UNIVERSITY HALL, ANN ARBOR, MICH.

FRIDAY, MAY 16th, 1890,

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE

University Musical Society.

CHORAL UNION SERIES.

PROGRAMME

C. A. ELLIS, MANAGER.

F. R. COMEE, ASS'T MANAGER.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Arthur Nikisch, Conductor, is the only permanent Orchestra to appear in this city, during the season, organized and maintained exclusively for concert purposes and the daily interpretation of music of the highest class.

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

University Hall,

Ann Arbor, Mich.

SEASON OF 1890.

ARTHUR NIKISCH, Conductor.

Under the auspices of the University Musical Society.
CHORAL UNION SERIES.

Friday Evening, May 16,

At 8 o'clock.

PROGRAMME.

Wagner – – – – – Overture, "Tannhaeuser"

Wagner – – Aria, "O lovely halls," "Tannhaeuser"
Mme. STEINBACH-JAHNS.

Saint-Saens Two movements from Concerto for Violin, in B minor, No. 3, Op. 61.
Andante quasi allegretto.—
Molto moderato e maestoso; allegro non troppo.
Mr. TIMOTHEE ADAMOWSKI.

Grieg – – – – – Suite, "Peer Gynt," Op. 46
"Daybreak."
"The Death of Aase."
"Anitra's Dance."
"In the Halls of the King of the Dovre Mountains."
(The imps are chasing Peer Gynt.)

Songs with Piano.

(*a*) Rubinstein – – – – – – "Es blinkt der Thau"
(*b*) Brahms – – – – – – – "Lullaby"
(*c*) Umlauft – – – – – – – "Erwartung"
Mme. STEINBACH-JAHNS.

Beethoven – – – Symphony No. 5, in C minor
Allegro con brio.
Andante con moto.
Allegro (Scherzo).
Allegro (Finale).

: : : : SOLOISTS : : : :

Mme. STEINBACH-JAHNS.

Mr. TIMOTHEE ADAMOWSKI.

THE PIANO USED IS A CHICKERING.

Historical and Analytical Notes prepared by
G. H. WILSON.

Overture, "Tannhaeuser." **Wagner.**

"Tannhäuser," the third of Wagner's operas to meet with general acceptance, is a happy combination of the legendary and historical, the legend of Tannhäuser being combined with the story of the battle of the bards of Wartburg. The legend, which probably has its root in the classic story of Ulysses, originally heathen, became transformed and beautified by the infusion of Christianity. It exists in various forms, but in none more graceful than that attached to the Hörselberg (the Venus Grotto) in Thuringia. According to the Thuringian tale, with which alone the overture to "Tannhäuser" deals, Tannhäuser, knight and minstrel, was allured into the Venus Grotto, and dwelt there for a year with the goddess. Freeing himself from the unholy alliance, he makes a pilgrimage to Rome, with a view to expiate his sin, but is told by Pope Urban that he can no more look for forgiveness than for his staff growing young again and blossoming. Despairing, he returns to the Venus Grotto, but (according to Wagner) is saved from entering therein by the arrival of a band of pilgrims from Rome, announcing the blossoming of Pope Urban's staff and Tannhäuser's salvation. In the spring of 1842, Wagner returned from Paris to Germany, and on his way to Dresden visited the castle of Wartburg, where he first conceived the idea of "Tannhäuser." The first performance of the opera occurred at Dresden, Oct. 20, 1845.

Liszt's efforts to worthily produce the work at Weimar, the great success which attended them, and Wagner's grateful recognition of Liszt's services are matters of history. The first Weimar performance "took place on a Sunday, and the students at the University of Jena were present in full force. Ignoring royalty, they burst out into boisterous and continued applause; but, as the opera was long and they had to get back to the university, they left before the end. As soon as the students disappeared, a perfect storm of hisses burst forth. Liszt's blood was up; and, flinging down his music-book, he turned around, faced the audience with defiance, and, raising his long, bony arms, covered with white gloves, he began to clap with all his might. The hisses were redoubled, the lights turned out, and the audience dispersed in an uproar. Several times afterwards, similar scenes occurred. At these 'scenes,' the princess used to applaud rapturously, while all the rest of the audience hissed; and Liszt and the princess continued the fight till Wagner triumphed."

