

FESTIVAL TO ROUND OUT SEASON OF OPERATIC AND OTHER MUSIC

Damrosch's Undertaking Recalls Those of the Past

By W. J. HENDERSON.

NEW YORK is soon to plunge itself into the sea of a music festival. The first concert of the series will take place on April 6, and no less an auditorium than the Seventy-first Regiment Armory is to be the theatre of action.

Doubtless disinterested observers will inquire why this city finds it necessary to indulge in a festival of music. There is a general impression that what might properly be called a music festival begins here about the middle of October and continues until the beginning of May.

In the course of that period we have the precious privilege of hearing more than 200 orchestral concerts, and next season, thanks to the generosity of some public spirited citizens, we shall have about twenty-five more. In the coming month of April Aeolian Hall is booked for forty recitals. The season of opera at the Metropolitan has yet four weeks of life. And still we are to have a "festival."

What is a music festival? Forty years ago it was understood to be a special series of performances in which a local chorus had a most important part and in which distinguished soloists appeared. The chief object was the presentation in adequate manner of great choral compositions not possible to produce in the ordinary course of musical activities in the town in which the festival was held.

Such festivals still take place in Cincinnati and in Worcester. At Norfolk, Conn., the ideal music festival is given annually under the patronage of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Stockel. The foundation of the force is the Littlefield Country Choral Union, and the main purpose is the production of new compositions written for the festival.

Pittsfield, Mass., has a yearly festival of unique character. It is a chamber music festival and original compositions, for which prizes are offered, are introduced to audiences gathered from far and near. Bethlehem, Pa., has an annual Bach festival.

The festival about to take place in this city has none of the characteristics of these. It must be accepted simply as a special series of concerts in which unusually large forces are to be employed. No work is to be presented which might not be given in the daily activities of the season. The soloists are distinguished, but world famous soloists are heard in concerts in this town every week.

New York has not had a gigantic music festival for very many years. Perhaps the last concert series deserving the title was Theodore Thomas's Wagner concerts in 1884, when Mme. Wagner and Messrs. Winkelmann and Scaria were brought from Europe to interpret excerpts from the great music dramas. Since that time we have had stage performances of the dramas at the Metropolitan Opera House exceeding any ever given in Europe. We do not require Wagner concerts of the Thomas variety. And our local orchestras furnish frequent and admirable performances of the usual concert arrangements.

A great music festival was given under the direction of Theodore Thomas in 1882, but it had been preceded by one under Dr. Leopold Damrosch in the same place in 1881.

It is interesting to recall the nature of that festival. There was a principal chorus of 1,200 singers. For the afternoon concert a chorus of 1,200 young women from the Normal College and 250 boys from various church choirs were gathered. The orchestra consisted of forty-five violins, forty-second thirty violas, twenty-six cellos, twenty-eight double basses, six flutes, four oboes, two English horns, four clarinets, two bass clarinets, eight bassoons, twelve horns, sixteen trumpets, fourteen trombones, four tubas, ten tympani, two bass drums, three cymbals and two harps. The entire number of trumpets and trombones was employed for only a special purpose.

The assembly of such a force of orchestral soloists and symphony societies and required the engagement of players from Boston, Cincinnati, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Organ Lent by Church. The great organ was built by H. L. Roosevelt for the Church of St. Peter and Paul by that church. It had three manuals (great, swell and choir organs) of fifty-eight notes each and a pedal of twenty-seven notes. It had thirty-seven stops, of which there were usual number of mechanical registers and combination pedals. It had one notable stop in the double open diapason, 22 feet tone, of which the organists were furnished by one Hans, a Swiss builder.

In order that the present day music lover may realize what a festival was forty years ago a retrospective of the first Damrosch festival was given. The soloists were Annie Louise Cary, the famous contralto; Halo Campanini, the great tenor, and Myron Whitney, the eminent American bass. Walter Damrosch was at the organ. This work was followed by Rubinstein's "Tower of Babel," described as a "sacred oratorio" but of course sung in concert with Campanini, Whitney and Franz Remetz, a distinguished baritone, as the soloists, and the full choral and orchestral force. That was one Tuesday evening in May.

The next afternoon the first matinee was given and the concert was more popular. After the overture to Spontini's "Clippers," Edvard Grieg's "The Valkyries," Miss Cary sang Berlioz's "Captivity," and Mme. Gerster an air from "L'Etrole du Nord," and Liszt's second Hungarian rhapsody concluded the programme.

