# MUSICAL NOTES & COMMENT

## THE FIRST PERFORMANCE OF BEETHOVEN'S 9TH SYMPHONY

### Further Reminiscences Drawn from Private and Secret Sources Hitherto Inaccessible.

It would be not only interesting, but well worth while, to reprint all of the books in which Beethoven's friends held converse with him from the time that it was decided to give the concert on May 7, 1824, at which the 9th Symphony had its first performance until after the concert had been given and repeated. But the record would be too voluminous. There are more than two hundred pages of small handwriting in the transcript of the Conversation books made by Alexander W. Thayer now in possession of this writer and which are being drawn on for the edification of The Tribune's readers. Some day, no doubt, they will be printed in full and properly annotated. For the present we purpose making a few more drafts, and as an agreeable continuation of last Sunday's account of the dinner which Beethoven was unexpectedly called on to give to the singers Sontag and Unger, who sang at the concerts. We begin with an extract from an earlier book than that containing that story. That Fraulein Unger was not only a great admirer of Beethoven but a good deal of a tease and not at all disinclined to make merry over his domestic affairs is plain from a meeting which took place in his lodgings somewhere about January 20, 1824.

#### UNGER WHEEDLES BEETHOVEN.

Fraulein Unger—Demoiselle Sontag regrets very much that she couldn't come to-day, but she's got to sing. I couldn't resist the longing to see our great and dear Master again. Why haven't you visited us for so long—laziness, nothing but laziness. Aren't you going to give us a new opera soon? They are going to give the "Taucher" Saturday; general rehearsal will be on Friday. Will you come? ("Der Taucher" was performed at the Court theatre on January 24.) The Diver himself—The opera is pleasantly composed, has a pretty subject. I believe it will please.—I have to sing 3 arias, 3 duetts, 3 terzetti and 2 finales.—My Sweetheart (Sontag), Forti, the King; Sontag, his daughter; Preisinger, his exiled brother; Unger, his son; Haitzinger, a damned Prince;—If the dear old God would only mercifully enlighten *you* that you would write soon something better for us, I would not spare any pains—for you would surely be rewarded, I would come out every day!

Schindler—Engage her as your housekeeper, she can cook very well.

Unger—Well, you will have to be in a hurry, for I must go to Germany in December—Will you go with me to the Casino to-day, we'll drive there and come back on foot—Please grant my wishes—the carriage is waiting below—God will give me patience till then—"Libussa".—frequently—Now he writes with more care, industry and fire, for he's recently got married. (Conradin Kreutzer) you ought also to get married, perhaps you'd become more industrious—Forgive my somewhat satirical remark.—I'll keep my vows at Vesta's altar, until I change my mind.—It has made me happy to see you again.—How can anyone who knows your Fidelio, your symphonies, how can any such an one not know you? If you knew how often I sing your songs;—THAT is hard to decide, since I love them all.—Did you hear Weber's "Euryanthe"? How did you like it? Much of it appeals to me, not all. The poem is hideous—

> Nim hin die Seele mein,
> Lass mich ganz du nur sein,
> Ganz in ich dein.
> Seufzer wie Flammen wehn
> Kuhlend im Lindrung dein,
> Lass mich in Lust und Wehen
> And deine Brust vergehen:—

How do you like such *German* poetry?—You have already a libretto? Is it pretty? Is there a role in it for me?—I'd like to read Grillparzer's libretto, but forego it for the present, although I believe you wouldn't let me have it—I swear on my honor—I would bring it back, with my thanks in person—Blessed is he who believes, says Jesus.—I'll be at your service, in the afternoon.—The libretto of "Der Taucher" is very pretty—I've got to go now. Farewell and keep your word soon and come to your servant Unger.

Schindler—She's a very devil of a girl, full of fire and open-heartedness. . . . Unger will not be here at the time the opera is performed, as she said herself that she is going to make a trip in the fall.—It would be better in November, as her Summer vacation will no longer embarrass her then.—A soprano is more necessary for Melusine (Grillparzer's opera, which Beethoven was expecting to compose) than a mezzo-soprano.—She sings up to E. . . . I'll tell her to-day to send it back as soon as she can.—Talking about it recently she did not say positively that she wanted to sing the first part.