The following is Wagner's own account of the poetical purport of the "Tannhäuser" overture:—

"At the commencement, the orchestra represents the song of pilgrims, which, as it approaches, grows louder and louder, and at length recedes. It is twilight. As night comes on, magical phenomena present themselves. A roseate-hued and fragrant mist arises, wafting voluptuous shouts of joy to our ears. We are made aware of the dizzy motion of a horribly wanton dance. These are the seductive magic spells of the Venusberg, which at the hour of night reveal themselves to those whose breasts are inflamed with unholy desire. Attracted by these enticing phenomena, a tall and manly figure approaches: it is Tannhäuser, the Minnesinger. Proudly exulting, he trolls forth his jubilant love-song, as if to challenge the wanton magic crew to turn their attention to himself. Wild shouts respond to his call; the roseate cloud surrounds him more closely; its enrapturing fragrance overwhelms him and intoxicates his brain. Endowed now with supernatural power of vision, he perceives, in the dim seductive light spread out before him, an unspeakably lovely female figure; he hears a voice which, with its tremulous sweetness, sounds like the call of Sirens promising to the brave the fulfilment of his wildest wishes. It is Venus herself whom he sees before him. He is drawn into the presence of the goddess, and with the highest rapture raises his song in her praise. As if in response to his magic call, the wonder of Venusberg is revealed to him in its fullest brightness: boisterous shouts of wild delight re-echo on every side; Bacchantes rush hither and thither in their drunken revels, and, dragging Tannhäuser into their giddy dance, deliver him over to the goddess, who carries him off, drunken with joy, to the unapproachable depths of her invisible kingdom. The wild throng then disperses, and their commotion ceases. A voluptuous, plaintive whirring alone now stirs the air, and a horrible murmur pervades the spot where the enrapturing profane magic spell had shown itself, and which now again is overshadowed by darkness. Day at length begins to dawn, and the song of the returning pilgrims is heard in the distance. As their song draws nearer and day succeeds to light, that whirring and murmuring in the air which but just now sounded to us like the horrible wail of the damned gives way to more joyful strains, till at last, when the sun has risen in all its splendor, and the pilgrims' song with mighty inspiration proclaims to the world and to all that is and lives salvation won, its surging sound swells into a rapturous torrent of sublime ecstasy. This divine song represents to us the shout of joy at Tannhäuser's release from the curse of the unholiness of the Venusberg. Thus all the pulses of life palpitate and leap for joy in this song of deliverance; and the two divided elements, spirit and mind, God and nature, embrace each other in the holy uniting kiss of Love."

Mme. Magdalene Steinbach-Jahns began her professional career singing soubrette parts in the Opera at Frankfort-on-the-Main. She next appeared in Danzig, where her remarkable gifts attracted attention, and brought her an engagement at the Leipzig Stadt Theatre. Here she soon became the leading dramatic soprano, and her career was one of extraordinary success. Among her more notable triumphs were the rôles of Elsa in "Lohengrin," Senta in "Flying Dutchman," Genoveva, Eva in "Die Meistersinger," and Agnes in "Freischuetz."

