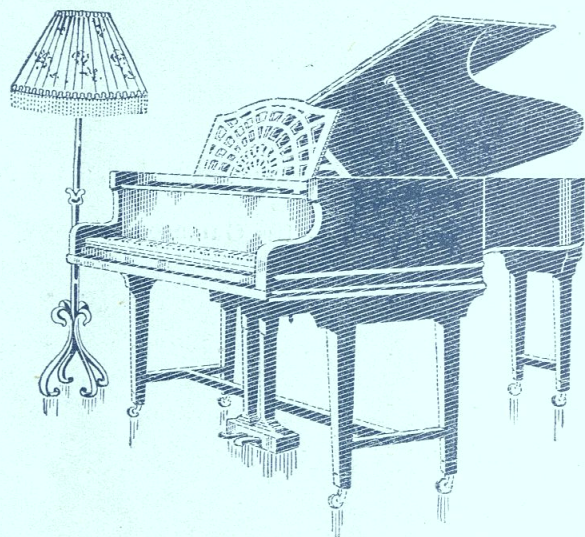


The
Best of Everything
in Music

PIANOS

by
Leading
British
Makers



UPRIGHT
BABY
and
BOUDOIR
GRANDS

The Largest Selection of
"H.M.V." and COLUMBIA
GRAMOPHONES AND RECORDS
PORTABLE and CABINET MODELS

PATERSON, SONS & CO. LTD.

27 GEORGE STREET

Telephone
Central 97

EDINBURGH

Telegraph
MUSIC, EDINBURGH

AND AT

Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, and London

THE REID
ORCHESTRAL
CONCERTS
THIRD SEASON



SIXTH CONCERT
SATURDAY, 10th MAY 1919

PROGRAMME
WITH NOTES BY D. F. T.
PRICE ONE SHILLING

University of Edinburgh.



REID ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

THIRD SEASON

SIXTH CONCERT

IN

THE MEWAN HALL,

ON

SATURDAY, 10TH MAY 1919

at Three o'clock

Conductor

PROFESSOR DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY

Solo Pianist—MISS MARY G. GRIERSON, Mus. B. Edin.

Concert under the direction of
PATERSON, SONS & CO. LTD., 27 George Street, Edinburgh

PROGRAMME

1. SYMPHONY, No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98 - - - - *Brahms*
2. CONCERTO in A major - - - - - *D. F. Tovey*
 Pianoforte—Miss MARY G. GRIERSON, Mus. B. Edin.
3. PRELUDE in E major - - - - - }
 MAZURKAS in A flat, Op. 41, No. 4, and C sharp minor, Op. 30, }
 No. 4 - - - - - } *Chopin*
 ROMANCE from Concerto in E minor, Op. 11, for Pianoforte }
 and Orchestra - - - - - }
- Miss MARY G. GRIERSON, Mus. B. Edin.
4. OVERTURE to "Euryanthe" - - - - - *Weber*

STEINWAY CONCERT GRAND PIANOFORTE.

NOTES BY D. F. T.

- I. SYMPHONY NO. 4, in E minor, Op. 98 - - - - *Brahms*
- Allegro non troppo. Allegro giocoso.
 Andante moderato. Allegro energico e passionato.

This Symphony is one of the rarest things in classical music, a symphony which ends tragically. In drama a tragedy tells a story which a happy ending would weaken and falsify: in the music of the sonata forms this is not so: in so far as the first movement maintains a tragic note it may be said to tell its tragic story from beginning to end, and the other movements are free to provide the most refreshing emotional reactions from it. Brahms, in his Fourth Symphony and a few other great sonata-works (notably the Pianoforte Quintet and the Third Pianoforte Quartet), has done what Beethoven did only three times in all his works; he has given us a tragic finale. This finale is unique in form among all symphonic movements, and, as we shall see when we come to it, the form is by no means the scholastic display which contemporary criticism has imagined it to be, but a very powerful expression of a great dramatic truth. The first movement acts its tragedy with unsurpassable variety of expression and power of climax. The slow movement, heroic though in pastoral style and ballad measures, has also an eventful tale to tell. The third movement, in the place of a Scherzo, has all the features of such a blend of sonata-form and rondo as is common in finales; yet with all its bacchanalian energy it is evidently no finale; it is not in the main key, and its extreme terseness, while increasing its energy, destroys what finality it might otherwise have had. After three movements so full of dramatic incident, what finale is possible? And how will the tragic note regain the domination after the triumph of the third movement?

