
Foreign Notes

By Appleton and Company



The Wagner Library

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About this Title

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Foreign Notes

Volume 1

Issue 3, April 17, 1869

[91]

Richard Wagner, the German composer, who has just finished his great operatic trilogy, "Die Nibelungen," will speedily commence writing a libretto based on one of Shakespeare's tragedies, and compose it for the Paris Grand Opera, which, he says, is bound to achieve a brilliant success, despite the failures of his "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin."

Issue 7, May 15, 1869

[219]

Richard Wagner, the great German composer, who is his own librettist, composes the texts of his operas, most of which possess considerable value as poems, with wonderful rapidity. He is said to have written the text of his famous "Tannhäuser" in less than four days. The young French writer, who translated "Tannhäuser" into French under Wagner's personal supervision, said that his energies as a worker had never been more severely taxed than when he had taken that arduous task upon himself. Wagner writes and composes, as a general thing, not less than sixteen hours daily, and his manuscript contains few or no corrections.

Volume 4

Issue 76, September 10, 1870

[318]

The King of Bavaria has purchased all the rights connected with Richard Wagner's famous trilogy of operas, Walkyre, Rheingold, and Siegfried, the last of which is not yet completed. For the copyright Wagner is to receive an annual sum of three thousand dollars.

Volume 5

Issue 112, May 20, 1871

[596]

An interesting volume on celebrated operatic composers, by Carlo Fanti, has recently been published in Milan. The author has taken pains to ascertain as accurately as possible the compensation which the leading composers of our times received for their works. According to his statements, Meyerbeer received for his compositions more than Rossini by nearly three hundred thousand francs; Bellini did not realize over sixty thousand lire for his operas; Donizetti received altogether about two hundred thousand lire, but left his family hardly money enough to pay for his funeral expenses. Gounod has realized for his "Faust" alone two hundred and twelve thousand francs up to the year 1870; and Richard Wagner received up to the same time for his "Tannhauser" about one hundred and thirty-five thousand francs. Verdi's average income since 1850 is stated at thirty-four thousand lire. Boieldieu's heirs still receive every year between seven and eight thousand francs for his "Dame Blanche."

[597]

Richard Wagner has accepted an invitation from the khédive to visit Egypt.

Issue 116, June 17, 1871

[719]

Richard Wagner received from the Emperor William, for the dedication of his "Imperial March," simply a diamond ring, and not a large sum of money, as had been previously reported.

Volume 6

Issue 119, July 8, 1871

[54]

Richard Wagner has not been appointed Musical Leader-General by the Emperor of Germany, as was reported some time ago. The official organ of the court of Berlin says, in regard to this matter, that, much as the Emperor William admires Richard Wagner's genius, he could never confer that position upon a man who, in the year 1849, fought on the barricades of Dresden against Prussian troops. Wagner, by-the-way, was overwhelmed with flattering attentions by the imperial court during his recent sojourn in Berlin.

Issue 121, July 22, 1871

[110]

The Austrian cabinet considers Richard Wagner's "Imperial March" and Abt's "Sedan March" so dangerous to the tranquillity and security of the empire, that it has forbidden their performance at public concerts.

Issue 124, August 12, 1871

[194]

The most gigantic operatic enterprise which has ever been undertaken by a musical leader, is the project which Richard Wagner, the composer of "Tannhaeuser" and "Lohengrin," is trying to carry into execution. He intends to build in the city of Baireuth, in Germany, a spacious opera-house for the sole purpose of representing there his great operatic trilogy, "The Nibelungen." The opera is divided into three parts, and it will take three days to perform them. The singers and musicians will be selected among the ablest in the large cities of Germany. They will assemble for rehearsals at Baireuth two months previous to the first representation of the trilogy. The whole expense of the enterprise is estimated at three hundred thousand dollars, which Richard Wagner proposes to raise by issuing shares of five hundred dollars each. The shareholders are entitled simply to free admission to the performances. It is believed that the various German princes will liberally assist Wagner in his undertaking, and that it will be a great success.