Concerto for Violin, No. 3, in B minor, Op. 61. **Saint-Saens.**

Camille Saint-Saëns may justly be called the most cosmopolitan French musician living. He is the one native of France who is heard of as travelling about in England, Germany, on some artistic mission bent, while there is a catholicity in his musical creed which the average catholic Frenchman does not possess. Saint-Saëns at seven studied the piano with Stamaty, and soon after commenced harmony. As a youth, he fortunately was not classed as a prodigy, though he was marvellously able and very studious. In 1847, when twelve years old, he entered the Conservatoire; and to him belongs the distinction of *never* having had the Grand Prix de Rome. His first symphony was written and performed when he was only sixteen. In 1853, he is found hard at work in the routine of his profession,—teaching, playing in church, and composing. Up to the year 1848, when he was appointed organist of the Madeleine, he had made his name respected as an interpreter upon the pianoforte of classic music. Resigning his post as organist in 1877, he has since devoted his time principally to composition. "La Princesse Jaune," an opera in one act, "La Timbre d'Argent," fantastic opera in four acts, both early works, produced respectively in 1872 and 1878 in Paris, were comparative failures. Affected by the harsh judgment of his countrymen, his next essays, "Samson et Dalila" and "Etienne Marcel," were brought out, the one at Weimar in 1877, the other at Lyons in 1879. Later operas by Saint-Saëns are "Henry VIII." (1883) and "Proserpine" (1887), both brought out in Paris, the former having taken permanent place in the répertoire of the Opéra. A new opera by Saint-Saëns entitled "Ascanio," drawn from the same source as Berlioz's "Benvenuto Cellini," has just been produced in Paris. In other forms of composition, Saint-Saëns has written much, the symphonic poems and pianoforte concertos being best known. He has composed three symphonies, several cantatas, and three violin concertos.

The violin concerto played to-day is dedicated to Sarasate. The com-

poser is particular to state upon the title-page "Concerto for violin, with accompainment of orchestra." Throughout this charming work the composer is consistent in maintaining the prominent and subordinate positions respectively of the solo instrument and the orchestra.

Suite, "Peer Gynt," Op. 46. **Grieg.**

Daybreak.
The Death of Aase.
Anitra's Dance.
The Hall of the Mountain King.

Grieg, like Chopin, Dvorák, and Tschaikowsky, gets his inspiration from national sources. It came, however, with his maturity; for, though born in Norway, his early studies were conducted for the most part in Germany, and gave no distinct premonition of their future trend. Ole Bull may be said to have discovered Grieg; for it was he who, on hearing the boy of fifteen play the pianoforte, insisted that he be sent at once to Leipzig, where he remained four years. After Leipzig, Grieg visited Copenhagen, then the literary and æsthetic centre of Scandinavia. Here, in 1863, when he was twenty years old, began his first serious acquaintance with the folk-songs of his people, from whose tender melancholy he has not since been parted. The influence and companionship of Richard Norkraak, a composer of great promise, who died young, must not be overlooked in tracing the development of Grieg's individuality. What came of their friendship Grieg has himself told: "The scales suddenly fell from my eyes when first I learned through him to understand Norwegian folk-melodies and my own nature. We united ourselves against the mingled Gade–Mendelssohn weakly-effeminate Scandinavianism, and struck out with enthusiasm into the new pathway which the Northern school is at present pursuing." Norkraak's songs, Kjerulf's romances, Ole Bull's "Visit to the Sater," and afterwards Björnson's poems and the dramas of Henrik Ibsen have had an ineffaceable influence on Grieg's music.

The dramatic poem of "Peer Gynt" was written by Ibsen in 1867,—a midway period in the career of one who is now occupying a share of the cultivated world's attention. This synopsis of the poem, or allegory, is presented: "The character of Peer Gynt is taken from one of the Norwegian folk-legends. He is a Norwegian Faust, whose superabundance of imagination will bring him to destruction if he is not saved by a woman. Peer Gynt is a peasant lad, whose parents were once well-to-do people; but the father is now dead, and the mother and son are living in great poverty. The lad is full of great ideas, and has many wonderful plans for the future. These he confides to his mother, who, notwithstanding his wild ways and fantastic ideas, believes in him. His youthful arrogance knows no bounds.

He goes to a wedding and carries off the bride to the mountains, where he afterwards deserts her. During the night, he wanders about and meets with some frolicsome dairy-maids. He harbors at last in the hall of the King of the Dovre Mountains, where he falls in love with the king's daughter, but is finally turned out of doors. He returns home, where he finds his mother, Aase, on her death-bed. After her death, he sails for foreign climes, and lands, after the lapse of many years, a rich man, on the coast of Morocco. In one of the Arabian deserts, he meets Anitra, the daughter of a Bedouin chief. She only succeeds in captivating him temporarily, and leaves him. Peer Gynt dreams about Solvejg, the love of his youth, who has faithfully been waiting for him, and to whose arms he at last returns, old and gray."

