

MUSIC FOR EASTER DAY

CHURCH CHOIRS TRAIN TO SING THEIR SWEETEST

There's an old legend to the effect that the sun shines brightest and that the birds sing sweetest and clearest on Easter day. It is also the one day throughout the year that all church choirs are worked their hardest. Once Easter music is finished, the choir leader begins to dream of a summer spent in luxurious idleness, when congregations are few and when the critics have either gone to sleep or are lulled into a condition of indifference, for once. It is safe then to select for rendition easy-part anthems which have been sung frequently in that particular church.

But the anxious, worrying time is just immediately before Easter, or rather a little after the opening of the New Year. There are mysterious conferences between the choir leader and the organist, if the church under review possesses a chorus choir, as to what is really new in the line of Easter music. It is the average ambition of every conductor not to sing what other choirs will select, and to surpass them if possible with new effects. Take church choirs in New York, Philadelphia, Boston or Chicago, for instance. Competition is keen. There is only room at the top, in the most musical glaze. The choirmaster spends an anxious time visiting different music stores selecting promising music in the shape of what looks to be worthy for rendition on Easter. Possibly he now brings to light for the first time since that eventful day at the seashore last July a pretty little anthem with a glad, glorious burst of praise in it, that a friend had given him with a hint that it might do for Easter work. Probably some members of the quartet have to be changed to get a particular effect in tone, and this often necessitates the engagement of new singers.

In Protestant Episcopal and Roman Catholic church choirs, the music takes a somber tinge during the season of Lent, and the spirit of joyfulness is hushed. But all the same, during Lent, rehearsals for Easter day are in active progress, and choir night, generally Friday evening in the large cities, is the occasion throughout the week that the singers feel they are really at work. The rule is to sing at these rehearsals for two hours every Friday evening. Some pieces of music are rehearsed again and again, until a certain standard is reached, or a fugue movement made more decided in the bass. Solos are generally rehearsed at home, and are rarely heard in presence of the other choir members until the eventful occasion of Easter.

During the month of March, even staid Presbyterians and rigid Methodists—shades of Knox and Wesley—prepare for the proper celebration of Easter. Their music is not so elaborate as that selected for use in sister churches. More solid choruses and song-anthems are chosen. Only a few of the more elaborate would have been a chorus of indignant antiphonalism if certain sects had observed the celebration of Easter day, but we are glad to see that the liberal and charitable in religious matters.

At last it is Holy week, and Easter day is just one week ahead. Singers make better choir than they do in any other year, particularly lyric sopranos and tenors, for a cold would rob their voices of all beauty just on the occasion the owners of the voices wish to be at their best in vocal art. The patient, careful rehearsal is ultimately showing fruit. Most of the choir singers can sing the anthems or masses from memory, they have sung them so often that the rehearsal is generally the last regular rehearsal night before Easter, as wise choirmasters realize that it will tire their voices to ask for a rehearsal on the night preceding Easter Sunday. What ambitions, what hopes, what fears, what inspirations are centered on that last rehearsal! The singers have been taught to sustain, and they wish, if possible, to excel their work of last year. So they sing with a will, and watch every beat of the choirmaster's baton. One time they are singing a lovely tune, a song-anthem by some favorite American composer, telling a story of the glory of a risen Lord, and the next section may be one of those heart-shaking, noble choruses from "The Messiah" or "Elijah."

The dainty unaccompanied work, without the organ, is carefully sung with bated breath to get the double piano effect, and everybody is delighted when the singers finish the last chord without a lowering of the pitch. The choirmaster somewhat grudgingly admits that the selections are satisfactory, and that if any improvements can be effected he would be very glad if some person would point them out. The singers look interested, but the older singers smile quietly, for has not this choirmaster said the same thing, to their certain knowledge, year after year? Good night is said, and the girls say to each other: "Well, I'm going now. Good night, dear. Do be careful of your throat, and avoid draughts. Hope Sunday will be fine, and that you will be able to wear the new hat."

How the singers wish that the sun will shine his brightest on Sunday, and that rain will not be visited upon them. Many demure maidens, who alas! do not pray every night very fervently for daily blessings, pray something like this: "O Lord, send down thy sunshine tomorrow on this Easter day, for I want to wear my new hat. Thou knowest. The one with the white feather."

Singers know that a rainy Sunday will rob them of beauty of tone, and that their voices will be more or less dulled. They wish a day of sunshine and a clear atmosphere. But the old adage rings true. It is Easter day, and the sun literally "dances," and the birds sing gaily on the trees. Lent is over, with its sackcloth and ashes and mourning and tears. All creation seems to say: "Jesus Christ is risen today. Hallelujah." How joyful sound the church bells. Spring is queen. It is Easter.

Musical Notes.

