

NOV.
1915

a harmony such as the present writer has never heard equaled in any other quartette. The Brodsky quartette in New York was more commanding and (not to say it disrespectfully) more virile. But this was due to the virtuoso artist at its head—a violinist of wholly exceptional rank as artist, Mr. Brodsky himself. The Kneisel Quartette fulfills what is almost universally recognized as the ideal of this sort of music, in the perfect equality of the voices, the true artistic feeling of all the players, and the patience to bring the entire work up to a standard of equal finish. Having these good qualities, it has what might still be lacking, namely, a refined musical and artistic feeling, which pervades and illumines everything that they play. Hence while there may not be any moment which stirs the unaccustomed hearer as the Brodsky quartette sometimes did, the entire performance is of such even and sustained quality as to bring a feeling of restfulness and enjoyment. It is rapture of pure contemplation, which Hegel and Schopenhauer make so much of in art.

The Beethoven quartette is one of his second period, written in the year 1809, and belonging to the same period as the pianoforte sonata, opus 81, "The Adieu, the Absence and the Return," the sixth symphony, and the immortal fifth concerto. It is one of the most beautiful of the quartettes, but also one of the lighter, from the standpoint of hearing, the moods and phases in it being none of them of the extremely impassioned kind. The entire work belongs to the category of classical Greek art, in which perfection of form and beauty of idea are the elements concerned.

As already intimated, all parts of the work were played to something very like perfection, but if preference were to be given either it might perhaps be awarded the second movement—a pure lyric.

The Variations from the Schubert "Death and the Maiden" quartette were given exquisitely. Everything in it was beautiful, and among others there was some of the most delightful playing by the 'cello that could possibly be heard anywhere. Both as to quality of tone and refined expression nothing could possibly be finer. It was great art.

Mr. Schroeder, as is well known, is one of the few great artists upon his instrument in the world, and he has the fortune to play a violincello whose powers and qualities are as rare as is the excellence of his own art. The world of music came very near losing one of its ornaments when Mr. Schroeder was ill last summer. But fortunately his life was saved, and here we have him, though still delicate in health.

To continue the discussion of the ensemble numbers, the closing Quintette by Dr. Antonin Dvorak, in A major, opus 81, was not so highly appreciated. Even after allowance is made for the time it came (past ten o'clock before it was begun) the result was not satisfying. The themes have little strength or pregnancy; and the development does not lead to results of vital value. Many sweet and some piquant moments it has; but the impression of the whole is rather common place. It is indeed possible that this might have been modified if the piano part had been differently interpreted.

And, speaking of piano, this concert brought us the first appearance here of Mr. Leopold Godowsky, who has lately come here from Philadelphia, and is teaching in the Chicago Conservatory. Mr. Godowsky is a young man, probably twenty-five or thereabouts, and he already has a remarkable technic and a comprehensive memory, together with unusual musical feeling. He made a good impression in the Brahms variations on a Paganini theme. This he played in a masterly manner, but still not very sympathetically. Then he followed it with the Chopin Allegro de Concert, a work which has not very much in it at best; and as treated by him had still less. All that evanescent shading of tone and intensity, which belongs to Chopin, was wanting here; and in place of it we had technical correctness, good melody sostenuto, and evidence of plenty of practice. All these qualities are admirable in their way; but they do not take the place of poetry. Of course it may be that later acquaintance with Mr. Godowsky's art will show him to possess other valuable qualities, not realized upon the present occasion. At all events he is a pianist of sufficient