The very reason why the finale of Brahms's Fourth Symphony was such a stumbling-block to contemporary critics answers these questions. It is a *passacaglia*; that is to say, a set of variations in moderately slow triple time on a theme, or ground, consisting of a single 8-bar phrase. As this is one of the most ancient of musical forms and, as such, is taught to young students at school, popular criticism assumes that, like the Ablative Absolute, it must be something extremely learned and difficult. Common sense would rather indicate that an ancient form that can be taught in schools must be something simple enough for primitive artists to produce and clear enough for schoolboys to understand. Brahms chose the form of Variations on a Ground for this finale, because dramatic activity (always on the ebb in finales, alike in drama

and music, no matter what surprises effect the *dénouement*) was fully exploited in the other three movements; so that he desired a finale that was free to express tragic emotion without being encumbered by the logical and chronological necessities of the more dramatic sonata-forms. The climax of the first movement is as great as ten minutes of crowded drama could make it; but the full tide of emotion that it implies can only be revealed in a finale in which the attention is directed to little else but emotional contrasts and climaxes. All successful sonata-finales, whether tragic or not, gain their emotional freedom by some simplification of this kind; and Brahms's ground-bass ranks with Beethoven's fugues as an extreme case of a law that can already be clearly seen in the looseness of phrasing and development which distinguishes even a sonata-form finale from a first movement. (See, for example, the finales of Beethoven's *Sonata Appassionata*, and the 4th, 5th, and 7th symphonies).

From the large procession of themes on which Brahms's first movement is organised I make three quotations, marking, as always, with letters and brackets those "figures" which are built up into fresh ideas in later developments.

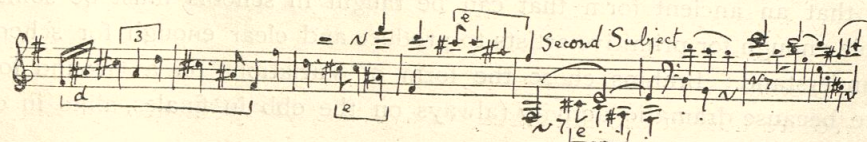
No one experienced in great music could fail to see that the long, quiet opening sentence is the beginning of a great and tragic work.

No. 1—



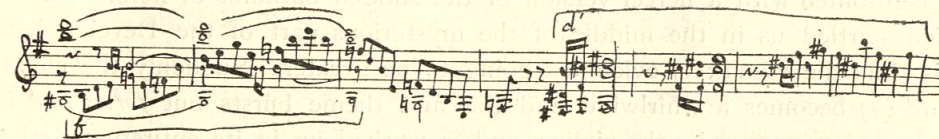
Its close is overlapped by a counter-statement in which the first phrase is divided antiphonally between the violins, the echo of the wood-wind is transferred to the basses (in another part of the scale), and the wood-wind weave a beautiful tissue of new polyphony. At the ninth bar of this counter-statement (with the entry of figure (b)) the harmony takes a new direction and moves towards the dominant, B minor, where, after a climax, an impassioned transition theme appears. This I do not quote, except for the spirited triplet figure (a) which ends it and (as will be seen) plunges into the broad violoncello melody that begins the Second Subject.

No. 2—



The sequel rises through heroism (figure (d)) to radiant happiness in a procession of themes which economy forbids me to quote. Then comes a cloud of mystery—

No. 3—



from which the triplet theme (d) emerges triumphant, and works up the Exposition of this movement to a triumphant climax, the final glory of which is its unexpected sweet and gentle close that leads back to E minor and the first theme (No. 1).

