SECOND DAY OF MUSIC FESTIVAL AT THE ARMORY CHARMS THOUSANDS

Artistic Performance of Orchestra and Singers at Matinee Pleases All—"Swan and Skylark," Principal Piece at Night Concert, Proves Gem.

BY J. M. QUENTIN.

WITH continuing charm and unabating enthusiasm among the audiences, the music festival of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, assisted by the 300 members of the Portland Choral Society, still holds sway at the Armory.

Yesterday was the second day of the festival and even better and more artistic programmes were offered. Both orchestra and chorus have found themselves and are better getting used to surroundings. Consequently, both Mr. Rosenbecker and Mr. Boyer, the conductors, are happy.

Although the symphony orchestra is still the main attraction at the festival, with its soloists, the Portland Chorus seems to have struck a popular chord and to hold a first mortgage on the affections of the public. For do not sons, daughters, nieces and nephews, and in some cases fathers and mothers in the chorus, sing to their many relatives in the Portland audiences? The chorus is also feeling more at home on the raised benches, and even the youngest singers have recovered from attacks of stage-fright, so much so that last night in the fortissimo passages, I am credibly informed the chorus nearly drowned out the orchestra, which was then playing for its life in the Goring-Thomas "Swan and Skylark" cantata.

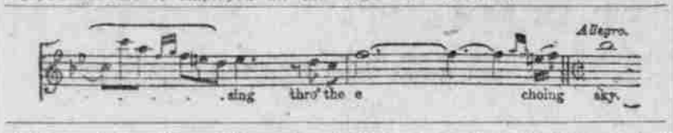
Mother and father and the boys and girls attended the matinee performance yesterday afternoon at the Armory, and to say that the young folks enjoyed their first taste of imported symphony orchestra is putting it mildly. Sullivan's "Di Ballo" overture was played with a swing and a dash by the orchestra that made the air tingle with sweet sound. Encore? Of course. It was a dainty string-study, "Minuet of the Fly," by Calbulka, and then Conductor Rosenbecker earned fresh laurels by the two Greig numbers. The two Hungarian dances, by Brahms, was out of the ordinary, so much so that I think they were the star contributions of the afternoon. So much so, that the effect was electrical. The encore was a dramatic and soul-stirring orchestral rendition of the famous sextet from "Lucia." In the whole world of music, I don't know one selection that lifts one out of oneself like this. Another novelty, for us, were the two American gems of the programme, Macdowell's "Love Song" and "Indian Dance." Striking originality is the first effect observed, especially in the latter number, where suggestions of the Indian tom-tom dance, and the weird music of the red man steal upon you. The tone picture is perfect. For an encore was played the Rubenstein melody in F. The orchestral finale was a grand climax of startling effects for both strings and brass in Svendsen's "Coronation March."

Good opportunity was offered at this matinee to make a closer acquaintance with two of the visiting vocal soloists, Mrs. Rose Lutiger Gannon, contralto, and John B. Miller, tenor. If you remember, the two other soloists, Mrs. Genevieve Clark Wilson, soprano, and Arthur Middleton, basso-cantante, sang at the Friday night concert, and I spoke of them and their work in detail yesterday. Mrs. Gannon is a pupil of Jean de Reszke, of Paris, and her home is Chicago. Her voice is remarkable for its beautiful tone and depth, her compass being from low E to high A flat. She visited this city some little time ago, in concert, as the solo contralto with the Chicago Ladies' Quartet, and her home is in Chicago, where she is well known as the noted contralto soloist in the choir of the Shaai Temple, where the celebrated Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch preaches. This church choir position Mrs. Gannon has held for five consecutive years, and is one of the very best church-choir positions in the United States. Her compass is from low E to A above the staff. She has a most pleasing platform appearance.

Her solo was an aria from Ponchielle's "La Gioconda," a selection well and favorably known here, from its vividly dramatic properties, and Mrs. Gannon, who sang it in Italian, gave it an artistic rendition. She was cordially received, and for her encore sang in English "What the Chimney Sang," by Arthur Griswold, with orchestration by Mr. Rosenbecker. It was a valuable voice lesson to listen to Mrs. Gannon's crisp phrasing and distinct enunciation.