On Wednesday evening Dr. Damrosch's "Festival Overture" was played, after which Berlioz's "Requiem Mass" was given with Campanini as the soloist. Wagner's "Kaiser March" finished the list. The second afternoon concert, Thursday, May 5, was light and miscellaneous. Such a programme would not be given now except at a Sunday night concert at the Metropolitan. The principal soloists were Campanini and Mme. Gerster, the latter singing "Sweet Bird" and "Carnival Song." The third evening concert "The Messiah" was sung with Mme. Gerster, Miss Cary, A. L. King and Mr. Whitney as soloists. The Saturday matinee was again very light in character, though three numbers from the Manzoni Requiem were included, with Mme. Gerster, Miss Cary, Campanini and A. E. Stoddard, a distinguished festival singer of those days, as the soloists. On Saturday night the first part of the programme consisted of selections from "The Melting Singer," to wit, the prelude, Wagner's address, sung by Mr. Stoddard; Walter's first song by Campanini and the quintet by Mme. Gerster and Carl Messer, Campanini, Toedt and Stoddard. The second part was devoted to the sixth symphony, with Mme. Gerster and Cary and Messrs. Campanini and Stoddard as the soloists.

It is really to be seen that the chief distinction of such a festival is the employment of such a force on which the

Concerts of the Week.

SUNDAY—Philharmonic Society, Carnegie Hall, 3 P. M.; Tollefson Trio, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M.; United States Army Symphony Band, Hippodrome, 2 P. M.; Salvatore de Stefano, harp recital, Princess Theatre, 3 P. M.; Concert, Metropolitan Opera House, 8:30 P. M.; Mme. Galli-Curiel, Hippodrome, 8:15 P. M.; Chamber music concert of the People's Institute, Washington Irving High School, 5:15 P. M. MONDAY—Miss Marcia Van Dresser, song recital, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M.; Mme. Helen Teascher, violinist, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M. TUESDAY—New Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.; Antonio de Ribautpers, violinist, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M.; Concert for benefit Fatherless Children of France, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M. WEDNESDAY—New Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, 2:30 P. M.; Dai Buell, pianist, and String Orchestra, W. H. Huntington, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M. THURSDAY—Richard Buhlig, pianist, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M. FRIDAY—Pura Roco, song recital, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.; American Legion's concert for benefit wounded ex-service men, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M. SATURDAY—Musical Art Society, Hippodrome, 2:30 P. M.; Charles de Harnack, pianist, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M.; Theo Karle, tenor, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

performed were planned. Nothing except the "Requiem" of Berlioz was unusual, and in these days would not be regarded as an extraordinary achievement to give that composition at a regular concert of the Oratorio Society. The most serious obstacle would be the expense, and yet the cost of the extra brass and percussion instruments would be in a certain measure balanced by the saving in soloists.

Fourth concert, April 19, at 8:15, "Pilgrim's Progress." Words from Bunyan's religious poem. Music by Edgar Stilleman Kelley. First performance in New York of this great American oratorio.

The Angel, Mme. Mabel Garrison; First Shepherd, Mme. Marie Sundelius; Madame Puffin, Mme. Julia Clausen; the Abbot, the Evangelist, Lambert Murphy; Christian, Faithful, Roland Verrenhart; Apollyon, Money-Love, Charles T. Tittman; Worldly Wife Man, Royal Daddum. Festival chorus, children's chorus and orchestra.

Fifth concert, April 19, at 8:15, "The Damnation of Faust." Baritone, Marguerite, Miss Florence Easton; Faust, Orville Harold; Mephistopheles, Leon Rother; Brander, Frederick Patton. Festival chorus and orchestra.

Sunday afternoon, April 11, at 2:30, "The Star Spangled Banner," festival chorus and orchestra; overture, "Rienzi," Wagner, New York Symphony Orchestra; aria from the "Pearl Fishery," Blina, Mme. Laita; Tetraxini (the gypsy, Scotch Jodel, Irish Gigue, from "Henry VIII," Saint-Saens, New York Symphony Orchestra; Rhapsody, De Koven; L'eco, Eckerle; Cantata di Fritto, Cimarosa, Mme. Tetraxini; Pietro Cimarosa at the piano. Allegro con grazia, Tschakowsky; Allegro molto vivace, from Symphony No. 6, "Pastorale"; New York Symphony Orchestra. Infamatus from "Stabat Mater," Rossini; Mme. Tetraxini, Festival chorus and orchestra. Last movement from the "Farewell" Symphony, Haydn. (During which one musician after the other will blow out his candle and leave the stage, until with the last note only the conductor is left.) New York Symphony Orchestra. At midnight on April 2 150 stage carpenters, scenic artists, electricians and laborers will take possession of the armory to make ready for the festival. Work will carry with them the sections of the stage to be erected, sounding boards, decorations, a proscenium frieze, pylons and electric fixtures for stage lighting. Work will continue without intermission until 10 o'clock on Monday morning, when Walter Damrosch, conductor in chief, will rehearse the New York Symphony Orchestra and the festival chorus.