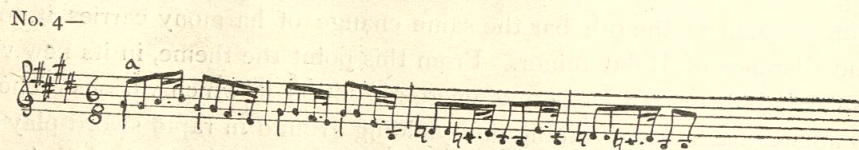
With this resumption of the first theme the Development begins. As in the first counter-statement of Ex. 1, so here the 9th bar sees a change in the trend of the harmony, and we are moved to a more remote key. Figure (b) becomes more agitated, and forms the accompaniment to a new variation of the theme in G minor. Again at the 9th bar the same change of harmony carries it to the extreme distance of B flat minor. From this point the theme, in its new variation, is carried through a passage of energetic action in which various orchestral groups answer each other, gaining and yielding ground in rapid sword-play until a close is about to be reached in the very key in which the Exposition had ended. Here, however, the theme of figure (d) (from No. 2) intervenes, no longer with its original bold spirit, but in hushed mystery. Then, through the solemn clouds of No. 3 (figure (e)) the wood-wind utter plaintive fragments of the first theme (a) and its variation, rising through distant keys in slow chromatic steps, till we reach the very threshold of our tonic. And here again the theme of figure (d) appears mysteriously. But it suddenly-blazes into passion, and, plunging again into distant keys, leads to a solemnly heroic close in G sharp minor. (This close, and the fierce passage that leads to it, will be heard again at the catastrophe of the tragedy.)

Now follows a new and very rich variation of the first theme. As usual the 9th bar, with figure (b), brings a change of harmony, and the figure is passed from voice to voice in a series of wistful modulations, drifting steadily towards the tonic, E minor, in a long *decrescendo*. At last, in slow and solemn semibreves we hear the first notes of No. 1. The great cloud-figure of No. 3 (e) separates the first two steps of the theme, with all the majesty of the Norns prophesying the Twilight of the Gods. The rest of the theme is taken up from its fifth bar as if nothing had happened.

We are now in the full swing of a perfectly regular Recapitulation. A

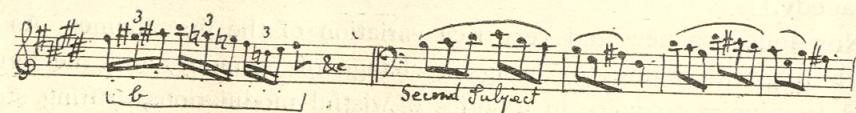
slight change of harmony brings the impassioned transition theme (ending with No. 2) into the tonic, and the whole Second Subject with its radiant procession of themes follows in due course. Only when we approach the triumphant close there is a sudden catastrophic change of harmony, and we are confronted with a fiercer version of the sudden outburst of heroic passion which startled us in the middle of the mysterious part of the Development. This time the climax is evidently going to be greater. Suddenly the cloud-figure (*a*) becomes a whirlwind and the first theme bursts out *fortissimo* in the basses, answered by the violins, and is worked up in its entirety, together with the transition-theme (the unquoted part) and the whirlwind-figure, into a peroration which, from its inception to its final grim "Amen" bears comparison with the greatest climaxes in classical music, not even excluding Beethoven. And Brahms does not even use trombones for it.

With a heroic call from the horns in a unison which suggests C major while emphasising the tonic note, the Andante lifts us from the world of our tragedy to some ancestral region of legend, the unforgotten source of the hero's pride. The long and straightforward tune which begins with No. 4—



is scored with delicious varieties of the blending of sustained tone with the *pizzicato* of strings. For all its ballad-like simplicity there are signs of drama in its structure, and we are not surprised when the strings take up the bow with the clear intention of breaking away from rigid stanzas and leading into the larger flow of a developed sonata-movement. Soon the dominant is reached; and an energetic triplet figure prepares the way for the Second Subject which, as Ex. 5 shows, builds its broad melody on an "augmentation" of it.

