

MUSIC CRANKS

A PLEA FOR BEAUTY OF BEHAVIOR IN SINGING AND PLAYING

(To the Editor)—Strange, is it not, that in music, where there is so much delightful harmony and beauty of color, there should be so much petty jealousy, bickering and unfriendly criticism of honest work well done. Most musical people, say 95 per cent, are musical cranks with whom it is difficult to live.

I have held these views during my 20 years' study of music as an amateur, and am sorry that I cannot make them different. Gladly would I do so if I could, but it is best to be candid. It is wearisome to meet so many pianists and violinists who are so jealous of other pianists and violinists, that they can only see their rivals' faults. It is also wearisome to meet singers who delight in telling you that their rivals, Mr. and Miss Blank, sing flat, and have no idea of rhythm, style or interpretation. When listening to the singing of a rival, these eager critics are nearly ready to expire with anguish. If the singer—who is human and therefore not faultless—does not commit an error of musical judgment, or manages her breath so that her trill is of the requisite length, volume and fineness. But let the singer make one little mistake, and the ordinary musical listener will audibly chuckle, and say to himself: "Ah, what did I tell you. What a great head, I have."

In a foreign city, not very many years ago, a distinguished choir was singing part songs unaccompanied, and it was the peculiar boast of this choir that the voices kept an even pitch throughout. In one of the front seats, sitting alone, was a dyspeptic, nervous, irritable musical crank who thought he was a musical critic, but he was not. One piece was marked in the key of A, and when the choir began to sing the composition, the critic waited until the sopranos finished in the key tone. Then he loudly blew his "A" from a consumptive-looking pitch pipe he carried, and to his intense joy found that the choir had ended a quarter of a tone flat. He beamed on everybody when he made this discovery. Then he departed, satisfied.

When a brass band with an international reputation for artistic excellence was in Portland recently, a certain musician who was a flute player, actually paid four-bits for the privilege of hearing the band play. He listened eagerly for signs of discord in the woodwind section, and when he didn't hear any he was unhappy. His criticism of the band was: "Oh, for my fifty cents. Of course there was no bad break in the woodwind. But say, the forehand is not up to much. No, sir. You ought to hear our band at Squeedunk Corners. We'd play as well as that foreign band. If the Portland public would only support us."

Another musician, on being recently interviewed as to the reasons why Portland does not possess a first-class brass band, said: "Because Portland will not pay money enough to support such a band." "We have the musicians here and the talent. Why could not a new band be organized to give public con-

certa, free of charge?" was ventured. The musician said: "Sir-r-r, I am insulted at your suggestion that I should play in public on my beloved instrument without getting paid for it. I want money."

Blessed are the peacemakers in music—people who scatter smiles wherever they go, and who are not eaten up with this petty jealousy. People who will do their art for art's sake, and are willing to bow humbly to real genius when they meet it. People who will also say a kind word about their musical neighbors, and will beatrate before they grow bitter or sarcastic. As one who has lived for a considerable time in Portland, I desire to say that nearly all the musical people I have met here have been kind in word and deed, to a marked degree. It is a pleasure to know them. But in the language of the poet: "There are others." I expect some of these people will arise in their wrath and smite me for what I have written. What of it? CONSTANT READER.

Portland, December 19.

FRENCH PIANIST ON A TOUR.

Raoul Pugno Receives a Hearty Welcome in the East.

NEW YORK, Dec. 18.—(Special correspondence.)—The representative pianist of France, Raoul Pugno, is now making his second American tour, and it is safe to say no artist ever received a heartier welcome than Mr. Pugno upon his return to this country. Six years have passed since his first visit, yet it seems but a year ago that he was here with Ysaye and Gerardy, making friends on all sides.

Pugno is a great man—not only a musician of enormous capability and genius, but also a man of ideal personality. He is a typical Frenchman, with a frankness and a geniality that are positively contagious. One cannot be with him for five minutes without feeling the exhilaration and freshness of a nobility and simplicity that one rarely meets in the world of artists who are accustomed to the admiration and adoration of hero worshippers.

Mr. Pugno speaks very little English, although he reads it fluently; he finds the English grammar much simpler than either the French or the German, but the pronunciation is difficult. He speaks enough, however, to make the people who do not understand French know that he is glad to meet them, and it seems to be a pleasure to them simply to watch him, as they can almost understand what he is saying by his characteristic French gestures. His father was French, but his mother was Italian.

He is a large, heavily built man with a fine head, handsomely set on broad shoulders. He is very distinguished in appearance, but he also has an extremely paternal look, and much personal magnetism, which puts one at ease with him on short acquaintance. His hair and beard are well sprinkled with gray; his eyes reflect the kind, loving nature of the man, and the deep intellectuality of his mind. A characteristic picture of Pugno would not be complete without the tortoise-shell

rimmed eye-glasses and the low, broad linen collar.

Aside from his music, Mr. Pugno has many subjects which make him interesting to the unmusical world. He can talk dogs and horses, in fact, he has no less than seven dogs at present, of each one of which he is devotedly fond. One little animal mourns for him from the time he leaves home until he returns. He can also talk photography, and is himself an amateur of no small ability; he understands the smallest detail and technicality of that fascinating art.