#### PROTESTATIONS FROM UNGER.

Date, April 11 or 12.

Unger—I have brought the parts of the Mass with me.—I fear there are some errors in it, and therefore I beg you to permit Herr Preisinger and me to have a short look at the score.—Might we not try to sing a little of it for you?—Moreover, I want to have another good look at the medal (presented to Beethoven by the King of France).—Who would not be made enthusiastic by *your* compositions.—Grant my request and improvise for us on the theme which Preisinger is now playing.—He knows all the symphonies by heart.—I am going to the "Seasons" to-day.—Will you not sit in my box? It would give me great pleasure.—Parterre box No. 2 to the left.—Sontag-Barth-Seipelt-Umlauf will conduct. Preisinger was to have sung, but was kind enough to get ill because of Duport's maliciousness, who would not let him sing.—I swear eternal allegiance to your standard; who can compel me to become faithless to my vow?

#### TROUBLE WITH THE ARTISTS.

(Time about the middle of April, 1824.)

Schuppanzigh—Has he (S. is addressing Beethoven in the third person, as was his custom) heard nothing from Klement? He is said to have been greatly enraged at his (B.'s) letter.—But Jäger wrote to Schindler and declined.—He wrote that the part was too low for him.—At least three days ago.—He said that he would say nothing to him (B.) in order to avoid vexation.—But he (B.) must know it so that other arrangements can be made. Jäger must sing; the management can command him because it is concerned in the affair.—Has Duport answered yet?—The fellow is not interested in music and therefore all's one to him how it goes.—He (B.) must write still another note of invitation for the choristers; Sonnleithner needs it and at the same time wants to know how large the ordinary chorus at the Theatre an-der-wien is.

Beethoven—(Memorandum)—The number of singers at Auf der Wieden.

Schuppanzigh—He (B.) must send the chorus parts to Schwarzböck because of the boys who learn slowly.—It would be a good thing if we were able to have a rehearsal of the strings the end of this week.—How is it with the extra parts?—Has Hensler sent the ouverture.—He would better make a memorandum so as not to forget it. It is better to have than to expect (the German proverb standing for our "Bird in the hand," etc).—Was he (B.) at the Vogel yesterday?—It would be a good thing to send parts earlier.

Schindler.—I shall have to tell that to Unger to-day, for she assured me yesterday that she and Preisinger would sing even if Duport refused his consent. Both are ready to make an agreement with Duport not to get ill the entire Summer.—He excused himself only because he wanted to go to Pressburg this week. But Vogel told me already the first time that he would—and must—sing.—Schuppanzigh might have held his tongue, since the matter was settled long ago.—That was only an excuse, since he was of the opinion that the concert would take place on the 22nd, but that's past now.—Schuppanzigh thinks that Wranitzky ought to take the soprano solos and Seipelt the bass.—Unfortunately there isn't a good contralto in Vienna just now.—By God, I would not have expected that.—If it were known how you are treated here!—Since he has done this you ought to show your contempt and demand the return of the opera book, which is lying around useless.—He does not deserve anything else.—I am not pleased with it. Vogel said yesterday that he would wager that D. (Duport) wouldn't hesitate in the least and that he could not possibly do it. Well, *he can*.—Sontag hasn't sung for a week.

Dr. Bach (Beethoven's advocate)—The Lithographic Establishment begs permission to copy the medallion from the King of France on stone and incorporate it as a supplement for the "Wiener Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung." It is to be full size and be as neat and beautiful as the original.

Schindler.—Please give the viola a rest or I shall also become deaf.—Listen near master! I met Archduke Rudolph on the Bastion to-day. He is still weak from the last attack.—He asked me how far we had advanced with the concert.—He will give you a dispensation relieving you of your visits.

Piringer.—The title is of no consequence at this concert.—The entire city knows whence these pieces were taken.—How about the copying?—Has everything been written out?

Piringer, a friend of Beethoven's, was leader of the Concerts spirituels in Vienna. His reference to the title went to the fact that the Archbishop of Vienna, backed by the police authorities, was unwilling to announce a mass or portions of a mass for performance in a theatre. The difficulty was overcome only a very short time before the concert and then only by appeal to high authority at court.