The suite played to-day is a reduction of the voluminous music Grieg composed for the production of the drama on the stage. The first movement, Daybreak, *allegretto pastorale,* is scored for small orchestra. The second, *andante doloroso,* consisting of four measured periods for muted strings, is a funeral march. The third, *tempo di mazurka,* is written for divided strings and triangle. The fourth, *alla marcia e molto marcato,* a somewhat grotesque march, is scored for full modern orchestra, and pictures the imps tormenting Peer Gynt.

Grieg is now living in Bergen, Norway. Of late, in company with his wife, who is a singer, he has made a number of professional tours, appearing both as pianist and conductor. Last season he was the honored guest of the London Philharmonic Society. Only a few weeks ago, we hear of him in Paris, where at the Châtelet Concerts M. Colonne arranged a programme consisting chiefly of his compositions.

Symphony No. 5, C minor. **Beethoven.**

Allegro con brio.
Andante con moto.
Allegro (Scherzo).
Allegro (Finale).

The following is a translation of an analysis by Berlioz of the symphony in C minor: —

"This symphony, without doubt the most famous of the nine, is also, in my opinion, the first in which Beethoven gave free rein to his stupendous imagination, and rejected all foreign aid or support whatever. His first, second, and fourth symphonies are constructed on the old known forms, more or less extended, and infused with the brilliant and passionate inspiration of his vigorous youth. In the third,— the Eroica,— the limits are no doubt enlarged, and the ideas are gigantic ; but it is impossible not to recognize throughout it the influence of the great poet whom Beethoven had long worshipped. Beethoven read his Homer diligently, in the true

spirit of the Horatian adage,— *Nocturna versata manu, versate diurna;* and, in the magnificent musical epic of which we are speaking, whether it were inspired by Napoleon or not, the recollections of the Iliad are as obvious as they are splendid. But, on the other hand, the symphony in C minor appears to me to be the direct and unmixed product of the genius of its author, the development of his most individual mind. His secret sorrows, his fits of rage or depression, his visions by night, and his dreams of enthusiasm by day, form the subject of the work; while the forms of both melody and harmony, rhythm and instrumentation, are as essentially new and original as they are powerful and noble.

"The first movement is devoted to the representation of the disorder and confusion of a great mind in despair,— not that concentrated, calm despair, which appears outwardly resigned, nor the stunned, dumb distress of Romeo when he hears of the death of Juliet, but rather the tremendous fury of Othello, when Iago communicates to him the venomous calumnies which convince him of Desdemona's guilt. One instant it is a delirious rage venting itself in frantic cries; the next it is absolute exhaustion, in which the mind is filled with self-pity and able to utter mere groans of regret. Those convulsive gasps of the orchestra, those chords tossed backwards and forwards between the wind and the strings, each time feebler than before, like the difficult breathing of a dying man; the sudden, violent outburst in which the orchestra revives, as if animated with the fury of the thunderbolt; the momentary hesitation of the trembling mass before it falls headlong in two fiery unisons, more like streams of lava than of sound,— surely a style so impassioned as this is beyond and above anything ever before produced in instrumental music.

"The *andante* has some characteristics in common with the slow movement of the seventh and fourth symphonies. It shares the melancholy dignity of the one and the touching grace of the other. The subject is given out by the tenors and 'cellos in unison, with a simple accompaniment, *pizzicato*, in the double basses. This is followed by a phrase of the flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, with its echo in the violins, which returns no less than four times during the movement, and each time exactly as before, key and all, whatever changes may have been made in the principal subject. This persistence in a phrase at once so simple and so profoundly melancholy produces by degrees an impression on the hearers which it is impossible to describe, and which is certainly more vivid than any impression of the kind that I ever remember. Beethoven has left a precious record of pathos in the fourth and last appearance of the melody, where, by a slight alteration of the notes, a trifling extension of the phrase, and a management of the *nuance* all his own, he has produced one of the most touching effects to be found anywhere.