Mr. Pugno speaks very entertainingly of his library in his home near Paris. Ever since he was a young boy, he has collected rare volumes, original editions and classics in every tongue. Before he was 20, when he was organist at the Church of St. Eugene in Paris, he gave each month a part of his salary to a dealer in second-hand books, who saved for him the finest, the most valuable books which he came across. This bookdealer, Mr. Pugno says, was a very well-educated man, and an intimate friend of the great novelist Balzac. Mr. Pugno tells a story of how the bookdealer came into possession of an enormously valuable library, containing original editions of Moliere, each volume of which brought more than the price paid for the whole library. After the death of the great French Basin, his magnificent library fell into the hands of a man who knew nothing about the value of a book and cared less. This man called in the bookdealer, who, being extremely shrewd, bought the entire collection for a ridiculously small sum of money. Several of these volumes now stand in Mr. Pugno's library.

As a musician, Mr. Pugno easily stands in the foremost rank of artists. He is a painter of dainty squares, of noble landscapes, of exquisite miniatures. He is broad-minded in his interpretations; when he plays Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, he is a strict classicist, when he plays Grieg, Chopin and Tschakowsky, he is a romanticist of deep sentiment and passion. He is also cosmopolitan in his art, for when he plays Chopin, he is a Pole; Liszt makes of him a Hungarian; Grieg, a Scandinavian; Schumann, a German; and in his own compositions, he is French.

Mr. Pugno has written a piano concerto, which places him, as a French composer, beside Cesar Franck and Saint-Saens. Of his smaller compositions, the best-known are "Serenade a la Lune," and "Conte Nocturne." The latter portrays an old grandmother telling ghost stories at twilight to the little grandchildren, and as may be imagined, the theme of the composition is very weird and extremely original. The "Serenade," too, is very original and dainty; it has a melody running through it that one cannot soon forget.

Mr. Pugno is the recipient of high honors in France. He is honorary principal of the Paris Conservatory, and is also an officer of the Academie Francaise, which is the highest mark of distinction that France has to offer her countrymen. The badge of the Academie is a little piece of red ribbon in the button-hole, and Mr. Pugno is never without it. MARION EUGENIE BAUER.

In the World of Music.

Mrs. Rose Bloch Bauer, the dramatic soprano, leaves tomorrow for Spokane to remain over the holidays. She will sing at the February meeting of the Musical Club, Tacoma, with the chorus of 70 voices, led by Director G. M. Schulz, and will also give a song recital soon. A Tacoma newspaper in speaking of Mrs. Bloch Bauer, says: "She is a singer well known here, and whose reputation as a vocalist is widely recognized. Those who have heard Mrs. Bloch Bauer will readily understand the great her singing promise. She has a fine voice of much dramatic power and sweetness, and sings with the power of an artist."

"Enoch Arden," in music, by Richard Strauss, was given by the Art Society of Pittsburg.

Gregory Haas, the English tenor, sails for this country immediately after Christmas. His first recital will be in Utica, N. Y., January 8.

Ellison van Hoose, tenor, sang at Pittsburg, Pa., at the Pittsburg Orchestra concert, when the first performance of Arthur Nevin's orchestra suite, "Love Dreams," was excellently played.

Lillian Blauvelt, one of this country's most popular concert sopranos in recent years, has been engaged in London for the next opera season at Covent Garden in June. She will sing Marguerite, and later will add Juliette, Zerlina and Micaela.

The Boyer chorus had an excellent rehearsal, last Wednesday, of several "Mozartian" choruses, and Nicola W. Glade's charming cantata, "Christmas Eve." The next rehearsal of the chorus, under Mr. Boyer's direction, will be January 7, at the Aeolian Hall.

Mrs. Alice Samuels Chamberlain, well known in this city, sang several songs with much acceptance at the recent German concert of the Musical Club, Tacoma. She will be soloist at Trinity Episcopal Church, next Sunday, and will also sing for the Browning Club, Tacoma, in January.

Paolo Gillico tackled a piano keyboard and a matinee audience both at 20 degrees below freezing at New York several days ago. It was more like dancing in the barn than like a house warming. But the pianist was brave, and though it was no fair hearing, he conquered most of the difficulties attending a piano recital. Gillico's technique is smooth and soft, and with much acceptance at the recent German concert of the Musical Club, Tacoma, in January.

An artistic recital of the music of young France, was given at New York by Madame Alexandre-Marie, when her programme was: "Le Poeme de L'Amour et de la Mer," Ernest Chausson; "Nell," "L'Hermitte," "Chanson a Danseur," A. Poulton; "Le Charme," "Les Papillons," Ernest Chausson; "Nages," "La Pousiere," "La Pluie," "La Parole," Chausson de Miarka (by desire), Alexandre Georges; "Les Mains," "Mouame," Massenet; "En Bourdine (Chanson Grieg), Gabriel Faure; "Mandoline," G. Chamade.

Edouard de Reszke was recently interviewed concerning his brother, Jean de Reszke, the famous tenor, and said: "For the present, Jean does not care to go far from home. This Winter he will remain most of the time in Paris, and as yet he has made no definite arrangements to sing elsewhere in the Spring. He is now appearing at the Opera in 'Siegfried' and 'Lohengrin,' and early in January he will create the role of Canio in the first French production of 'I Pagliacci.' I may tell you that Leoncavallo's opera is not to remain in conjunction with another opera, but is to be sandwiched between the first and last acts of a ballet, which should make it doubly attractive to Parisian audiences."

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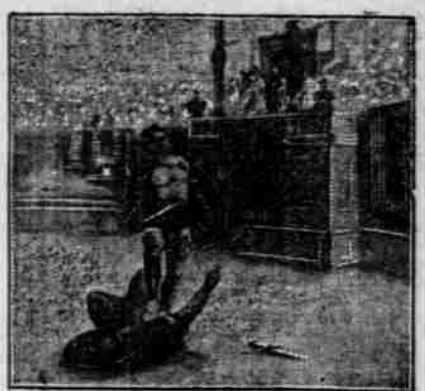
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