Baltimore, Md., has had a season of French opera by the New Orleans French Opera Company.

George Ade's comic opera, "The Sultan of Sulu," has been successfully played in Chicago.

Grace Driscoll, a talented violinist and only 15 years old, died March 24 at Spokane from tuberculosis. She had a promising artistic future.

Mancinelli, the Italian opera conductor of many seasons in New York City, has produced his opera, "Ero e Leandro," in Spain, and he speaks word of its success.

Frank Damrosch, superintendent of music in New York City's public schools, says that the aim of the schools should be to make the children not musicians, but lovers of music.

Sailor boys who attended the musical evening given at the Seamen's Institute, March 25, by Mrs. Rose Bloch Bauer and her friends, say that it was one of the most enjoyable of the series.

Today finishes the 12th year of Mr. Edgar E. Courson's service as organist and choirmaster of the First Presbyterian Church. It is always a pleasure to hear Mr. Courson's musical and scholarly work.

The event most talked of during the past week in church choirs has been the excellent performance of Dubois' "The Seven Last Words of Christ," sung last Sunday under the leadership of W. H. Boyer, by a choir of about 60 voices.

at Taylor-Street Methodist Church. It is not often choir singers praise the work of other choirs, but in this instance it has been done. A select party of singers from Salem was present, specially to hear the rendering of the sacred cantata.

Mascagni, who wrote the charming "Cavalleria Rusticana," has a mania for watches, of which he is said to carry three in his pockets. One is gold, with the monogram in diamonds; another is of silver, and the third of nickel. He will take Marie Antoinette as the theme of his next opera.

Georg Henschel has been for some time engaged on the composition of a "Requiem" in memory of his wife, Lillian Bailey Henschel, the well-known singer. The probabilities are that the work will be published simultaneously at Breslau and Boston, the birthplaces, respectively, of husband and wife.

At one of the Faderewski concerts a woman sighed and said to her friend: "But you hear the way he played those runs. They were as easy and free as running water. I have worked five years on that piece, and can't play it yet. Now I shall have to give it all up, and my life will be ruined. Just think of that!"

Tuesday evening, the choral class of St. Helen's Hall will give its fourth annual entertainment, when two cantatas will be sung: Behrend's "The Singers from the Sea," and Bendell's "A Legend of Bregenz." It will be under the efficient direction of Mrs. Walter Reed. Miss Huggins will be the accompanist.

Mrs. Rose Bloch-Bauer was the soloist at a meeting of the Woman's Club, held Friday afternoon, and she kindly sang these numbers: "Spring," by Foster, and for an encore, "Mighty Lak a Rose" (Nevin), "Ich Liebe Dich" (Grieg), and encore, "At Parting," by James Rogers. The singing was marked by beautiful quality and finish.

Miss Minnie Newby, of Ventura, Cal., a school girl, has such a wonderful voice, in the opinion of Mr. and Mrs. S. S. Eaton, of Boston, that before her voice is trained for concert work as a professional artist, her life will be insured for \$5,000 or more in the name of her patrons. Miss Newby will get her voice trained in New York City and afterward in Europe.

Miss Milka Ternina, who has been this season the chief dramatic soprano at the Metropolitan Opera-House, New York City, especially in the Wagnerian roles, is not to return next year. This, at least, is stated by one of her close artistic associates, with much reason. The singer has received the offer of a very large salary to stay in Europe next winter, appearing in "Als Gast" in several cities.

The last Pittsburgh Orchestra concerts during the present season took place March 21 and 22, when this programme was given: "The Flying Dutchman" overture (Mozart); "Tannhauser" aria from Act II, "O Lovely Halls" (1865); "Lohengrin," procession to the cathedral, from Act II (1858); "Die Meistersinger," Walther's Prize Song from Act III (1867); "Die Walkure," I. Prelude—entire scene between Siegmund and Sieglinde (1856); "Die Gotterdammerung," "Trio of the Rhine Daughters," from Act III (1876).

Plunkett Greene, the Irish baritone, is charming the New York folks again, and his next concert there is tomorrow. At his recent concert in New York, Mr. Greene, as usual, and wisely, sang several of his lovely Irish ballads and got repeated encores, although one critic remarked that Mr. Greene's natural voice showed signs of the "wear" that comes from a fairly long career, especially in the lower register. But let the critics find fault. Mr. Greene today is one of the most popular ballad singers on the concert platform, and curiously enough there are other singers who have better voices than he, but they do not draw the crowds or succeed financially. Mr. Greene has a striking personality, and when he sings he is about the piano as he is in his own drawing-room. His manner is good and his sentiment pure.

