

EDITORIAL BRIC-A-BRAC

On the 6th of December, 1900, Mr. Leopold Godowsky gave a concert in the Beethoven hall in Berlin, assisted by the Philharmonic Orchestra. He played the Brahms Concerto in D minor, the same as here last year, and closed with the Tschai-kowsky Concerto in B flat minor, which he played with the Thomas Orchestra four years ago. Between these important selections he gave a group of seven of his own paraphrases of Chopin studies and the "Invitation to the Dance," his arrangement of the latter being far more elaborate than that of Tausig. The object of this concert was to show his hand and to try whether the over-experienced Berlin musical public would find anything in his playing to enjoy. At the time of the concert he had been in Berlin some months, and, according to his usual custom, had been in frequent association with all the leading pianists and many amateurs, and had played a good deal in private. Pachmann and Rosenthal had already given intimations of Mr. Godowsky's remarkable gifts, and the published studies had been examined there and given up as unplayable, but not the less admired for their cleverness and novelty no less than for the subtle difficulties which abound in them. The consequence of this was a great deal of interest in advance, and when the concert came there was a crowded house, all the Berlin pianists being present and all the critics. From all accounts this must have been one of those occasions such as few musicians see many times in their life. The greeting was very warm to begin with, and the first movement of the concerto by Brahms entirely gained the audience, saving a few critics whose idea of the work had been formed by hearing Brahms play it himself, and in his peculiarly brutal way, which for many passes for breadth. Needless to say that in M. Godowsky's interpretation there is no brutality, but in place

of it all, the poetic suggestions of Brahms are made the most of. At the end of the concerto an ovation and many, many recalls.

Then came the group of his own works. They were these:

Study in A minor, Op. 25, No. 5, for left hand alone.

Op. 10, No. 11, and Op. 25, No. 3, united in one, in 1.

Op. 25, No. 8, Sixths for left hand.

Op. 10, No. 9, in C sharp minor.

Op. 25, No. 5, in E minor, paraphrased as a mazurka in C sharp.

Op. 10, No. 5, and Op. 25, No. 6, in one ("Badinage").

Op. 10, No. 7, in G flat, for left hand in the toccata motion.

"Invitation to the Dance."

Those who have examined the first of these studies (Schirmer) will remember that while Chopin in writing it for the right hand does not bring in his melody until the chords are well established; Godowsky starts the left hand out alone with the melody from the beginning, and when he arrives at the place where Chopin begins the melody he starts an eighth note motion, and this later on accelerates to a triplet motion, so that the handling of voices is far more difficult than in the original, despite the fact that the paraphrases is here working with the left hand alone. Then the next study (as yet unpublished) combines that arpeggio study in No. 11 of the opus 10 with the arpeggiatura study, Op. 25, No. 3, the left hand having the melody and spread chords of the arpeggio study. This combination, while of incredible difficulty, and requiring marvelous lightness and delicacy of the left hand, is a very beautiful work. The next study has the sixths for the left hand and a new cantilena above it. (Published.)

These original works of the concert-giver made a wonderful sensation. Every one was the occasion for a new ovation, and at the end the astonishment of the hearers and their enthusiasm was of the kind which is never awakened except in the playing of the most phenomenal artists. The Tschai-kowsky concerto made a brilliant ending for a fine program, but later Mr. Godowsky played the Scherzo from the Saint-Saens Concerto in G minor, and still later his first arrangement of the Chopin black key study. After the music had ceased and the artist had been called back innumerable times,

there was a grand crush to get at him in the green room. Next day he found himself famous in Berlin. The criticisms came in leisurely during the next ensuing week. Out of some twenty-six papers which commented, all but two recognized the artist as a virtuoso of most phenomenal powers and a musician and artist of the first order. Engagements were immediately made for next season in Brussels by Ysaye, who happened to be in Berlin, and by Marteau in Geneva. Mr. Godowsky was obliged to decline, a few days later, a most flattering and remunerative engagement from Warsaw, on account of his American passports not having been properly vised for travel in Russia. In the advertising pages of this issue will be found the press notices in full, so far as received at this office. The showing is truly remarkable. Dr. Schmidt, who was one of the two writing unfavorable notices, apologized in person to the artist two days later, saying that the freedom with which Mr. Godowsky had treated a standard German tone-poem, the "Invitation to the Dance," had offended him so much that he quite lost his temper, for which he was truly sorry. This is one of those things more likely to happen to Godowsky than to almost any other artist, he is so amiable and agreeable in his personality and so entirely without jealousy or ill will towards other artists, or even to critics who differ from his ideas.

The success was so pronounced that many applications were made for other recitals, and on January 16 the following program was played in the same hall:

Schumann: Etudes Symphoniques.

Godowsky: Courante.

Valse Idylle.

Moto Perpetuo.

Liszt: Eclogue.

At the Spring.

Concert Study in F minor.

Waldesrauchen.

Chopin: Sonata in B minor. Op. 58.

Chopin—Godowsky Paraphrases:

Op. 10, No. 1, in C major.

Op. 10, No. 2, Irrlichter.

Op. 10, No. 10, Tarantelle.

Op. 10, No. 5, in A major.

Op. 10, No. 8, in F major.

Op. 25, No. 4, Polonaise.

Op. 25, No. 2, Valse.

Op. 25, No. 11, in A minor.

This program is liable to be mistaken for a virtuoso work, but it will be safe to promise the hearers something quite as novel in the most familiar works upon it as in the astounding virtuosity of the first and last studies, the great one from Op. 10, in F major, and the evasive "Fire Fly" study based upon Op. 10, No. 2, the left thumb and second finger having the chromatic scale, the lower fingers dropping in the chord notes, all this in 4-4 motion of sixteenths; over this Godowsky runs a 12-8 Scherzo, a lovely and fascinating creation, the poor left hand gaining no more glory for all its pains than an orchestral second clarinet or second oboe in Richard Strauss.

Next season Mr. Godowsky will concertize in Europe entirely. He remains American at heart, but having looked forward to establishing himself in Europe among the pianists of the very first order, he naturally feels excited that it has happened so suddenly and so completely. He is also kind enough to remember that the first important criticisms he received speaking of his art as that of a world-artist in the fullest sense were printed in *MUSIC*. And the editor of *MUSIC* is proud that he had the privilege. Also thankful for four years' education in the higher art of piano playing.

There are still other developments which ought to happen to this great artist: The first is to somehow come at the routine of conducting, for if symphonies and tone-poems could be treated with orchestra as he treats them upon the piano-forte, something entirely new and beautiful would open in orchestral concerts, things vastly more epoch-marking than the symphonic readings of Buelow, for Godowsky has more innate musical insight than Buelow. The other is for his writing to go on to the production of novel creations out of entirely whole cloth, and not necessarily from a virtuoso standpoint. All this also will come.

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Mr. Clarence Eddy opened a new organ in the first Methodist Church in Evanston, Ill., January 1. The organ is a large