John B. Miller, the tenor soloist, is a stately, impressive looking man, and his voice, although a lyric tenor of fine quality has considerable carrying power. He is a native of Anna, Ill., and at the present time he holds the position of tenor soloist in the choir of St. Paul's Universalist Church, Chicago, and like Mr. Middleton, the basso-cantante, is a member of the faculty of Chicago Musical College. Mr. Miller's compass is from C to B natural. He has never been further west before, than Denver, and is favorably known in the Middle West as a talented oratorio tenor. His vocal selection was the flower song from Bizet's "Carmen," and his tone was clear and pure, though not powerful. His tone production is very pleasant to the ear. He also was kindly received, and for his encore sang "Lamp of Love," by Mary F. Salter, with orchestration by Mr. Rosenbecker. The orchestral accompaniment was a trifle loud.

The dominant part of the evening concert, without meaning at all to dim the orchestra's art, turned out to be the rendition of Goring Thomas' "Swan and Skylark," sung by the chorus of 300. It was an impressive sight when those singers arose for business. They had the confident air that they knew by heart what they were going to sing—and that's half the battle in singing. The cantata was all the more enjoyed because it employed all the visiting soloists, Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Gannon, Mr. Miller and Mr. Middleton, and it went with a sweep and a vigorous quality of tone that carried all before it. William H. Boyer, who trained the chorus, was, by the courtesy of Mr. Rosenbecker, conductor of the cantata, and he skilfully handled both orchestra and chorus.



I wish to state at the outset of this criticism on the "Swan and Skylark" that this cantata, a typically English one, was written by the late Arthur Goring Thomas, who died March 20, 1892, the words being selected from the compositions of three English poets—Hemans, Keats and Shelley. The editor, who also orchestrated from the piano score left by the dead composer, is Charles Villiers Stanford, known as one of the most gifted composer-musicians Ireland has ever produced. "The Swan and Skylark" paraphrases life and death by the departure of Summer and its resurrection, and speaks of the dying flowers and tender shoots of leaves suddenly springing into beauty and fragrance, through the all-life giving sun.

Gloom marks the opening motif, finely sung by the basso-cantante, Mr. Middleton:

A Grecian poet I, but born too late;
For me no nymph sings from the upland wood
Her antique song; nor in bright, hurrying brook
Is seen and lost her illusive smile.

The sentiment is pagan and savors of thick woods and hoary Druids. It is woven into a delicate, tender symphony by the orchestra, and then come voices which murmur, "'mid the long reeds that o'er a Grecian stream," "the sculpture of a broken shrine," and "a lonely swan warbled his death chant." The poet listens to the strange music and bids farewell to laughing Summer, the theme being swelled to a chorus, with a typical contralto lead, and the sentiment glows and pulses "as with the sweetness wrung from parting love"—whatever that may mean.

Summer, the time of roses and sunshine, when all the little growing plants take new beauty, is first voiced by contraltos, members of a special chorus of women's voices, the names of these soprani-contralti singers being:

First soprano: Mrs. May Dearborne Schwab, Mrs. Elia Hoberg Tripp and Miss Eva Wells; second soprano, Mrs. Nettie Greer Taylor and Mrs. E. S. Miller; first contralto, Mrs. Rose Coffey Powell, Mrs. Gertrude Holmes Brewery and Mrs. Leila Hammond; and second contralto, Mrs. W. A. T. Bushong, Miss Petronella C. Connolly, Miss M. Evelyn Hurley and Mrs. Jessie McConnell Hale.

Their theme is "Soft Summer Clouds," and a suggestion comes of singing, warbling birds all in a garden fair. The semi-chorus was sung with excellent taste and shading, the voices blending perfectly and the tone quality, especially in the head register displayed by the singers, was delicious. Considerable credit must be given to the members of this special chorus of women's voices for the skilful way in which they interpreted the leading motif. It is even a feat to read the music correctly, so difficult is the score. Portland is one of the few cities on the Pacific Coast to possess such a finely-voiced and intelligent-reading chorus of women's voices. These singers fairly represent the church choirs of Portland.