Issue 133, October 14, 1871

[446]

Richard Wagner is in trouble again. His wife wants to be divorced from him.

Issue 134, October 21, 1871

[474]

Liszt, the composer, has completed his long-expected oratorio, "Christ." It is not dedicated to the pope, as had been asserted by some papers, but to Richard Wagner.

Volume 7

Issue 147, January 20, 1872

[83]

Richard Wagner has succeeded in collecting half a million dollars for the purpose of having all of his operas performed at a new theatre to be constructed for the purpose, in the city of Baireuth.

Issue 150, February 10, 1872

[167]

In case Richard Wagner's singular operatic enterprise at Bayreuth should fail, he intends to visit the United States.

Issue 156, March 23, 1872

[335]

Richard Wagner's "Tannhäuser" has proved a perfect gold-mine for him. His *tantièmes* have thus far amounted to over sixty thousand dollars—ten times as much as Mozart ever received for all his operas.

Issue 157, March 30, 1872

[362]

The old city of Baireuth will become famous again in consequence of the great representations of Richard Wagner's operas, which will take place there next year at a theatre expressly constructed for the purpose. Formerly Baireuth was the seat of a gay court, and in the present century it has been most frequently mentioned in consequence of a mysterious adventure which Napoleon I. had there during the night, which he passed in 1809, at the royal palace. What that adventure was has never been ascertained. When the subject was alluded to in the emperor's presence, he manifested unmistakable symptoms of horror.

Issue 158, April 6, 1872

[391]

It is profitable nowadays to compose popular operas. Richard Wagner received lately a remittance of thirty-two thousand dollars for two years' performances of his "Meistersinger."

Issue 163, May 11, 1872

[530]

The Bavarian papers are full of amusing anecdotes about the singular eccentricities of King Louis II. Among other things, it is related that, when, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Nicolsburg, the Bavarian Prime-Minister, Von der Pfordten, hastened back to Munich, in order to inform the king of the somewhat humiliating terms which Prussia had imposed in that treaty upon Bavaria, he found the king engaged in playing one of Schiller's comedies in costume, with some of his young friends. The king received the depressing news from the lips of his minister in the costume of the middle ages. It is reported also that King Louis, in 1867, broke off his engagement with the youngest sister of the Empress Elizabeth because the princess fell asleep during the performance of one of Richard Wagner's operas. The king, however, has since then greatly changed his opinion as to the musical value of Wagner's productions, and, despite his eccentricities, he is sincerely respected by his subjects.

[531]

Richard Wagner and Gounod are the wealthiest of modern composers. Verdi has lost most of his earnings in consequence of unfortunate speculations, and Offenbach, like Alexandre Dumas, lives so extravagantly that he is comparatively poor.

Issue 164, May 18, 1872

[558]

Franz Liszt, Verdi, and probably Gounod, will be present at the great Richard Wagner festival, in Baireuth, next year. It is denied that Gounod is the inmate of a lunatic asylum near Paris, as reported some time ago by the Paris *Patrie*; but his friends admit that he is in very feeble health, owing to his depression in consequence of the misfortunes of France, and that his physicians have advised him for the next few months to abstain entirely from mental work.

Issue 167, June 8, 1872

[643]

Richard Wagner intends to repeat his Wagner festival in 1875 in the United States.

Issue 170, June 29, 1872

[727]

M. Clement, an opera-singer, died recently in Bremen, as his widow says in an obituary notice of the deceased, of over-exertion in studying his part in Richard Wagner's opera, "Der Meistersinger."

The King of Bavaria told his friend Richard Wagner that he did not intend to marry.

Volume 8

Issue 171, July 6, 1872

[27]

Richard Wagner wanted, last year, three hundred thousand dollars for his Wagner Opera-house, at Baireuth. The subscriptions amounted to upward of one million dollars.

Issue 176, August 10, 1872

[167a]

The great Richard Wagner Festival, at Baireuth, has been postponed till 1874. Financial difficulties are the cause.

