

The last night of the Company in Dunedin was fine, and when the curtain fell on the final performance Dunedin literally "rose to its feet" and cheered the company to the echo. I have never known Dunedin, in an experience of 20 years, to do this before. It was a great compliment coming from this usually uncomplimentary city. In a brief season here, all the members made themselves highly popular. Tom Walls particularly so. Personally, I found them all charming and the warmth of the reception "behind" was really great. I will always have pleasant memories of the show and the people.

Andersonian Drama.

It's coming from the South!—"The Game of a Lifetime."—Not a share list or a land steal, but simply a melodrama—some of Nat Gould's classic stories turned into an orgy for the peanut public. The company opened in Christchurch on the 5th with Harry Roberts and Beatrice Day in the lead.

On the same date no less than five of William Anderson's companies were due to inaugurate seasons in various theatres in the Commonwealth, three of these attractions having their first presentations in Sydney. "The Man from Outback" was to be presented by the William Anderson No. 1 Co. for the first time in Sydney; Mr Joseph Blanche and Miss Mildred Wrighton make their first appearance in that city with their "Society Snap Shots," and the Child's "Pantomime," "The Old Woman who Lived in a Shoe," will be presented at the Palace Theatre, Sydney; whilst in Melbourne Mr Walter Baker and Miss Frances Ross make their reappearance under Mr Anderson's management in "Tommy Atkins," and in New Zealand Mr Harry Roberts and Miss Beatrice Day, inaugurated a season in Christchurch.

Sousa and His Band.

Sousa's specially selected band of sixty magnificent musicians has for many years been recognised the world over as the greatest instrumental combination in America. In the formation of the band money was no object; Sousa insists on having only the best artists, and enormous salaries are paid to secure them, and when it is stated that the salaries drawn by many members of the band exceed those of star actors or actresses, who head our big dramatic or musical comedy companies, the financial responsibility assumed by Edward Brandreth, Ltd., will be readily understood. As a conductor, Sousa is par excellence. Nothing can compare with the dignity, fervour and spirit which he infuses into his great band. Wherever he has appeared the public have been captivated by his own magnetic personality, and the subsequent work of his bandsmen. Sousa holds the distinction of being the only American on whom the Victorian Order has been conferred. This Order was conferred by the late King Edward, after Sousa and his band appeared at Sandringham and Windsor.

The Auckland Sousa season opens at the Opera House on Wednesday, 23rd, and a series of matinees will be given for the convenience of country patrons.

Auckland Liedertafel.

The second programme of this season was given last week by the above society, conducted by Dr. Thomas. I was present at the Friday's performance, and derived great pleasure from it. The audience was large, but not over enthusiastic as regards the choir's numbers. Why this lack of enthusiasm I could not understand, as many of the concerted pieces were excellently sung, and there has been a distinct all-round improvement since I heard this body of singers last. On the whole, the concert was an extremely enjoyable one, but there can be no harm in pointing out a few places where improvement might be reasonably looked for. A quite common fault was the overdoing of the crescendo and diminuendo. A crescendo is an effect, and must be used sparingly, or it ceases to be an effect. The same singing was distinctly good, but the forte singing; many of the first basses and tenors were shouting, not singing, in the louder passages.

Certainly, one of the most enjoyable numbers from an artistic point of view was the "Battle Prayer" by Storch. In this composition the voices were more evenly balanced than in other part-songs. Beyond a little overdoing of the light and shade, mentioned above, a very creditable performance was given.

Schubert's "Serenade" does not lend itself to arrangement for male voices, and although interesting in this new

guise, was frankly disappointing. The second verse was badly out of tune, and this fault did not improve as the song moved on.

"O Breath of Music," by Rehr, was admirably rendered by the choir, but marred by the ineffective organ and piano accompaniment. The organ and pianoforte tones do not blend well; in fact, one destroys the tone of the other; in addition to this, very unsatisfactory choice of stops were used by the organist; perhaps it was an accident that the voice celeste was used along with the diapasons, oboe, and fifteenth on the swell; however it happened, the result was far from pleasing.

I have only space to mention a few other numbers. The "Cossack War Song," by the American composer, Horatio Parker, was effectively rendered, as also was De Rillies' "Village Wedding."