No. 5—

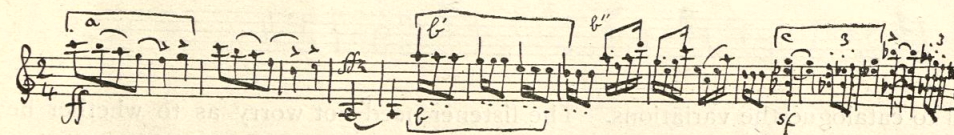


The continuation seems as if it was going to lead to a crowd of accessory themes, but it very soon shows signs of drifting back to the tonic. The drift is slow and its apparent indecision leads to one of the most beautiful modulations Brahms or any man ever wrote. By this modulation the main theme is brought back in the tonic, with gorgeous new scoring. At the point where it showed signs of dramatic freedom there now arises an energetic passage

of polyphonic development. This leads to a powerful climax with the triplet figure of Ex. 5: which subsides quite suddenly, and then the Second Subject sails grandly in, with great and sumptuous harmony of divided strings. It is being repeated in soaring triumph, when suddenly it melts into tenderness; a shadow comes over the harmony, and wistful questions from the clarinet and oboe bring back the close of the first theme with an added sweetness. On its last note the horns burst out with their opening call, and the conflict between the keys of C and E which we suspected at the outset now appears in full harmony as that solemn splendour which Palestrina would have recognised as the Phrygian Mode which he uses where doubts and fears are given full expression in order to be convicted of ignorance by the voice from the whirlwind (e.g. the Motet and Mass *O magnum mysterium*.)

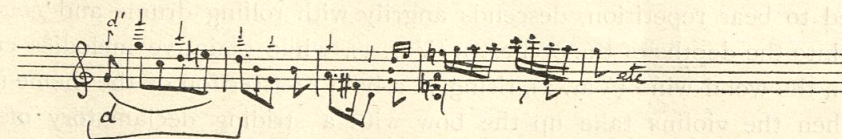
Within six or seven minutes Brahms's third movement, perhaps the greatest scherzo since Beethoven, accomplishes a form which you may call either a sonata-rondo or a first movement, according to the importance you give to the fact that the first six bars of its main theme—

No. 6—



return just between the short Second Subject—

No. 7—



and the quite fully organised and widely modulating development. The shortness of the whole movement used to blind critics to its bigness of design; and at one time people thought it clever to say that the Second Subject (Ex. 7) was too slight, a criticism which would have condemned nearly every Second Subject in Beethoven's biggest Rondos and Sonata-form finales, as, no doubt, in Beethoven's day it did. A slender childish figure for a Second Subject is of the very essence of this phase of Brahms's drama; and nothing can be more quaintly original (or, in the sequel, more productive of powerful results) than the way in which the counterstatement of this innocent tune is reduced to a *staccato* outline, as indicated by the small notes in Ex. 7.

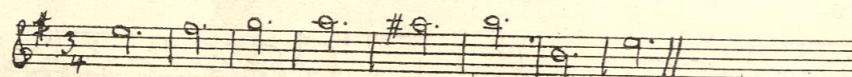
What it throws into higher relief is the tiger-like energy and spring of the whole movement. Some idea of the terseness and swiftness of the action may

be gained by noting that my first quotation (Ex. 6) contains three complete and sharply contrasted themes. All three have important variations, one of which I have tried to indicate by extra tails, while the others I have not space to quote. The third (*c*), with its abrupt plunge into E flat, produces perhaps the two most powerful strokes in the movement; firstly by means of the fact that the anxious, mysterious, questioning close of the Development is answered by it and not by the first theme, as the beginning of the Recapitulation; and secondly by its triumphant final outburst on the trumpets, for the first and only time, in the tonic, C major, at the end.

A piccolo, a contrafagotto and a triangle contribute with grotesque poetic aptness to the bacchanalian fury of this movement.

So far, then, this symphony has shown us life and action. These are what its heroism fights for; but the hero is not fighting for his own happiness. He is to die fighting. After what I have said as to the meaning of Brahms's choice of the *passacaglia* form, little remains but to give the theme—

No. 8—



and to catalogue the variations. The listener need not worry as to whether he can trace the theme in the variations. If and where he can, that is well, but beauty is skin deep, though it does need bones to keep it in shape.

