

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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CHORAL UNION SERIES, 1920-1921

FORTY-SECOND SEASON

FOURTH CONCERT

NO. CCCLIV COMPLETE SERIES

DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

OSSIP GABRILÓWITSCH, CONDUCTOR

SOLOIST

PHILIPP ABBAS, VIOLONCELLIST

MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 1921, AT EIGHT O'CLOCK

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- OVERTURE, "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" *Mendelssohn*
VARIATIONS ON A ROCCOCO THEME, Op. 33 *Tschaikowsky*
MR. ABBAS
THIRD SYMPHONY, No. 3, "DIVINE POEM," Op. 43, in C *Scriabin*
I. Luttés (Struggles)
II. Voluptés (Pleasures)
III. Jeu Divin (Divine Play)
(Played without Pause)

INTERMISSION

- "THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN" *Debussy*
"RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES" *Wagner*
-

SPECIAL NOTICE.—Owing to the refusal of the Minneapolis Orchestra to keep its engagement the concert announcement by that organization will be omitted. Instead, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Conductor, Ilya Schkolnik, Violinist, Soloist, will again be heard on Monday evening, February 21, instead of on the date announced for the Minneapolis Orchestra. Patrons will please use coupon marked "5" for admission.

The next concert in the FACULTY CONCERT SERIES (complimentary) will be given Sunday afternoon (January 30) at 3:00 o'clock.

The next concert in the CHORAL UNION SERIES will be given by THE DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, OSSIP GABRILOWITSCH, CONDUCTOR, Monday evening, February 21.

The final concert in the EXTRA CONCERT SERIES will be given by THE NEW YORK CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY, February 28.

The next concert in the MATINEE MUSICALE SERIES will be given by SASCHA JACOBINOFF, February 8 (High School).

ANALYSES

OVERTURE, "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM," Op. 21 . . . Mendelssohn

(Jacob Ludwig) Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy was born February 3, 1809, at Hamburg; died November 4, 1847, at Leipzig.

That a youth of seventeen (the overture was completed August 26, 1826) should compose such a masterpiece as this is a signal proof that "genius is a law unto itself." Schopenhauer once wrote, "Art is a quest, a quest and a divine adventure," and, though Mendelssohn cannot be included in the ranks of those whose "quest" led them into untrodden paths, his undertaking such a task as this, when his apprentice years were scarcely behind him, indicates that he was not insensible to the lure of *Wanderlust*. Mendelssohn's intense and absorbing interest in Shakespeare's play, the first fruit of which was this marvellous overture, so dominated the years of his maturity that his sister Fanny wrote in a letter dated October 18, 1843: "We were mentioning yesterday what an important part the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' has played in our house, and how we had all at different ages gone through the whole of the parts from Peasblossom to Hermia and Helena. . . . Felix especially had made it his own, almost recreating the characters which had sprung from Shakespeare's exhaustless genius."

As at the time the overture was composed the Mendelssohn family resided in Berlin, the composer, as behooved a loyal subject, dedicated it to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Prussia. The overture engages the services of a relatively small orchestra, from the point of view of today, but its resources are so genially drawn upon that one can conceive of no more exquisite pleasure than is afforded by its dainty, fairy-like appeal.

After four prolonged chords for the wood-wind—E major, *Allegro de molto*, Alla-Breve time—which to Sir George Grove "represent moonlight as well as sound can represent an object of sight," a bewitching weaving together of delicate threads of sound compels our attention and defines the prevailing atmosphere of the work. To this the short interpolated dissonant chords for wood-wind—*pianissimo*—contribute no small share.

The second theme—B major—is first given out by the clarinet and taken up by the strings. If this is supposed to represent the love of Lysander and Hermia, the Bergomask Dance, in Act V of the play, soon finds equally vivid delineation in the score. Neither did the composer forget the love-lorn donkey, nor could he refrain from depicting the buzzing of the "Schönhauser fly" through a rapid descending passage for the 'celli. That Mendelssohn had in mind the histrionic adventure of Bottom, Snout, Quince et al., the activity of Puck, and the ministrations of Titania goes without saying.

Using the wonderful material already propounded, Mendelssohn in his individual manner constructed a "development" worthy of its every implication. This section is followed by a "recapitulation" which, after a short coda, comes to a conclusion through a restatement of the four initial chords of the work.