Mr Ernest Parkes was the solo vocalist, and rendered A War Song by Elgar and "Oberon in Fairyland," by Slater. The Elgar song suited him admirably. Mr Parkes has a baritone voice of good power and range, and uses it artistically; his runs are never slurred, every note of a scale is heard distinctly and full of ring. He was enthusiastically and deservedly recalled after both numbers.

Herr Pechtsch contrived the difficult Faust Fantasia arranged by Sarasate, and exhibited the same technique which one associates with this performer. This piece makes very heavy demands upon the resources of the performer, and Herr Pechtsch was equal to it. In his first encore a wonderful display of harmonics was given, which pleased the audience immensely, so much so that he was compelled to contribute still another piece, which proved to be the "Elegy" by Ernst, in which more sustained playing was made use of. During the second half he played Bach's Chaconne, by far the best piece of work this player has so far vouchsafed us, but the audience did not respond; they preferred the pyrotechnic display.

Mr F. S. McLean gave two cello numbers in a very artistic manner. The andante from the Grand Duo by Gollermann proved the more enjoyable. Mr McLean has good technique and a fair tone, but he scores his success chiefly through his sympathetic readings.

Miss Gertrude Hunt and Mr L. G. Whittaker shared the honours of accompaniment, and under the circumstances, did wondrous well.

Stray Notes.

Berlin is to have an orchestra consisting of doctors only. Their rendering of the "Dead March" should be worth hearing.

The Norwegian composer, whose delightful "Carnival" was played by the Auckland Orchestral Society at its last concert, is dead, namely Johann Severin Svendsen, who passed away recently at Copenhagen. He was born at Christiania on September 30, 1840, and was the son of a military bandmaster. His most popular works in England are the fascinating "Romance in G for violin"—so full of musical feeling—four "Norwegian Rhapsodies" and "Carnival in Paris." Some years ago the deceased composer conducted one of the concerts of the London Philharmonic Society. It is said that the circumstances of Svendsen's life left him too little time for composition. The bulk of his compositions—which include chamber music—belongs to the early part of his career.

Before leaving Sydney for New Zealand, Mr Sousa expressed a wish to hear some of Mr Alfred Hill's music, more especially the "Maori Quartet." Mr Cyril Monk accordingly led the Austral String Quartet in this characteristic composition, and on the same occasion Miss Rosina Buckmann and Mr Nelson Illingworth sang several of Mr Hill's songs. In the result Mr Sousa gave the New Zealand composer a letter of recommendation to his New York publishers, Messrs Schirmer and Co., and promised also to assist in introducing some of Mr Hill's music in the United States.

Joseph Bennett, the well known musical critic of the London "Daily Telegraph," is dead. He was in the early eighties one of the protagonists of "Anti-Wagnerism." How many musical changes has not England seen since those late lamented days.

Says the London Express:—The discovery of the month in the vaudeville world is undoubtedly Miss Nan Gray, who only arrived in England from Australia a few weeks ago, but is now booked up with contracts for more than a year to come. Miss Gray, who is a most charming and vivacious comedienne with

a most compelling manner and songs which would rouse the most apathetic audience, has now started in the (Gibbons) tour, and Sir Edward Moss has secured her services for his list of halls, and the managers of the leading provincial halls have followed Sir Edward's sound and excellent example.

The London Symphony Orchestra, with Arthur Nikisch as conductor, have been engaged to make a tour of the United States and Canada in April next year, when they will give 31 concerts. Alas! if somebody would only bring them to New Zealand, I guarantee we would find something better than tin sheds for them to play in.

Sir Henry J. Wood, whose first wife died nearly eighteen months ago, was quietly married recently in London at St. Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill, to Miss Greetox who has been associated with him in his musical enterprises.

The most important feature of the Australian concert at the Crystal Palace on June 13 was Mr Marshall Hall's Symphony in E flat. It was first introduced in London at a promenade concert four years ago, and on the occasion under notice it was again interpreted by Sir Henry Wood and the Queen's Hall orchestra. In breadth of design and sincerity of feeling the Symphony is a notable achievement, and most worthily represented the creative output of the colony for whose musical life Mr Marshall Hall has done so much. Another Australian musician who has won his way to the front by his charming opera, "A Summer Night," is Mr G. H. Clusman, who was represented in this programme by a song, while the colony may be equally proud of the executive musicians he has given us. Mr Percy Grainger, for instance, has long been recognised as one of the ablest of the younger pianists, and the brilliance of his technique had every opportunity for display in the Liszt Rhapsody which formed his contribution to the programme.