But, taking up again the thread of "Swan and Skylark," a more than usually joyous moment dawned when chorus tenors and basses began one mighty unison duet of triumph, the music bearing such a suspicious resemblance to a certain popular song that the audience of last night may be pardoned when some listeners sat up in their seats and asked themselves: "Where have I heard that air before? It seems to me——. H-m-m." The musical passage in question recalls a familiar ditty in which a merry auto is the principal feature, or—perish the thought—is it that the Goring-Thomas music is cut from the same cloth as the song in question? Of course I couldn't mention the name of the song—no, not at the rate of a dollar a line. Just a little hint.

Several messages from chorus, soloists and orchestra say "Summer Is Come," and on page 38 of the score a joy picture was unfolded by the soprano soloist, Mrs. Wilson, who sang brilliant coloratura music of lace-work finish. In one instance she reached high C in altissimo.

It struck me that this lighter sort of music is more suited to her voice than the heavy, dramatic qualities called for, from the soprano soloist in "Fair Ellen."

The trend of the music in the chorus beginning "Higher Still and Higher," reminds me of Wagner, somehow, and also because of the exacting demands made on vocalism. The resemblance to Wagner also haunts one in the motif, "So Those Two Voices Met," vivid picture of life and death. The note of farewell has a dirge tone, and instead of the remainder of the cantata from this particular point being built to a glorious, triumphant close, to my great disappointment, the composer has again introduced the "dying swan" effect. Every singer in the chorus, and both soprano and tenor soloists, find the music growing fainter, until one wonders what on earth Goring-Thomas was driving at. He ordered the passage, on page 90 of the score, "Thou Art Wonderful" taken at double piano. Then the motif dies away, softly but suddenly, without any apparent reason, and orchestra and singers are left to look at one another. And it's all over, like a flash. To my way of thinking, it is a tame way to end a really meritorious cantata representing the very best in the modern school of music.

Now, to speak even more critically about the score of "The Swan and Skylark"; surely, Goring Thomas must have written it as exhibit A of technical difficulty. To read some of the chorus passages is as bad as a Chinese puzzle. There are frequent and capricious changes of key, broken time, and the motif twists and twines like a sinuous sunbeam, only to emerge again in unexpected places. The poetical atmosphere is almost Moorish, so warm is its intensity. But, after all, as a cantata "The Swan and Skylark" is a fresh breath from the open. It is unhackneyed, and is marked by really high art. Too bad that its composer died so young!

Just think of the additional masterpieces he might have given to the world! Arthur Goring Thomas was born at Ratton, Sussex, England, and according to Rupert Hughes' book the date was November 21, 1850. Sir George Groves gives the time as November, 1851. At first Goring Thomas was educated for a business career, and music did not seriously come into his life until his 20th year. In 1875, he went to Paris and studied for two years with M. Emile Durand, and for three additional years he worked with Sullivan and Prout. As a composer, he was an instant success, one of his early hits being an opera on Moore's poem, "The Light of the Harem." He soon achieved celebrity at the English music festivals, particularly the series at Norwich, and grew to be favorably known by his compositions in detached pieces for orchestra, songs, etc., for his cantata, "The Sun Worshippers," and his four-act operas, "Esmeralda" and "Nadeschada." His was a busy musical life, of which this writing necessarily because of the time at my disposal must be a brief sketch.

His friend and the editor of "Swan and Skylark," Charles Villiers Stanford, the noted composer and conductor, was born September 20, 1862, at Dublin, Ireland. Stanford has written lots of good church choir music, and he has nearly revolutionized music at Cambridge University, England. Stanford's best-known works are: "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan," "Savanarola," "The Canterbury Pilgrims," "Shamus O'Brien," incidental music to Tennyson's "Queen Mary," "The Eumenides," "The Holy Children," "The Revenge," "Voyage of Maeldune," etc.