The first public performance of the overture—at Stettin—fell on February 20, 1827. Since then it has been performed with great frequency, and few concert-goers there are who have not responded to its charm. Historically, the overture is first in a group of thirteen numbers which were intended to vitalize various episodes in the drama. All of them, with the exception of the overture, were written in the year 1843, at the request of the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795-1866). The complete set is as follows: I. Overture; II. Scherzo; III. Melodrama and March of the Elves; IV. Song, for two solo sopranos and choruses of women's voices; V. Melodrama; VI. Intermezzo; VII. Melodrama; VIII. Nocturne; IX. Melodrama; X. Wedding March; XI. Melodrama and Funeral March; XII. Bergomask Dance; XIII. Melodrama and Finale.

On October 14, 1843, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," with Mendelssohn's music, was given at the Neue Palais, Potsdam. The music was received with enthusiasm, but the play was severely criticized. Some disputed "whether Tieck or Shakespeare were the author," others believed "Shakespeare translated it from German into English." Still others "were shocked by the scenes with the clowns, and annoyed that the King should have patronized such a low piece." An exalted court personage regretted that "such lovely music should have been wasted on so poor a play." Poor Shakespeare! The English-speaking world was not affected by these ill-judged deliverances regarding the drama, and German audiences soon rejected them *in toto*.

VARIATIONS ON A ROCCOCO THEME, for Violoncello and Orchestra,

Op. 33

Tschaikowsky

MR. PHILLIPP ABBAS

Peter Ilitsch Tschaikowsky was born December 25, 1840, at Wotkinsk; died November 6, 1893, at Petrograd.

Few will deny the beautiful tone-qualities of the violoncello, and fewer will maintain that its literature is worthy of its exalted musical value. A comparison of the majority of cello concertos with those for the pianoforte and violin will reveal their artistic inadequacy, but will not explain the reason. Apparently there is no rational explanation, and it is possible that the future will bring in its train works that will give the lie to this general statement. In the estimation of many, the composition on our program is a notable exception to the rule, for it possesses real musical distinction and does not appear to exist solely as a vehicle through which an artist may display his virtuosity. Its demands exceed those of mere technique, as such, and lie along the line of interpretation. Cast in the variation form, it affords great variety, and it is barely possible that the inspiration which brought the master's symphonic-poem, "Francesco da Rimini," into being may have sufficed to imbue this work, which immediately followed it, with somewhat of its power. Written in 1876, it was first produced June 8, 1879, at Wiesbaden, and since then has been heard frequently, if not with the frequency its importance deserves.

Structurally, it consists of a short prelude for the orchestra leading to the theme for the solo instrument—A major, *Moderato semplice*, 2-4 time. This "rococo" melody is worked up into seven variations—the last being a brilliant "coda"—each of which has for its background a fluent, ingenious, and delineative orchestral mass, manipulated with the surety, brilliancy, and keen sense of proportion revealed in all the scores of Peter Ilitsch Tschaikowsky.

SYMPHONY, No. 3 ("The Divine Poem"), in C, Op. 43

Scriabin

Lento ("Prologue")—Allegro ("Strife"); Lento ("Sensuous Pleasures"); Allegro ("Divine Activity").

Alexander Nicholaevitch Scriabin was born January 10, 1872, at Moscow; died April 14, 1915, at Petrograd.

Written in the summer of 1903, in what his English biographer, A. Eaglefield Hull,* calls "The most fruitful period of Scriabin's work," this symphony is "characterized by imaginative flights of unusual loftiness," and, like all the creations of that year, is "permeated with the optimistic feeling of a great, abiding happiness." The titles of the various movements attest the breadth of his vision, and, in connection with the suggestions of their content which appear in the score, are indicative of a programmatic point of view; but in spite of the fact that there is no pause between these main divisions, they do not necessitate the employment of the treatments we meet in the symphonic poem, for, to quote again, "Scriabin seems to have been obsessed with the strict sonata-form," and no less so "with the four-bar phrase." The first "obsession" mentioned simply means that he again revealed the plasticity of a form that had already responded to many novel demands, while the second indicates that he considered symmetry a *sine qua non* in the presentation of his original, often daring, but always justified thematic concepts. A study of his broad outlook on life, together with a sympathetic evaluation of his artistic ideals and their genesis in his receptive attitude towards Theosophy and the advanced sociological theories which he held to be ideals, throw a flood of light on the development of his theories, and the means through which he laid bare the convictions of his soul and the visions of his imagination.

