

Parsifal and Canada: Documentary Sources

1. Toronto *Globe*, 27 July 1882, p. 3

Wagner's New Opera.

BAYREUTH, July 26 —The first performance of Wagner's new opera "Parsifal" was given to-day. The novelty of the stage appliances, the beauty of the scenery, the enormous number of performers, and almost religious inspiration of the music charmed the audience and aroused indescribable enthusiasm. Wagner was called before the curtain after the second act, and made his acknowledgments for the reception of the performance.

2. Toronto *Globe*, 28 July 1882, p. 8

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

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Analysis of Wagner's New Opera "Parsifal."

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A NEW CONCEPTION OF HAMLET.

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Colonel Haverly on Theatrical Affairs in England.



2. Toronto *Globe*, 28 July 1882, p. 8 (cont'd)

The scenic effects are very fine. There are no wings and flies, but every detail is worked out. That is, instead, for instance, of having in the forest scene the trees and shrubs painted on the side scenes, there are artificial trees and shrubs on the stage; and in order that the branches and more delicate tendrils may not shake too much in the strong draughts they are held together by fine invisible netting. The transformation from the forest to the Castle of the Holy Grail is managed by sliding all the scenes on the stage, and by successive settings towards one side of great beauty, the effect of which is that *Gurnemanz* and *Parsifal* appear to be walking through the magic garden. Nothing could be lovelier; the stage is a succession of blooming bowers and flower-studded terraces glowing beneath a soft, sensuous atmosphere. The flower maidens are clad in flesh-coloured tricots, which gives them the appearance of wearing absolutely nothing more than Makart's damsels of Antwerp in his picture of the entry of Charles V., excepting girdles of foliage about their waists and garlands of soft roses on their heads. In this scene Frau Materna as *Kundry* is clad in white gauze embroidered with gold over a flesh-coloured tricots. She wears a jewelled bracelet and necklace. *Amfortas* and his knights wear Bavarian blue tunics.

WAGNER'S "PARSIFAL."

Wagner's "Parsifal," now being performed at Bayreuth, is not of phenomenal dimensions, like the quadruple "festival stage-play," as the author called it, of 1876; it seems to be intended for the standard repertory of German opera, though two of the scenic changes would severely tax the resources of even the best equipped theatres. It is remarkable that there is no love in the plot. The subject is taken from the same legend of the Holy Grail, of which Wagner has already made use. *Parsifal*, according to the story, was the father of *Lohengrin*, and the chief of the company of knights who guarded the Sacred Cup in the castle of Monsalvat. The Knight of the Swan is not introduced in the new opera, but "Grail motive," so familiar to us in "*Lohengrin*," is heard again, and the worship of the Grail which is symbolized in the introduction to "*Lohengrin*" is represented with splendid ceremonies in the finale of "*Parsifal*." The story of the later work is distinctly inferior to the other in simplicity, beauty, and human interest; of the last named quality we should rather say that it has none at all. The meaning of many passages is provokingly dark, and even the principal characters, *Parsifal* and *Kundry*, are highly enigmatical. In brief, the action of the drama may be said to concern itself with the adventures of *Parsifal* in quest of the Sacred Spear which has been lost by the Knight of the Grail; the trial of his fidelity and purity; his victory over the magician *Klingsor*; and his return to the castle, where his selection as chief guardian of the Grail is celebrated with religious rites, including the eucharistic feast. The first and third acts open in a flowery place outside the Castle of Monsalvat, the scene slowly changing into the interior of the Hall of the Grail. The second act is devoted to the temptation of *Parsifal*, and takes place in the castle and gardens of the enchanter *Klingsor*. If we except the forms summoned forth by the enchanter in his garden of delights, the only female character is *Kundry* (represented by Frau Materna), who appears in the first act as a wild and savage creature, rendering menial service to the knights; in the second she is a voluptuous temptress obedient to *Klingsor*; and in the third, having become a penitent follower of *Parsifal*, she receives baptism and pardon. The deep philosophical meaning which Wagner hides in this protean personage has been the occasion of much debate among German commentators upon the text, but we do not know that the problem has ever been solved. The language is much more obscure and the thought much more mystical than those of any previous work of Wagner; and so far as regards the story itself, apart from the music, it can hardly be denied that "*Parsifal*" marks a decline and perversion of the author's poetical powers.

PARSIFAL AT BAYREUTH.

The First Performance of
Wagner's New Opera

DESCRIBED BY AN EYE WITNESS.

A Gorgeous Spectacle, with Tri-
umphant Scenic Effects.

REPLETE WITH DRAMATIC INCIDENTS.

Powerful Chorus of Knights, Youths,
and Flower Girls.

A correspondent of the New York *Nation*, writing from Bayreuth on July 26th, says:—At ten minutes past four yesterday the first performance began. The introduction to "Parsifal," which unites some of the most charming motives in the drama, is a symphonic prelude of wonderful beauty, destined soon to become a favourite in concert halls. Before its last notes have died away the curtain parts in the middle, and shows the spectator a shadowy but not gloomy landscape in the neighbourhood of Castle Monsalvat in Northern Spain, the Grailburg, which was built by King Titurel and his Knight as a sanctuary for the holy grail that was brought to them by angels. The grail has the same qualities that the earth has for Antares, or Freia for the gods in Walhalla—it rejuvenates and invigorates the holy knights who are privileged to behold it whenever the king uncovers it, and it thus enables them to perform their duties, which consist in punishing misdeeds and defending innocence among mortals, as we see in the case of *Lohengrin*, in Wagner's drama, who goes forth in his swan boat to protect *Elsa* from her unjust accusers. When *Titurel* found the end of his allotted life approaching, his son *Amfortas* was crowned king of the brotherhood. But *King Amfortas* succumbed to a temptation which had already brought misfortune to many of his knights.

Not far from Monsalvat is the castle of *Klingsor*, the wizard. *Klingsor*, the representative of heathen sensuality, had once endeavoured to secure admission to the holy brotherhood. But he lacked the requisite purity of heart and conduct, and freedom from worldly desires, to obtain which he resorted to self-mutilation. Repulsed from the Grailburg, he swore vengeance on the knights, and in his magic castle he now holds many of them as captives to the charms of his lovely maidens. *King Amfortas*, when he went forth to annihilate the sorcerer and his castle fell a victim to the wiles of *Kundry*, the most beautiful of the unhappy females enslaved by *Klingsor*. *Kundry* is a sort of female wandering Jew, the Herodias of German legend, who laughed at the Saviour when he bore his cross. For this she was condemned to "curse laughter," and to wander about the earth until she could again find a saviour to release her from her curse by his love. *Klingsor* had gained control over her through his magic arts, and now compels her to aid him in reducing the number of faithful knights, so that he may ultimately satisfy his desire of gaining possession of the grail. While *King Amfortas* is ensnared by *Kundry's* charms, *Klingsor* snatches from him his holy spear—the spear with which *Longinus* had pierced the Saviour's side, and which *Titurel* had received with the grail. With this spear he inflicts on *Amfortas* a painful wound, which henceforth forever exposes him to the most awful torments.

These events, which precede the drama proper, are made known to the audience in an epic or episodic form during the first act, which also contains some of the most

STIRRING DRAMATIC INCIDENTS

in the play. When the curtain is drawn, *Gurnemanz*, a robust and hale old knight, and two young pages are seen asleep under a tree. *Gurnemanz* awakes at the sounds of invisible trombones blowing a morning call in the direction of the Grailburg. He rouses his companions, and bids them go to the lake and prepare the wounded King's morning bath. As they retire towards the lake, which is seen in the background, they suddenly behold a horse, with a female rider, dashing wildly along, almost flying. It is *Kundry*, who in hours of freedom always endeavours to atone by some good service for the harm she does the knights while under the influence of *Klingsor's* spell. She is arrayed in a short dress, held together by a girdle of snakeskins; her black hair flows in disorder over her shoulders; her complexion is dark brown, and her eyes piercingly black, now wild in expression and anon fixed in a dead stare. In her hand she has a small flask, which she gives to *Gurnemanz*, and then throws herself on the ground, exhausted.