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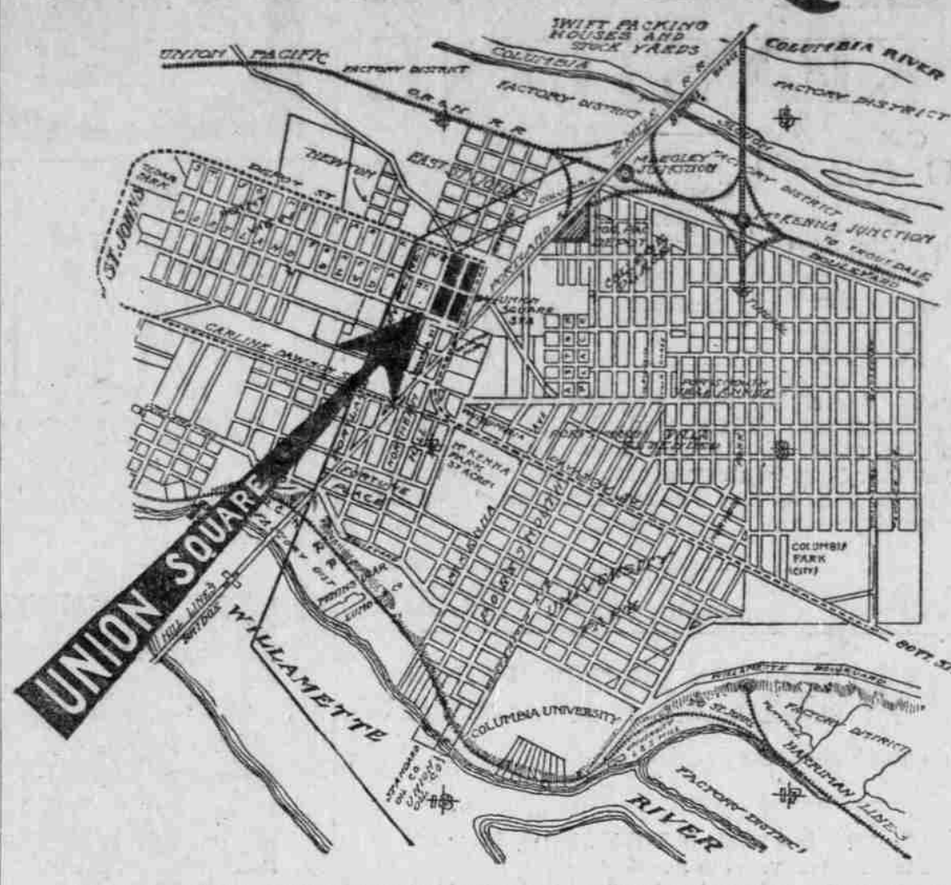

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Portland bank clearings keep crawling back toward the normal point where they were before the financial stringency of a few months ago. It will not be very long, it is believed, before they entirely recover from the depressing effect of the unfavorable condition of the country when financial squalls set in last August. Each week sees the clearings slightly ahead of previous weeks and the week just closed is no exception. For the six business days ending yesterday, the associated banks of Portland show cash transactions of $6,106,526.69. For the corresponding week of last year, when the wave of prosperity sweeping over the country was at its crest, the figures were $8,979,790.61.

Clearings yesterday were $859,839.28, while the corresponding Saturday of last year showed a total of $984,388.46.

Portland is at the head of Pacific Coast cities in that the decrease compared with last year's figures is smaller than other centers on this shore of the continent. San Francisco shows a decrease of 39.6 per cent, Los Angeles 21.1 per cent, Seattle 26.3 per cent and Portland 18.8 per cent. The average decrease for all cities listed in the Bradstreet report is 30.1 per cent, showing that Portland is far ahead of other cities in recovering its place in the financial world.

The statement made throughout this state that Portland is first among the Coast cities to emerge from the troubled financial conditions and that Oregon is among the most favored sections of the whole country at this time is borne out by the official figures.

New Road in Marion County.

