (oboe). These ideas, contained in two bars, suggest Siegfried, the hero, the treasure he holds as possessor of the magic ring, the flames he is approaching, and the bird which guides him. Now is heard another “Voice of the Bird” (oboe and clarinet), next the fire motive in the strings in conjunction with Siegfried’s horn. Interrupted by Siegfried’s heroic motive, this idea is worked out at considerable length. The flames rise higher, then subside as Siegfried nears Brünnhilde’s rock, and the slumber motive (wood-wind), which in “Die Walküre” accompanies Wotan’s farewell of Brünnhilde, sounds. Siegfried has gained the rock, sees Brünnhilde, and the orchestra pictures his impressions. The first violins play the “wandering passage” as Siegfried nears Brünnhilde.

The arrangement includes none of the sublime music of Brünnhilde’s apostrophe, nor does it touch upon the great love duet with which the drama of “Siegfried” ends. The orchestra now enters upon the “Morning Dawn” motive (from the second scene in the first act of “Die Götterdämmerung”), heard in the ’cellos. As day broadens, the horns give out the motive of “Siegfried, the Son of the Forest,” followed by a new motive (first clarinet), indicating Brünnhilde’s love for Siegfried. The strings take it to a splendid climax. The sun rises high. Siegfried and Brünnhilde come forward (he in full armor, she leading her horse), which scene the orchestra illustrates by a superb handling of the “Siegfried, the Son of the Forest,” motive. The section “Siegfried’s Rhine Journey” (he leaves Brünnhilde, in search of adventure and in fulfilment of the tragic fate that holds him) begins with Siegfried’s horn-calls from the depths below Brünnhilde: a second time he passes through the fire (note the development of the horn motive and its conjunction with Loge’s fire motive, first violins). On reaching the Rhine, the primeval element motive, beginning with the modulation, sways the whole orchestra. This superb picture extends through fifty-six bars. Then is heard the song of the Rhine daughters, with its brilliant accompaniment, interrupted by the “Rhinegold” motive, the symbol of desire (bass trombone), the motive of the ring (wood-wind and soft brasses). The arrangement closes with an effective handling of the “Walhall” theme.

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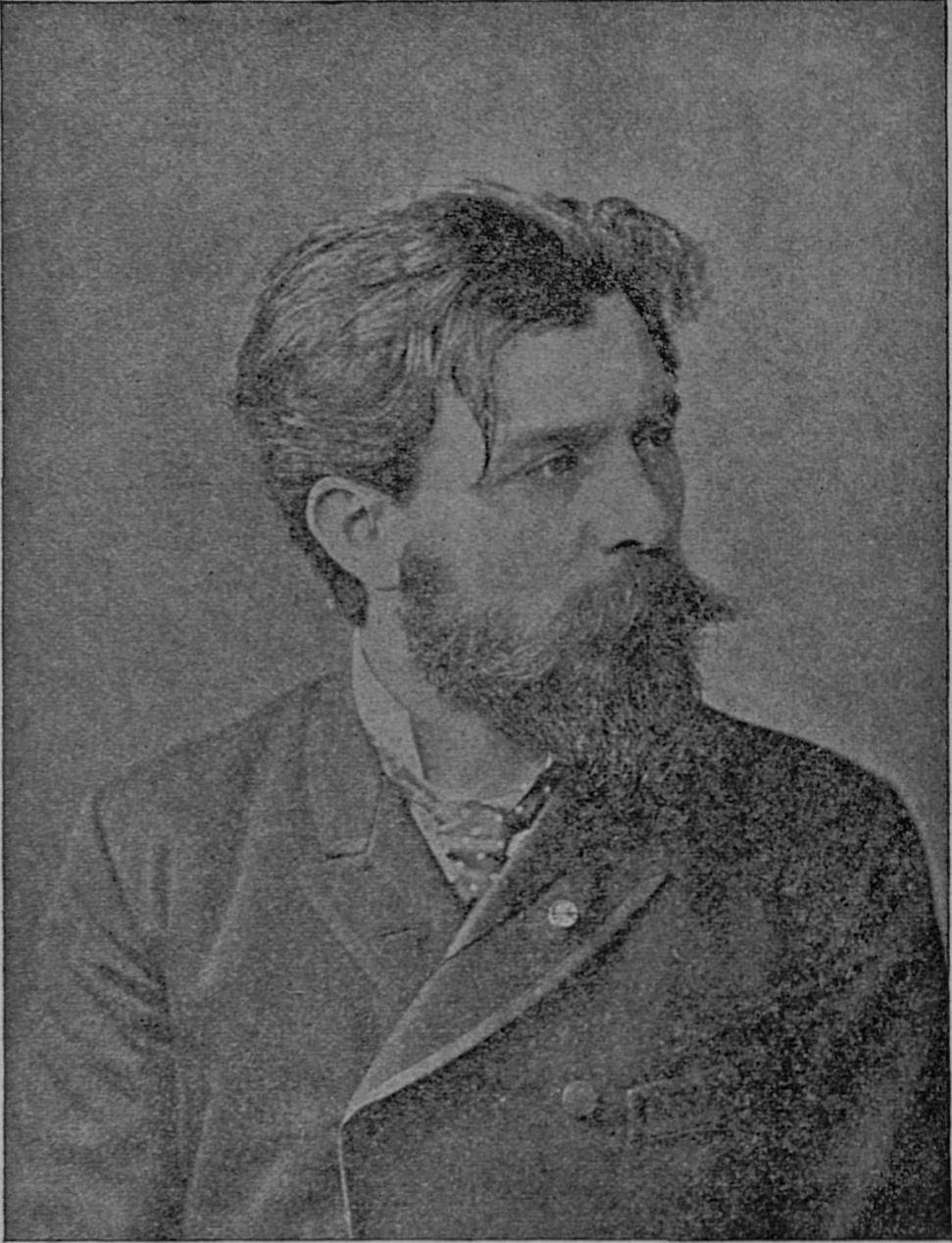
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