Issue 177, August 17, 1872

[194a]

Richard Wagner, the German composer, must be a very sensitive man. He has libel-suits pending against nine newspaper editors.

Issue 180, September 7, 1872

[279]

Richard Wagner threatens with a libel-suit every German paper that publishes the spurious letter purporting to have been written to him by Victor Hugo.

Issue 182, September 21, 1872

[335a]

Richard Wagner, the German composer, says, in a recent card, that the "Marseillaise" is an old Italian air, and that it was played at the court of Lorenzo de Medici.

Volume 9

Issue 200, January 18, 1873

[128]

Richard Wagner's "History and Philosophy of Music" is about ready for the press. It will be published in three volumes.

Issue 205, February 22, 1873

[287]

Richard Wagner's theatre, at Baireuth, is making rapid progress, and those who have seen the building as it now appears express surprise at its truly colossal dimensions. Meanwhile, Wagner has made a professional tour through Germany, the results of which he has published in a characteristic pamphlet. He sums up his opinion concerning the present state of dramatic and operatic affairs in the Fatherland by declaring: "Every thing looks discouraging in the last degree; genius, even talents, are sadly wanting. Shallowness rules the hour everywhere. Oh, how glad the French would be if they only knew the truth about us in this respect!" To which the Paris *Figaro* maliciously replies, "We *are* glad, dear *maestro*, we *are* glad!"

Volume 10

Issue 241, November 1, 1873

[568]

AN INTERVIEW WITH VERDI.

With all the laurels won during the past thirty years, despite his arduous labors, which have kept him busy for months, nineteen or twenty hours every day out of the twenty four, the composer of "Il Trovatore" is still a young man. He is brimful of work, and he looks forward with enthusiasm to the consummation of the pet scheme he has entertained for years past, namely, a sort of musical journey round the world, a visit to all the prominent musicians of all countries, and, combined with it, representations of his principal works under his own leadership. Richard Wagner has undoubtedly instilled this project into his mind. The composer of "Tannhauser," dissimilar as his music is to Verdi's in almost every respect, is nevertheless an ardent admirer of his Italian colleague, and he wrote to him, more than six months ago, the following flattering letter:

"MY DEAR FRIEND: When I saw you last year at Florence, I conversed with you about the opera-house I intended to build at Bayreuth. You manifested the warmest interest in my schemes. Now they are in a fair way of completion, and I reiterate my invitation to you to be present at the festival, next year; and, besides, I beg to tender you the operahouse for a representation of your own works, which would be performed there, owing to the enormous dimensions of the edifice, and the facility with which eminent singers could be secured, in a style unprecedented for scenic splendor and musical effects, and worthy of your genius.

RICHARD WAGNER."

Verdi's eyes glistened with pleasure as he showed me this letter, yesterday, at the Hôtel Reichmann, in Milan. He declared emphatically that he would accept the invitation, and he urged me warmly to say in my letter to you that, in his opinion, Richard Wagner was the greatest composer of modern times.

I could not help smiling at this avowal. "Ah," I said, "so you, maestro, have become a convert to the music of the future, too?"

"Well, and what if I have?" he asked, gayly. "Do you remember the fierce quarrel between the adherents of the classical and romantic schools in your own country, forty years ago? Who cares about it now? The distinction is utterly forgotten and obliterated. All critics agreed long ago that Victor Hugo is a great poet, and Ponsard, the last of the classical school, had no warmer admirer than Saint-Beuve, the original champion of the romancists. So it is in music. too; we know no longer a music of the future. We admire everywhere what is good. If you had heard the encomiums which Richard Wagner bestowed upon the most hostile of his adversaries, Mevberbeer!—"

"Wagner is a prodigious genius," I remarked.

"Yes," said Verdi, thoughtfully, "and an enormous worker; but, notwithstanding the popular belief, I am sure he has not written half as much as Meyerbeer, nor even as much as my humble self, and he commenced sooner."

