

Reviews of the 2nd concert, 21st February, 1900.

Yorkshire Herald, February 22nd, 1900

YORK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

It is impossible to find an object more worthy of support than the restoration of York Minster. If this magnificent structure, pre-eminent among the ecclesiastical buildings of the world for the grandeur of its architecture, should be permitted to suffer from the destroying hand of time without the necessary work of restoration taking place, and from this neglect some permanent injury should befall it, the loss would not be a merely local one. It would be national, and upon this nation would rest the stigma of having allowed such a calamity to occur. It must be acknowledged that at the present time there are calls of a peculiarly pressing nature upon the people of England, but in performing their duty in one direction they must also recognise that there are others which must not be passed over. Amongst the latter is the restoration of York Minster. Mr. T. Tertius Noble, the organist of York Minster, and the members of his Symphony Orchestra, have done their best to perform the duty which we have mentioned. To help to raise the fund required to carry out the work required to be done on the mother church of the Northern province, they gave a concert in the Festival Concert Rooms, York, last night. The programme was admirably chosen, the performers are perfect masters of their respective instruments, an almost perfect rendering of the works selected for performance was assured, but the support accorded by the public was bitterly disappointing. The empty seats were neither few nor far between. What could be the reason? It cannot be that high class music is "caviare to the general" in a city like York. It cannot be that the inhabitants of the city and district are indifferent to the fate of the Minster. The reason for the paucity of attendance is, therefore, an occult one. The audience who were present were thoroughly appreciative, and the enthusiasm with which they received the various items in the programme was some compensation to the musicians for the services they had rendered on behalf of the cause. The programme was as follows: - Overture, "Magic Flute" (Mozart); incidental music to the "Wasps," Andante, Allegro Vivace, Post-prandial Music, Crabs' Dance, and Final Chorus (T. T. Noble); two part songs, (a) "Corydon, arise," (b) "Diaphœnia," (Stanford); Reformation symphony, Introduction-Allegro con fuoco, Allegro Vivace, Andante, Andante con Moto, Allegro Maestoso (Mendelssohn); string suite, Kahnfahrt, Serenade, Sage, Intermezzo, Dorfspielmann (Olsen); violin solo, "Idyll" (Pattison Haynes), Miss E. G. Knocker; (a) "Hymn to Apollo" (b) "Fierce was the wild Billow" (T. T. Noble); Peer Gynt suite, Morgenstimmung, Ases Tod, Anitras Tanz, Tanz in der Halle des Bergkönigs (Grieg). Mr. Noble conducted and had at his command an army of musicians of which any conductor would feel proud to have under his control. Mr. Noble is an ideal conductor. We might almost venture to assert that he would be able to bring into submission to his baton the most erratic performers, but in the present instance he would be the last to claim all the credit. A substantial portion of the laurels must be bestowed upon those whom he conducted. They were perfect in time, each part was taken up with promptness and firmness, the lights and shades were admirably displayed, and the tone production was exquisite. No particular work deserves any special mention, but it would not be difficult, we think, to award the palm to Mendelssohn's "Reformation Symphony." It was splendidly played. The audience would gladly have had repeated the "Crabs' dance and final chorus" (the latter finely sung by the Minster songmen, and the dance in the hall of the Mountain Kings, from Grieg's "Peer Gynt Suite," with which the concert concluded, but Mr. Noble wisely declined to comply with their request. Miss E.G.Knocker does not require much laudation to commend her to a York audience. Her violin playing is fully appreciated whenever heard, but we venture to think that it has rarely been enjoyed to a greater degree than it was last evening. Battison Haynes' lovely "Idyll" received a faultless rendering. Miss Knocker's violin playing is

characterised by firm bowing and exquisite tone production, without which we might say that violin playing becomes a trying ordeal to listen to. The vocal contributions were given by the Minster songmen and choristers. They sang "Corydon Arise" and "Diaphoënia" in the first part, and the latter was encored in such a determined manner that the conductor was obliged to yield to the demand. The choir of York Minster was never in so good a condition as it is at the present time. The songmen are all accomplished vocalists, and thanks to Mr. Noble's admirable training, the boys have attained a state of perfection which can be excelled in very few if any other choirs. Their voices are peculiarly sweet and pure in tone. In the second part the choir gave Mr. Noble's compositions "Hymn to Apollo (men only) and "Fierce was the wild billow." Both testify to the fact that Mr. Noble has attained a proud position in the ranks of composers. The second of these works was sung unaccompanied, and being a very trying piece to sing there was some excuse for the boys being slightly untrue in some of their notes. From a musical point of view the concert was an unqualified success.

