



Music News and Events



MUSICAL CRITICISM UNRELIABLE INDEX

**Time Termed Most Reliable Aid
in Forming Judgment of
Musical Values**

By Walter Spry

When I was a student in Berlin I remember criticizing a certain musical leader who was conducting the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven. He was a choral trainer and, as such, was very good, but he was unaccustomed to leading an orchestra. He made one or two mistakes in the tricky Scherzo of the symphony, and in some caustic remarks I made to my teacher concerning the occasion, I learned a valuable lesson. Professor Urban said to me: "You should always judge a musical performance in its entirety." So often we hear a first-class artist who for some reason or other slips either in technic or memory, and we say the performance was not good. The same thing occurs when we hear a musical work and we are apt to say that we like parts of it, thereby admitting that there are parts we did not like and possibly did not understand. This happens frequently in new works, and it is safer to withhold our opinions until we become more familiar with the work under discussion.

Greatest Masters Maligned

The question is natural—When can we be sure that criticism is right? The reply is that we can seldom rely wholly upon any musical criticism. When we remember how musicians denounced Beethoven as crazy and begged him to return to the simpler style of his early works; or when we read how one of the ablest German critics wrote of Wagner—"Not one of his works will outlive him!" (Hauptman), we must realize that time is the most reliable aid in forming our judgment of musical values.

In judging musical performances, a knowledge of the music is essential to a correct estimate. When we know either by study or by frequent hearing the works of, say a composer like Chopin—his Nocturnes, Waltzes, Etudes, Ballades, etc., etc., we begin to realize the vastness of the piano literature.

Need Impartial Mind

Then, in conclusion, of great importance is the judgment of an impartial mind. It is said that a talented young pianist gave a concert, but played only fairly well. A certain critic was rather adverse in his criticism, and upon meeting the teacher of the young lady was reminded that he was rather severe. The critic was surprised to learn that his friend was the teacher and said: "Had I known you were her teacher, I would have given a more favorable review!"

Brewer-Spry Recitals Attract Music Lovers

Three historical recitals to be given by Valona Brewer, violinist, and Walter Spry, pianist, are creating a great deal of interest among musical and society people on the north shore. The first recital will have for its program the early composers and will take place Thursday evening, December 8, at the Winnetka Woman's club. Beginning with the spinet composers in the Elizabethan era, Mr. Spry will trace the development of music to the time of Beethoven, closing the program with this master's "Moonlight Sonata."

Schlussus Sensational Success



THE Winnetka Music club, through its Artist-Recital committee, Mrs. Roland D. Whitman, chairman, has secured a genuine treat for patrons of the current recital series in the scheduled appearance of Heinrich Schlussus as the artist for the next program, Monday, December 12.

Coming to America a few weeks ago as guest artist with the Chicago Civic Opera, Schlussus has already created a sensation in the music realm with his marvelous artistry. He has been booked solidly up to the moment of his return to Germany early in January and, in fact, has found it necessary to cancel some engagements because of the tremendous demand upon his time.

A conservative estimate of the enthusiastic reception accorded Mr. Schlussus in his Chicago concert appearances is found in the accompanying excerpts from leading critics, opinions of his performances:

Is Real Star

Rosenfeld, Chicago Daily News—"The short acquaintance Chicago opera-goers have had with Heinrich Schlussus, the German baritone, who was heard as Wolfram in "Tannhauser" at the opera, showed this artist fully equipped with the requisites of a real star in the world of vocal music.

"Thus, his song recital at the Cort theater yesterday afternoon confirmed this opinion of his admirable vocal qualities, and strengthened the thought that he was also a fine interpreter of the art songs, such as were composed by Schumann, Liszt, Hugo Wolf, Richard Strauss and some American composers.

"In the more intimate environments of the concert hall more detailed interpretative art is necessary to give the many inflections and definitions in

musical tones to the poetic expression of song, and besides the resonant, vibrant baritone voice, absolutely controlled by Mr. Schlussus, a clear enunciation of the various texts of selections was one of the special artistic qualities noticed in his recital."