Some may find in the means he employs much that is startling and more that seems to be an unknown tongue. They are wrong in their inferences, for there is nothing in Scriabin's style, nor in his treatments, that is illogical, and when one masters his speech it will be found that in its idioms alone could concepts of the type inherent in his point of view find fitting utterance. Granting his concept of chord-formations, and, consequently, of the tonalities of which these chords are potentialities, the "mystic" harmonies, and the

* For a comprehensive and stimulating discussion of Scriabin's life and work, consult "A Great Russian Tone-Poet, Scriabin," by A. Eaglefield Hull; Kegan Paul, Treuch; Trubner & Co., Ltd., London, 1916, which has been freely drawn upon in this analysis.

strange, yet captivating, scale-formulae² to which he constantly reverts display themselves as component parts of the "unknown tongue"—which then becomes our own. In spite of much honest opinion to the contrary, these concepts have come to stay, and their force will be increasingly acknowledged as composers decide to face forward rather than backward, as too many do, even in this day.

Scriabin not only viewed his own art in the large but his vision included other arts as well. This is shown by his desire to intensify the effect of his "Prometheus, the Poem of Fire," Op. 60, through the employment of the *clavier à lumières*, a key-board mechanical device by means of which colored lights could be thrown on a screen as the composition was played by the orchestra. Single tones were represented by appropriate colors (C, red; D, yellow, etc.), while chords produced mixed color-schemes. At the first performance of this work in Moscow the apparatus failed to work, and no production since has been vitalized by its aid. It may not be generally known that Professor Johannes Wulfrum, of the University of Heidelberg, installed a very adequate apparatus of this type in the new hall of that institution, through which during the performance of symphonies or choral works the auditorium was flooded with an appropriate colored light. It would be of interest to know the Professor's interpretation of "appropriate" and how he would differentiate Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, and Strauss, although we might easily fancy that the last-named composer's color would be lurid. The results of this procedure—through which the joy of chromesthesia might be increased—were in inverse ratio to the anticipations of the Herr Professor, Doctor, etc. Color-schemes will add, and have already added, new terrors to musical criticism, for, in a review of a new orchestral work, no later than December, 1920, the "flaming greens of the flutes" and the "deep purples, browns, and gold"—including the "old gold of the viola"—were mentioned. It is but fair to state that this reviewer's excursion into the field of color was preceded by a page or more of pseudo-scientific floundering in the domain of the physiological, with occasional side-trips into the realm of the psychical, which at that time was immersed in a deep fog. The stimulating influence of perfumes on musical appreciation has frequently been suggested, and the combination of poetry, music, color, and perfume is not a distorted vision, for such an "union of the arts" found concrete expression as long ago as 1895, in Paris. It will be remembered that the ancient Romans found one of their greatest pleasures when at their banquets the odors of perfumes mingled with those of the viands. There are some who claim that the greatest esthetic satisfaction can only come through a synchronous appeal to all the senses. Were such a sensuous concept to obtain it would add the term "omni-esthetic" to "omni-tonic," "omni-rhythmical," and "omni-chromatic," which make up a rather formidable list.

One must grant that underlying all these suggestions is a real desire to increase the range of music's appeal, but there is the imminent danger that through such means the real things in music will be overlooked or minimized. One must concede that a man like Scriabin would never have proposed such a radical departure from usage as was involved in his invoking the assistance of color without due reflection, for,—and this has escaped many of his so-called critics,—all of the structural devices and concepts of the inner essence of music propounded by him were as natural to him as the act of breathing, and were born of the impulse to create. Creation is giving of one's self, and he, through the use of what might be called a music-symbolism, gave of himself, freely and fully. That he should have been called from earth as his powers were unfolding more and more is one of the tragedies for which we can find no explanation. Had he lived to complete his "Mystery," of which he had already made sketches, one can but feel that he would thereby have crowned his life-work. Looking at his life as a whole, one is impressed by the consistency of his progress towards fulness of realization of ideals in the expression of which he never hesitated to slough off any passing phase which reflection taught him was not justified. This accounts for his growth as a composer and no less clearly reveals his strength of character.