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Miss DAI BUELL, PIANO RECITAL—AEOLIAN HALL

Miss SOPHIE BRASLAU as MADDALENA in "RIGOLETTO" METROPOLITAN

At 17 of the flip of a coin decided the future musical comedy star to enter the Peabody Conservatory of Music instead of the Johns Hopkins School of Surgery, where he had already matriculated. He studied music with no idea of a theatrical career, for Thomas is the son of a Methodist clergyman, who made his first visit to the theatre to see his son open in "Apple Blossoms." During his three years at the conservatory Thomas became a church soloist in Baltimore, singing in St. Michael's and All Angels' and the Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church. After graduation he went abroad to study further with M. Anshin Petrovich, under whose instruction he had been at the conservatory and who had a studio at Prague. M. Fermin felt that his pupil's special gift lay in the field of musical comedy, and during Thomas' career he has been his constant coach. Thomas first appeared at the Winter Garden, following this engagement by playing in "Alone at Last," and later sang for eighteen months with Peggy Wood in "Maytime."

HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

Miss Elsa Huber, the diminutive sourette in Max Rogers' revue, "Saucy Bits of 1920," at Robinson's Columbia Circle, is having success in singing plaintive melodies. Others in the revue are Misses Peggy Hart, Mario Villani, Ida Meyrd and Adelaide Hall, Nat Moritan, Edward Kimmy and the Four Jankeys.

Peter A. Gage, who for ten years operated in the West Street Building, is now at 16 to 20 Stone Street and 96 and 95 Broad Street operating for the Davidsons' Restaurant Company, Inc.

At Blossom Heath Inn, on the Merrick road at Lynbrook, L. I., last night there was a heartbreak dinner to start the season. Harry Susskind, proprietor of the inn, deserted his Pelham Heath Inn to journey down the Merrick road to greet the arrivals.

The Palais Royal has ushered in the spring season with the presentation of a new and by far the most elaborate revue of the series, called "Fads and Fashions." It is a conglomeration of lively numbers and fashion parades, with entertaining specialties.

"Cheer Up New York," with its daring ice numbers and dazzling ice ballets, has entered upon its seventh month at Thomas Hooley's Golden Glades Roof.

It has just become known that Gertrude Four, a member of the chorus in Max Rogers' "Saucy Bits of 1920," has been a regular contributor to the leading periodicals in this country, writing under the pseudonym of "Violet Saunders."

Instead of being overcrowded the hotels of the city are not more than 80 per cent full and have been this way for the last month, said Frank A. Ready, resident manager of the McAlpin Hotel, last Wednesday. Just now we are "between seasons," and the summer and fall buyers have not started for the city in any large numbers, and not until after Easter will the real buying season commence.

Miss Sophie Tucker has given a silver cup as the prize in an exhibition one-step contest to be held on Tuesday evening at the Terrace Garden Dance Palace. The contest is open to all couples. It is expected there will be more than 100 entries.

WOLFGANG MUSICAL BUREAU ANNIVERSARY BACH CONCERT. AEOLIAN HALL, WED. AFTERNOON, MAR. 31, at 3. DAI BUELL and STRING ORCHESTRA. W. H. HUMISTON, Conductor.

Princess Thea, THIS AFTERNOON at 3. Aeolian Hall, Mon. Eve., Apr. 5, at 8:15. De STEFANO. Assisted by GRETA TORPAIDE. Aeolian Hall, Thurs. Eve., Apr. 8, at 8:15. MARTHA PHILLIPS. Song Recital. (Mason & Hamlin Piano). ANITA LOEW. SONG RECITAL. (Steinway Piano).

AEOLIAN HALL, TO-MORROW APT. at 8. MARCIA ANDRESSER. SONG RECITAL. (Mason & Hamlin Piano). Aeolian Hall, Tues. Aft., Apr. 6, at 8:15. MARIE-MADELEINE DU CARR. Piano Recital. (Mason & Hamlin Piano). Aeolian Hall, Sat. Eve., Apr. 10, at 8:15. YVONNE de TREVILLE. COSTUME RECITAL. with RUTH LOWTHER KEMPER, violinist and MAURICE VAUGHAN,