"And all you have written," I said, politely, "has been well received; while all Richard Wagner—"

"Oh, what a mistake!" said Verdi, laughing. "All I have written well received! Why, my friend, I believe I am the best hissed of composers. That I did not go mad at the outset of my career as an operatic writer is still a mystery to me."

"Your success afterward was uniform enough to console you for early mishaps," I said.

"Rossini's experience consoled me," said Verdi. "He himself, good old man, was the first

to encourage me really, when I was unable to obtain the representation of 'Ernani' at the Italian Opera, in Paris. He generously removed all obstacles from my path, and I really believe but for him I would have utterly lost heart."

M. Verdi was in a hurry. And so we parted.—*Milan Correspondence, Paris Temps.*

Volume 11

Issue 253, January 24, 1874

[116]

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD WAGNER

(Translated for the JOURNAL.)

WALKING down the quiet Main Street of the pleasant city of Baireuth, I stopped at a small, one-story cottage, and rang the door-bell.

A handsome lady appeared in response.

"Is Herr Wagner in?" I asked.

"He is at the opera-house," she answered. "Have you any message to leave?"

I answered in the negative, and she directed me where to go.

Five minutes later I was at the spot. The dimensions of this new Wagnerian opera-house are truly colossal. Imagine the three largest theatres of Berlin thrown into one, and you have an idea of the enormous edifice now in course of erection for no other purpose than to enable representations of the Wagnerian music of the future to be given in a style such as the works of no operatic composer have enjoyed.

I asked a laborer to tell me where I could find Richard Wagner.

"There he stands," he replied, pointing to a group of carpenters. All of them were in their shirt-sleeves.

One was a tall man, with black hair, swarthy complexion, and most remarkably chiseled features.

That was Wagner, the composer of "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin."

I hastened to him and said: "Herr Richard Wagner?"

He turned round to me, and, acknowledging my address, took from me the letter of introduction I presented to him.

It was from Joachim, the great violinist, his most intimate friend. He read it carefully and said, then:

"My friend Joachim writes to me that you would like to hear all about my opera-house."

"There have been rumors," I replied, "that you would abandon the whole enterprise, owing to the exhaustion of the funds collected for it."

He said, laughingly: "I know that my enemies have circulated that report. But it is groundless. Among my friends the rumor has never found any credence. They know better. They know that I never gave up any thing, no matter how great the obstacles I had to surmount. Here," he added, pointing to the unfinished edifice, "that has cost me two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I need three times that amount more. Last week I had but twelve thousand dollars in my exchequer. Yesterday I received a letter inclosing an order for three hundred thousand dollars more. You will go home with me. I will show it to you. Whom do you suppose this generous gift is from?"

I said I could not guess who the generous donor was.

"Why, his Bavarian majesty sent me that princely gift," he said, laughing.

"King Lewis?" I exclaimed, "but—"

"Ah!" he interrupted, gayly, "you think what most people believe, that the king and I are enemies. There is nothing in that report either. King Lewis II. has a head of his own, and so have I. But, if we quarrel sometimes, we still remain friends. The king gave me one hundred thousand dollars for my theatre before."

All this conversation had been carried on in the presence of several carpenters. Herr Wagner gave them some instructions, and then conducted me round the theatre as far as it was finished.

I was especially struck with the colossal dimensions of the stage.

"But this will require an immense orchestra," I exclaimed.

"No fewer than three hundred performers," said Richard Wagner, gravely. "I have written my operas for vast orchestras. 'Tannhäuser,' my first opera here, will have a band of the above number of instruments. There will be seventy-five violins, and twenty-five trombones. Then will people, for the first time, learn what I intended with the overture."

"Will not the expense be very heavy?" I asked.

"For the musicians and singers? No. I have now more applications for gratuitous coöperation from first-class singers and musicians than I can use. Joachim will lead the violins, Liszt will preside at the organ. And," he added, with glowing face, "that organ will be a superb one—more powerful and melodious than the one at Ulm, although it will not be quite so large. That organ will be a present, too," he added, gayly.

"But what will be the destination of your grand opera-house permanently?" I inquired.