The King's approach is now heard. He is conveyed in a litter, accompanied by knights and esquires. From *Gurnemanz* he receives the flask, and hears that *Kundry* has brought it as balm for his wound from Arabia. He expresses his gratitude, but has no hope in the remedy, for he knows he can only expect a cure through one whom the grail has announced to him as his saviour. "By pity enlightened, a guileless fool; Wait for him, my chosen tool"—these were the words that once appeared in magic letters on the rim of the holy vessel while he lay before it in fervent prayer. The procession now moves on toward the lake, while the esquires remain taunting the mysterious *Kundry*, when suddenly the whizz of an arrow, imitated in a strikingly realistic manner by the orchestra, followed by weird, swan-motive harmonies from "*Lohengrin*," is heard. A wounded swan slowly flies across the lake, and then falls down dying. The *Parsifal* motive announces the appearance of the culprit who has thus ruthlessly killed one of the animals sacred in these precincts. In an affective passage, in which words and music are alike beautiful, *Gurnemanz* reproaches *Parsifal*, who at first boasts of his skill in having killed the bird "on the wing," but, after listening to the old knight, follows a sudden impulse and breaks his bow in pieces. The question who he is and where from he professes to be unable to answer, when *Kundry* interrupts the dialogue and announces that he is the son of *Gamarel*, who gave birth to him after the death of his father, who fell in battle. To save her son from a similar fate she reared him in a deep forest, ignorant of the world and his parentage.

Parsifal now remembers that one day he saw some armed horsemen, with beautiful horses, whom he endeavoured to follow. Soon he lost sight of them, and, with self-constructed weapons, fought his way through the various dangers that beset him. *Kundry* replies that his mother is dead—that his departure broke her heart; whereupon *Parsifal* is seized by such sudden regret and horror that he threatens violence to the unhappy messenger of these tidings; but *Gurnemanz* protects her from his fury. A sudden trembling and fatigue now overcome *Kundry*, who retires into the forest to sleep. The magic motive of *Klingsor* in the orchestra explains that it is his spell which calls her thus to the castle. *Gurnemanz* suspects that *Parsifal* may be the "guileless fool" who is chosen to relieve the King, and accordingly invites him to follow him to the Grailburg. As they seem to walk from left to right,

THE SCENE GRADUALLY CHANGES:

the forest disappears, and wild rock takes its place; a door opens amidst walls of stone, which they enter. Sounds of bells and trombones are heard coming nearer and nearer. At last they arrive in a large hall, ending above in a vaulted dome, through which alone light is admitted. A door opens on each side, through one of which the Knights of the Grail enter in procession, singing a solemn chorus. While they take places at two long tables their voices are joined by those of youths in the midheight of the dome and boys' voices at the summit. Through the opposite door another procession enters, bearing *Amfortas* in

his litter. It is the King's duty to uncover the grail, to rejuvenate his knights; but he longs to be relieved of this duty, as it gives him, too, renewed vitality and prolongs the agony of his existence. The voice of *Titurel*, however, urges him on, and he at last uncovers the grail. Darkness has meanwhile spread over the hall so that the grail is distinctly seen gradually glowing with a purple lustre. *Amfortas* raises it and gently swings it about on all sides—the whole act being accompanied by music of the most super-terrestrial, ethereal character, like a halo of sound. *Gurnemanz* invites *Parsifal* to take part in the supper, but *Parsifal* remains standing lost in mute astonishment at these proceedings. After the knights have again departed, the disappointed *Gurnemanz* shakes *Parsifal* by the arm and bids him thus depart:—

"Leave thou our swans in future alone.
And seek thyself, gander, a goose."

The first is by far the longest of the three acts; its duration being over an hour and a half, while the others are somewhat over an hour each. It contains situations as fine as any Wagner has ever conceived, the most affecting scene being the uncovering of the grail, followed by the triple chorus of knights, youths, and boys at different altitudes above the stage—the effect of which can be approximately judged of from the wonderful beauty of the trio of Rhine daughters from an elevated position, as heard at the late musical festival in New York. The idea is similar to that which Wagner, early in his career, used in his cantata "*Das Liebesmahl der Apostel*;" and as thus transplanted it is eminently dramatic—that is, in harmony with the character of the situation. The gradual glowing of the grail is effected by means of a current of electricity with which it is supplied by means of a thin wire. The effect is exceedingly impressive. The flight of the swan, like that of the spear which remains suspended over *Parsifal's* head in the second act, and of the dove which hovers over him at the close of the third, is also managed in a clever and thoroughly artistic manner. The contents of

THE SECOND AND THIRD ACTS

may be summed up in fewer words. After an agitated introduction by the orchestra the spectator finds himself transferred to *Klingsor's* magic castle—at first in the inside of a tower open at its top. Magic implements are scattered about everywhere. *Klingsor* summons *Kundry* by lighting a bluish flame in the background of the stage. When *Kundry* appears he commands her, in spite of her piteous protests, to use her beauty and persuasiveness to ruin *Parsifal*, who is already seen by him approaching the castle. He calls out to the knights to defend themselves, but *Parsifal* soon puts them all to flight. The tower now slowly sinks out of sight, and its place is taken by a magic garden full of tropical vegetation and the most luxuriant large flowers. A number of beautiful damsels in light attire rush on the stage, and bewail the loss of their playmates until they behold *Parsifal*. While some flirt about him, others disappear in an arbour, whence they soon return arrayed in flowers, looking like living flowers themselves. *Parsifal* regards the spectacle unmoved and unyielding, when presently *Kundry's* voice is heard calling out his name, "*Parsifal*, remain!" The flower girls reluctantly retire, not without a parting fling at the "guileless fool," who is now at the mercy of *Kundry's* charms. With true feminine art she wins his confidence by telling of the last moments of his mother. *Parsifal*, overcome with grief, sinks down at her feet, when she raises her head and gives him his mother's last greeting and the first long kiss of love. With an expression of consternation *Parsifal* jumps to his feet and pushes *Kundry* away. Her kiss, like a sudden pang, gives him a presentiment of *Amfortas's* sufferings, and at once the whole situation dawns on him. Hitherto he has only been the "guileless fool"; now he is also, "through pity, enlightened." *Kundry* refuses to listen to his explanation that to grant her his love would condemn her to a new lease of her cursed existence. She invokes a curse on him—a curse which shall compel him to go about the world searching in vain for *King Amfortas*. Her cries summon *Klingsor* to the castle wall, whence he hurls *Amfortas's* holy spear at him. The spear remains suspended over the head of *Parsifal*, who seizes it and describes the shape of a cross. Instantaneously, as through an earthquake, the castle vanishes, the garden is transformed into a desert, and the maidens lie as withered flowers on the ground. The suddenness of this transformation is one of the greatest of modern scenic marvels, and, like some of the other effects, it shows that the machinist, Fritz Brandt, is determined to emulate his father, Carl Brandt, who constructed the Nibelung machinery, and planned some of the contrivances to be used in "*Parsifal*" before death took him away, about a year ago.

