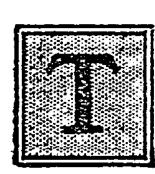


CHARLES DALMORES IN LOUISE. Manhaitan

Interesting Career of Gustav Mahler, Vienna's Famous Composer, Who Takes His Place as Conductor of Opera in New York.



Mahler, who arrived in New York last week to take his place as conductor at the Metropolitan Opera House, will

be an important event in this musical season, if all the plans to which he is a party and all that is expected of him are carried out. For Mr. Mahler is at the present time one of the most distinguished personalities in the world of music. He is admittedly one of the greatest and most individual of conductors. He is also conspicuous as a composer; but here his achievements are still subject to great debate and contention, as, in fact, are those of almost all who at the present day produce music.

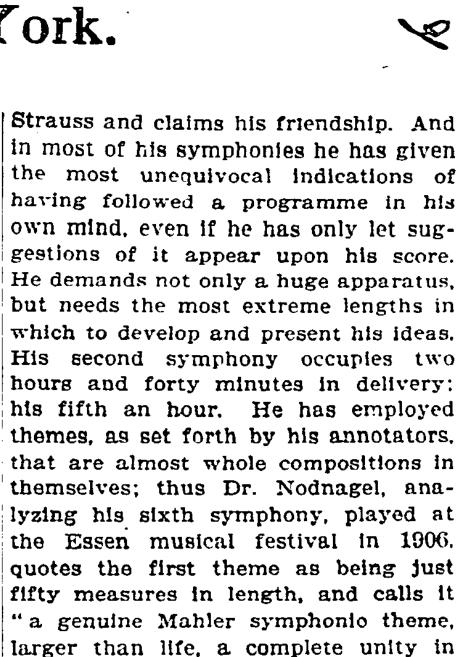
Mr. Mahler's music is known in New York through two of his symphonies that have been played here. In November, 1904, Mr. Damrosch produced for the first time his fourth symphony, and in 1906 Mr. Gericke brought out his fifth at one of the concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. These two compositions are singularly different in their musical substance and apparently in the effects the composer was aiming at in them; and from them it is scarcely possible to deduce a conception of Mahler the composer that will fit both. In the fourth he has shown a fondness for disporting in the forms of the naïve, even the archaic. He has gone to folksong and the suggestions of folksong for some of his inspiration, and has made use of a quaint poem in the old collection of German popular poems known as "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" for his vocal finals.

He has drawn largely from the same rich store for some of his songs. In his fifth symphony there is some suggestion of the same sympathy with folk music in the Viennese "Ländler" that he uses as a scherzo; but as a whole it aims at very different things; at the grandiose, the tragic, the passionate expressed sometimes in extravagant but intensely serious music.

Since these works were heard in New York he has produced two more symphonies, a sixth and a seventh, and he is said to have an eighth up his sleeve which may be given first to New York. Besides symphonies, he has 'composed songs, especially songs with orchestral accompaniment, a form to which modern composers have given a good deal of attention. Twenty years ago he completed and prepared for practical performance an opera left unfinished by Weber, "Die Drei Pintos," and some have said that there is as much of Mahler as of Weber in this youthful indiscretion, which kept a place in the German repertory only a short time.

Performances of Mahler's symphonies have been considered as more or less momentous events when they have 'taken place in European cities; and they have been found so in New York, Boston, Chicago, and Cincinnati. He has been hailed as a genius, and he has had to undergo the imputation of madness, and still worse, of ambitious commonplaceness. Pamphlets are emitted easily in Germany these days about disputed claims in music, and they have been emitted about Mahler. His symphonies have been frantically applauded and stormily hissed. For most of them he demands a most elaborate, and sometimes eccentric, orchestral apparatus, and he has had resort in two of them to the chorus and to solo singers.