Two Conversation Books of some twenty pages give a pitiful picture of the confusion which still prevailed in all departments up to the very hour of the concert on May 7. The dates are no doubt May 3, 6 and 7. Much must be omitted from the following translated transcript, partly because of its irrelevancy, partly because to make everything clear would cost too many explanatory notes. Points to which attention may be directed are the evidences of Beethoven's irresolution in most things and his obstinacy in one. Preisinger was to sing the bass solos, but his voice was a low one and he could not reach the high F sharp in the recitative which introduces the choral part of the finale. Schindler begged permission to change the one tone, but Beethoven remained obdurate almost to the last; then grudgingly gave his consent. When the time came Preisinger did not sing, and Seipelt had to take his place. It is pathetic to get a picture of Beethoven driving from house to house of the nobility in order personally to deliver invitations to the concert, though the pathos is lessened by the circumstance that he was only following a custom prevalent among artists of that time, and one which endured a long time thereafter. That there should have been so much doubt about the efficiency of the two singers who stood close to Beethoven, and whom he called his "witches" up to the time of the performance, is calculated to cause surprise, but an explanation is found in the fact that Beethoven was vacillating, suspicious of everybody and everything, and that his native irresolution was heightened by his multitude of counsellors, among whom there was no unity of plan or conviction. The conversation apparently opens in the rehearsal room on May 7.

Schindler.—Durzka is already rehearsing with the entire chorus. Meanwhile, you go back with Schuppanzigh.—Will you permit Karl (Beethoven's nephew) to go to the concert to-day to hear the overture to "Fidelio"?

Schuppanzigh.—They are singing it for the first time, and want to sing it rather slowly the first time.—They have got to take time because they do not know it yet.—In the mean time, I'll go down and take a look at the orchestra.

(A day or two later.)

Schindler.—My Lord, Falstaff (Beethoven's nickname for Schuppanzigh), Sontag, Unker, Preisinger and I. (Evidently Schindler is making up a dinner party.)—Falstaff is already fasting.—We shall not be able to have a rehearsal to-day; no call was given to the orchestra.—And at court? There we shall exchange our roles—you, my obedient Phylades, and I—? Well, you shall see how I play Orestes.—I have long been on terms of familiar fraternity (drunk Bruderschaft) with all the archdukes.—I, too young?—That's all right; I'll make myself appear older than I am.—But be nice and obedient and dont grow.—The most exalted court will come out to both of us, you the great Beethoven and I the great—what?—Your little son? The tailor is here. You ought not to bother about anything.—He has arranged it so that the Jew will have to wait till the end of May. (Beethoven was about to order his concert clothes.)—He has already sent him the receipt and told him that he had no more claim against you.—The Orchestra is called for half after 9 o'clock. Five would be nice.—Among the second violins.—If everybody is attentive to the arrangements confusion will be impossible. . . . The solo singers of the society (Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde) will sing along—but scarcely those of the theatre.—My head is heavy—I am thinking a good deal.—Now, give me the other score, so that we may have them bound together. . . . I have arranged with Bach (Beethoven's advocate) that if you make up your mind to repeat the concert he will begin at once to arrange to have the Hall of the University placed at your disposal.—He assures you that he can do this without cost to you beyond the building of the orchestra.—He approved of my plan in this case to have a simple orchestra, choir and solo singers like the present.—Then it will be profitable.—He is now Procurator of the University.—You will not make much profit the first time, but there can be no talk of losing. But that's not enough. However, this was the only way to acquaint the public with the magnitude of the works.—Without going to extraordinary expenses.—At the second concert this cost will no longer be necessary.—The Public knows in advance *what* it is going to hear.—The King paid the greater part.—If your brother had not made a mess of it in the beginning it would have been all fixed up in three or four weeks.—Before I knew this D. (Duport) paid me the compliment of saying that if I had come at first and told him what you wanted and how you wanted it everything would have been in order long ago.—He even offered me a seat in his box as often as I am able to go to the theater.—I'm going now to the Ridotto Room (where rehearsals were held) in order to get things in order.—I have appointed the people.—I beg of you only to have yourself in marching order tomorrow at 9 o'clock.—It would be well if you were to get an advanced look at the arrangement of the orchestra.—Rest assured that U. (Umlauf) will do all in his power and if everything isn't exactly as it should be it will not signify greatly. I was really amazed yesterday to see how he saw so clearly what was wanted from a single glance into the score. . . .

