

IN THE MUSIC WORLD—FILM STARS FEATURED

THE CRITIC TALKS TO MUSIC LOVERS Weekly Comment on Things Musical in Discriminating Philadelphia

THE modern composer in a new strange and little tried medium was introduced to us on Thursday evening by Percy Grainger when he played the ultra-modern piano sonata by Cyril Scott. In the days of the classics the young composer was supposed to show his proficiency in handling sonata form by the composition of many piano sonatas before trying the larger forms, but nowadays our composers leap full-fledged from their musical swaddling clothes into the composition of operas, symphonies, symphonic poems and other musical works of the largest dimensions. This is a somewhat mixed metaphor, but it conveys the idea.

One reason for this is the gradual elimination of absolute music by the greatest composers since Beethoven. From the time when Schumann began to write pretty much everything for the piano to a title, this system has come more and more into vogue. But it should not be forgotten that in this respect Schumann wrote upon a plan radically different from that of the modern composers, to say nothing of the fact that his musical ideas were in many respects radically different also.

Another reason was the widespread promulgation of the idea, for which Liszt and Wagner were chiefly responsible, that the sonata form and the entire symphonic field had been so exhausted by Beethoven that nothing more could be done along these lines. It is true that little or no new piano sonatas have been composed since the time of the great Bonn master which appears to be permanent music, with the possible exception of one sonata by Liszt and the two by Chopin.

THIS is true in a much more limited way in the symphony. Despite the assertion of Wagner that nothing more of merit could be composed after Beethoven's Ninth, a number of great and purely symphonic works have been written since that time, and they bid fair to survive for many years yet to come. Among these may be mentioned the Unfinished and the C major of Schubert; at least two, the First and Fourth, of Schumann; all four of those of Brahms, the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth of Tchaikovsky, the one by Cesar Franck, the E minor (New World) of Dvorak and some others.

The decadence of the piano sonata as a means of expression by the modern composers has doubtless been due to some extent to the general shortening of recital programs and the substitution of a greater number of smaller compositions for a few of the larger ones. Beethoven, it is true, has furnished a lot of the latter type and, after all, little has been said in the form of piano sonata since he wrote the Hammer-Clavier and the gigantic ones in A flat and C minor, the principal piano works in that amazing list of compositions after he had passed the opus 100 mark.

THEREFORE, by reason of its rarity if for no other, the performance of the piano sonata of Mr. Scott by Percy Grainger formed one of the most interesting points in the current season. The work is very large in its outlines and really consists of seven movements, as all of the regulation four movements is connected by an interlude, which is nothing more or less than a development of material which has previously appeared at some time or other in the sonata.

If this work of Mr. Scott be taken as a type, however, one of the chief lessons that its performance brought home most strongly is that the modern composer of the Cyril Scott brand, who runs the gamut of harmonic and extreme in not absurdities of rhythms, has not a congenial medium in the classic sonata form. As was noted in these columns the day after the performance, the piano sonata does not go to the lengths of the violin sonata of the same composer in these respects, but even at that it is pretty radical. The themes of the modern composers are not such as lend themselves to development along the lines of the classic sonata form and thematic development is the very breath of life of the sonata.

Mr. Scott is evidently an admirer of Debussy, to put it mildly, and Mr. Grainger made the tactical error of following the sonata with three of Debussy's most atmospheric and popular pieces. A few years ago we thought Debussy had gone pretty far in the line of dissonances, but after the Scott sonata his works sounded like Haydn after Ornstein or Prokofiev.

IT IS to be regretted that the fine old form of the piano sonata has virtually been placed in the "discard," but as long as the trend of modern musical thought continues along the lines which it has during the last few years, with a continual and increasing tendency to break away from compositions in strict form, there is little hope of and even less use in attempting to revive it. The thoughts of the modern composer are too hectic to fit into the old classic sonata.

In this respect, however, the composer of the piano is only following the lines adopted by his brothers who write in the larger forms. The symphony has now all but given way entirely to the symphonic poem, always written to a program, the shorter piano pieces have a name each, if not something more extended in the way of a title, and the concerto for violin, piano or violoncello has virtually disappeared. The concerto for piano by Rachmaninoff, played here within the limits of the present season, was constantly referred to as "new," but it was nine years old this year. Times and manners change and music changes with them, because in the last analysis music is only an emotional reflection of the times in which the composer lives, but the price of it is that these fine old forms are almost gone and the modern composer has given us nothing to put in their places.

THE professional artist, whatever may be the medium in which he works, is credited with having a kind heart, and this is borne out by the part which Miss Geraldine Farrar is taking in the Minnie Hank fund. This fund is now being raised with the worthy object of helping Minnie Hank, a well-known American singer of some years ago.