"He has expressed himself in an almost ferocious manner against programme music as it is pursued by modern musicians, and he abhors "analytical notes"; yet he acknowledges his deep indebtedness to Richard Charles and the contract of the



Mahler is now 47 years old, and is a Bohemian by birth. He was sent to the gymnasium at Prague and to the University of Vienna, and, entering the university in 1877, he entered at the same time the Conservatory, where Anton Bruckner was his teacher. He could stay only two years. The need of earning his living drove him forth to accept places as conductor in small opera houses. In these posts he had to conduct many operas that he had never even heard. He had no routine, no tradition. He made his own and remained original. By 1885 he had risen as high as to be second conductor at Cassel, after two years as first conductor at Prague. In 1886 he went to Leipzig as second conductor of the opera there, under Arthur Nikisch. In 1888 he was made first conductor at the opera in Budapest, which flourished mightily under his direction. Then Hamburg got him, and kept him for six years. In 1897 he was offered the post most sought for by German conductors, that of conductor of the Imperial Opera at Vienna, succeeding Wilhelm Jahn there, and, as conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic, Hans Richter. He was made not only conductor of the opera, but also director of that institution, and he governed it with an iron hand for ten years. Last May came his decision to give up the post, and later his engagement for New

It must be confessed that his acceptance of the appointment in New York was a surprise to all who knew of Mahler's personal qualities, his ideals and methods as a conductor, and the conditions that prevail at the Metropolitan Opera House, that necessarily must prevail there as long as it remains what it is in the musical and social life of this community. In Vienna he was a dictator, with funds almost unlimited, with power to enforce all his wishes as to casts, rehearsals, scenic decoration, interpretation, and he had no hesitation in enforcing them to the utmost. It is, perhaps, needless to say that whatever may be given him nominally in New York, he will, in actual practice, have no such free hand. But such an iron will as Mahler's, joined to such a genius for conducting and for organization, as all accounts agree that he possesses, will accomplish much. The last great conductor that was active at the Metropolitan Opera House, Felix Mottl, possessed the highest gifts as a conductor, but he did not accomplish all that he might have because he had not the determination to bend things his way as far as was physically possible, the inflexible will to insist, the indifference to making enemies if need be.

.

Mahler is said by some to have given up his place in Vienna because his ambitions as a composer came into too frequent conflict with his duties as

and the second second

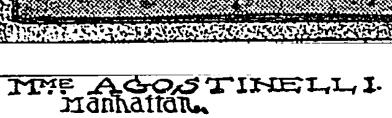








metropolitan





ALOIS BURGSTALLER.
AS TRISTAN. Metropolitares



director. He has written his elaborate orchestral work-at least the later ones -in rapid succession, and he has eagerly seized upon the occasions, more and more numerous as his fame has waxed, to conduct them with various orchestras in different parts of Europe. It is also to be said that he has made numberless enemies in Vienna, and that in his management of the Imperial Opera, an ancient institution honeycombed with privilege, and connected by numerous strings with influential personages in the court, he has set many forces at work against himself. A recent German writer's account of Mahler's work in Vienna suggests what these may have been:

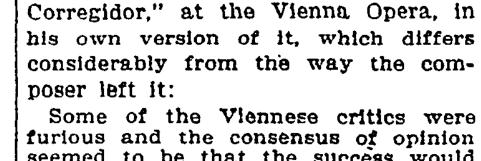
When Mahler undertook the direction of the Imperial Opera, dull routine ruled there in everything, an indifference that is indescribable. The wonderful tale was repeated with shudders that the new conductor at one rehearsal had rapped to stop the orchestra one hundred times. It was told how he had pointed out to gray-headed principals in the orchestra—of whom he had once had music lessons himself-that three notes must be played staccato, which they had overlooked; that he had interrupted the rehearsal three times again to bring out this staccato, which made them very uncomfortable. It was rumored that he had warned leading singers not to sing mezza voce at rehearsals; that he had taken parts away from prima donnas that they thought belonged to them, because they would not submit to the the second of th

new order of things; that he had systematically crowded into the background singers with "influence" and 'protection" at court, to give opportunity for better and more talented ones. It was reported that one prima donna, in despair at the inflexibility of the new director, flung herself into a hasty marriage; another singer contracted heart disease in his anger against him and died.