"The *scherzo* is an extraordinary composition: the very opening, though containing nothing terrible in itself, produces the same inexplicable emotion that is caused by the gaze of a magnetizer. A sombre, mysterious

light pervades it. The play of the instrument has something sinister about it, and seems to spring from the state of mind which conceived the scene on the Blocksberg in 'Faust.' A few bars only are *forte: piano* and *pianissimo* predominate throughout. The middle of the movement (the trio) is founded on a rapid passage for the double basses, *fortissimo*, which shakes the orchestra to its foundation, and irresistibly recalls the gambols of an elephant. But the gamesome beast retires by degrees, and the noise of his antics is gradually lost. The theme of the *scherzo* reappears, *pizzicato*, the sound diminishing at the same time, till nothing is heard but the crisp chords of the violins, and the droll effect of the upper A-flat in the bassoons rubbing against the G, the fundamental note of the dominant minor ninth. At length, the violins subside on to the chord of A-flat, which they hold *pianissimo*. The drums alone have the rhythm of the subject, which they reiterate with all possible lightness, while the rest of the orchestra maintains its stagnation. The drums sound C, C minor being the key of the movement; but the chord of A-flat, so long held by the strings, forces another tonality on the ear, and we are thus kept in doubt between the two. But the drums increase in force, still obstinately keeping up both note and rhythm. The violins have by degrees also fallen in the rhythm, and at length arrive at the chord of the seventh on the dominant (G), the drums still adhering to their C. At this point, the whole orchestra, including the three trombones, hitherto silent, bursts like a thunder-clap into C major, and into the triumphal march which forms the commencement of the *finale*. The effect of this contrivance is obvious enough to the ear, though it may be difficult to explain to the reader.

"With reference to this transition, it is sometimes said that Beethoven has, after all, only made use of the common expedient of following a soft passage in the minor by a burst in the major; that the theme of the *finale* is not original; and that the interest of the movement diminishes instead of increasing as it goes on. To which I answer that it is no reflection on the genius of a composer that the means he employs are already in use. Plenty of other composers have used the same expedients; but nothing they have done can be compared for a moment to this tremendous pæan of victory in which the soul of Beethoven, for the moment freed from its mortal drawbacks and sufferings, seems to mount to heaven in a chariot of fire. The first four bars of the subject may not be strikingly original; but the forms of the triumphal *fanfare* are but limited, and it is probably not possible to find new ones without forfeiting the simple, grandiose, pompous character which is native to that kind of phrase. But Beethoven evidently did not intend to continue the *fanfare* style after the first few bars; and, in the rest of the movement,—even as early as the conclusion of the first subject,—he quickly passes to the lofty and original style which never forsakes him. And, as to the interest not increasing as it goes on, the transition from the *scherzo* to the *finale* is probably the greatest effort of which music, in its present state of means, is capable, so that it would be simply impossible to have surpassed it."

GEO. H. ELLIS, Printer, 141 Franklin Street, BOSTON.

PRESS COMMENTS.

New York Tribune, Wednesday, January 15, 1890.

"Criticism, in the sense that the short-sighted and unreasoning employ the term, has little to do with performances like that of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Steinway Hall last night. It is chiefly that sublimated criticism which is all praise that is challenged by Mr. Nikisch and his band of virtuosi. If musical New York were disposed to petty feelings, there would be a chance for envy."

New York Sun, Wednesday, January 15, 1890.

"Last evening's performance of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, at Steinway Hall, once more established the fact that the band, under Mr. Arthur Nikisch's direction, is far and away the most admirably balanced and best disciplined organization now in existence on this side of the Atlantic."

Philadelphia Press, December 19, 1889.

"The orchestra has justly come to be regarded as the most important organization of its kind in the country."

Washington Post, January 18, 1890.

"It is hard to imagine a band of musicians nearer perfection than the company which Mr. Nikisch controls."

Baltimore Herald, January 17, 1890.