The third act contains so few incidents that it will be pronounced undramatic by those who hold that the essence of the dramatic condition is

hold that the essence of the drama consists in rapid and varied action. But in a higher sense of the word—that in which “Tristan and Isolde” is Wagner’s most dramatic work—the third act of “Parsifal” is also highly dramatic, for in it the development and conflict of emotions are intensely and vividly portrayed. At the beginning of the third act, after a weird and sad introduction of great beauty, we see a smiling meadow at the borders of a forest; in the background a simple hermit’s hut. It belongs to Gurnemanz, who now appears as a very old man. Strange, mournful sounds, proceeding from behind a bush, induce him to search for their cause. It is Kundry, now again the simple, homely servant of the grail, and no longer the fascinating queen of Klingsor’s flower garden. She is disinclined to speak, but goes into the hut to work. Looking about him Gurnemanz spies a knight in full armour approaching. He bids him respect the laws of this holy place, which forbid any one on Good Friday to bear arms. Parsifal complies, and Gurnemanz now recognizes him, as well as the holy spear, at sight of which he breaks forth in joyous exclamations, heralding the King’s release from his torments—for only then can his wounds be closed when they are touched by the “guileless fool” with the same spear that inflicted them. Gurnemanz relates how, since Parsifal’s departure, the knights have been deprived of the blessing of the grail, since the King refuses to uncover it—hoping thus to starve out his life even as Titirel’s came to an end after long privation. Once more on this day, however, the grail is to be uncovered. The scene changes back to that which closes the first act, in the Grailsburg. Two processions of knights again appear, one with Amfortas on his litter, the other with Titirel’s bier, accompanied by the strains of a majestic funeral march. Amfortas refuses to perform his task—to be once more brought back to painful life from the brink of death. He tears open his bandages, and begs his companions to kill him, when Parsifal appears and touches the wounds with his spear. He then takes the grail in his hands while a halo of light is shed over all. A dove descends and hovers over the head of the new King, Parsifal. Kundry sinks slowly to the ground, lifeless, while Amfortas and Gurnemanz do homage on their knees to Parsifal. It is a magnificent final tableau.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

As time is short and art criticism at Bayreuth long, I must defer some general aesthetic remarks on the poem, and the music, and the relations of “Parsifal” to Wagner’s other dramas, until after the second or third performance. The reception of the new drama last evening was very enthusiastic. After the first act there was prolonged applause for Wagner, the spectators all facing round toward his box, as it was understood that the artists had agreed not to appear before the curtain so as not to interrupt the illusion. After the second act the applause was so demonstrative that Wagner was obliged to come forward and explain that the refusal to appear before the curtain was not stubbornness on any one’s part, but a desire that the artists should only be seen within the frame of the art work. This was interpreted by the audience as a desire on his part that there should be no applause, and accordingly the third act—the grandest of all—was received in silence—a curious illustration of the absolute subjection of the Wagnerites to their master’s command. But Wagner again came forward to explain that he had been misunderstood. At the end of the performance he was the first to applaud the artists for their admirable work. A perfect tornado of applause and calls of “artists” and “bravo” now burst out; but the artists were already busy with their wardrobe and could not appear. This was a pity, for they deserved the most unqualified approval of the audience. The cast, down to the smallest details, was as perfect as it can only be at Bayreuth. To prove this I need only state that the parts of Kundry, Gurnemanz, Parsifal, and Amfortas were taken respectively by Frau Materna and Herr Scaria, of Vienna, Herr Winkelmann, of Hamburg, and Herr Reichmann, of Munich. The choruses of knights, youths, and boys were beautifully sung, as well as the flower-girls’ chorus, who was very effective and stirring. All the vocalists pronounced their words with a distinctness which if emulated

elsewhere would soon make obsolete the reading of text-books during a performance; and most wonderful of all was the perfect accordance in time and tune between the various musical factors, invisible to one another—the orchestra, the choruses, the vocalists, and the brass band and the bells on the stage. To those who had not been at Bayreuth before, last night’s performance must have been a revelation.

and changes that render it a very pleasing concert piece. The piece of resistance music “Siegfried’s Song,” by Fred H. Cowen, is a new work by this now well-known composer. The work consists of four movements, the allegro being a very nervous and rapidly working out of a happy theme. The adagio is a noble and dignified movement with excellent melodic lines, a prominent feature being an exquisite French horn solo, which gives an additional charm to this beautiful section of the work. The scherzo is unique in form and treatment, and the finale is a grand and fitting close in chorusing rhythm and dynamic force. The composer has used all the resources of the modern orchestra with telling effect in this great work. The dramatic foundation of which is thoroughly Scandinavian, as its name indicates. The ever varying light and shade and the changing effect of time occurring in the work were carefully noted out in the conducting given it by this Orchestra. The preface to Wagner’s new opera “Parsifal” opened the second part, and it is safe to say that if any of Wagner’s latest compositions had been presented and yet maintained at the simplicity of treatment and the grandeur of his noblest work. The four principal motifs of this opera are here discussed almost without elaboration, and yet by the hand of the great master of orchestral treatment are brought out with thrilling effect and impress the listener with the deep religious feeling that pervades the great work. Liszt’s symphonic poem was omitted but will be given to-morrow afternoon. The grand factory march from Berlioz’s “Fantasia of Faust,” was the last number on the programme. This march is said to be founded on an old Hungarian air played by a soldier in the army of Francis Rákóczy II. on the return from the battle of Solva in 1704, in which the King took a fancy, and it was thereupon called after him, and being shared by “Hungarian” then, a descendant of the soldier, became popular. As given by the orchestra it is certainly very taking, and made a lively and pleasant close to the first of music. The band ran to their feet and played “God Save the Queen” as the audience retired. Those who fail to hear this excellent organization during their stay will miss a treat that they will not soon again have an opportunity of enjoying. It was announced by Mr. Pollard that a machine would be given this afternoon, at which the general admission will be fifty cents. To-night the programme will be more than ordinarily interesting on account of the production of Beethoven’s life of C minor symphony. This great work alone will more than repay those who attend, and in addition to this, the creative of Chopin by Weber is a work of great interest. Dr. Danneberg will also produce one of his own instrumental works entitled the “Pastoral” overture. Miss. Martens will be present and sing at both performances.

HORTICULTURAL GARDENS.
Dr. Danneberg's Orchestra Greeted by a Large Audience.
AN ARTISTICALLY ARRANGED PROGRAMME.
The lovers of good music were afforded a rich treat in the form of a short series of orchestral concerts under the direction of Dr. Danneberg, of New York, which was given in the Horticultural Gardens last night. The Pavilion was comfortably filled by an audience that showed a keen appreciation of the music, and which greeted the talented conductor with much cordiality. The orchestra under Dr. Danneberg consists of over fifty of the chosen musicians of New York, and their condition of the members on last night's programme bore testimony to their ability. Every member of the organization is evidently an artist, capable of performing the part allotted to him not only with technical correctness but with artistic finish, a quality quite as important as technical in its way playing. With the best of material, however, no satisfactory effect can be produced in the performance of great orchestral works unless the conductor has not only the ability of a musician to read these correctly, but also the artistic feeling necessary to give his aid significantly with the composer. These qualities are necessary in the more work of conducting a performance, but other qualities are not less essential for the preliminary work of organization and rehearsal, where it is that a conductor requires intellectual, mechanical,

and business of wit, the most rule in his own domain with a hand of iron, however soft may be the glove that bears it, and he must have such a knowledge of human nature combined with a degree of tact as will enable him to control passions, and command not only obedience but respect. These qualities Dr. Danneberg possesses, combined with a large experience and a good deal of tact that altogether make up one of the most successful conductors of the day. The work the accompanying the organization, on their part is Miss. Ingeborg Martens, a former member of the Kullberg Opera Company, who possesses a soprano voice of much sweetness, especially in the medium register. In Puccini's “Air with Variations” she exhibited excellent skill and considerable range of voice. The accompanying chromatic passages were wonderfully good. In the second part she sang an air from Gounod's “La Fille du Sam” which she gave with much taste and effect. The audience demanded an encore, but this could not be allowed, and the merely bowed her acknowledgments, being recalled several times. At the close of her first number the four artists were made the recipients of a handsome floral tribute. The first number on the programme for the orchestra was Beethoven's third symphony, the best of those great concert works that Beethoven was the first to inaugurate. The shading in this, as indeed in the entire work of the orchestra throughout the evening, was most excellent, and the distinct treatment effect was a marked feature. After this had been given Dr. Danneberg was enthusiastically recalled. The Norwegian melody, by Grieg, and value from “Tristram's” overture, given by the strings alone, were very attractive. In the first the melody, after being given out by the entire string band, broken up in a quartette on four solo violins, and after a transition and variation by the orchestra, dies away into silence. The value in first given out in unison, then in a quartet on the violins, followed by other unique modifications

5. Various U.S. bands introduce *Parsifal* excerpts to Canada

Vancouver Province, March 9, 1905 p. 12

MUSIC AND DRAMA

Creator's Band.