Mahler reformed everything; the orchestra, the company, the scenic decorations; nothing escaped his attention, the least chorus singer no more than the prima donna. He was orchestral conductor, singer, actor, stage manager, scene painter, costumer. He even reformed the ballet. The day he began this reform it was thought his fall was near at hand. People saw in their mind's eye the swarm of influential friends of the beauties of the ballet, and the storm they would raise against the director—something, it was supposed, not to be withstood. But they were mistaken about the solidity of the director's position, as well as about the faithfulness of the ballet's frlends—especially when the director began to put young and pretty dancers in the front rows.

In addition to this, Mahler is a Jew. and Vischa a chief seat of Jew-baiting, What he has suffered from this need not be related:

Another account of Mahler shows how perfectly indifferent he is to criticism that he feels is not well grounded, either underrating or overrating him. Even when abused he refuses to enter a protest. A few years ago he. for the first the second of th



produced Hugo Wolfe's opera, "Der

Don Grovanni. Manhattan

Some of the Viennese critics were furious and the consensus of opinion seemed to be that the success would have been infinitely greater had the opera been produced as written by the composer. Thereupon Mahler calmly rehearsed the original version, and after its first performance had the satisfaction that the critics admitted their mistake and asked urgently for the restitution of the Mahler arrange-

On the other hand, if he feels that criticism has weight he has been known to listen to it with a docility bordering on recklessness. Thus when he was preparing for the production of "Louise" at the Vienna Opera, he sent his stage manager and costumer to Paris to get directions and patterns for everything possible. After thorough rehearsal the composer, Gustave Charpentier, was invited to attend. This is what happened:

At the dress rehearsal Charpentierso Mahler himself says-found fault with everything, with the scenery, the costumes, and—he did not blush when he related it-" with the tempi I took!" The next morning the Vienna papers printed the alarming notice that the performance of Charpentier's "Louise" had been postponed for six weeks. Everybody surmised a controversy between the composer and the "eccentric" Mahler, but Mahler simply wanted time to rectify all mistakes. In spite of the enormous expense, he ordered new scenery, new costumes, and went with Charpentier through the score to get the composer's tempi exact. When the performance came at last, Mahler had the satisfaction that the composer praised it publicly as an ideal one, far superior

to that of the Opera Comique in Paris. Mr. Mahler's coming to New York as conductor may be expected to offer much of the same sort of absorbing interest that has been felt in the appearance here of the numerous great conductors who have made recent musical seasons notable-Weingartner, Mottl, Strauss, Colonne, Henry Wood, and the others.

RICHARD ALDRICH.

THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY. Wassily Safonoff has placed on the programme for the next two concerts of the Philharmonic Society, to be given on Friday and Saturday evenings at Carnegie Hall, the first movement of the Glazounow suite, called by the composer "Moven-Age." At the suggestion of Mr. Safonoff, Glazounow, in order to separate the prelude from the other three movements of the suite, gave it the name. "The Isle of Love." To contrast with this richly orchestrated work of a Northern composer, Mr. Safonoff has arranged for Fritz Kreisler to play the violin concerto in C major, by Vivaldi, a work characteristic of Italian composers in the eighteenth century. Both these numbers are new here. Mr. Kreisler prepared the concerto for modern use, but his aim has been to preserve the music as it came from the mind of the composer. Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony, the overture to "Der Freischütz," and Mozart's concerto in D major for violin, in which Mr. Kreisler will play his own cadenzas, complete the programme.