FEATURED IN NEXT WEEK'S FILMS



KATHERINE MacDONALD 'THE THUNDERBOLT' Broadway TAYLOR HOLMES 'NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH' Regent NELL SHIPMAN 'BACK TO GOD'S COUNTRY' Palace MABEL NORMAND 'PINTO' Capitol



WALLACE REID and WANDA HAWLEY 'DOUBLE SPEED' Stanley

ETHEL CLAYTON, 'YOUNG Mrs. WINTHROP' Arcadia and '13th COMMANDMENT' W. Allegheony Cedar, Calceum

MAITELL AS MACBETH Melodramatic Power and Rhetorical Effect in Impersonation Energy and rhetoric were more in evidence than profound characterization and poetic imagination last night at the Broad where Robert Mantell and his leading woman, Genevieve Hamper, bodied forth the murdering Thane of Cawdor and his murderous-minded lady in Shakespeare's titanic tragedy of 'Macbeth.' The propulsive force of which is 'vaulting ambition that overleaps itself.'

DERE MABLE STAGED Louis Bannison Will Have Roll of Bill The long-awaited (at least by the multitude who read 'Dere Mable'), musical version of 'Dere Mable' will unfold itself next week at the Garrick. This piece has been tried out in the provinces for a fortnight. The adaptation from the book was made by the author, Edward Streeter, in collaboration with John Hodges, and the result has been that the quality and accuracy and unique characterization of the letters have been retained in this stage version. Mr. Streeter having himself been in the army and knowing, therefore, that the public desires to get away from the war stuff as much as possible, has achieved war flavor and begun his story with Bill's return home. There is a plot in the piece and it is sometimes quite visible in front of the scenery, meaning that there is a well-defined love interest and there are, also, a few touches of pathos in the story with Bill and Harold, his dog and pal. Louis Bannison, known on the legitimate stage and in the movies, will be seen as Bill.

Local Song Writer Composes Hits Louis Herscher, the local song writer, has placed a song with the largest publishing house of popular music in the country. Nine years ago, at the outset of his career, the man told him to get a reputation. He achieved it last summer by writing his first real hit, 'There Are Just Two Blue Eyes in Dixie.' He followed his first success with six other songs to be published soon. They are: 'Can't Take You Out of My Heart,' 'When I Marry Mary Down in Maryland,' 'Arabola,' 'Petin' and 'On the Old Clothes Line,' in collaboration with Kretsch and Bessie, man, writers of 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles,' 'Golden Gate' and 'Stepping Stones.' His latest song is an Oriental fox trot called 'Bound in Morocco.' Mr. Herscher is now completing two new songs which probably will be named 'The Idol's Eyes' and 'Rose of a Summer Night.'

Just 'Ann' Unadorned Ann Warrington, who is a member of William Hodge's company in 'The Guest of Honor' to be seen at the Lyric Theatre, claims the distinction of being the first actress to use the name Ann without the final 'n' or 's.' Since adopting it for a stage name, she's a native of Hillsboro, Wis., and her real name isn't anything like Ann Warrington—hosts of Ann have appeared in theatre programs.

From Ledgers to Legerity Walter Gallagher, who does a specialty dance in 'Dere, Mable,' was a bookkeeper in the Klaw & Erlanger office up to three months ago. During his spare moments at night he danced at several Broadway cabarets. His success drifted back to the home office, which explains his being engaged by Mr. Klaw to show those who don't frequent cabarets what he can do.

Hopes to Play Kate, The Shrew Miss Jane Houston, leading lady with William Hodge in 'The Guest of Honor,' is a Shakespearean student and some day hopes to have the opportunity of playing 'Kate, The Shrew,' in 'The Taming of the Shrew.'

Sothern and Marlowe Until E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe joined forces and appeared as co-stars in Chicago in 1904, Mr. Sothern had never seen Miss Marlowe act. They will appear here together later in the season.

Galley Scene In 'Ben Hur' The scene in 'Ben Hur' representing the scene in which the Roman galley between decks of a great Roman galley is the first that has been put accurately upon the stage. It is one of the most interesting events of the performance to students of history.

Advertisement for Klein's Peanut Lunch Bar. Features a large illustration of a woman eating a bar, the text 'Have You Tried Klein's Peanut Lunch Bar?' and 'Made of a wonderful combination of Klein's Sweet Milk Chocolate and fresh roasted Peanuts! 5c'. Includes a large '5c' graphic and the product name 'PEANUT LUNCH BAR SWEET MILK CHOCOLATE'. At the bottom, it says 'Klein's Cream Nut Almond Bar a Great Popular Favorite!' and 'The Milky Way' logo.