

Music and Drama

It is said we may prepare ourselves for something in the way of a novelty when the curtain rises on "Diana of Dobson's" this evening, this being the second production of the Tittell Brune season. Half a dozen shop girls are seen going to bed in one of Dobson's dormitories after a heavy day's work. One of the assistants, "Diana," comes into a legacy of £300, and a new life of freedom, travel and pleasure opens out to her. At a fashionable hotel in Switzerland the detested shop is forgotten, and Diana soon has a lover, a lazy ex-guardian, who is living aimlessly on £600 a year. When she has spent her £300 Diana returns to London, only to find a place in the ranks of the unemployed. On the Thames Embankment in the early morning the out-of-shop girl meets her unlucky guardian. Brought together by the currents of misfortune, Diana and the Captain resolve to sink or swim together, and the play ends with a marriage engagement and the dawn of a day of hope and happiness. The part of "Diana" should be right into the hands of Miss Tittell Brune. Others in the cast are Messrs. Thos. Kingston, Greghan MacMahon, T. W. Lloyd, Frank Harcourt, Mrs. Robert Brough, Misses Emma Temple, Nellie Calvin, Florence Kelley, Georgie O'Meara, Adele Kelley, and Edith Lewis. "Diana" will be staged for four nights, followed by a revival of "Sunday" for three nights and "Romeo and Juliet" the last two nights.

The average theatre-goer is, it would seem, a perverse fellow, who persists in knowing what he likes rather than what certain sapient critics tell him—or it may be a her—they ought to like. For example, the publications of both morning and evening papers were far from complimentary to "The Girl of the Golden West," which is, as was indicated last week, really not much better or much worse than "Sunday" (also a conspicuous success). Despite adverse criticism, however, "The Girl" has drawn big houses for over a week, and it is, at the moment of writing, still going strong. High art in drama, evidently, is as poor a band to play as it is in painting. Emotionalism wins every time, and it must be confessed there is emotionalism—"good and plenty," as "the Girl" herself would say in Belasco's western drama.

"Diana of Dobson's" promises to be a boom in Auckland, all the best seats being already sold, and the booking for "Sunday" is exceedingly heavy. To conclude the season there are two nights of Romeo and Juliet.

Before a large attendance at His Majesty's School of Music, Parnell, last Saturday evening, the pianoforte pupils of Mr. J. F. Bennett gave their sixth and last concert of the season, the following contributing to the programme, and acquitting themselves most successfully:—Mr. G. H. Woolley, Grieg's Sonata Op. 7 in E minor; Miss Mary Geddes, Hiller's "Marche Elegiaque" in D minor; Miss Flora Maclean, Heller's "Etude in B minor," and Mozart's "Sonata in B minor"; Miss Joannie Wright, Grieg's "Au den Fouchling," Stranky's "La Plaint d'Amour," Bobby eddies; Horvath's "La Mento," Miss Jessie Geddes; "My Garden," Miss Norma Downs; Gillet's "Danse Ancienne," Mr. W. Geddes; Mozart's "Magic Flute," Misses Dorothy Parker, D. Cardno, K. Curtis, C. Keale, R. Bushaw, and A. Morrison; Chopin's 2nd Nocturne, Mr. Alexander Geddes; Weber's Concert Stuck in D minor, Mr. Woolley and Miss D. Cardno; Chopin's Mazurka in G minor, Misses Marion Henderson and Isabella Cardno; Gillet's "Pizzicato," Misses M. Cardno and M. and J. Geddes; Liszt's "Rhapsody, No. 2, and Wagner's "Tannhauser" overture, Misses Phyllis McKeckie, Clara Keale, M. Cardno, M. Geddes, Anna Morrison, K. Curtis, Nellie Renshaw and Mr. Woolley; Reinecke's "King Manfred" overture arranged for pianoforte quartet, Misses Renshaw, Morrison, Cardno and Woolley; Weber's "Jubel" overture, Misses Cassie Macky, D. Cardno and Woolley; Gillet's "Dance Carosse," Miss M. Geddes and Mr. A. Geddes; recitation, "The Picture Hat," Miss Eileen Cottrell, Mrs. E. R.

Cardno presented the 21 theory certificates secured at the June examination of the Associated Board of the R.A.M. and R.C.M., London, and gave Mr. G. H. Woolley Mr. J. F. Bennett's gold medal for highest marks gained in his last examination. During the proceedings, in a few well-chosen words, Mrs. J. McKail Geddes presented Mr. and Mrs. Bennett, on behalf of the students, with a handsome silver tray, as a token of the high esteem in which they are held by the pupils.

Mr. Cyril Monk, who was solo violinist at the Exhibition concerts, was the leader of the orchestra recently at the first production in Australia of Cowen's oratorio, "Ruth."

The music of Moussorgsky is unlike any other music. It is almost alarmingly personal, but it leads one into a new world, where an unhappy soul wanders in darkness. He hears wild lamentations, and shadowy figures, like Dante's in hell, float past his sight. They mutter of obscure sorrows, hopeless and endless misery; and the few words that they speak, with long silences between, express a grotesque despair. Overhead, sudden thunder rumbles and sharp flashes of forked lightning illuminate, with a ghastly clearness, this world of sufferers.—Arthur Synonis, in the "Saturday Review."

Speaking of Mrs. C. M. Brooke's first appearance in Melbourne at a recital given by Miss Rita Hope, the "Argus" says:—"Mrs. C. M. Brooke, a pupil of Marchesi, and a New Zealander, made her first appearance in Melbourne, and created a very favourable impression. She has a light, flexible, soprano voice, and her style is full of vitality and charm. Her songs were the well-known soprano aria from Massenet's "Cid," and Arditi's famous valse song, "Se Saran Rose." There was an emphatic encore, and Mrs. Brooke honoured her native land by singing Alfred Hill's Poi-Dance Song, with which Mr. Kennerley Rumford made such a success both here and subsequently in London."