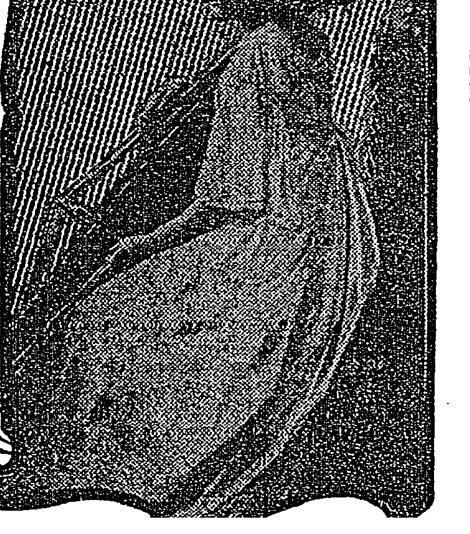
MUSICAL NOTES.

The Kneisel Quartet will give a series of five chamber music concerts under the auspices of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences in Association Hall, Brooklyn, on the evenings of Jan. 17. Feb. 6, March 12, April 9, and May 7. To-morrow evening in Association Hall a song recital will be given by Francis Rogers, baritone, and Cecilia Winter, contralto, assisted by Albert Rosenthal. 'cellist. Bruno Huhn and Norman Winter will be at the piano.

The third chamber music concert, under the auspices of the People's Symphony Auxiliary Society, will be given by the Olive Mead Quartet, assisted by Paolo Gallico, pianist, at Cooper Union Hall next Friday evening. The next concert given by the Symphony Society itself will be given in Carnegie Hall on Jan. 10. Gertrude May Stein-Bailey will be the soloist.

Victor Maurel will make his only appearance here this season in Carnegie Hall





on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 5. He will sing French songs, English songs, and a number of operatic excerpts.

Wilhelm Lamping, 'cellist, gave a concert at the Hotel Astor last Sa'urday afternoon. Alexander Rihm was at the plano.

Francis Rogers, baritone, gave a song recital at the Harvard Club last Sunday afternoon.

The Vienna Quartet, assisted by Rose O'Brien, contraito, will give its second concert at Cooper Union next Thursday

The Cornell Glee, Mandolin, and Banjo Clubs will give a concert in the ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria next Tuesday even-

The next pair of Boston Symphony concerts will be given in Carnegie Hall on Thursday evening, Jan. 9, and Saturday afternoon, Jan. 11. At the evening concert the soloist will be Mme. Teresa Carreno, and at the afternoon concert Mr. Carl Wendling, concertmaster of the orchestra, who will make his first appearance in New fork as a solo violinist. The most important item on Thursday evening's programme will be a symphony in E major by Hermann Bischoff, which has its first performances in America in Boston on Jan. 3 and 4. It is a work of huge dimensions, something in the style of Richard Strauss, and an idea of its technical difficulties may be had from the fact that Dr. Muck and the orchestra have been working at it for the past three weeks. Mme. Carreno will play MacDowell's concerto in D minor, and the other number on the evening programme will be Dvorak's "Carnival" overture. For Saturday afternoon the programme will be Händel's concerto for two wind choirs and string orchestra. Mozart's concerto for violin in A major, No. 5, and Hermann Götz's symphony in F major, No. 9.

Fritz Kreisler is spending the holidays with Mrs. Kreisler in Lakewood and will remain there until he plays with the Philharmonic Society.

Ernest Schelling, planist, will give a recital in Carnegie Hall on Tuesday evening. Feb. 14. Later in the month Mr. Schelling will play his new "Suite Fantastique" for piano and orchestra with the Boston Symphony Society in Boston. New York will hear this work at a February concert of the New York Symphony So-

Julian Isseliss, a planist from Moscow, will make his American début at the next concert of the Russian Symphony Society. Besides the third symphony of Sibelius, the orchestral novelties will include a ballet suite by Glazunow and a tone picture, "The Witch," by Liadow.

Miss Lisette Frédéric, a Roumanian violinist, appeared with Mrs. Richard Henry Savage at the Waldorf-Astoria last Friday afternoon.

Copyright © The New York Times