Excellent are the notices appearing in San Francisco and Portland papers of concerts given by Creator's band in the coast cities. To-morrow night and Saturday, the great leader and his expert musicians will be in Vancouver. Following is the programme for Saturday evening:

Part I.

- 1—March—Royal Purple... ..Creator
- 2—Overture—William Tell... ..Rossini
- 3—Gavotte from Mignon... ..Thomas
- 4—Prelude and sacred scene Act I.
* Parsifal... ..Wagner

Intermission.

Part II.

- 5—Miserere from Il Trovatore...Verdi
Solos by Signori Tommasino and Forcellati.
- 6—Harp solo—Pensee Poetique, Lebano
Signor C. Sodero.
- 7—Grand selection from Carmen...Bizet
Solos by Signori Tommasino, Forcellati, Iafisco and Raho.
God Save the King.

Winnipeg Tribune, Wed. Aug. 1, 1906 p. 2

Music and Drama

The Duss band programme at Happyland today will be as follows:

Afternoon.

Part 1—
Overture—"Zampa"Herold
March—"Cross and Crown" . . .Duss
Solo for Petit Clarinet (in E flat.....
Mr. S. Sirginano.
Rhapsodie Hongroise (new- ..Ehrlich

Part 2—
Grand Selection from "Simon Boccanegra"Verdi
Nocturne—"Im Rosenhain"Ellenberg
Popular Melodies from "King Dodo"Luders
Characteristic Piece—"Panamericana"Herbert

Evening.

Part 1—
Overture—"Raymond"Thomas
CavatinaRaff
March—"The Trolley"Duss
Song for Cornet—"The New-born King"L'Espero

Mr. Bert Brown
Processional and Grail Scene from
* "Parsifal"Wagner

Part 2—
Andante from C Minor SymphonyBeethoven
Scherzo, Orologio (The Clock) . . .Arditi
Serenade (transcribed for wood, wind and harp)Schubert
Dance of the Hours, from "Gloconda"Ponchielli
"The Rose, the Shamrock and the Thistle"Baetens

Vancouver Province, Saturday, July 1, 1905, p. 2

Sunday Band Concerts.

Two concerts will be given in Vancouver to-morrow at Recreation Park, one at 2:30 o'clock in the afternoon and the other at 9 in the evening. Frederick Neil Innes and his band are fresh from successes in San Francisco, Portland and other cities and Vancouver people may look forward to listening to the best of band music. Following is a summary of the programmes:

Afternoon Concert.

1. Overture—SakuntalaGoldmark
2. (a) TraumereiSchumann
(b) Spring SongMendelssohn
3. Kammenoi OstrowRubinstein
4. Carnival of Venice (Cornet Solo)Paganini
5. Second Hungarian Rhapsody...Liszt
6. Dance Macabre (symphonic poem)Saint-Saens
7. Two Well Known Marches—
(a) Stars and StripesSousa
(b) Love is KingInnes
8. A Merry Zingara (Song for Soprano)Balfe
9. Albion (Grand Popular Fantasy)Baetens

Introducing a number of the most beautiful gems of English, Irish and Scotch Songs and ending with an original transcription of the following interwoven airs, God Save the King, Tullochgorum, St. Patrick's Day, The British Grenadiers and Rule Britannia.

Evening Concert.

Part I.

1. Overture—JubileeWeber
2. Serenade RoccocoMeyer-Helmund
3. Du Und Du (Cornet Solo)Levy
4. Bonnie Scotland (Popular Fantasy)Godfrey

Part II.

* PARSIFAL, a consecration stage festival play by Richard Wagner; in concert form, including the following scenes:

Vorspiel.
The Good Friday Magic Spell.
The Temptation of Parsifal by Kundry (aria for soprano).
Procession of the Holy Grail.

Ottawa Journal, Saturday, 27 May 1899, p. 7

THE SOUSA BAND CONCERT

A Bright and Interesting Performance. Presentation to Dr. Drowne.

The concert given last night in the Russell Theatre by Sousa and his band was decidedly of a popular character, the selections ascending all the way from "A hot time in the old town," through Sousa marches to the Grand Scene from Wagner's Parsifal Knights of the Holy Grail—a kaleidoscopic mixture surely, but one which just as surely pleased the large audience present. Pretty nearly every number was encored, and without any ado Sousa responded by dashing right into one of his own taking marches. True, there isn't much variety in them, but they catch on all right.

AMUSEMENTS.

THE PAVILION.

TUESDAY EV'G, APRIL 4, AT 8.15.

GRAND OPERATIC

"Wagner Festival."

Nine excerpts and scenes from "Tannhauser," "Lohengrin," "Tristan and Isolde," "The Meistersinger," "Die Walkure," "Siegfried," "Götterdämmerung" and "Parsifal" seven of the above now performed for the first time in this city.

ANTON SEIDL The celebrated Wagnerian conductor, and his entire **METROPOLITAN ORCHESTRA.**

Clifford Schmidt, concert master; Victor Herbert, violoncello; John Cheshire, harp, assisted by Miss **EMMA JUCH**

Prima Donna Soprano, and an unequalled array of 16 soloists. Seats will be on sale at Nordheimers' music store Thursday morning, March 30th. Prices, \$1 to \$2.50, first row in gallery extra

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

Saturday Night's Seidl Orchestra Concert.

For the first time, we believe, in the history of Toronto the people had the opportunity, on Saturday evening of enjoying a high class orchestral concert at what may be termed popular prices. Notwithstanding the short notice given the pavilion was about two-thirds filled with an audience embracing the cream of the music lovers of our city, and the wonder is that the building was not full to overflowing. It is doubtful if a better concert at any price was ever given in our city. Herr Anton Seidl's superb orchestra was in fine form and played magnificently. Miss Emma Juch was in excellent voice and sang as well as she ever did on any former visit, and the other vocalists acquitted themselves in a highly creditable manner. The programme was well chosen and skilfully arranged, and was of a more popular character than that given by Mr. Seidl on the occasion of his recent visit. The concert opened with Liszt's noble symphonic poem, "Les Préludes." This grand work, which abounds with startling harmonic changes and dynamic effects, is thoroughly characteristic of the erratic genius who composed it, and it need scarcely be said that it received at Mr. Seidl's hands an artistic interpretation. Like remarks apply to the same composer's first Hungarian Rhapsody performed later in the evening, and which created a strong impression. The second number on the programme was the grand scene from the second act of "The Flying Dutchman," but owing to the score having been sent on to New York by mistake the first scene from the third act of the "Walkure," known as the "Ride of the Valkyries," and given at the last Seidl concert here, had to be substituted. This scene was presented in such a manner as to give the audience some idea, faint though it be, of the thrilling effect of these wonderful creations when given in their entirety, with scenery, action, hidden orchestra and all the accessories. After this came two selections for string orchestra, the well-known Schumann "Traumerei," and a "Polonaise" of considerable merit and

originality by Herbert, presumably the noted 'cello player of that name who is a member of the orchestra, and which sounded delightfully restful and soothing after the thrilling Wagner number. Then Miss Juch appeared and sang with exquisite taste a suite of three songs by Wagner, (a) "Pains," (b) "Dreams" and (c) "Cradle Song," accompanied on the piano by Mr. Seidl. What an object lesson the accompaniments were to all who aspire to this thankless though important phase of the art. The orchestra then gave the charming waltz from Beethoven's fifth symphony, which proved one of the most pleasing numbers on the programme. It was performed with great smoothness and finish. The delightful Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria" was then sung with great soulfulness and fervor by Miss Juch with violin obligato by Mr. Schmidt, and harp accompaniment by Mr. Cheshire. In this prayerful and beautiful melody Miss Juch was heard at her best, and after being three times recalled Mr. Seidl was reluctantly compelled to allow it to be repeated. The next selection was the flower girl scene from "Parsifal," never before given in Toronto. It was performed by the full strength of the company. The concert closed with scenes from Mascagni's popular opera, "Cavalleria Rusticana," including the orchestral prelude and the Siciliana sung by Miss Juch, the scene and duo, introducing Santuzza, Turiddu and Loia, by Miss Juch, Mr. Stephens and Miss Stein, and closing with the "Intermezzo" by the orchestra. Miss Juch, who is thoroughly at home in this opera, again distinguished herself, and Mr. Stephens and Miss Stein did themselves credit in their respective parts. It is satisfactory to note from a brief interview with Mr. Seidl that he does not attribute the comparatively small audiences with which he has been greeted on the occasion of his last two visits here to any lack of appreciation of his magnificent orchestra, or of the music of the master whose greatest exponent he is on this side the Atlantic, but to bad business management, and it is his purpose to return here next season, when it is hoped he may have a reception worthy of the man and creditable to ourselves.