The theme, stated, with trombones, in harmonies too remarkable to be intended to bear repetition, descends angrily with rolling drums and *pizzicato* chords into the depths of the orchestra (Var. 1), while plaintive melodies crowd above in the wood-wind (Var. 2), rising to a bold re-assertion of the theme (Var. 3). Then the violins take up the bow with a striding declamatory melody (Var. 4, theme in bass), which becomes more flowing and is agitated by a lively cross-rhythm in the wood-wind (Vars. 5 and 6). A sharply rhythmic variation follows (Var. 7), and leads to a pair of stormy variations in semiquavers and triplet semiquavers (Vars. 8 and 9). Plaintively the storm subsides into a pathetic dialogue of beautiful sustained harmonies between the violas and the wood-wind (Var. 10). The same harmonies underlie the April sunshine of the next variation (11), and then the time changes to 3/2, twice as slow—which with triple time always produces a momentary sense of cross-rhythm.

Now we have perhaps the most pathetic flute passage since Gluck's wonderful *adagio* in the Elysian scene of *Orfeo* (Var. 12). The theme, which had been in the bass since Var. 4, is now in the outlines of the melody and the inner parts of the harmony. (I mention this merely as a safeguard against the temptation some listeners feel to hunt for it.) With the next variation (13) the major

mode quietly appears, in a pathetic dialogue between clarinet, oboe and flute. The cadence of this is reproduced in the two next variations (14, 15), which bring the trombones forward with the most touching and solemn passage in the whole symphony. When this has died wistfully away on an inconclusive chord, the original theme sternly reappears in the wind-band, to be fiercely cut across by the indignant strings (Var. 16). Then there is a dramatically agitated variation (17) followed by a sonorously determined one (18), which leads to a pair of *staccato* variations increasing in energy and movement (19, 20). The next (Var. 21) is the most volcanic outburst in the whole symphony. Suddenly it gives way to a panic-struck and hushed *staccato* in which Var. 22 hurries by. With Var. 23 the *staccato* triplets recover courage and strength, working easily up to a climax. This climax is of powerful and unexpected effect, for it gives a sense of big design to the whole movement by making the next two variations (24, 25) reproduce in a blazing *fortissimo* the substance of the first two, while the 26th variation gives in an awestruck *piano* what the third variation had given boldly. Now two specially graceful variations (27, 28), relieve the tension. Then in the next variation (29) we notice a quiet series of falling thirds which may remind some listeners of the theme of the first movement. I doubt, however, whether this was Brahms's intention, and the doubt does not worry me. At all events this sequence of thirds, taken up energetically in the 30th and last regular variation, seems dramatically to set the Ground-bass reeling and staggering to its end, for the rhythm expands and there is an ominous *ritardando*. Then the theme bursts out with new harmonies in quicker time. Hesitating at the fifth bar, the Ground-theme suddenly finds that its second half (bars 5-8) is capable of executing a grand series of modulations (very apposite after all this confinement to one key) if the bass imitates the treble at two bars' distance a semitone higher. With this resource, a compressed version of the Ground in crotchets, and a pathetic new derivative therefrom, one of the greatest orchestral works since Beethoven storms to its tragic close.

2. CONCERTO in A major - - - - - D. F. Tovey

Pianoforte—MISS MARY G. GRIERSON, Mus. B. Edin.

FIRST MOVEMENT.

Nos. 1-8.—RITORNELLO.

1. *Pianoforte.* (a)

Wind. (b) &c.

Orchestra. (d)

2. *f* (c)

(e)

3. *f* (f) Rhythmic figure. &c.

4. (g)

5. (h)

6. (i)

(a)

7. *cres.* *ff* &c.

8. *ff*

Nos. 9-11.—FIRST SOLO.

9. (a) diminished (a) (Compare Ex. 1.)

10. &c.

11.

