

THE PHILHARMONIC CONCERT

Bruckner's Fifth Symphony for First Time Here—Mme. Nordica, Soloist.

At the Philharmonic Society's fifth evening concert last evening Mr. Stransky undertook the formidable task of interesting the New York musical public in a symphony by Anton Bruckner. He chose the fifth, in B flat, one that had never been heard in New York. In the last five years four of Bruckner's symphonies have been performed in New York—three by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under Dr. Muck and Mr. Fiedler, and last year one by the Philharmonic Society, under Mr. Mahler. It cannot be said that any of them made much headway toward gaining the admiration of this public, though much pains and great skill were expended upon them by men to whom they evidently meant much, and who labored with great earnestness and evident conviction to establish a place for Bruckner. In their number is now to be counted Mr. Stransky, who, as a pupil of Bruckner, may no doubt have been actuated by the additional motive of pious duty toward his master.

That such men, and others of the highest standing as conductors in Europe, have so ardently championed Bruckner's cause must necessarily create a presumption in favor of his music. Can it be that the value of his achievement in his symphonies is so much greater than the musical public has been willing to concede, by its grudging and unwilling acceptance of what is offered it? For it must be said that, though there was applause after the grandiose finale of this fifth symphony, with its unexpected and swelling climax from the brazen-throated choir, it produced no deep impression.

It produced, in fact, an impression similar to that which previous experiences of the same sort have given in the twenty-six years that have elapsed since Bruckner was first made known here. There is power, at times grandeur, nobility, poignant expressiveness in the music; there is an original and moving force at work in it. But it comes to its own only fitfully. There are fine beginnings, ideas, combinations that seize the listening ear, often given a vivid effectiveness by resplendent orchestral color. They soon run out into the most laborious music making, smothered in vain repetition, directed to no logical and convincing development.

Bruckner was called a great master of counterpoint, and this fifth symphony "the most contrapuntably brilliant" of all his works. Counterpoint and all its ingenious devices and applications indeed abound in it. But the object of counterpoint is the enhancement of musical effect, the raising of musical ideas to a higher power, to a loftier significance—not the burial of them beneath the killing weight of scholastic débris. There is much that is vain and commonplace in this symphony of Bruckner's.

There is much thundering in the index of an introductory adagio: the first movement opens with an imposing proclamation, which is complemented by a theme of tenuous substance, and the development is halting and disjointed. The slow movement has more to warm the heart of the listener, if only its line were more continuous and direct. The scherzo has rhythmic piquancy, but its incessantly repeated figures soon pall. In the last movement a highly organized fugato passage has interest. All through these movements may be heard an interchange of thematic material in various forms, the ingenuity of whose interplay will demand attentive listening.

There have been hints, and more than hints, of a choralelike theme in the previous movements. When the last movement reaches its climax the effect of the eleven players in the auxiliary brass choir rising at the back of the orchestra (as Mr. Stransky had them do) to intone this chorale, is immediate and remarkable. It will not, perhaps, bear much reflection; but it serves its purpose in producing an impressive close.

Mr. Stransky had studied the symphony with much care, and gave a highly elaborated performance of it, in which there was much tonal beauty. The orchestra played superbly. He gave the work in a version shortened by very considerable excisions. In this case it was a proceeding much to be commended.

Mme. Lillian Nordica was the soloist. She sang four songs with piano accompaniment, Debussy's "Mandoline," Rachmaninoff's "Springtide," Stange's "Damon," Schubert's "Der Erl König." She then added Schumann's "Der Nussbaum." Such songs are out of place in such a concert, and Mme. Nordica's singing of them did not make them less incongruous. Her voice was not in its best condition, and her intonation was not infrequently flat. At the end of the programme she sang the scene of Brünnhilde's immolation from Wagner's "Götterdämmerung." Between her two appearances the orchestra played Beethoven's overture, "Leonora," No. 3.

Cornell Glee and Banjo Clubs' Tour.

The Cornell University Glee, Banjo, and Mandolin Clubs will start out in Christmas week on a tour that will take them to Buffalo, Detroit, Toledo, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Albany, Syracuse, and Elmira. The only local appearance of the undergraduate musicians will be on the evening of Dec. 27 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The Cornell Glee Club is under the direction of Hollis Ellsworth Dann, Professor of Music at Cornell. The instrumental club is coached by George L. Coleman of Ithaca.

German Opera Company for Weber's.

Announcement was made last night that a new German opera company, composed of several of the principals from the Viennese Opera Company that recently closed an engagement at the Irving Place Theatre, would begin a two months' season at Joe Weber's Theatre on Christmas afternoon. At the head of the company of singers will be Grete Meyer and Vilma Conti, both of the Irving Place company. The chorus, it is planned, will be American. The first operetta to be presented will be "A Waltz Dream," that was given here in English several years ago.

PASSENGERS FROM EUROPE.

Some of the Arrivals on Oceanic and President Lincoln—Departures.

Transatlantic liners arriving yesterday, and some of their passengers, were:

OCEANIC (Southampton)—Miss M. E. Allinger, Mr. and Mrs. John Axten, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Bachelder, Miss Gladys Baker, Rathbone Ballou, Mr. and Mrs. F. Brenner, C. F. Buck, Jr., M. Bannell, J. A. Campbell, Miss E. G. Carroll, Miss D. M. Cary, Russell Cheney, Drew Chidester, J. Chisholm, James H. Cobb, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Thwaite Comper, W. W. Craib, Capt. S. E. Darby, Murray Davey, Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Day, James T. Dixon, S. B. Dougherty, Robert H. Downes, the Misses Kathleen E. and Lillian C. Drummond, Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Duncombe, T. J. Eldridge, Miss Anita Firestone, Mrs. L. Fowler, Miss E. Fowler, Mr. and Mrs. Martin H. Fry, Miss E. C. Gardner, D. S. Gideon, Miss Ray Grannis, Dr. Edmund L. Gros, Miss Ida Hopner, A. W. Hutton, Edward C. Jones, A. E. Keith, Miss Emily Kenny, C. Laurent, Mr. and Mrs. E. May, Mrs. Frank Millet, Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Morgan, Jr., Miss Jane H. Morgan, Miss F. T. Morgan, A. J. Drexel, W. F. Narro-way, A. L. Neeson, Miss S. Pallard, Mrs. C. L. Peterkin, the Misses Marjorie and Evelyn Ross, Allen Shortt, George A. Smith, Mrs. A. O. Tate, J. H. Thompson, G. V. Vallancey, Miss Selma L. Johnson, B. Van Voorhis, Miss L. C. Wheeler, the Misses M. T. and A. B. Wynne.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN (Hamburg)—Mrs. N. F. Bloch, Godfrey Bloch, Mr. and Mrs. V. V. Branford, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Collett, Mrs. F. R. Folk, Miss Roberta Gilroy, Miss F. Gilroy, Mrs. W. S. Hoyt, Miss Edna Hoyt, Mrs. C. Jacobs, Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Leonard, Miss Laura Lockwood, Mrs. J. Logan, Miss Julia Logan, Mrs. C. Mackenzie, Miss Frances Mackenzie, William Speer, Mrs. May Purcell, Miss Helen E. Purcell, Mrs. J. B. Read, Mrs. Madelaine Ritchie, E. T. Robinson, Mrs. Alma Webster-Power, Thomas Whistler.

Some of the passengers leaving on the New York for Southampton to-day, are:

Miss H. B. Cryder, P. A. Curry, Jr., Mrs. E. V. Elder, Mrs. Max Lange, A. L. Marlow, Miss Helene Moffat, Mrs. Edgar Park, Mrs. Mabel P. Valentine.