Articles of incorporation of the Woodburn & Western Railway Company were filed yesterday by R. L. Donald, C. N. McArthur and Wallace McCamant. The company plans to build a line of railway from Scotts Mills to St. Paul, Or., via Woodburn. Both termini of the road are located in Marion County. The object in building the line is to provide facilities for getting the output of newly opened coal mines near Scotts Mills to market. Work is progressing on development of the mines, which, it is said, are rich and will supply considerable tonnage for the projected road.

SUBWAY PLAN ABANDONED

Project for Putting Wires Underground Will Rest for Present.

At a meeting of the subway committee yesterday morning it was voted to recommend to the City Council that the plan be abandoned for the present. This project was one which was thought might reduce the danger from overhead wires of heavy voltage, but is now thought to be impracticable. An appropriation of $5000, which was made to defray the expense of making preliminary estimates and plans, will be returned to the Council, and will probably be used to pay an expert engineer to submit plans and specifications for a high bridge over or a subway under the Willamette River.

Inasmuch as the telephone and telegraph companies doing business in Portland have already put their wires underground, and because the city cannot force them to shift their wires into a municipal conduit, it was decided to be best to abandon the project. The orginal plan was to construct conduits throughout the fire limits and to compel all companies using wires to lay them in the city's subway. A rental was to have been charged to defray the expense of the work.

NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

Charles S. Fee Not Concerned With Vexed Gateway Matter.

That he has nothing whatever to do with the vexed gateway question that is agitating the minds of Portland people is the statement of Charles S. Fee, passenger traffic manager for the Southern Pacific Company. The gateway matter is purely one between the Union Pacific and the Northern Pacific, the Southern line being entirely disinterested. The closing of the gateway affects only east and westbound travel via Portland and has no significance whatever when viewed by Southern Pacific officials as such. Here in Portland, where the Southern Pacific and O. R. & N. passenger offices are combined, the matter is one that is very interesting.

"Our relations with the Northern Pacific are of the most pleasant character," said Mr. Fee yesterday, "and they will no doubt remain such. I was with that company for years and I can see no reason why there should be the slightest change in the attitude of the two systems. Our interchange with the Northern Pacific at Portland continues as always without the slightest interruption and promises to do so indefinitely.

"The only matter that can be given out of interest locally is that our company is rearranging its time card to California but this requires the approval of the operating department before schedules can be announced. The arrangement of details may require some little time yet."

Mr. Fee left last night for his home in San Francisco, accompanied by his wife in the private car Sunset.

GIFT TO THE LONDON ZOO

King Edward Presents It With Herd of Mouflon.

LONDON, April 4.—King Edward has presented a little herd of mouflon to the extension of the Zoo, now nearing completion, which, it is hoped, will be open a few days before Easter. In this extension, which covers about three acres, there will be a number of large paddocks, containing various animals, which will be visible to the public from Rengent's Park.

Mouflon are the only wild European sheep. Hitherto the King's herd had been kept in a large inclosure in Windsor Great Park, but His Majesty, who, it is understood, always thought it was a pity that they should be kept from public view, immediately presented them to the Zoological Society on hearing that the gardens were to be extended, in order to provide a permanent free show of some of the animals.

Sir William Ingram has also made an interesting presentation to the free part of the Zoo, in the shape of two of the cassowaries—large ostrich like birds—which he keeps at one of his private residences.

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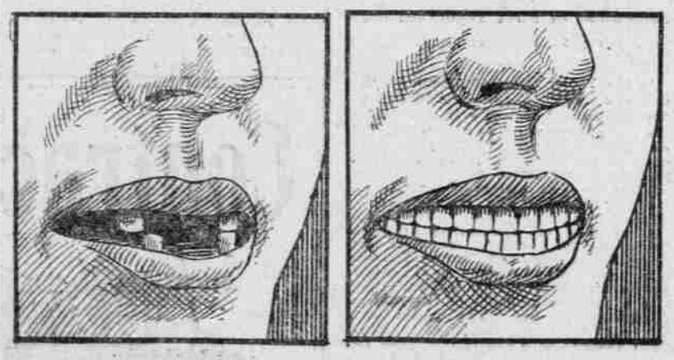

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