University Music Class Room,

EDINBURGH.

FOUR HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

CONCERT II.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1900.

A Melodramatic Recital, interspersed with some Violoncello Music.

Performers—

Mrs TOBIAS MATTHAY (Jessie Kennedy), - - - *Reciter.*

Mr CUTHBERT WHITEMORE, - - - - - *Pianist.*
(*Accompanist of the recitations.*)

Mr DAVID MILLAR CRAIG, - - - - - *Violoncellist.*

Mr A. SCOTT JUPP - - - - - - *Pianist.*
(*Accompanist of the violoncello music.*)

PREFACE TO THE PROGRAMME

MELODRAMA meant originally Musical Drama, either in the sense of Opera or of Spoken Drama interspersed with Music. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century the word began to be used in the specialised sense of Spoken Drama accompanied by Instrumental Music, and has since been applied to recitation of any kind accompanied by instrumental music—to long and short passages in operas and cantatas, to epic and lyrical poems, to prose tales, &c. Although, no doubt, instrumental music was thus employed in the spoken drama in earlier times, even in antiquity, Jean Jacques Rousseau has been credited with the invention of Melodrama, and it must be allowed that he originated a particular kind, the lyrico-dramatic scene, and gave the impulse to the artistic cultivation of an interesting form of mixed art, which, if previously practised, had gone out of fashion, and been forgotten. Rousseau wrote the words of his *Pygmalion* in the sixties. It is a lyric scene in prose, intended to be recited and acted in costume on a properly equipped stage, with instrumental music accompanying, not the words, but the actor's pantomime during the pauses between the words. The first performance of this work took place at Lyons in 1770, the first Paris performance in 1775 The music used on these occasions, with the exception of two pieces by Rousseau, was by Horace Coignet, a Lyons amateur. The new *genre* became at once very popular, especially in Germany. Several French and German composers followed Coignet in composing music to *Pygmalion*, and new libretti were written and set to music. The most prolific and successful of the many melodramatic composers who then arose was George Benda, musical conductor (*Capellmeister*) of the Duke of Gotha. The most famous of his melodramas, *Ariadne in Naxos*, will be performed (with two short cuts) to-night. Mozart was so delighted with this and another of Benda's works, *Medea*, that in travelling he carried the scores about with him; and conceived so high an idea of the *genre* that he occupied himself with the composition of a melodrama, *Semiramis*. What has become of it is unknown. Except in his serious operetta *Zaide*, he does not in any of his operas resort to the melodramatic treatment. The interest taken by the public in the new art form lasted about a quarter of a century. But while the cultivation of the melodrama as an independent form was of short duration, its introduction into operas and plays saved it from oblivion. To give a few instances—Beethoven in *Fidelio*, Weber in *Der*

Freischütz and *Preciosa*, Marschner in *Der Vampyr* and *Hans Heiling*, Mendelssohn in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Schumann in *Manfred*. But about the middle of the nineteenth century composers began again to cultivate the melodramatic form independently. It will suffice to mention here Schumann, Liszt, Grieg, Mackenzie, and Richard Strauss. Mackenzie cannot be named without mentioning his felicitous utilisation of the melodramatic form in his cantata *The Dream of Jubal*.

The aim of the melodramatic treatment is to emphasise what the words express, and to supply what they only imply or hint at; music being superior to speech in emotional expression, and also able to add descriptive touches. As a rule the most important part of melodramatic music is heard in the pauses of the recitation, during the speaking the music is either silent or subordinate, consisting oftenest only of a few sustained harmonies. The procedures of composers differ, however, in this respect very considerably. To show how much they sometimes differ, Massenet's opera *Manon* may be instanced, where the continuous music accompanying the purely conversational spoken dialogue is neutral with regard to expression, and serves only to bridge over the musical silences that otherwise would arise between the lyrical and dramatic portions of the work. This, however, is melodramatic treatment only in form, not in spirit.

These remarks would be incomplete without an indication of the principal defects of the *genre*—namely, that the speaking voice and the music do not blend, and that melodramatic music is a thing of formally undeveloped and unconnected patches and snatches.

In conclusion, it should yet be stated that in connection with the melodrama the terms Monodrama and Duodrama were frequently used in the olden time. In the monodrama there was only one *chief* actor, in the duodrama there were two. Thus *Pygmalion* was called a monodrama, although there was, besides Pygmalion, Galatea, who, however, had only a few words to pronounce; and *Ariadne in Naxos* was called a duodrama, although there were, besides Ariadne and Theseus, an Oread, who had little, and some Greeks, who had nothing to say.

Programme.

1. GEORG BENDA (1721-95):

Ariadne in Naxos, duodrama, the words by J. C. Brandes, after Gerstenberg's cantata *Ariadne*. (First performance in 1774.)

2. JOSEPH HAYDN:

Adagio for Violoncello from the Concerto in D major.

3. ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-56): Op. 115.

Manfred, a dramatic poem in three acts, by Byron, with music by R. S. (Composed in 1848 and 1849.)

(*a.*) Calling of the Witch of the Alps.
(*b.*) Invocation of Astarte.
(*c.*) Manfred's Address to Astarte.

4. ROBERT SCHUMANN: Op. 122.

The Fugitives, by Shelley.

5. FRANZ LISZT (1811-86):

Leonore, ballad by G. A. Bürger, translated by F. Corder.

6. EDVARD HAGERUP GRIEG (*b.* 1843): Op. 42.

Bergliot, a poem by Björnstjerne Björnson, translated by F. Corder.

["In Ancient Norway the country was split up by the feuds of various clans, and the poem deals with one of these party quarrels. Bergliot is the wife of a chieftain, Einar Tambarskelfir by name, who has gone to meet King Harald, and settle terms of peace with him in the All-Thing, or Parliament House. The discussion becomes heated, Harald murders Einar and his son Eindridi, a general stampede reveals to the wife waiting without what has happened, and after a tremendous appeal to the people for vengeance—an appeal not responded to—she relapses into stony despair, and accompanies the corpses of her dear ones home."]

7. JULIUS KLENGEL:

Two Pieces for Violoncello.

(*a.*) Intermezzo.
(*b.*) Mazurka.

8. RICHARD STRAUSS (*b.* 1864): Op. 38.

Enoch Arden, by Tennyson, Part II.

9. A. C. MACKENZIE (*b.* 1847):

Queen Mab, by T. Hood.

Jabberwocky, by L. Carroll.

DATES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE FOUR HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

November 14 (*Wednesday*).—Early Symphonies by Haydn, and Predecessors and Contemporaries of Haydn: Sammartini, Stamitz, Van Maldere, Gossec, and Haydn. Songs sung by Madame MAHLER, accompanied by Mr A. SCOTT JUPP.

December 19 (*Wednesday*).—A Recital of Melodramatic Music (interspersed with some violoncello music).—Performers: Mrs TOBIAS MATTHAY [Jessie Kennedy] (reciter); Mr CUTHBERT WHITEMORE (pianist, accompanist of the recitations); Mr DAVID MILLAR CRAIG (violoncellist); and Mr A. SCOTT JUPP (pianist, accompanist of the violoncello music).

February 14, 1901 (Thursday).—Early Symphonies by Haydn, and Predecessors and Contemporaries of Haydn.

March 13 (*Wednesday*).—A Recital of Pianoforte Compositions by Brahms.—Miss FANNY DAVIES (pianist).

FREDERICK NIECKS,
Reid Professor of Music.