"I shall present it to the nation in 1878," he replied, gravely, "on condition that every year once, for two weeks, deserving operas of young German composers be performed there in imposing style. Thus my opera-house will become a national institution in the truest sense of the word—an institution that no other civilized country can boast of; and the annual performances in it will be something like the Olympic games in ancient Greece; grand, superb festivals of art; tributes to genius which will have a sympathetic echo throughout the world."...

The *maestro's* face glowed with enthusiasm as he uttered these eloquent words.

"Let us go home," he said, after a brief pause; and we walked slowly up Main Street again.

Every now and then a citizen passed us. All of them greeted Richard Wagner with affectionate reverence. The people of Baireuth seem to understand how much lustre the great enterprise of Wagner will shed upon their humble city. They have already made him an honorary citizen of Baireuth, a distinction conferred on no one except him and Bismarck.

At Wagner's house I was introduced to his wife, a beautiful and accomplished lady, and a true helpmate to her eminent husband. She is his secretary and cashier. She showed me the above-mentioned letter from the King of Bavaria, and allowed me to copy it. It was very brief, and to the point.

"HOHENSCHWANGAU,

October

15,

1873."

opera-house. "MY DEAR WAGNER: Here are three hundred thousand dollars more for your That sum, I trust, will be sufficient."

"Lewis."

"And when will the opera-house be opened?" I asked.

"If I live," replied Wagner, solemnly, "on the 1st of May, 1875. It cannot be done before. On that occasion we shall have an audience such as has never been assembled in a theatre before. Already have I invited all well-known operatic composers, even my bitterest enemies. Nearly all of them have answered that they would be present. Of course, the kings and emperors will be here, too. It will be a grand festival for little Baireuth. Three new hotels will be built by that time."...

And thus the great man chatted on. I left him with the impression that he is the most genial, energetic, and modest of all the eminent composers I had ever met with in my long musical career.— *From the Leipzig Musical Gazette, by J. C. Lobe.*

Issue 260, March 14, 1874

[349]

A new Russian opera, "The Maid of Pleskau," by a composer bearing the highly-euphonious name of Nicolai Remsky Korssakow was produced on New-Year's eve at the Maria Theatre, St Petersburg. There has been of late years a great impulse in the direction of national opera in the land of the Muscovites, [350] and this opera is said to be one of its most peculiar and characteristic results. The musical school of the composer seems to be that of aggravated Wagnerism—the Slavonic spirit of Oriental exaggeration having been infused into the art-forms of the great German, without a retention of his essential beauties. The *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* speaks of the work as an interesting and historically-instructive dramatic performance, but as not entitled to the denomination of opera, except that it has one good solo and two or three effective choruses. Of operatic or melodic style there is no trace, even in the recitative, and, in the instrumentation, the composer is said to write in dissonances, just as others write in consonances.

One of the causes of the misunderstanding of the purpose and value of the Wagner music, has been that musicians have measured him by the ease with which his methods may be abused by weak imitators. This has come to be so much the case in Russia, that the critics of that distant region now begin to claim that Wagner stole his ideas from hints in Russian music. Poor Wagner! this is the last feather of insult to break the camel's back.

Issue 264, April 11, 1874

[463]

Prosper Mérimée and His "Inconnue"

...

In one of his letters appears a characteristic account of the first representation in Paris, at the old opera-house in the Rue le Peletier, which was destroyed by fire a few months ago, of Richard Wagner's opera "Tannhäuser." "A last *ennui*, but a colossal one, was 'Tannhäuser.' Some said the performance in Paris was one of the secret stipulations of the treaty of Villa Franca; others that Wagner had been sent to compel us to admire H. Berlioz. The fact is, it is prodigious. It seems to me that I could write something like it to-morrow by drawing inspiration from my cat walking upon the keys of a piano. The audience was a curiosity. The Princess de Metternich troubled herself terribly in order to make it appear that she understood, and to lead applause that never came. Everybody yawned, but, at the same time, everybody was anxious to seem to comprehend this enigma with words. Under Mme. de Metternich's *loge* it was remarked that the Austrians were taking their revenge for Solferino!"