GRAND FESTIVAL

Concerts Wagner

Les 26, 27 et 28 Juin, sous la direction de
THEODORE THOMAS,
Le fameux trio de Wagner,
MATHERNA, WINKELMAN, SCARIA
ET
CHRISTINE NILSSON,
JUCH, WINANT, TONDT, REMMERTZ,
ET
L'ORCHESTRE sous la direction de **THOMAS**

Billets de saison (cinq grands concerts) \$10.00
Petits particuliers qui s'adressent aux magasins de musique de MM. Lavigne & Lajoie, Bouvier, Henry Prince et J. J. Lemplough.

Bayreuth and Wagner

An Account of a Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Music-Drama, and of Five Supreme Performances There Attended

Third Series: Letter No. 12 From a Globe-Trotter
(By LAWRENCE MASON, Music and Drama Editor of The Globe.)
Bayreuth, Bavaria, Aug. 18, 1931.

ALl my imaginings, nourished by study, by pictures, by word-of-mouth reports, and by lifelong devotion to Wagner's music, have fallen far short of the reality in this music-lover's paradise, Bayreuth. From the window of my room in a little lodging-house on the Liebstrasse, I could look across the road at the house, directly opposite, where Liszt died, and read the marble tablet on the wall: "Franz Liszt, 31 July, 1806." While to the left, across the intersecting street, I could look out upon Villa Wahnfried, where Wagner lived and died, where his devoted wife Cosima died last year, and where his son's English widow, Frau Winifred, now gallantly struggles to carry on the Bayreuth tradition as head of the orthodox Wagner cult. Whenever I looked out, a stream of visitors could be seen, passing into or out of the grounds.

My first step, on Sunday morning, was to visit the grave of the mighty genius whose marvellous life-work is so fittingly enshrined in this little Bavarian town. Wagner's tomb, in which Cosima's ashes were deposited last year, stands in the garden behind Wahnfried, a great stone sarcophagus covered with wreaths and beautifully framed by squared walls of flowers, bushes and trees. Fortunately I had this enclosure to myself for a few minutes. Then followed a visit to Wahnfried and to the chief Wagner museum in the New Castle, where every event in his life is minutely and copiously documented with priceless manuscripts, relics, pictures, books, etc. After these acts of homage and adjustment, I felt better prepared for my week's work; and as "Parsifal" at the Festival Theatre followed only a few hours later, this first day in Bayreuth was one of the most movingly impressive that I can recall. However, I must begin this narration with more commonplace matters.

Music and the Drama

Conducted by E. R. PARKHURST.

The National Chorus, at their second concert last night in Massey Hall, quite sustained the reputation they had made on the previous evening, although so far as the chief number, the finale from Wagner's "Parsifal," was concerned, the music for the ensemble of chorus, orchestra and soloists was more exacting than the selection from Boito's "Mefistofele." A large number of the audience were glad to make a second acquaintance with the "Parsifal" music, which, it may be remembered, was introduced here by the Savage Opera Company. But the long monologue of Amfortas, sung very suggestively by Mr. Frederick Weld, is, when divorced from the theatre stage, not specially interesting to the average concert-goer. The successive choruses, celestial (boys' voices), the full chorus and the male chorus were all impressive and effective. Mr. Rhynd Jamieson sang the not very gracious part of Titurel in very grand style and in excellent voice. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra in the trying instrumentation of the music astonished even their admirers, both strings and wind achieving results that were not fully anticipated. Under Mr. Welsman's direction the orchestra gave a fine rendering of the overture to Rossini's "William Tell." For the first time in the musical history of Toronto of the past thirty years, the delicate staccato passages for the violins in the last movement were not covered up by the accompanying brass. The credit of this welcome reform must be attributed to Conductor Welsman. Another number in which the orchestra shone to advantage was Coleridge-Taylor's original and highly-striking instrumented "Ballade." The National Chorus

gave illustrations and renned unaccompanied part-singing in Leslie's "Lullaby of Life." Pearsall's "Who Shall Win My Lady Fair," the dance song by Cornellus and Lee, Williams' fanciful "Mapsa." The men's section showed a much better balance with the women's voices than on the first night. With regard to the women, one can praise without reservation their beauty of tone and their general steady adherence to pitch. Mme. von Nlessen-Stone, in her solo songs, won a greater triumph than even on her first appearance. She was repeatedly recalled, but had to refuse all but one of the encores demanded. On Tuesday evening it was omitted to notice in our report that as an encore number to Elgar's "Wand of Youth," for orchestra, Mr. Welsman gave Dr. Ham's march militaire "Canada," which was received with enthusiasm, as a much deserved compliment to the trainer and conductor of the National Chorus. One can compliment Dr. Ham on the able manner in which he conducted the "Parsifal" selection, music that would test the efficiency of any musical director.

CNRM—Montreal.

10 p.m.—Canadian National Railways' Transcontinental hour. Orchestra directed by Dr. Luigi von Kunits; soloists, Miss Jeanne Hesson, soprano; Dalton Baker, tenor.

Programme—Music of the "Holy Grail" from opera, "Lohengrin" (Wagner); opera, "Parsifal" (Wagner). 1. Prelude to Act I. "Lohengrin"; (a) Elsa's Prayer; (b) Swan Music. 2. Prelude to Act I. of "Parsifal"; (a) Amfortas Suffering; (b) Chorus of the Magic Garden Flower Maidens; (c) Kundry's Song; (d) Good Friday music; (e) The March of the Holy Grail.

'PARSIFAL' CLOSES FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

Moving Performance Is Given
Under Direction of Dr.
Wilfred Pelletier

BACH ITEMS RENDERED

Programme of Solo and Or-
chestral Excerpts Conducted
by Charles O'Connell of
Philadelphia Orchestra

By THOMAS ARCHER.
(Gazette Drama and Music Critic.)

Substantial excerpts from "Parsifal" brought the Montreal Music Festival to an impressive close last night at St. Laurent. A capacity audience attended to hear the opening and close of the first and the whole of the third act of Wagner's score. The performance of the "Parsifal" music under the direction of Dr. Wilfred Pelletier was preceded by a programme of solo and orchestral items by Bach conducted by Charles O'Connell, assistant director of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The "Parsifal" music, for the most part, sounded highly effective in the college chapel. This reporter, indeed, found it far more expressive and touching in church than in the theatre. The glorious Temple Scene in the first act needs no scenery because the music is strong enough to move by its own weight, so to speak. At least that is how it sounded last night.

It is a wonderfully classical score and it is strange to think that, not so long ago, it was looked at askance and doubts were thrown upon its artistic worth. In such places as the solos of Amfortas, the coming of Parsifal in the third act and the Good Friday Magic, it proved intensely moving.

The chief soloists were Max Harrell as Amfortas, Norman Cordon as Gurnemanz and Edward Grobe as Parsifal. Mr. Harrell did a magnificent piece of work in Bach's Passion on Monday. His Amfortas last night was even finer were that possible. You really felt the sufferings of the woeful Grail King who had dishonored his office by his sin as you heard Mr. Harrell's dignified resonant voice, and expressive declamation of the text every word of which was clear and delivered in a beautiful German.