To attempt an adequate analysis of so profound and involved a work as the symphony interpreted by Mr. Gabrilowitsch and his marvellous organization this evening, is to invoke disaster, and the venture is entered upon with considerable reluctance. This feeling is partly due to the fact that there are no "cuts"—notated illustrations—available, whereas at least twenty would be necessary to make concrete the descriptions of the interesting thematic material. The absence of illustrative material, coupled with a limited opportunity of studying the score at first hand, are noted, not as excuses for obvious shortcomings, but in explanation.

² For examples of some of these scales, consult "Modern Harmony," Hull, London, Augener, 1915, pp. 74-75. Still other forms used by modern composers are given on pp. 65 to 72.

In the "Prologue"—C minor, *Lento*, 3-2 time—we hear three of the basic motives of the symphony. These themes, "Divine Grandeur," "The Summons to Man," and the "Fear to Approach, suggestive of Flight," occur in combination, and are the sources of many of the most pregnant subjects conditioning the entire work. For this reason they should be carefully noted.

Those who are accustomed to look for an unmistakable proclamation of the key indicated in the title will immediately realize that in this section C minor is scarcely touched till its conclusion, when, through its "dominant," the first movement proper is reached. In this wonderfully conceived and marvellously executed movement—Allegro ("Strife"), *mystérieux, tragique*, 3-4 time—the first subject (violins) is sixteen measures in length and exceedingly graceful.

Mr. Hull—who is responsible for all designations of titles given and the remarks in quotation—calls it "a fine, leaping grace."

The next theme, marked *avec un tragique effroi*,—under which, after its first exploitation, the basses sound the principal subject—adds the "first suggestion of divinity." In several places *pianissimo* trombone chords—*mystérieux*—impart color. The theme as it develops takes on more and more of confidence—*de plus en plus audacieux*—until the "upward aspiring curves," through which the "soaring of the spirit" is represented, culminate in a delineative and intense sweeping motive—*avec entrainement et ivresse*—which later "becomes more feeble and attenuated" as it sinks to the second subject—E flat major, *Voilé*, 3-4 time. Just here mention must be made of the illuminating qualities of the French expression-marks which run through the entire score. In many instances they either take the place of or accentuate the usual Italian expression-marks. Thus, *piu vivo* is less inclusive than *avec entrainement et ivresse*.

Mr. Hull declares this melody "belongs to the same spiritual plane as many of Elgar's themes." This may be so, but one would wish to have these themes pointed out, for many of Elgar's themes are commonplace, and this is not, for its opening phrase is full of prophecy of pure enjoyment.

A mood of "lassitude and languor" now ensues, followed by a new subject—*mystérieux, romantique, légendaire*—spiritual in essence.

Then comes a thrilling, typically Scriabinesque climax, based on the "Divine Theme." Through this the "exposition" comes to an end.

The "development," also lengthy, now follows. Into the mazes of the various treatments through which the composer, by the exercise of his masterly control of counterpoint and of every resource of orchestration, brings into relief the many-sided implications of his material we may not enter. Neither is it advisable to restate the meanings of subjects which, already heard, now present themselves anew with many added graces. Reading the marks of expression in the order in which they are given will show the wide range of emotional expression underlying this movement, and may be of assistance to the listener. Its comprehensiveness and the strangeness of some of its idioms will serve as excuses for any lack of immediate appreciation, for no one, however sophisticated, can grasp such a work at one hearing. Of the intrinsic beauty of the music there can be no doubt, and is there any legitimate reason why the acquaintance with the literature of music we win in the concert-room should be restricted to works we can make our own through one hearing, that could not be applied with equal force to poetry, the drama, painting, or sculpture?

The second main-division ("Sensuous Pleasures")—E major, *Lento*, 3-4 time)—follows with no pause and opens with a theme marked *Soblime*, which soon gives way to a chromatic episode—*avec une ivresse débordante*—which is soon "crossed by a new crashing motive." Parenthetically, it may be observed that "crashing overthrows" and "crashing motives" are conspicuous in Mr. Hull's vocabulary. But when he speaks of "a restful passage completely diatonic with limpid arpeggios," in this characterization of a melody that has just escaped "a crashing motive," he ceases to be an apostle of destruction and becomes constructive, for he gives to arpeggios a mode-defining function hitherto unrealized—even by Scriabin. When almost immediately we read that the motive of "Divine Aspiration" through which the third division ("Divine Activity") is gained, is soon "crossed by a crashing motive," one can but ask, "Did Scriabin deliberately let loose a musical Frankenstein?" or is this a camouflage under which we find a purely musical motive which through its intensity—in the reviewer's estimation—demanded a striking designation?

