

Reviews of the 3rd concert, 6th December, 1900

Musical News, 15th December, 1900.

On December 6th, the York Symphony Orchestra gave its third concert, and played the following programme:- Overture, "Ruy Blas," Mendelssohn; Suite for Strings, Grieg; "Unfinished" Symphony, Schubert; Overture, "Egmont," Beethoven ; Pianoforte Concerto, Mozart; Suite for Strings, Purcell; Overture, "William Tell," Rossini. There is a marked improvement both in the string tone and freedom of style since last season; this was particularly noticeable in the string suites, which were finely played, the phrasing being unanimous. The solo part of the Piano Concerto was played with truly Mozartian feeling by Herr Padel, a well-known York musician here - again, the orchestra showed an unusual command of tone-colour, keeping the accompaniments in due subordination to the solo part, and not forgetting in the tutti to do justice to the sparkling humour of this lovely composition. Mr. Reginald Crawford was the vocalist, he sang songs by Gounod, Handel, and Pelissier with such taste and ability as to give the audience great pleasure, which latter, by the way was again very thin. Mr. Tertius Noble, as usual, conducted with contagious enthusiasm and vivacity. The band was ably led by Miss E. G. Knocker.

December, 1900

YORK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Mr. Noble's abundant energy has had no happier illustration than the progress made by the orchestra he has established in York, a progress strikingly manifested last evening, when the first concert of its second season was given. The bulk of the players, more especially among the strings, are amateurs, and since last season they have developed in both confidence and technical ability, resulting in better tone and greater freedom of style. The excellence of the strings was shown in Mendelssohn's "Ruy Blas" Overture, which opened the concert; and in two movements for strings by Grieg they had a severe test of purity of intonation, acquitting themselves more than creditably. The chief thing in the programme was Schubert's beautiful B minor Symphony. Mr. Noble's tempi were faster than is usual, but he was probably well advised in leaning rather on the side of quickness under the circumstances. The strings played well, and the brass, chiefly imported, were satisfactory, the weakest place being the woodwind, which was not quite flawless in the matter of intonation, especially in the Andante. Beethoven's "Egmont" Overture, though also a trifle too much hurried for its weight and force to be felt, was cleverly played, and indeed the band showed the result of careful training in nothing more than in their precision and unity of attack and phrasing. Other things in the programme were Mozart's pianoforte concerto in A, a mature and beautiful work, the solo part in which was played by Mr. Padel, whose clearly cut style is well suited to Mozart's music; a Suite for strings by Purcell, and the familiar and effective "William Tell" Overture. The vocalist was Mr. Reginald Crawford, who sang Gounod's "Salve Dimora" with much expression, and in thoroughly operatic manner, while for the air from "Jephtha", "Deeper and deeper still," he received an encore, to which he readily complied by singing the delightful Welsh air, "All Through the Night." Mr. Noble's vivacious and inspiring conducting conducted greatly to the excellence of the performances.

December, 1900.

YORK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

THIRD CONCERT

Mr. Noble's Symphony Orchestra is beginning to feel its feet. Nurtured at first, as was meet, on the earlier and simpler forms of orchestral music, the players have gradually acquired confidence, and at their third concert given last night in the Festival Concert Room, they not only attempted the execution of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, but undertook to share in a pianoforte concerto with Herr Padel. The violinists showed timidity in entering on the first movement of the Schubert symphony, but the oboes set a good example by the firmness with which they gave out their weird mournful phrase, and the bassoons and 'cellos, taking courage also, entered with admirable clearness. Mr. Noble, in fact, elicited a really satisfactory interpretation of the exquisite and original effects which stud the score of the allegro. So satisfactory was the result that it almost looked as if the most care had been bestowed on the preparation of this movement to the detriment of the andante, in which the band did not reach the same standard. Towards the end of the movement some differences in the matter of pitch were noticeable.

The strings had their innings in two suites which to a nicety represented this form of composition in its earliest and latest stages. There was Grieg's suite in two movements, full of sensuous beauty, and containing intervals that would have sounded strangely in the ears of musicians in olden times. The other was a suite by Purcell, in three movements modelled as all suites then were dance forms – in this case the "Allemande," "Sarabandi," and "Cebell." These measures have a quaint antique flavour about them. They suggest the simple stately, decorous, graceful dancing of the Caroline period. They afford yet another instance of the astonishing versatility and virility of this great English "master musician."

Three overtures were included in the programme, the first being the sprightly, vivacious, and effective concert overture "Ruy-Blas" of Mendelssohn, the second Beethoven's "Egmont," full of interest as representing a distinct phase in the evolution of the overture; and the third the familiar "William Tell" overture of Rossini. Herr Padel was the soloist in Mozart's Pianoforte Concerto in A, and his careful phrasing and clean execution, together with an absence of exaggeration, just suited the style of writing. The andante movement of the concerto, with its limpid, lucid phrases, is surely one of the happiest efforts of Mozart, and the perfect proportion observed in the orchestra setting was duly kept by the band, under the direction of Mr. Noble, who kept his forces from obscuring the pianist's part more successfully here than he did in the first movement.

Mr. Reginald Crawford was the vocalist. His tenor voice is hardly of the robust order, but he is aware of the fact and sings with discretion. The "Salve dimora" cavatina from Gounod's "Faust" was his first effort, and he wisely refrained from attempting the high C. He next sang the recitative "Deeper and deeper still," and the air "Waft her angels," from Handel's "Jephtha", but did not reach the pitch of dramatic expression required to make the recitative really impressive. [. . .]