Mr. Cordon sang the role of Gurnemanz in a manly forthright way. This Gurnemanz was more operatic in style than either the Amfortas or the Parsifal. Mr. Grobe's voice proved a little light in texture for the title role which really calls for a heroic tenor. But he sang the music with direct attention to its melodic beauty which is something of a novelty in the Wagnerian singing heard today. Kathryn Meisle delivered the prophecy allotted to an alto voice at the close of the first act. Her voice, coming from offstage, made a colorful impression.

The chorus parts were sung by the Cathedral Singers and the boys of La Manecanterie. Practically the whole choir must have been singing in German for the first time. Moreover the style of the music cannot have been exactly familiar to them. Under these circumstances they did extraordinarily well. The Manecanterie boys were particularly fine in the Temple Scene in the first act, singing the music with uncommon assurance and beauty.

The honors, however, went to the soloists and also to the orchestra. And it was astonishing how admirably this difficult score was played. Dr. Pelletier seemed able to get everything he wanted and there were many times when the orchestral performance rose to great heights, notably in the Transformation music, the prelude to the third act and in the Good Friday music.

The Bach music which served as a prelude to Wagner, as it were, consisted of three orchestral items and solos and duets by Miss Meisle, Mr. Harrell, Rose Bampton and Joseph Bentonelli. Miss Meisle sang an aria from the St. John Passion with much feeling. Miss Bampton delivered "Sich ueben im Lieben" from Cantata No. 202, with a lightness and flexibility perfectly adapted to the style of the music. Soprano and contralto joined in the duet from Cantata No. 78 which proved so popular at the festival two years ago. Mr. Bentonelli and Mr. Harrell were heard in a duet for tenor and baritone.

The singing of the Bach music was nearly spoilt by the fact that photographs were taken during the performance. A light was flashed in Miss Meisle's face during her solo. The last measures of Miss Bampton's solo were similarly interrupted.

Mr. O'Connell directed the beautiful choral-prelude, "Herzlich tut mich Verlangen," a delightful orchestral version of "Jesu, Joy of Men's Desiring," and his own highly effective version of "Komm, süsser Tod."

It was announced in the programme that Bach's Mass in B minor would be repeated at the next festival and that Brahms's German Requiem would be one of the new items.

Excerpts from Boris Godounov End Tercentenary Gala Series

By THOMAS ARCHER.

La-Societe des Concerts Symphoniques achieved last night what must undoubtedly be regarded as the climax of its career with the performance of six excerpts from Moussorgsky's Boris Godounov under the direction of Desire Defauw with Alexander Kipnis, Gerald Desmarais and Les Disciples de Massenet as the vocalists. The presentation, given before a capacity audience which included His Excellency, the Governor-General and the Princess Alice, was decidedly a landmark in the story of music in this city.

In the first place, it was new music. Boris, one of the greatest and most original contributions to the lyric theatre and, perhaps the greatest musical work to come out of Russia, has only been heard here once before when it was given by an itinerant Russian opera company 20 years or so ago. The few broadcasts by the Metropolitan hardly account since they conveyed little idea of either the style or the substance of this vividly dramatic score.

But last night, thanks to Mr. Defauw, Mr. Kipnis and Les Disciples de Massenet, those who either didn't know Boris at all or knew the work only from the printed page, were able to obtain a fair idea of its mighty sweep, its profound and inevitable drama, its absolute novelty, its power to grip the hearer and, so to speak, lift him out of himself. Such experiences come all too seldom and when they do they are all the more overpowering.

It is difficult to give first place to any one of the participants. But honors undoubtedly should go first of all to Mr. Defauw who prepared the excerpts, wrought them into an interpretative whole including soloists, choir and orchestra and thus enabled the impression of Moussorgsky's music to be conveyed as a balanced unit to the listeners. That was indeed an artistic achievement, unquestionably the greatest of the present Tercentenary gala series.

Next the credit must go to Mr. Kipnis for his highly intelligent, completely sincere and very musical interpretation of the title role of the opera. In spite of all vocal limitations, and there are several that

could be named, this bass proved himself an exceptional artist last night. His singing both of the Hallucination and the Death scenes were perfectly adjusted to the orchestral expression. They furnished a model for dramatic declamation and they invoked the sheer reality of the unhappy usurping Czar tormented, Macbeth-like, by a too tender conscience.

It was surprising how well the clear French of Les Disciples de Massenet fitted the rhythm of the Boris music, more particularly as Mr. Kipnis sang his text in the original Russian. One was never aware of the anachronism, probably because Charles Goulet, director of this very fine choir, had, by some alchemy of his own, imbued his singers with the spirit of the music as much as of the words. The choruses in the Coronation scene and, with Mr. Kipnis in the finale, were delivered with impressive tonal power and rhythmic phrasing.

The orchestra, too, contributed mightily to the picture as a whole. The musicians seemed fully in tune with Mr. Defauw's intentions, and, in consequence, the drama of the instruments was as obvious as the drama of the voices. And that would seem to be the way to convey the essence of Moussorgsky and his very remarkable opera.

The orchestra was the collective star, however, of a superb performance of the Parsifal Prelude which opened the concert. Under Mr. Defauw's direction this extraordinarily beautiful and gripping music was delivered with just that deliberate plasticism and gravity of accent which it needs for its splendor to be fully exhibited. Too little of this kind of Wagner is heard nowadays and this example last night was in its way a revelation.

It is no reflection upon Mr. Kipnis to say that his participation in the Good Friday Spell which followed was superfluous. The fault lay with Wagner who, in his total absorption in the beauty of his symphonic thought, seems to have added the human voice as sheerly a theatrical necessity. One questioned the appositeness of following up the Parsifal music with such obvious Wagnerian matter as The Ride Of The Valkyries.

5th ANNIVERSARY

Les **JOIES** de la **musique** **SCOTT**

RICHARD WAGNER'S

PARSIFAL

second act, concert version
with

JESSYE NORMAN
Kundry

SIEGFRIED JERUSALEM
Parsifal

OSKAR HILLEBRANDT
Klingsor

FRANZ-PAUL DECKER
conductor

OSM Chorus - Iwan Edwards

February 4 at 8:00 pm
Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts
Tickets: 842-2112 ~ Prices: \$20, \$30, \$50

Orchestre symphonique de Montréal


in collaboration with **LE DEVOIR**

G 2 THE GAZETTE, MONTREAL, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1991

Chemistry was right for Decker, Norman

"I must admit I was quite shaky," conductor Franz-Paul Decker said the other day. "God! This was the most difficult act of the opera. There were a lot of notes to play. How could we manage?"

Montreal Symphony patrons heard how on Monday night, when the former MSO music director took the helm of a concert performance of the second act of Wagner's lush and mystical final opera, *Parsifal*. With no less a soprano than Jessye Norman in top form as Kundry, the evening was the stuff of local history. *



ARTHUR KAPTAINIS
CLASSICAL MUSIC

REVIEW

MSO and cast combine to create great Parsifal


Montreal Symphony Orchestra with guest soloists Oskar Hillebrandt, baritone; Jessye Norman, soprano; and Siegfried Jerusalem, tenor, conducted by Franz-Paul Decker, at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier, last night.

Parsifal, Act II Wagner

ARTHUR KAPTAINIS
GAZETTE MUSIC CRITIC

The concert reading last night by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra of the 70-minute second act of Wagner's *Parsifal* was eagerly awaited for a few reasons. Most obviously, it was an opportunity to hear the world's ranking Wagnerian soprano — Jessye Norman — in a role she will soon play at the Metropolitan Opera. Veterans of the local scene knew it was also a chance to hear former MSO music director Franz-Paul Decker conduct music he loves at the height of an extraordinary Indian summer.

The list could go on, but suffice it to say that any musical, theatrical or spiritual expectation that could have been brought to Salle Wilfrid Pelletier was fully satisfied. It was a great night.