Mr. Hull's work in the volume from which these citations are drawn is entitled to respect, but he frequently falls a victim to the inevitable difficulties attending both musical and literary criticism. In the former the constant occurrence and recurrence of themes, the entrance of which must be noted, makes it difficult to avoid monotony, and the only

remedy lies in the pages of a dictionary of synonyms. In the attempt to impart variety the reviewer often not only uses terms that are "far-fetched," but also is tempted to introduce terms that are "mushy," and whose only excuse for existence is their novelty. The difficulty of giving clear-cut explanation of structural processes is greatly increased when the attempt is made to bring home the spiritual content. Were it not for the fact that nowadays the phraseology of art, specifically musical criticism, is applied to caramels, marshmallows, and Easter bonnets, this task would be easier. Practically debarred from the use of the real language of criticism because it has so largely lost its force, too many reviewers seek refuge in a labyrinth of corruscating adjectives and palpitating adverbs. This has two results; the first is that it reduces one's outlay for such literature, and the second is that it justly invites more or less of contempt.

The moral of all this is—Please do not be too critical of such deliverances, for, in the main, they have the saving virtue of honesty of purpose; and, second, if, despite the above-mentioned saving virtue, they are undeniably bad, be thankful that they are not worse.

Returning to our purpose, we note that the initial theme of the third division—C major, *Allegro*, common time—is the motive of "Joy Soaring" (marked *éclatante*). In the second measure we meet suggestions of the major-minor mode, which comes to fuller utterance in the melody of the broad second subject. This subject, the "Ego Theme," symbolizes "the translation of human personality into celestial regions." This mention of the "major-minor" mode (in which the modal suggestions vibrate between the opposite poles of major and minor) suggests the indication of tonality in the title.

The Fifth Symphony of Beethoven might carry the same designation, and many other classical works as well, but in this case there is abundant justification for its use, based on its continuity. Moreover, the whole concept of tonality is in a state of flux and many of its time-worn definitions will be revised in the immediate future. Reference to certain of Scriabin's sonatas will show that he, with his marvellous insight, appreciated this to the full.

Returning again to our analysis, we note an entrancing theme—*doux, limpide* (*pianissimo*)—which, following this first statement of the "Ego Theme," brings into clear relief its intensified proclamation. Through this, and a restatement of themes heard in the "Prologue," this masterpiece comes to a satisfying conclusion.

As in the first division, the further development of the material already presented will not be subjected to analysis, but will be left to the kindled imagination of the individual auditor to interpret, for music, held to be a universal language on account of its *indefiniteness*, is *indefinite* to the *mass* because it is so *definite* to the *individual*.

In this movement, as throughout the entire work, idyllic episodes, magnificent proclamations, and strikingly pictorial schemes of orchestral color engage the attention. To point these out categorically would result in confusion when one would choose to listen to them as they present themselves with the imagination unhampered by any preconceptions and free to revel in their sensuous beauty as well as in their delineative power.

It will be seen that Scriabin in this symphony sought to express the greatest concepts genius can voice. To his task he brought unusual resources, and through his masterly control of every phase of the means of expression he brought to utterance not alone the visions of his imagination but his conviction of their reality. The work must be looked upon as a whole, as is shown by the continuity of its inspiration and, therefore, of its performance. This adds to the difficulty of grasping it fully, but intensifies its effect. Pausing between the movements of a cyclical composition gives a respite to the listener, but when one realizes that our appreciation is then expressed by applause rather than by reflection on that which we have heard, one cannot escape the conviction that the attitude of the average audience involves considerations that might well be revised. There is a tremendous power in silence, but it is not appreciated either by artists or auditors, and there is too much of truth in the statement of Jean Cristoph, when, in his capacity of critic, he wrote: "The modern audience would cry *encore* to the crucifixion."

But we can hardly expect the millenium to begin in the concert-room before its advent in the Halls of Congress, so we must be satisfied with the measure of appreciation we now enjoy and not sigh for an unattainable perfection.

