

## Music.

Some time ago, it will be remembered, I had occasion to remark on the improper and undue influence exercised in musical affairs in this country by the "recognised" teaching institutions, and how those who were not products of these, no matter how able and gifted, found their way barred and impeded in all sorts of ways. Now, I am happy to see, Dame Ethel Smyth, in her last book, "A Final Burning of Boats," speaks out very much more strongly than even I upon this shameful abuse, making some most direct, trenchant, and pointed remarks upon it. Further confirmation, if that were needed, came to my hand recently in the case of a well-known and talented singer *not* a product of a "recognised" institution, who is constantly being passed over in favour of all sorts of hopelessly inferior nonentities who happen to possess the correct background. In the case of composers, the working of the system is particularly flagrant. There is a certain very talented composer of English nationality of the younger group whose name is but the rarest occurrence upon a programme—and its occurrence becomes progressively rarer. Yet the one or two orchestral works of his which are thus rarely played are not only most brilliantly successful achievements, but are invariably received with enthusiasm, so that no excuse about his not going down with an audience can possibly pass muster—but—here, of course, is the explanation of all the matter—he has had the bad taste to belong to no institution—having studied privately on the Continent. The treatment of Delius is, of course, notorious, as a reviewer in the *Universe* rightly points out in speaking of Dame Ethel Smyth's book. It is only through efforts of individual conductors in the face of passive and active opposition that his work has ever reached the public in England at all.

**Bach. St. John Passion. (Queen's: Good Friday.)**

With a small number of the Bach Choir as nucleus, this very lovely work received a competent performance as far as choral singing goes and the conductor, Vaughan Williams. By far the best of the solo singers was Arthur Fear, who has the makings, if he will only work to develop his capacity, of a first-rate Bach singer. Mr. Eric Greene (the Evangelist) sounded as though he were singing under the obsession of Schönberg's special breed of Sprech-gesang—the timid, colourless manner of it was in the authentic English oratorio tradition which, unhappily, is still not dead. Miss Silk sang in the manner her admirers admire, and that those who understand the requirements of eighteenth-century vocal writing do not. Again one remarked the possibilities of the voice, but its immaturity and the lack of solid foundation or good breath technique are as apparent as ever—and yet again one repeats that good musicianship and musical sensibility achieve here naught without a first-class technique. Miss Helmrich again also has the making of a good singer, but she has got to get rid of her wobble first.

**Godowsky. (Queen's: 21st.)**

An interesting Passacaglia on the first eight bars of the "Unfinished" a theme well made and pianistically interesting and distinguished as a whole, but weakest in the final fugue, which does not grow sufficiently, but peters out into free treatment just when it ought to get closer knit. The use of the accompaniment figure to the first subject of the first movement of the "Unfinished," in the coda, is clever, tasteful, and appropriate, and quite convincing in the natural way in which it arrives.

Some fine transcriptions of Schubert songs followed, with an exceptionally noteworthy and perfectly played version of *Die Forelle*. The great pianist himself in his foreword to his arrangements has so completely exploded the sentimental muddle-

headed thinking of the "purists," who rail at arrangements that nothing is left to do except to underline his remarks and emphasise a point here and there. Transcriptions like these are *new compositions*, just as variation is a new composition, though starting from possibly someone else's material. The result stands or falls on its own merit, independent of and apart from its starting point. Godowsky shows his own right instinct about his own especial province, by including, as he does a good number of his own transcriptions and free variations of other works, for as Mr. Newman is most right in pointing out, he is much more interesting as a player when playing his own inquiries into whomsoever it be than when playing original untouched work. Godowsky in this aspect of him is a great scholiast like Heinrich, Anthon, or Scartazzini, and the supreme interest of his recitals is just this, his commentary on, and development of, the thoughts of composers on whose work he is thus engaged. The original Strauss Waltzes, with which he has done such superb, magnificent, and dazzling things in his three great *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, have become through him, three very important works in modern piano literature, that can be disliked, but not possibly ignored, by anyone who studies the development of modern piano music. The second of these, *Heldermans*, was played very fascinatingly on this occasion though one regretted a big cut containing some of the most delicious contrapuntal jugglery of the whole work. The subdued browns and greys that are the tones of this pianist's predilection produce a monotony that approaches too near dullness and prevail in places where higher and intenser colouring is called for. But he is a deeply interesting and significant musician, and a very distinguished mind, for all that a glowing imagination, poetry, and high fantasy are not his.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

## Twelve o'Clock.

[*"Shakespeare strikes twelve every time."*—Emerson.]

EXTRACTS FROM "THE NEW AGE."

Edited by Sagittarius.

"In our judgment, no revolution can be successful until 'capitalists' range themselves with the revolutionaries. Producer-capitalism must be detached from its subservience to finance-capitalism."—*Social Credit Policy*.

"If Italy really aims at initiating a new order in which national plenty shall be consistent with world peace, she must find a way of 'extirpating the usurer and manipulator of values' (as Major Barnes declares that Fascism desires to do), instead of following slavishly the financial orthodoxies of Powers whose example in so many other respects she is ready to repudiate."—*The Significance of Fascism*, Maurice B. Reckitt.

"This psychological criticism of *The Wild Duck* is justified inasmuch as the play itself is psychological criticism of human nature. The character-drawing is of the psychological order. To precisely the extent, therefore, that Ibsen holds the mirror up to the spiritual poverty of mankind, the resulting picture holds a mirror up to Ibsen's own mental condition."—*Drama*.

"The board of directors (Finance Company of Great Britain and America, Ltd.) is virtually an Anglo-American Cabinet, subserving American financial policy. If it does what it hopes to, we might just as well shut up Parliament and pension off our Ministers. We are not sure that we ought not also to close the Bank of England, or at least re-name it as a branch of the Federal Reserve system."—*Notes of the Week*.

"The country which cancels financial over-lordship by establishing its own credit system at the focal point of all the evil, in *prices*, draws every one of its citizens into participation in its release and its attainment of real power—fearless because functional; safe because claiming no other's place in the sun."—*W. T. Symons*.