Acting amply but within the bounds of excess, la Norman was in majestic voice, filling the hall, as well as the role of Kundry, to the brim. Even her first anguished cries from the depths exerted strange magnetism, and with every added bar of music the portrait of the tormented temptress deepened.

She is not the first great Kundry, but perhaps a point of comparison with legendary ladies of the past is the high level of musicianship she sustains while wielding her big and darkly alluring voice. The syncopations of her Scene II aria were rendered exactly, not in Wagnerian approximates.

It would be wrong, however, to portray the evening strictly as Norman's. Tenor Siegfried Jerusalem gave a brilliant account of the title role, mild at his first entry and mighty at the end, as a three-dimensional Parsifal should be. His self-reproach was almost painfully life-like and his voice projected much more dynamically than it did four years ago in the same hall.

German baritone Oskar Hillebrandt was vocally firm and dramatically subtle as the wicked magician Klingsor, while a team of local flower-maidens ably dispatched their sometimes taxingly stratospheric parts. Even the all-female MSO Chorus made a vivid contribution with sparkling cascades of laughter.

For all of the above, much credit is owing to Decker and an orchestra that sounded inspired from beginning to end. It is rare to hear such understanding of Wagner's sound-world wedded to such impeccable execution.

Indeed, so convincingly propulsive was the drama and so softly evocative the tone painting that it was tempting to forget the musicians altogether. It is a paradoxical quality of great performances.

ORCHESTRA IN SPLENDID CONCERT

Symphony Society Earns
Real Success in Notable
Programme.

GIFTED SOLOIST.

By R. J.

Evidence that Vancouver Symphony Society, Allard de Ridder, conductor, is beginning to develop expressive strength, was forthcoming at the concert of the orchestra in Strand Theatre Sunday afternoon before a surprisingly large and spontaneously enthusiastic audience. Let us hope this will continue because, in the final analysis, first class performance is the only factor that counts. And all things considered, Mr. de Ridder and the musicians came closer to the ideal objective than they have ever done.

Despite its shortcomings the orchestra reveals a definite advance in its respective departments, even the sometimes despised woodwind family distinguishing itself to better purpose than usual and en passant perhaps the oboes will make a real effort to improve upon the quality of their tone in the days to come. Balance and blend on this occasion were much improved and if the trumpets will give us a little more restraint in forte passages next time, the outcome will no doubt relieve the conductor of considerable anxiety. Strings as usual gave an excellent account of themselves with refreshing unanimity of bowing and finer singing quality of tone than is their custom. On the purely technical side the results were generally safe although here and there timidities in certain inner voices made themselves manifest.

For the programme it is gratifying to state that it caught the fancy of the listeners because the music was invested with significant humanizing touches. Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony proved to be the real contribution of the afternoon, thanks to its manner of approach by the conductor and his associates.

PERSUASIVE DIRECTION.

There is a unifying force in the strongly rhythmical phrase of fateful import that appears in the introduction to the Fifth, reappears impressively near the end of the second movement, is suggested as in a whisper at the end of the slow movement, is proclaimed with further import in the introduction to the last movement, and recurs emphatically in the working out of the second theme of that movement. Tchaikovsky, it will be recalled, makes effective use of this device known as the "community of theme" and obviously the conductor realized its value because he took advantage of its possibilities.

Under Mr. de Ridder's persuasive direction the orchestra throughout entered into the spirit of the music with obvious appreciation of its varying moods. The introduction and Allegro with its two sharply contrasting subjects were acceptably stated while the romantic atmosphere of the second movement revealed many beautiful moments, strings especially etching the melodic lines with shimmering curves. Woodwind and solo horn on the other hand did much commendable work, while the lower brass and strings disclosed excellent qualities.

The poetical waltz theme in place of the conventional scherzo was also gracefully contrived, its flow being effectively interrupted occasionally by the re-entrance of the principal theme of the first movement. In the vigorous climax of the finale the orchestra, moreover, despite inevitable lapses in inner sections, rose to lofty peaks, thus ending a performance of sterling merit. Mr. de Ridder's conducting, it was significant to note, was more purposeful and imaginative than usual, probably for the reason that he made greater expressive use of his left hand, wisely putting less emphasis on baton technic.

SOLOIST'S SUCCESS.

Following the intermission the orchestra devoted the remainder of the programme to some of Wagner's remarkable operatic music, of special distinction being the performance of the Prelude to "Lohengrin" and Prelude to "Die Meistersinger." There was much to intrigue the mind in the treatment accorded the Lohengrin music which the strings sang with ethereal beauties of tone, suavity of phrasing and emotional feeling. In "Die Meistersinger" excerpt the outcome was even more successful in its interpretative appeal, march themes and other episodes being uncommonly well pictured. The finale with its towering climaxes was dramatically conceived. For its other Wagnerian number the orchestra gave the famous Prelude to "Parsifal," but unfortunately not with the same success because of the lack of rhythmic continuity, technical freedom and absence of the necessary spiritual atmosphere.

The assisting artiste on this programme was Avis Phillips, well-known Vancouver soprano, who was enthusiastically received for her traditionally correct Wagnerian singing of Senta's Ballad from "The Flying Dutchman" and Elizabeth's Prayer from "Tannhauser."

The soloist was in fine vocal trim and captured the mood of her music unmistakably, her visualization of the Senta air (in German) being notable for its fervency of utterance and emotional sweep in the final upsoaring passages. In Elizabeth's Prayer Miss Phillips sang with moving spiritual beauty, sublimity of expression, polished German diction and artistic poise. Orchestral accompaniments, particularly that of the horns and woodwind in Elizabeth's Prayer, were discreetly managed and invariably well controlled.

Music and Drama.

TWO PROFESSIONAL CRITICISMS.

The Royal Italian Band's Farewell Concert as It Impressed a Lady.

The opera house was last night very well filled with a decidedly enthusiastic audience to hear the Royal Italian band for the last time here this season.

Last night was by far the most interesting concert given in this city by the Italian band. The programme was of unquestioned interest, containing several favorites. The performance accorded to the Miserere from Il Trovatore by Sig. Palma and Marino left nothing to be desired. Parsifal, by Wagner, was a brilliant effort, a noticeable feature being the precision displayed in the delicate *lehr langsam* movement.

Tannhauser (overture) was undoubtedly the gem of the evening's performance and with it came the climax that would have made a much better finale than did the Carmen (sel.). The sextette from Lucia was received with tremendous applause, but impressed one with the fact of being too loud, as in places the sextette were almost producing the power of a band in themselves. The important fact of tone purity is sadly neglected in every instance and a distinction should be made in outdoor and indoor playing. Miss Heintzen's solo on the harp was much appreciated.

German selection was interpreted al-

**THE WINNIPEG
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**Wagner's Grand Opera
Parsifal**

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First Performances in Winnipeg.
Also Other Orchestral and
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Tues. Evg., 8.30, March 31

BOARD OF TRADE
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ARTHUR EGERTON
Conductor

NORRIE DUTHIE
Contralto

JOHN WATERHOUSE
Concertmaster

RONALD GIBSON
Accompanist

Full Word Book and Annotated
Program Notes

Box Office, Mason & Risch
Seats \$1.50, \$1.00, 75c
Motors for 10.15 p.m.

**ORCHESTRA TO CLOSE
SEASON WITH CONCERT**

The final program of the series of orchestral and choral concerts promoted by the Men's Musical club will be given by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, directed by Peter Temple, in the Playhouse theatre, Sunday, March 29.

The guest artist will be Flora Matheson Goulden.

The program is as follows:

1. Overture—"The Flying Dutchman" Wagner
2. Symphonie Pathetique
Allegro con gracia—March
..... Tschaikowsky
3. Symphonie Espagnole ... E. Lalo
Allegro—Lento—Finale.
Flora Matheson Goulden
4. Good Friday Music from
Parsifal Wagner
5. Four Dances from "Prince
Igor" Borodine

**WAGNER MUSIC
PROGRAM SUNG
BY STUDIO CHOIR**

The John McTaggart Studio Choir gave a concert of Wagnerian music Thursday evening, in the concert room of the Marlborough hotel. The choruses and solos, greatly appreciated by an audience of some 300, were taken from Wagner's operas, "The Flying Dutchman," "Lohengrin," "Tannhauser," "The Ring of the Nibelungs," "The Mastersingers," and "Parsifal."