Individuality

Stinson, Chicago Journal—"His style is dignified, yet intimate; it is impersonal in the best tradition of interpretation, but not a word that he sings is left without its subtle indication of the individuality which prompts him to so pure, so musical and so resourceful a revisioning of his material.

Meets Supreme Tests

Hackett, Chicago Evening Post—"There have been times when the term lieder singer had seemed destined to become one of reproach and comes along Heinrich Schlussus and restores it to its true meaning. Lieder singing is one of the highest forms of art. This means that it makes supreme demands on singing powers. A man must have voice and technique if he is to sing in the true sense of the term. But, alas, a race was permitted to grow up with little voice and less skill but with what by courtesy was called "temperament," and, in the language of the street, they got by. Lieder singing had become a form of leather-throated declamation until the mere thought of a liederabend was an infliction. They are still breeding them of the real strain, however, as Mr. Schlussus demonstrated.

"It was beautiful singing. There was imagination and interpretative power made of practical avail because the singer had the voice and the skill. Baritone in timbre, at times verging on the tenor, yet with the solid body in the middle characteristic of the true baritone. Capable of a wide range of color which was always expressive of the word."

SYMPHONY SHOWS FINE QUALITY IN CONCERT

**First of Season's Appearances
Finds Group Performing with
Consummate Skill**

By Rutheda L. Pretzel

The Little Symphony orchestra of Chicago opened its sixth season Monday, November 14, at New Trier High school, with an interesting evening program skillfully handled. No more need George Dasch, its conductor, or those in charge, offer apologies and murmur excuses for a "raw" orchestra. A year of playing together under Mr. Dasch's baton has smoothed out rough spots, and the balance has been improved with new players added in former weak sections.

The tone of the orchestra is full and rich, and the members play with a sense of firmness and ease. Since most of the players now in the orchestra received nearly all of their ensemble training under Mr. Dasch, they have learned to follow his baton and are now able to execute his interpretations. Consequently the orchestra has personality. The playing is vigorous when it should be so, and all nuances are beautifully colored. It was a pleasure to listen to a program carried out with as much musicianship as the Little Symphony orchestra had on Monday.

Play Wagner Effectively

Wagner was justly handled in his Overture to "The Flying Dutchman," in their first number. The curse motive and the approaching storm were given with power without being heavy, and the Angel of Mercy motive well brought out. Cesar Franck's artistic Symphony in D Minor followed, with its solid foundation and imaginative themes. Prolonged applause greeted the orchestra at its conclusion, and rightly so.

Ballet music from "Feramors," by Rubinstein was well liked, the "Dance of the Bayaderes," for its light, engaging swing, and the "Torch Dance of the Brides of Kashmir," and the "Wedding Procession," for their spirit. Herman Felber played the violin obligato to the prelude to "The Deluge," by Saint-Saens. He played with great feeling and poise. All of his nervousness has vanished. He was very enthusiastically applauded, and had to rise several times to bow.

Conclude With Massenet

The evening concluded with the sparkling color of Massenet's "Scenes Napolitaines," consisting of "La Danse," "La Procession," and a whirl of gaiety, "La Fete." Again and again Mr. Dasch was called forth to acknowledge the applause, but refused to oblige with an encore. He wisely refrained, knowing it would have been an anti-climax.

Reports of the afternoon concert for children and young people are that it was just as successful. Maria Matyas, soprano, pleased with her songs, especially the Hungarian group, given in costume. Miss Matyas gave the stories of some of her numbers, thereby doubly endearing her to her listeners.

McCORMACK IN FAREWELL

John McCormack's farewell concert of the year in Chicago is announced for Sunday evening, November 27, at the Auditorium theater.

What is believed to be the first piano brought into New Mexico is still in use at Thunderbird ranch, near Las Vegas