Issue 272, June 6, 1874

[733]

A London journal has the following sharp bit of sarcasm on Wagner's proposed emendations of the instrumental score of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: "Our wonder is that anybody should be found to approve of 'Wagner's suggestions.' And yet, upon second thoughts, it is hardly a matter for surprise. There are said to exist even now a few believers in Joanna Southcote, who—poor, crazy soul—lies buried, with no chance of rising again to give birth to a Messiah. Cardinal Cullen's opinion that the sun goes round the world, and Parallax's belief that the earth is a plane, equally exist in the face of science. In short, no absurdity need despair of a following, especially if it be downright and unmistakably absurd. But there is little fear of serious results. By-and-by, the last of Joanna's faithful ones will die off, and Cardinal Cullen and Parallax will cease to slap the face of Common-sense. In like manner, we may hope that the egregious doctrines of Richard Wagner, with regard to the claims of a masterpiece of genius, will run a brief course, and then perish, leaving Beethoven in his unsullied glory."

Volume 12

Issue 284, August 29, 1874

[286]

Sutherland Edwards, in his recent book on "The Germans in France," tells the following pleasant anecdote of the armed propagation of the Wagner idea: "The morning after my arrival in Rouen, I was awakened by the sound of such music as under ordinary circumstances would never have been heard in France. A selection from 'Lohengrin' was being played by the band of an East Prussian regiment just in front of the hotel. Here, then, was conquest symbolized in music. Nothing but a successful invasion could have brought Richard Wagner to the native city of Boildieu; beneath whose statue the unfamiliar sounds were, at that moment, being produced. The sarcasm, however, met with very little notice from the inhabitants. Street-boys, whose curiosity and love of novelty are stronger everywhere than their patriotism, held the music-sheets for their enemies; but the adult passers-by paid no more attention to the doubtful strains than did the orchestral dog who had dragged the big drum after him, from somewhere near Königsberg, to the capital of Normandy, and who now, like a dog that had seen the world, lay down on the pavement, and calmly slept without once disturbing the general effect of the music by the unexpected *rinforzando* of a snore. It was freezing hard, and the brass instruments, pinched by the cold, were terribly hoarse. What, however, was the frost to East Prussians?—one of whom, when a shivering Frenchman complained that the thermometer marked ten degrees below freezing-point, is said to have replied: 'Ten degrees? Why, in East Prussia, at ten degrees, it thaws.'"

Volume 13

Issue 317, April 17, 1875

[505]

Wagner's latest opera, "Götterdämmerung," the closing work of the Nibelungen series, is exciting no little enthusiasm among those who have heard selections from it. Dr. Theodor Helm, the accomplished critic and musician, writes to the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, after the great Wagner Concert at Vienna: "There can be no doubt that Richard Wagner, in the 'Götterdämmerung,' has reached the summit of his creative powers, of his mastership, and geniality."

Issue 325, June 12, 1875

[762]

THE London *Musical World* admits the following bit of Philistinism to its editorial columns:

"That to which Richard Wagner objects (principally) in the works of masters hitherto recognized as 'great,' is the return to themes already heard. According to these acknowledged masters, with whose views we feel compelled [763] to agree, the absolute thing here represents 'form' in music. Can Wagner desire that chaos, moulded by the Divine will into a shape from the proportions of which all artistic labor is clearly derived, should be reimposed? We sincerely hope not; and yet otherwise how explain his criticism on the grandest of Beethoven's 'Leonora' overtures? To go on further, the return to the leading theme in the opening movement of Beethoven's 'Ninth Symphony' is one of the most superlative passages in music—nay, in *art*. A much muchness (we are tolerably aware) of Wagner's theory proceeds from Gluck; but Gluck could produce rhythmical melody when so disposed, and, being not unfrequently in that humor, gave reins to his Pegasus. The very overture to 'Iphigenia'—to which Wagner passingly alludes—goes directly, on the strength of its form alone, to the heart of the question—that is against Wagner's theory, a theory to which Beethoven, 'the immeasurably rich master,' would under no conditions have ever given acquiescence."