***Yorkshire Post* , February 22nd, 1900**

YORK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The programme at the second concert given by the York Symphony Orchestra, in the Festival Concert Rooms, last night, was such an excellent one that it is a thousand pities there was not a larger audience to enjoy it. Mr. T. Noble has done the lovers of orchestral music in the city a good turn in organising the forces capable of appealing to them, and while there is the artistic satisfaction of having developed these forces to the high degree abundantly shown to have been attained last night, he is surely entitled to something more than this. In essaying a higher flight than at the first concert last year, Mr. Noble has but done justice to the merits of the orchestra. It is a far cry from what they did on that occasion to Mozart's "Magic Flute" Overture and Mendelssohn's Reformation Symphony, which were the principal items last night, but they were given with a skill and an intelligence that speak more than hopefully for the future of the Society. There is high worth in these amateur instrumentalists, and York has not given it too much encouragement.

Mozart's overture was finely played, and the hearty burst of applause that followed marked it as one of the most popular features of the programme. The Reformation Symphony was equally delicately treated, and the beauty of the melody found adequate expression. For the rest we had the incidental music to the "Wasps," composed by the conductor, the quaint conceits of which were heightened in effect by the final chorus, in which the Minster Choir took part, a string suite by Olsen, and the "Peer Gynt" suite by Grieg. The one solo interpolation was given by the leader of the orchestra, Miss E. G. Knocker, who played Battison Haynes's "Idyll" with admirable taste. Not the least enjoyable feature of the concert was the contribution by the Minster Choir. There was little to choose between the part songs, "Corydon, arise," and "Diaphoënia," and though the choir perhaps excelled in the former, the smooth rhythm of the latter captivated the public taste. At all events an encore was demanded, and given. In the second half Mr. Noble "Hymn to Apollo" and "Fierce was the wind billow" were given with similar success.

Leeds Mercury, February 22nd, 1900

CONCERT IN YORK

Mr. Tertius Noble's symphony orchestra gave a concert in York Festival Concert Rooms last night, the proceeds to be devoted to the restoration fund of York Minster. There was a comparatively small audience. They were, however, highly appreciative. The programme opened with the overture to Mozart's "Magic Flute," given by the orchestra in a faultless manner. The various instruments were well balanced, and being under the perfect control of Mr. Noble, who conducted with consummate ability, they displayed a perfect mastery over light and shade, and were never out by the smallest portion of a beat. The incidental music to "The Wasps," by Mr. Noble, greatly delighted the audience, and they wanted the Crab's Dance repeated, but the demand was not complied with. Mendelssohn's "Reformation Symphony," Olsen's String Suite, and Grieg's "Peer Gynt Suite" were the other works performed. Miss Knocker, a most accomplished violinist, gave a faultless rendering to Battison Haynes' Idyll. The Minster choir sang Stanford's "Corydon, arise," the "Hymn to Apollo," and "Fierce was the wind billow," and gave them the most finished rendering.

***Yorkshire Gazette* , February 24th, 1900**

York Symphony Orchestra

To the genuine lovers of music in York and district the splendid work of which the York Symphony Orchestra is capable, under the conductorship of Mr T. Tertius Noble is gratifying to a degree. But one grows a bit sceptical about the musical tastes of the public, which will allow but tardy recognition to such worthy efforts. 'Tis true that everything at the present time is over-shadowed by the war, but even in normal times, those who would engage in music in the ancient city should do so for its own sweet sake, rather than look for any satisfactory reward from an indiscriminating public. To put it bluntly, we are not thoroughly musical in York. We merely pretend we are, because it seems to be the correct thing and gives one a bit of a tone. The orchestra which Mr Noble, by infinite pains and skill has got together, is a very fine one, and York should be proud of it and lend it every support. It is the same, however, with the Art Gallery. From time to time exhibitions of pictures are held, but very few people go to look at them, and the art criticism devolves upon the attendants and the policeman on duty. The Technical Instruction Committee have done their best with the meagre funds at their disposal, but if they ventured to ask the City Council for a round sum to restore and thoroughly preserve the pictures, valued at thousands of pounds, which they hold in trust, the request would fall into the gilded chamber like a lyddite shell.