Charles Frohman writes from London to his business manager in the States that he does not recall when that city has had so many dramatic, as distinct from musical comedy, successes. For the first time in years the legitimate drama is numerically stronger than the lighter entertainments. "I believe that the success of these plays is due to their human appeal," he says. "In 'The Butterfly on the Wheel,' a young wife facing alone 100 men, cries out for justice, and the audience cry out with her. That is why the libraries are renewing their 'deals' for this play for many months. In 'Passers-By,' the simplicity of a man made again a child brings together a man and a woman who should be brought together. In 'The Witness for the Defence,' a woman cries out for justice from the brutality of a man, and the audience cry out with her. In 'The Popinjay,' a suffering wife bears her suffering through her pride and proves herself a queen, and the audience delight in her sincerity, suffering, and predominance. 'Kismet,' in spite of all its wonderful pictorial effect, has one thing that, in my mind, is bigger than the production, and that is the performance of Oscar Asche. That play, like the others, is written by the audience; in this case because his predominance is so great that the audience write the play with him by enjoying the result of his revenge. So that every death that he accomplishes is 'Charley's Aunt' laugh to them. In 'Lady Patricia' we see and enjoy the side of life that is ludicrous. So many enjoy seeing their neighbours satirized, while all the time it is themselves being satirized, only they do not know it. These plays follow my new rule, which I did not intend to give away, and that is that the successful play to-day is the play that is written by the audience, and I am certain that if the author does not permit the audience to write the play their way, the play will not have a long life. Every one of these pieces is written by the audience, and then they take others to see the way they write plays, and then the others feel they have written it, and so they all go on making audiences."

Miss Gertrude Gilliam, Clark and Meynell's soubrette with "The Arcadian" Opera Company, was the recipient of a green-tone pendant, emblematical of the shamrock, during her stay in Wellington. The four initials commemorating the Irish emblem were "E.I.G.F." An accompanying note explained that Miss Gilliam was the first artist who essayed an Irish part on the stage who had not caricatured the race, and the initials represent, "From Irish Girl Friends."

Describing the performance of Puccini's new opera, "The Girl of the

Golden West," a London theatrical paper tells us that the last act is made a sort of Wild West show. At the beginning of the act Joshua's pursuers are seen galloping hell-for-leather, hot foot on his truck, and they ride with the straight leg, which was part and parcel of the American horsemanship of the period, and which, in a measure, resulted from using a high-peaked Mexican saddle. It is no stage amble, but a breakneck dash, more realistic than the race in "The Whip," because the horses are not stationary. This manhood of the miners is as near the real thing as counterfeit will allow.

Supported by a specially formed company of talented artists, Mr. Walter R. Lee and Miss Frances Ross are to be presented at the King's Theatre, Melbourne, by Mr. Wm. Anderson in the finest of all military dramas yet produced in Australia, "Tommy Atkins."

Mr. Michael Joseph, business manager for Mr. William Anderson, advises that the end of the year will see the re-organisation of Bland Holt's old company, which has recently been touring under the management of Mr. Max Maxwell, and at whose death the company was taken over by Mrs. Maxwell. The company is disbanded meanwhile, but it is to be reorganised for a New Zealand tour, with Mr. Walter Baker and Miss Frances Ross in their old positions as leads.

Percy Denton, the original Doc, Sufkins in "The Belle of New York," and a well-known figure in New Zealand, where he has been, amongst other things, insurance canvasser, actor, and concert singer, writes to "Pasquin" of the Otago "Daily Times" from Rock Springs, Wyoming, under date June 14: "For a wage of 2500 dollars I am singing my way from San Francisco to New York and booking the Panama-Pacific Exhibition of 1915. Best wishes to all friends in New Zealand."

During a performance by the Georgia Magnet at the Warrington Hippodrome on the 2nd inst., a powerful brewery horse—one of a pair used on the stage for the purposes of the show—slipped, and crashed over the footlights into the orchestra. The players, foreseeing the danger, jumped clear, but the footlights and the instruments left in the light were smashed. Great consternation ensued, and the performance came to an abrupt termination. The horse, weighing 15 cwt., was uninjured.

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