The symphony was first performed by Arthur Nikisch at Paris, May 29, 1905. It has not appeared on concert-programs with great frequency—not owing to its length, for, although the first movement covers 127 pages of orchestral score, the two succeeding divisions are shorter (35 and 45 pages, respectively). Few works by ultra-modern composers are characterized by brevity, and "length" is a relative designation. There are some modern works equally conspicuous by their brevity and their efficiency in inducing *ennui*, but neither the products of Scriabin and Debussy nor of the more important moderns can come under

such a condemnation. The number of instruments and players necessary (1 piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, bass-clarinet, 3 bassoons, double-bassoon, 8 horns, 5 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, kettle-drums, 2 harps and strings), and its difficulty, which makes it a "sealed book" to any but a most efficient orchestra under the lead of a superlatively equipped conductor, are more plausible reasons. It should be a great source of satisfaction that we are to hear under this roof a work that is still a rarity in American concert-halls.

PRELUDE TO "THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN" Debussy

Claude Achille Debussy was born August 22, 1862, at St. Germain (France); died March 26, 1918, at Paris.

The comparatively recent passing of Debussy may be looked upon, even by those who question the value of his innovations, as leaving a wide gap in the ranks of modern composers. There is no doubt whatever that he did contribute important innovations, and in time their real value will be justly appraised. Like many others who have dared to establish new points of view, he has suffered more from his friends than from his enemies, for the contributions of these "friends" to critical literature have been so extravagant and vague that they have alienated many whose questionings have been based on sincere conviction.

Calling him "the prophet of a new dispensation," these critics proclaim, "he weaves a hesitant mysticism into designs of impalpable and iridescent beauty," and speech "at once luminous and esoteric, importunate and profound." Scriabin is also put forward in support of this point of view, for, these critics say, "He begins where Chopin left off; his music is super-subtle, delicate, charged with philosophical and psychological significance"—and he, like Debussy, writes music whose function is "to stimulate the subliminal consciousness" and "to search the inmost recesses of the human soul." In the case of Scriabin the ideals are not of the type mentioned in the quotation, and, to a lesser degree, the same may be said of Debussy. The influence of concepts other than poetic, or purely esthetic, is a potent factor in the development of ideals. With this development of new needs of expression creative genius must of necessity respond in terms of the ideal as conditioned by the novel environment, but we must bear in mind that the one incorruptible jury, the world, is influenced in like manner; therefore, there need be no fear of its final judgment.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," and in discussing novel points of view it must never be forgotten that no one, even though he be a genius, can win success in any art through the negation of its fundamental principles. Interpretations change—principles *never*. Debussy was a positive force and exercised a great and beneficial influence on creative art. He developed new concepts of harmony and novel schemes of tone-color; evolved new technical treatments of the pianoforte and the orchestra, and thus in the works through which he enriched the literature of each, though the subjects of many seemed to exceed the limitations of music's idiomatic speech, they found adequate and subtle expression. It must be urged that his selection of subjects for portrayal revealed poetic vision of a high order, and in carrying out these concepts he displayed imagination and daring, the latter always held in leash by his fine sense of proportion, while the former was real instead of simulated.

The composition chosen as illustrative of the new ideal—to some, everything new, untried, and unproven in music is "ideal"—was composed in 1892, and played for the first time in Paris on December 23, 1894. The years that have elapsed have witnessed no dethronement of worthy older ideals, for in the realm of the ideal there is always room for new applications and interpretations of the basic principles on which the ideal, as such, must rest.

The *Prélude* is based on an eclogue by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-98) and is rhapsodical in form and somewhat illusive in content. The following resumé, written by Mr. Edmund Gosse, is offered in the hope that it will be found illuminating:

"* * * A faun—a simple, sensuous, passionate being—wakens in the forest at day-break and tries to recall his experience of the previous afternoon. Was he the fortunate recipient of an actual visit from nymphs, white and golden goddesses, divinely tender and indulgent? Or is the memory he seems to retain nothing but the shadow of a vision, no more substantial than the 'arid rain' of notes from his own flute? He cannot tell. Yet surely there was, surely there is, an animal whiteness among the brown reeds of the lake that shines out yonder? Were they, are they swans? No! But Naiads plunging? Perhaps! Vaguer and vaguer grows the impression of this delicious experience. He would resign his woodland godship to retain it. A garden of lilies, golden-headed, white-stalked,