Schindler.—But how about Preisinger? May he sing it *ad libitum*? Again no? It will make a better effect, *yes*, rest assured of that. Oh, Lord!!! . . . You dropped a word yesterday which startled me concerning Schuppanzigh, namely, that he had so little to say a short time ago because you had not yet negotiated with him. Is that really so? Shall I pay him for this favor? Yesterday I asked him if he had engaged the supplementary wind instruments. He had not yet; otherwise you would not have been able to get them. That would have been meaner than all the dirty acts of the administration. Duport begs your pardon a thousand times. Gottdank forgot to call the orchestra. Do not suspect anything malicious. He called everybody for to-morrow morning at 9 himself. What shall be done with the gentlemen dilletante?

Schuppanzigh.—It will be wise if there is a thorough rehearsal of the choir. The dilletante are all here, and I shall ask them in his (B's) name to come to-morrow at 9. Stesso tempo.

Schindler.—I'll drive at once to Seipelt. I hope he'll do it with pleasure. . . . I'll go also to Sontag and Unger to call on them. Wait for me here; I'll be back. Unger, too, is sitting at home with her throat in a bandage. She will be better by to-morrow. . . . The coachman is paid till 2 o'clock; it is now half-past 1; *ergo*—I found the two together comforting each other. That was only a joke. She has got to sing already to-day.

(*They go to a tavern to dine.*)

Do you want to eat according to the tariff or at fixed prices? I do not believe that any singer will sing at this concert so willingly as Sontag. She (Unger) was ready as soon as she saw me coming with the carriage, and met me on the stairs—but, oh, the sad face which she put on when she heard it all! And she wants to assure you that you need not fear anything unpleasant so far as she is concerned.

Schuppanzigh.—If it were not for Schindler it would be impossible to give the concert. Schindler deranges or arranges everything. Has he (B.) got a new housekeeper? Does he want to eat a gosline? . . .

#### SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION.

There are talk and anecdote about eating and drinking, and then Schindler calls up the subject of Beethoven's title on the announcement, the story of which has already been printed in The Tribune. The conversation goes on:

Beethoven.—Three florins 30 kreutzer. A pear.

Schindler.—That's what we owe; we ate a great deal to-day. If it suits you we will go to the café. If you go to court to-morrow, which is very necessary, you will not well be able to attend the entire rehearsal. Neither is it wise to postpone the visits till the last day, because everything needs to be prepared for, and the princess, etc., might take a drive into the country on Friday. It is therefore necessary to do this business to-morrow. A great deal will be gained if you attend the general rehearsal. . . . Umlauf is not quite strict enough in these things. Now he says he is going to put it (the orchestra) on the stage, but the basses make too much noise in the room and the violins lose power. You certainly do not think that they laugh at you or your work? Moreover, you know that Unger is a mad little thing, full of fun and fond of teasing even on inappropriate occasions. They laugh at Preisinger. He did sing it as it stands, on my honor! Only the Alti were weak, but to-morrow the boys will be added, who must bring back the balance. Forti is proud, and would hardly have taken the part after Preisinger; otherwise I would have given him the part without question. But Forti and Preisinger are friends, and it was hard to say what should be done except to choose a neutral. . . . Forti could sing the F sharp, but he lacks depth. I will change it in the bass part. We shall leave it so and have no more doubts. He'll bring it out well. Then we are agreed? Bon!

#### FROM A CONVERSATION BOOK.

One of the conversation books referred to above follows close on to the one just abstracted. It was written partly in a carriage while Beethoven was making his formal calls on the members of the Austrian nobility, and only a portion of it need be given. The date is fixed by various incidents as May 6, the day before the concert.