With an orchestra of 100 and a chorus of 50, the 15th Cincinnati May Music Festival will be held in the Music Hall there, May 14, 15, 16 and 17, under the direction of Theodore Thomas. The soloists will be: Mrs. Marie Zimmerman, Miss Clara Turpin, Madame Schumann-Heink, Ben Davies, Ellison Van Hoose, Andrew Black, who comes from England especially for the festival, and Gwyn Miles. The principal works to be performed are: "Carmen," "Beethoven's Requiem," "Mass in B Minor," Berlioz's "Requiem," scenes for chorus, orchestra and soloists from Gluck's "Orpheus," and from "Die Meistersinger," selections from "Die Walkure," "Siegfried," "Die Gotterdammerung" and "Tristan and Isolde"; love scene from "Parsifal" (new), Richard Strauss; and the Eroica Symphony. The

orchestra will be increased for the performance of the mass, and will be augmented to 150 for the Wagner selections and Berlioz's Requiem.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave the last of its evening concerts this season in the Borough of Manhattan March 28. The solo performer at the concert was Mr. Timothee Adamowski, who played Saint-Saens' violin concerto in B minor.

Mr. Van Dyck was announced to appear in "Tristram and Isolde" with the Grau Opera Company, March 30 at Boston, but at the last moment he turned ill, and "Lohengrin" was substituted, with a new tenor, M. von Bondrowski, in the celebrated role. On the same occasion David Bispham, the well-known baritone, temporarily lost his voice by having used it too much.

A luxurious addition, costing \$10,000, is to be made to Grace Church, New York City. The plans involve an enlargement of the chancel, the construction of a room for choir practice, the doubling of the residence accommodations for the resident clergy, the building of a dormitory for nonresident choir boys, and an enlargement of the basement accommodations for the system of heating and ventilation.

Eighteen years ago R. C. Davis, a bass singer, residing in Indianapolis, Ind., had the misfortune to lose his voice, and the trouble refused to yield to the skill of some of the best throat specialists in this country. March 15 he was seized with a sudden fit of coughing and he ejected a small substance which proved to be a bit of tooth he had unconsciously swallowed. To his joy he found that the removal of this obstruction immediately restored his voice, and he now sings as well as ever.

Tonight at the Academy of Music, New York City, the benefit to be given by the musical and vaudeville profession in aid of the Actors' Fund Home, will take place. The benefit will be under the direction of W. A. Brady and De Wolf Hopper, and among the great artists listed are Weber and Fields, De Wolf Hopper, John T. Kelly, Ezra Kendall, Marie Dressler, Emma Carus, Harry Burrill, Dan McAvoy, Frank Decker, Mabelle Gilman, Joseph Hart and Carrie De Mar, who will, in company with Bobby Barry and George Mack, introduce the musical numbers from "Way Grandpa." Other performers from Keith's Proctor's, the New York, Hyde & Behnman's and the Orpheum, Brooklyn, will also appear. A skill called "Billiepie of the Riado," is being prepared, in which over 100 prominent actors and managers will appear.

Madame Calve, the great contralto, who has carried the musical world by storm, mostly by her work in "Carmen," recently undertook to give a concert of French songs at the palatial Waldorf-Astoria, New York City, and one critic disposed of Madame Calve in this manner: "She disclosed a sad lack of appreciation of the nature of her self-imposed task. She resorted to cheap operatic tricks, such as no singer of folk-music should ever use, and she sang with a hard and unsympathetic voice, and frequently far away from the key. In short, French popular songs have been sung here with much more taste and skill by one of our local concert singers, and this same singer has shown much more skill in the matter of selection. Miss Jessie Baskerville played bold and unmusical accompaniments to the songs. The audience, which was apparently composed largely of personal admirers of Mme. Calve, applauded vigorously at all times; but the entertainment was distinctly disappointing to those acquainted with the possibilities of such a concert."

A healthy movement is springing up in musical centers in Eastern cities, and all other things being equal, preference should be given to American singers in engaging them for concert work etc. In connection with this subject, it is interesting to quote what Sir Arthur Sullivan said about this matter, as applied to England: "Every year we are encouraging young men and women to take musical honors, and to work hard, with a view to adopting music as a profession; and having done this we refuse them anything like fair opportunities, and close up the market. It has become a convention with us to give foreigners the preference. The result of it all is that at the present moment almost all the best of music are turning out many highly trained paupers. Everyone must have noticed that foreign conductors are accepted here with open arms. There is a deal of nonsense talked about no nationality in art. That's very well, but there is nationality in the artist, and if you offer me, for my orchestra, two men of equal merit, I choose the one who is born and (probably) educated in my own country. This is by no means a matter of sentiment; it is one of culture and fair play."

The same is true in the matter of more valuable, were it used for the purpose.

DOAWAY WITH SIGNBOARDS

Supplement These Unpleasant Objects With Natural Decorations.