"The opinion was more firmly established that the Bostonians are by far the most evenly balanced and best disciplined organization on the American continent."

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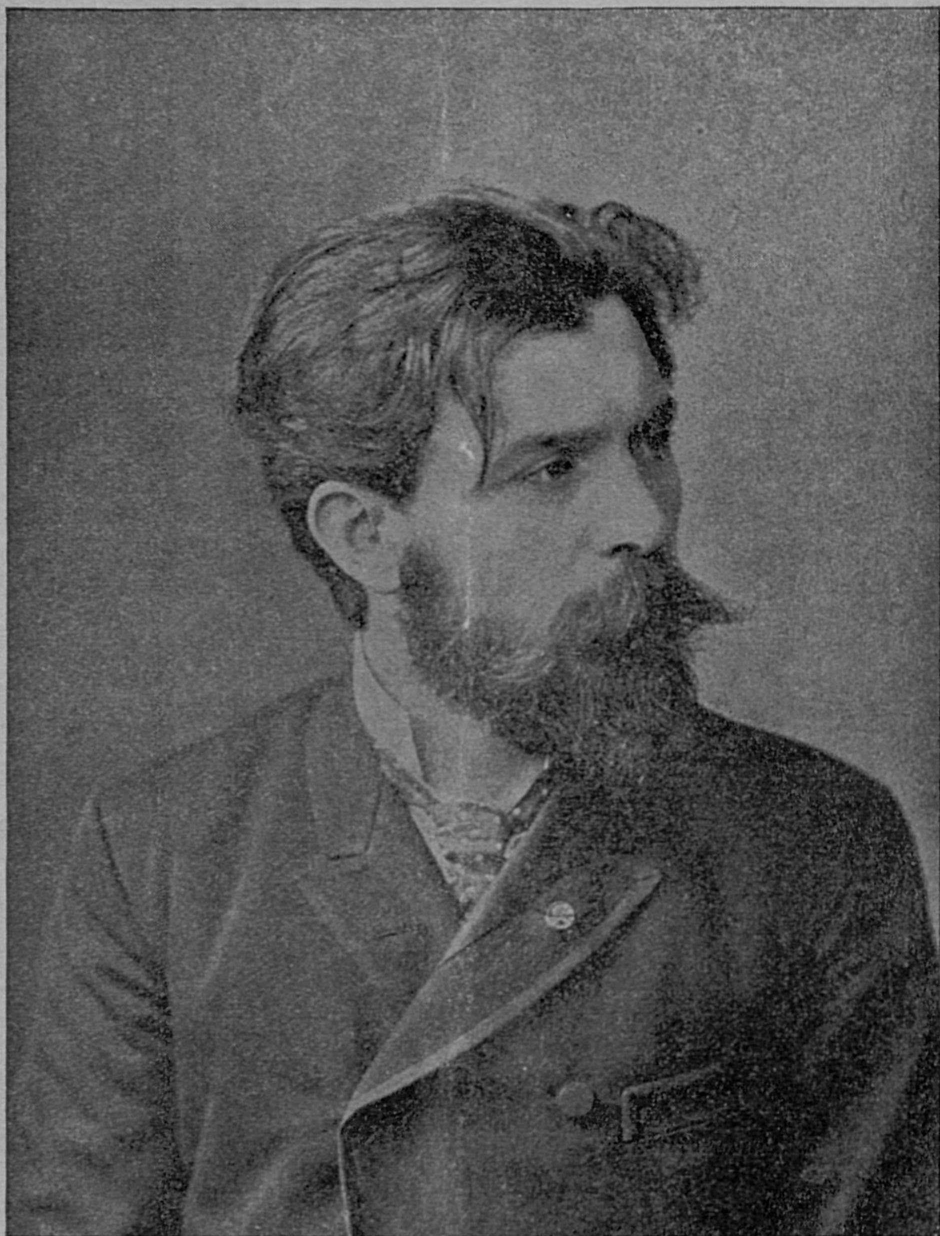

ARTHUR NIKISCH.