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behind the trellis of red roses? Ah! the effect is too great for his poor brain. Perhaps if he selects one lily from the garth of lilies, one benign and beneficent yielder of her cup to thirsty lips, the memory, the ever-receding memory, may be forced back. So, when he has glutted upon a bunch of grapes, he is wont to toss the empty skins into the air and blow them out in a visionary greediness. But no, the delicious hour grows vaguer; experience or dream, he will never know which it was. The sun is warm, the grass yielding; and he curls himself up again, after worshiping the efficacious star of wine, that he may pursue the dubious ecstasy into the more hopeful boskages of sleep * * *."

The subtle melody, the mobile harmony, and the delicate orchestration of the *Prélude* appeal in exact proportion to one's appreciation of all that is embodied in Mallarmé's text. Technical analysis would be an impertinence, for it would substitute "the understanding for feeling"; therefore, it is better to give one's self over to its suggestions as one would welcome the visions of dreamland.

"THE RIDE OF THE WALKYRIES," from "Walküre" Wagner

(Wilhelm) Richard Wagner was born May 22, 1813, at Leipzig; died February 13, 1883, at Venice.

The "Walküre," the text of which was completed July 1, 1852, and the orchestral score in April, 1856, is the second of the four music-dramas included in the "Ring of the Nibelungs." It received its first hearing June 26, 1870, at Munich, under the direction of Franz Wüllner. The excerpt in our program was arranged for concert performance by the composer and immediately found a place in the repertoire of the most important concert-institutes. The date of its first performance in America (New York) is September 17, 1872. Theodore Thomas was the conductor, and he produced it for the first time in Chicago on October 11, of the same year.

"The Ride of the Walkyries" opens the third act and introduces the scene at the Walkyr's Rock where these daughters of Wotan and Erda assemble at the behest of the Wal-father to participate in the punishment of Brunhilde, his favorite daughter, who has dared to disobey his commands. From all directions the Walkyries come flying through the air on their horses, over the backs of which hang the bodies of the heroes, who, having fallen on earth's battle-fields, are taken by them to Walhalla. It will be remembered by those conversant with the plot that Siegmund, who violated Hunding's hospitality by fleeing with Sieglinde, has been sentenced to death by Wotan, who, cowed by Fricka, turns a deaf ear to Brunhilde's plea that she may protect him, although, as Wotan states in "Siegfried" (Act II): "She did that which I fain would have done." Reluctantly Brunhilde yields and bids Siegmund to Walhalla. When he asks, "Will Sieglinde be there?" and she replies, "Sieglinde will not be there!" Siegmund, for the first time in the "Ring," exhibits its underlying ethical motive—self-sacrifice—through his rejection of all that appealed to the hero: "Greet Wotan! Greet the Wish-maidens! for I go not!" Then is born in Brunhilde this determination to disobey Wotan—knowing the results of her disobedience. Through this resolve she "rises to greatness in the realm of sacrifice" and sets in motion the forces which, culminating in her "Self-Immolation" in the final scene of the concluding drama of the cyclus, made the "Twilight of the Gods" inevitable.

Having stated the import of the dramatic situation, the structural side is easily set forth, for "The Ride of the Walkyries" produces its marvellous effects through comparatively simple means. Written in B minor—*Lebhaft*, 9-8 time—it is based on a bold theme through which the flight of the "Choosers of the Slain" is depicted, while occasional interjections of the "Cry of the Walkyries" give added direction to our thoughts.

The juxtaposition of Debussy and Wagner on our program suggests a fact that has not been taken into consideration by the champions of the former composer, who, referring to what they consider a lack of appreciation of their idol, say—"But look at the case of Wagner!" They overlook the proof of Wagner's saying—"The common people have always understood me," shown by the eagerness with which the "common people" crowded the opera houses whenever a Wagner opera was listed. It was no uncommon thing to see hundreds of such people standing from early in the afternoon before the entrance to the fourth gallery, for the opportunity of remaining on their feet for hours listening to music which appealed to them at a time when most of the critics, and too many professional musicians, looked upon it with derision. It is doubtful whether "Pelleas and Melisande" has ever known such a demand. This is to be construed neither as a reflection on Debussy nor a glorification of Wagner, but it is a point worthy of note.