The pianoforte then proceeds to the First Subject, No. 1. Transition, No. 2 in new position, No. 3 in 9/8 time and new keys. *Second Subject*: No. 4 expanded, in E major; No. 5 much developed, leading to Nos. 6 and 7 stormily in C sharp minor. *Development*: Orchestra bursts out with end of No. 7, continues with 8 and works out the solo themes 9 and 10. Pianoforte enters when things are quiet, and works out Nos. 10 and 11 in close imitative sequences, *crescendo*: modulating widely till the drums enter with the rhythm (*f*)— on the tonic A, while the strings work up (b) *pizzicato* and *crescendo*. At the climax the *Recapitulation* begins with the main theme No. 1 in the bass. It follows the first solo closely in A and F sharp minor. The *Coda* is formed on

the lines of the opening Tutti, beginning with No. 3 in E so as to lead to No. 4 in C, and Nos. 5 and 6 and 7 (the last not in entirety) in the tonic, A. The movement ends with Nos. 11, 1, and the rhythmic figure (*f*).

SLOW MOVEMENT.

12. Main Theme. Dialogue between Solo and Strings.

13. Modulating Episodes.

14.

15.

No. 12 returns, and the movement ends with an allusion to Nos. 13 and 14.

FINALE.

16. First Theme. *Alla marcia*.

17. Alternative.

18. Orchestral Fugato.

19. Transition Theme. &c.

20. Second Subject.

This modulates to C and thence to dominant of D, and brings back the main (Rondo) themes, (Nos. 16 and 17).

21. Central Episode.

22. (Compare 16.) &c.

After considerable development this leads back to No. 19 in tonic followed by a regular recapitulation of the Second Subject. After this the First with all its accessories (16-18) returns, the fugato being taken up in a pianoforte cadenza and combined with Nos. 20 and 22. Then a *Coda, Presto, 6/8* time, ends the Concerto with varied developments of Nos. 16 and 18.

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|----------|
| 3. PRELUDE in E major | - | - | - | - | } Chopin |
| MAZURKAS in A flat, Op. 41, No. 4, and C sharp minor, | - | - | - | - | |
| Op. 30, No. 4 | - | - | - | - | |
| ROMANCE from Concerto in E minor, Op. 11, for Pianoforte and Orchestra | - | - | - | - | |

MISS MARY G. GRIERSON, Mus. B. Edin.

The unity of a sonata or symphony is inviolable; all the more because it is so easily broken up. But there are cases where this unity is an illusion, and the detached movements of a work may show a perfection which is ruined by fatal flaws in the construction of the larger whole. The arias of Handel's operas are a conspicuous example; it is the aria itself that is an important art-form, and Handelian opera as a whole represents nothing more than a bad habit of dressing up the singers expensively and putting them on a pantomime stage to please an eighteenth-century public that would not listen to music for music's sake. The slow movement of Chopin's E minor Concerto is a remarkable case of another kind. Every pianist who works at that Concerto as a whole becomes almost as fond of it as Chopin himself; yet it is no exaggeration to say that you will never know what a masterpiece the slow movement is until you have heard it set free from its context. The first movement strangles a wealth of beautiful ideas in the most suicidal design ever found in the history of music; the finale is the most charming of Chopin's rondos; but the rondo is of all classical forms the one he handled most voluminously and understood least. Both these huge movements are so designed as to make the tonic major key an obsession so persistent that when, far too late in the day, modulations are carried out, neither the composer nor the listener can manage to believe in them. And the slow movement, with its own perfect key-system, is in this same tonic major! Let us hear what it sounds like after a suitable group of Chopin's wonderful

mazurkas; after a tragic close in C sharp minor, let the orchestra steal in with its introduction in the mood of Agatha's prayer by moonlight in *Der Freischütz*; and let us have no brilliant rondo to take away the impression of the final return of the childlike main theme below a filmy glory of ornamentation by the pianoforte. We will also leave Chopin's orchestration alone; for the purposes of this slow movement it is very near the mark indeed. In bigger movements it is notoriously thin, but a careful study of Klindworth's masterly (or masterful) re-scoring does not convince me that the remedy is to make it thick. At all events in this Romance Chopin knew exactly what he wanted to do with his orchestra; and standard treatises on instrumentation contain many an illustration less happy than his simple entries for bassoon and for horns at the dramatic points of the design.