The logic of the writer is somewhat obscure, but his *animus* is quite manifest. The charge made against the greatest of contemporary German masters is clearly based on a very foggy understanding of his purpose and theories. Wagner's plans, so far as they look to reform in music, extend only to opera, which he claims to be a radical perversion of the true musical drama. Here "form" is sacrificed to that extent which is required by an identification of the musical with the dramatic purpose. Or, in other words, the musical form is made to concede enough to the poetical form to save the latter from being an art-monstrosity, as is the case in the majority of the old operas. So far as the "symphonic" form of music is concerned, Wagner humbly bows, as do all great composers of the past and present since the days of Beethoven, before that great genius. The former declares, in numerous passages of his writings in language of fervid eloquence, that the composer of the "Ninth Symphony" has reached a height where no human being can ever hope to follow him, and he certainly does not make the accusation against the greatest of the "Leonora" overtures which the *Musical World* writer would have as understand, or else he contradicts and stultifies some of his best-known utterances. And certainly Wagner is entitled to the credit of logical consistency with himself both as thinker and writer, if to no other merit.

As a creator of "form" in instrumental music, Wagner, though his main efforts have been in dramatic composition, is no unworthy disciple of the "immeasurably rich master." Extremely rich and brilliant in his coloring, the critic finds in the "form" of his overtures, the symmetry and finish with which they are projected and carried out, hardly less to admire than in the superb instrumental effects.

The lack of the gift of melody, which is the occasion of a casual sneer in the above extract, is a frequent charge against the composer of "Lohengrin" by his enemies, who have brought no less rancor into their assaults than that displayed by the *Italianissimi* headed by Antonio Salieri against Mozart, in Vienna, and the same tribe led by Piccini against Gluck in Paris. That our composer does not incorporate the current "hand-organ" style of melodies into his operas is not the result of want of creative power, but a consequence of his musical system. "Lohengrin" is full of exquisite melody, and even the critic of the London *Times*, a declared opponent of Wagner, who, we believe, is also the responsible editor of the *Musical World*, speaks of the rich gift of tune shown in the opera, which, had it not been held in rigid

restraint, would give to the world melodies that would be remembered to the end of time.

MR. DAVISON, the accomplished musical writer for the London *Times*, though an open opponent of the Wagner theories, is moved to strong admiration of some of the characteristic features of the opera of "Lohengrin," now performing in London. After an analysis of the story, he says: "Such, in few words, is this singularly interesting drama, in feeling so truly poetical, in simplicity of design, in purity of conception and logical symmetry of form so beautiful, that, from a certain point of view, it seems strange how Wagner the poet should also be Wagner the composer. Whatever may be said, and from whatever point of view, about the music of Wagner, and the theory on which he constructs it as a necessary element of the drama, to deny his poetical tendency even in the musical treatment of his subjects, would be absurd." Again, our critic is forced to acknowledge that "Wagner is quite competent to use to advantage the kind of musical structure which seems inherent in the art he has shown many times, not only in his earlier compositions, but in this very opera of 'Lohengrin,' in which many themes are indicated that, carried out in the spirit which suggested them, might live as melodies to the end of all time." The *Athenæum* sums up its judgment of the work in this curt sentence: "What is really good and grand in his operas is to be found where he adheres to the forms of his predecessors, and, when he departs from them, he is stilted and passionless, harsh and discordant." The critic of the *Academy* says, per contra: "I may say that never in my life have I been so overpowered with any operatic performance as that of 'Lohengrin.' And the force of the impression produced not merely or not chiefly even from the music *per se*, but from the entire combination of music, drama, action, and the *mise en scène*." So, it will be seen that Wagner's opera has produced the same extraordinary diversity of opinion in London as elsewhere. The rival company of Mr. Mapleson will soon produce the same work.