Mrs. A. C. Orr-Loring will assist the King's Trumpeter, Mr. William Short, L.R.A.M., at his recitals in the Town Hall, Wellington, on Wednesday and Monday, December 2nd and 7th. Mrs. Orr-Loring ranks as Dunedin's most popular soprano, and has been specially engaged for these recitals. A pure soprano of excellent quality and great range is Mrs. Orr-Loring's voice, her mezzo-voice work being particularly sweet and effective, and a glance at the programme shows that her items are all standard soprano solos.

No one has ever accused the Chinaman of being songful. Nevertheless he has a peculiar musical taste of his own. He is charmed, for instance by the singing of a peculiar breed of mice which he had especially cultivated and which a German scientist, Dr. Eichelberg, who has just spent a term in a Chinese prison, declares capable of producing vocal harmonies quite equal to those of the canary. The structure of a mouse's throat is shown, moreover, not to be much different from that of the little yellow bird, there being likewise a distinct physical analogy between the two, even to the peculiar nibbling manner in which they take their food.—"Science Sitings."

There will arrive in Melbourne on 9th December, and in Sydney on 14th December, a little Australian, Dorothy Lawson (age 11) described as a brilliant child pianist and infant prodigy. This child is coming from South Africa. She is a gold and silver medalist, and is the winner of the silver medal of Trinity College of Music exam. (junior), held in Johannesburg recently. She obtained 93 out of a possible 100 for theory, sight-reading, ear test, etc., etc. She won a gold medal at the Pretoria Fintedoff. "Her technique is wonderfully good, while her expression is spontaneous and marvellous," said the Cape "Argus."

Miss Amy Castles, who is busy preparing for her coming tour of Australia, has refused an excellent offer for a series of concerts in America.

Saxhorns, so called after a famous Belgian family named Sax, who invented and introduced these instruments some 60 years ago, are the mainstay of all modern brass bands. They are manufactured in many different sizes, from high soprano to the huge contrabass or bombardon, and the most important of the lot is euphonium, which supplanted the now obsolete "serpents" and ophicleides. The tallest saxhorn ever made stands 8ft high and contains more than 40ft of tubing.

As was to be expected of a King's trumpeter, Mr. William Short was enthusiastic in the praise of his instrument. It far surpassed the cornet, he said, in the course of a recent interview at Wellington, in the nobleness, purity, and brilliancy of its tone, which, in addition, was a good deal more piercing. This latter he proved right away by standing up and blowing a blast which would have gone through a battleship, then following by playing a few phrases to demonstrate his former assertion. He admitted that the tone of the trumpet was harder to get, but then it was worth while in the end. The trumpet was making very great headway now at home, for every orchestra of importance had trumpets instead of cornets, especially in London. The best of the big composers wrote parts for the trumpet, and, though cornets had been used for them, very often they could not play them at all properly. The use of trumpets added greatly to the brilliancy of a performance. That was why he recommended their introduction into bands, all of which should have a couple in addition to their cornets, as was very frequently done in England.

The New York correspondent of "The Times" on October 13 last wrote:—"No demonstrations yet accorded Mr. Taft or Mr. Bryan approached the rousing welcome which Mr. Harry Lauder received at the Lincoln-square Theatre last night from the audience, which packed the theatre to its doors. His delighted admirers, including the members of several Scottish societies, were present in force, and kept him on the stage for an hour and twenty minutes, and wrung two speeches from him. The crowd was so dense outside that police reserves, I hear, were summoned to maintain order. The impression made by his humorous personality and his mere presence, without movement or speech, consuming the audience with mirth, evoked a reception which a Presidential candidate might well envy."

A peculiarity of the actor's art is the inability of the actor to see himself as others see him (says a London critic). He cannot get outside himself. He cannot walk in the procession and look out of the window. The poet, the painter, and the musician can study their work objectively. The actor can never be a spectator.

Big hats led to blows, not among the wearers, in a music-hall last summer, and to a lawsuit the other day. At the Alcazar, two men in the stalls sat behind two hats, and saw nothing else. To while away the time they shouted "Hats off!" and thumped the floor. The husband of one of the hats turned round, and said, "You are hooligans!" The result was a fight, the exact circumstances of which will never be known, as even the exhaustive evidence given in court could not clear the matter up. In the witness-box one of the ladies swore that blows from a walking-stick rained upon her hat. "Luckily, madam," said the judge, "the hats of to-day are large, and you were thus adequately protected." In the end the Court found that two spectators, both gentlemen of honour and renown, one a well-known architect and the other a mayor of a seaside borough, had lost their tempers in a just cause, "large hats in theatres being an acknowledged nuisance," but that one of them, the architect, had lost his temper too completely, and while acquitting his friend, the Court sentenced him to twelve and sixpence fine.

The Zancigs, who are filling a two months' engagement at Berlin, have given a command performance in the Marble Palace at Potsdam before the guests of the Crown Prince and Princess. Their Imperial Highnesses subjected the "mind readers" to a test which was so severe that the performers were absolutely exhausted. The Crown Prince and Princess wrote down two characteristic German compound words, and asked Mme. Zancig to guess them. The words were "hinterbliebenerversicherungsfonds" (survivors' insurance funds) and "zwanzigversteigerungsergebnisse" (results of compulsory auction). Mrs. Zancig gasped for breath when she attempted to negotiate these mountains of syllables, and begged the Crown Princess' permission to write the answer, which was given amid great laughter from the guests.

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