Schindler.—1, to Prince Cohary—2, to Schwarzenberg—to Stadion.—Prince Palfy—Hatzfeld—Metternich—Trauttmansdorf—To Saurau—Early: in an hour all will be done.—To Esterhazy at once—To the government President.—It is possible to reach them as early as 8 o'clock.—Now you are ready, we'll drive to Sontag.

Beethoven.—*Contra fag.*

Schindler.—The free tickets at your disposal, if you want to grant them, are:

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 to Unger.<br>2 to Sontag.<br>1 to Hensler.<br>2 to Umlauf.<br>2 to Bernard.<br>3 to Staudenheimer. | Parterre. |
| 2 to the Printer who asked them in return for printing the Ode.<br>1 to Pilat.<br>2 to Kirchhoifer.<br>1 to Bäuerle, if you will permit.<br>3 to your Brother. | 4th Gallery. |
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H. E. K.

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Continued on fifth page.

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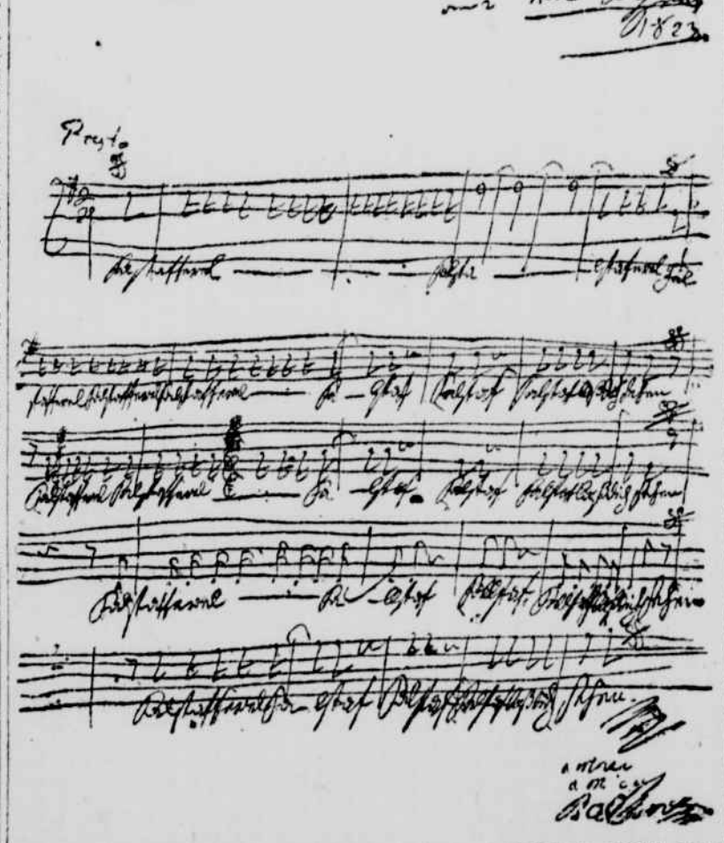

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SUNDAY—Metropolitan Opera House, 8:30 p. m., operatic concert; Aeolian Hall, 8:15 p. m., song recital by Miss Ethel Walsh and Miss Gertrude Gugler; Rumford Hall, 3 p. m., concert by the Lambord Choral Society.

MONDAY—Metropolitan Opera House, 8 p. m., Russian opera in Italian, "Boris Godounow."

TUESDAY—Metropolitan Opera House, 8 p. m., Italian opera, "Aida"; Aeolian Hall, 8:15 p. m., concert by the Kneisel Quartet; Berkeley Theatre, 8:15 p. m., song recital by Theresa Frances Wolfe.

WEDNESDAY—Metropolitan Opera House, 7:30 p. m., German opera, "Die Meistersinger."

THURSDAY—Metropolitan Opera House, 2 p. m., Italian opera, "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci"; 8 p. m., German opera, "Koenigskinder."

FRIDAY—Metropolitan Opera House, 8 p. m., German opera, "Tannhäuser"; Aeolian Hall, 3 p. m., song recital by Miss Margaret Barrell; Hotel Plaza, 11 a. m., lecture on "Music in America," by Oscar Sonneck.

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