4. OVERTURE to "Euryanthe"

Weber

Weber was consumptive from his birth, and he had no time to lose, and no disposition to lose it. Throughout his thirty years of life his time was lost for him by fools and humbugs. His master, Abt Vogler, to whom he always remained loyal, was one of the most devastating of musical humbugs; he has been described for all time, not by Browning's poem (to which Browning gave the wrong name on purpose), but by that great classical scholar, Otto John, who, in his *Life of Mozart*, characterises Vogler as one of those musical philosophers who disguise their lack of solid musical schooling in a vast ostentation of general culture. Vogler's other great pupil was Meyerbeer. It is a pity the two pupils did not exchange their physical constitutions.

Euryanthe is both a more mature work of art and a more advanced development of Wagnerian music-drama than *Lohengrin*, though it is a generation earlier. No one who knows *Euryanthe* thoroughly will consider this an extravagant statement: there are fully a dozen well-developed *leit-motifs* waiting for the Wagnerian label-sticker; and the division into set numbers (arias, quartets, et cetera) is an illusory survival which could just as easily be foisted upon *Lohengrin*, or even upon *Meistersinger*. While there is nothing quite so sublime in *Euryanthe* as the *Prelude* and the Grail-themes of *Lohengrin*, Weber remains throughout *Euryanthe* on a level from which he is both morally and technically incapable of sinking as Wagner often sinks in *Lohengrin*. The whole work is of such a quality that a single glance at an unknown fragment of it would convince you that here is the style of a great man; and there is no form of dramatic music—not even the finale, where *Freischütz* itself shows weakness—which is not here handled with freedom and power.

Why, then, is this tremendous work so seldom heard? Has *Lohengrin*, in

pique at Elsa's want of faith, meanly revenged himself by stealing Euryanthe's birthright?

Ask poor Weber what he thought of Frau von Chezy after he had got "old Chez" to remodel her libretto for the ninth time. Ask him how he came to call his beautiful and virtuous heroine Ennuyante.

He was not the only composer "Old Chez" took in. Schubert was another victim; but his *Rosamunde* was only incidental music to a play; and, the play being lost, we do not know what it was about, except that she was Queen of Cyprus. It is, however, pretty clear to a musician, where the poetasteress's power lay. She had fluent and typical words and images for all moods, and a good sense of contrast. These properties might readily induce a composer to commit himself long before he had time to grumble that her style consisted mainly of indications of the places where style ought to be. This does not often worry a composer whose own style is enough for him. The trouble comes when a great composer like Weber awakens to the fact that he is devoting the magnificent commonsense of his highest structural power to a drama in which the emotions and contrasts, admirably adapted for music in themselves, are associated with events as crazy as the logic of dreams. The beautiful and virtuous Euryanthe is made to appear faithless to her Adolar by means of the treachery of her confidante Eglantine and the villain Lysiart. It is not injured innocence nor any lofty scruple nor tragic ignorance that prevents her from saying the very first thing a rational being would naturally say when first put into her position; it is simply that if she said it the whole story would collapse, and all poor old Chez's verses and all her puppets could not put it together again. For three whole acts all the situations are of this type: there are no other Gilbertian qualities. Among the most troublesome features of the whole affair is that everything seems to depend on the unseen ghosts of Emma and Udo, two ancestors whose exact relation to Adolar a mere Southron cannot even in these genealogical latitudes undertake to describe. But, anyhow, long ago they committed suicide; and Euryanthe, who had to live in a garden adjoining Adolar's family vault, told the dread secret to Eglantine, who told Lysiart, who told Adolar, who saw at once that this proved that Lysiart had won his wager against Euryanthe's truth. Weber did his best for these poor ghosts, and very shrewdly drew public attention to them by bringing the music of their story into the overture and demanding that the curtain should be raised for a few moments at that point to show Adolar's family tomb.

Such, then, is the stuff to which Weber devoted the greatest of all his works. I am not without hope that some day the right story may be found for his music; but many attempts to improve the libretto have failed through lack of appreciation of Weber's sense of form. It is no use improving the play if you think Weber's huge musical design does not matter.