PORTLAND, March 28.—(To the Editor.)—An article in yesterday's Oregonian under the head "Signboards May Go" strikes the keynote to one of the uninviting sights of our city. Should the

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City Council pass an ordinance for the removal of them, making a heavy fine the penalty for its violation, every mother-in-law, and also those of nearly all fathers, would be grateful.

Walking home after an hour spent at the library, with happy thoughts which kept pace to hurrying feet, my attention was arrested by two schoolgirls on route home from the afternoon session, standing, looking and seemingly discussing a certain picture upon one of the unsightly board walls which line so many of our streets. Presently one of the girls, of some 13 or 14 years, stepped nearer the picture, her companion followed; soon they renewed their walk. Upon reaching the scene of their delay was found a large, glaring, highly colored sign, representing a man with fiendish eyes, holding high a dagger dripping with bright red blood, while drops seemed falling near him, almost prostrate upon the green earth, was a woman with bare neck and arms, in agonizing gasp, warding off another blow with one hand, while the remaining hand clanked at the wound in her breast, from which the red blood was gushing. The picture was a representation of a scene in some play then running in one of Portland's theaters.

Imagine if you please what must be the thoughts of those two young girls with such a picture so conspicuously shown on a principal street! Imagine also what must have been in mine after the refining influence of the hour just spent among pictures, books and statuary in the library, so recently made free by this same city.

Since much is judged by comparison, let us hope the City Council will pass the ordinance introduced, and thereby do away with this deplorable practice of using our everyday thoroughfares as signboards upon which the theater, prizefighter, etc., may be advertised.

With the aid of our civic movement actively at work, cannot cleanliness, purity and flower-growing supplant all such products of the printer, with his type and ink, and so aid nature in giving us pic-

tures to inspire better thoughts, and be more in keeping with the grand background of varied green, hazy Coast Range and towering mountain peaks, enshrined in purity the year through? Let us first ponder, then grasp the helping hand which nature offers; and so aid in making our city indeed a city of beauty in all details.

A. ELLA S. STEARNS.

CALIFORNIA STREETS.

A Portlander Notes a Few Features in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES, Cal., March 24.—(To the Editor.)—During my stay of two months in the State of California I have noted some things which I hope will be of some interest to Portlanders.

The principal streets of San Francisco, and of this city, are laid with asphalt, and are well kept in repair. When a small piece is out of order it is at once repaired, mostly after business hours.

The street-car rails are laid on each side with Belgium blocks, one block in width, with asphalt in the center. Mr. Staff, City Engineer, informs me that in this city (Los Angeles) great improvements in the manner of asphalt streets are now made. He kindly gave me several copies of specifications for street work, which I am sending to Mr. Devlin, Portland's City Auditor.

In regard to street-cars and service, Portland compares favorably with any other city, and has as good attractions along its lines as any I have seen. We notice the manner Californians have of bringing the attractions of the places before the traveling public. In addition to the many circulars published in different forms, the Chamber of Commerce a few days ago had printed for free distribution 50,000 leaflets, describing climate, etc. Could not Portland with advantage do this, setting forth the advantages we have that other cities do not have. We have the purest and best drinking water

in the world. Had Los Angeles such drinking water as Bull Run affords, the fact would be heralded far and wide. In Los Angeles it is no uncommon sight to see the "filtered water" dealer going from house to house, delivering this article to his customers. I do not say this is used by every one, but it is by a great many people. Let us sing the praises of our splendid Bull Run water.

Let it also be known far and wide that Portland has the second largest electrical power plant in the United States—large enough to run all the machinery of Lowell, Mass. It is a credit to any city to have such a plant.

There are our fine river, shipping, and railroad facilities, and last, but not least, the Morning Oregonian, one of the best newspapers published anywhere. Let us hang our banners on the outer wall.

DAVID DALGLEISH.

England's Conservation.
Army and Navy Journal.

South Africa has given Great Britain a lesson of many phases. That which has

made the deepest impression is the necessity for the greater mobility, which has been the most striking characteristic of the foe. England has always been slow to accept the lesson of experience. Speaking of the break in old traditions, and unwilling conformity with foreign standards, by the English Army in the time of Elizabeth, Fortescue, in his "History of the British Army," says: "The passion of English sentiment over the change is mirrored to us for all time in the pages of Shakespeare; for no nation loves military reform so little as our own, and we shrink from the thought that if military glory is not to pass from a possession into a legend, it must be eternally renewed with strange weapons and by unfamiliar methods." This was the trouble which after England under the Tudors, and she comforted herself with the immortal prejudice that is still her mainstay in all times of trouble.

"I tell thee, herald, I thought upon one pair of English legs did march three Frenchmen."

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