The soloists, all students of Mr. McTaggart, were Helen Dallas and Helen Tennent, sopranos; Florence Rawlinson, contralto; Ernest G. Burrows and John Rowson, tenors, and Maurice Head.

The accompanists were Ruth Stephens, A.R.C.M., and Allan Vickers, L.R.A.M., A.C.C.O. Mr. McTaggart directed, and preceded the musical program with a short talk on Richard Wagner.

From "The Flying Dutchman," the ladies voices were heard in the Spinning Chorus, with Catherine Rose singing the part of Dame Mary. The male voices followed with the Sailors' Chorus.

Miss Tennent sang Elsa's Dream, from "Lohengrin," after which the choir sang the familiar Wedding Chorus, and Mr. Rowson, Lohengrin's Narration.

In the group of selections from "Tannhauser," Elizabeth's Greeting to the Hall of Song was given by Miss Dallas; Hail, Bright Abode was sung by the choir; the male voices sang the popular Pilgrims' Chorus, and Miss Tennent, Elizabeth's Prayer.

Two operas, "The Rhinegold" and "The alkyrie," were presented from "The Ring of the Nibelungs." From the former the ladies voices chose the Rhine Daughters' Chorus and Miss Rawlinson selected Erda's Warning of Wotan. Mr. Rowson sang Siegmund's Spring Song from the Valkyrie, and part of the Magic Fire music was given during the singing of Brynhilda's Entreaty and Wotan's Farewell, done by Miss Dallas and Mr. Head.

Mr. Burrows performed Walter's First Song Before the Guild, from "The Mastersingers," and the concluding number of the program was The Love Feast of the Holy Grail, from "Parsifal," sung by the choir.

No molly-coddling for youth orchestra

Edmonton Youth Orchestra
Richard Eaton
Singers Chamber
Choir
Alexandra Munn,
piano
Eileen Armstrong,
organ
Convocation Hall
Tonight at 8

By CLAYTON LEE
Conductor Michael Massey doesn't believe in molly-coddle. Sunday night, in Convocation Hall, he guided the huge forces of the Edmonton Youth Orchestra through a program that a youth orchestra ought not to be playing. But play it they did, and stirringly so.

Solid, sparkling and syncopated, the early 20th-century jazz idioms and clashing harmonies of Constant Lambert's *The Rio Grande* (to a poem by Sacheverell Sitwell) for orchestra, chorus and piano, with massive percussion instruments, were firmly established with Alexandra Munn particularly effervescent in the extroverted key-

board part. She's solid as concrete and seemed to anchor both chorus and orchestra in what could easily pass as a one-movement piano concerto with voices. More depth and tension was needed in climactic portions and the chamber choir seemed too far back to be entirely effective. But, it was musically well-conceived, well sustained and, in this small hall, roof lifting. More collaboration between choirs and orchestras is needed in this city.

Whatever tension was missing in the Lambert was picked up in the Leos Janacek "Taras Bulba" Symphonic Rhapsody After Gogol, the orchestra responding alertly to Massey's scholarly and intense delineation. In the three-movement work, strings, good all night — but strangely with some intonation problems in this work — excelled particularly with wide arcs of richly resonant sound, the whole orchestra digging in for truly dramatic and striking effects. The irregular rhythms of *Prophecy and Death* held no terror for these attentive players. The work received added

weight from the organ, adroitly played by Eileen Armstrong.

* The program opened with the contemplative and ritualistic Prelude to Richard Wagner's last opera, *Parsifal*, and here first violins and cellos, beautifully in tune, provided a rich, singing texture. The Dresden Amen was hurried just a little, but strong, seamless brass and graduated tone coloring from balanced sections accompanied the work.

Debussy's *Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun* was not quite serene enough, and it seemed stiff. It needed a lighter and more relaxed treatment to create the impressionism intended, the swan gliding peacefully, cutting smooth ripples through the water.

The concert is repeated tonight at eight.

Vancouver OPERA HOUSE
Saturday, October 13
Messrs. Martin & Emery's majestic presentation of the great Sacred Festival Drama,
PARSIFAL
The most imposing production ever sent on tour.
Curtain rises at 7:45 sharp. Prices, \$2, \$1.50, \$1, 75c; gallery 50c. Box office opens Thursday, Oct. 11.

PARSIFAL AND THE PIANOLA

We have for *The Pianola* the principal selections from Wagner's great music-drama "PARSIFAL"

This music has been arranged under the supervision of Mr. Alfred Hertz, who came to the United States especially to conduct the performances of *Parsifal* at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, and who is universally recognized as one of the world's greatest interpreters of this remarkable opera.

The music is published on rolls, and includes the following selections:—

- Tone-picture, No. 1—"Prelude."
- Tone-picture, No. 2—"Amfortes."
- Tone-picture, No. 3—"Das Holzhuhn." ("The Sacred Relics.")
- Tone-picture, No. 4—"Der Schwan." ("The Swan.")
- Tone-picture, No. 5—"Einzug in die Gralsburg." ("The Entry into the Castle of the Grail.")
- Tone-picture, No. 6—"Das Liebesspiel." ("The Eucharist.")
- Tone-picture, No. 7—"Klingsor and Parsifal."
- Tone-picture, No. 8—"Die Blumen-Mädchen." ("The Flower Maidens.")
- Tone-picture, No. 9—"Hörzeleide." ("Heart's Affliction.")
- Tone-picture, No. 10—"Charfreitag's-Zaubers." ("Good Friday Spell.")
- Tone-picture, No. 11—"Titirel's Todtenfeier." ("Titirel's Funeral.")
- Tone-picture, No. 12—"Die Erlösung." ("The Redemption.")

No work of this kind has ever been attempted before, and no work of this kind would be possible were it not for that wonderful invention, *The Pianola*.

We are giving daily readings of the *Parsifal* music in our Recital Room which are of interest not only to owners of Pianolas, but to music-lovers generally.

The Pianola is Purchasable by Moderate Monthly Payments.

The MASON & RISCH PIANO CO., LIMITED
32 KING STREET WEST.

EVENING OF PARSIFAL.

Dr. Bruce Gordon Kingsley, Eminent English Musician, Will Be Heard.

A grand opera recital of *Parsifal*, the world's masterpiece, will be given next Tuesday night at the Metropolitan Methodist church by the eminent English musician, Dr. Bruce Gordon Kingsley. This is an event of great attraction, Dr. Kingsley being both a musician of unsurpassed attainments and as well a master of oratory. His method of dealing with the subject is both interesting and unique. The audience is conducted through a great opera, scene by scene and act by act, and so vivid is the portrayal that a performance such as he gives is conceded by both public and critics to equal the grand opera rendition itself. Exquisitely colored views, nearly one hundred in number, painted by a master hand, add to the beauty of the entertainment, and a musical programme is rendered upon the piano by Dr. Kingsley, which contains the most beautiful and dramatic excerpts from the immortal masterpiece. The performance will be something to be remembered.

22. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 8 Sep. 1906, p. 10 [picture]
and 18 Sep. 1906, p. 11 [review]

MUSIC AND DRAMA

"Parsifal," without music and somewhat changed from Wagner's great work, is a beautiful and most elaborate play to witness. Its action moves on an exalted level; it utilizes not one of the baser sentiments. Like "The Sign of the Cross," it is a touchstone showing whether the theatre-going public will or will not accept theatrical recreation of a distinctly religious and ethical kind. Last night's representation at the Auditorium brought out a fairly large and deeply appreciative audience of Winnipeg people.

Parsifal is the story of the "Holy Grail," that mysterious cup which to mediaeval poets had a very real existence, the cup with which tradition says, Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood from the pierced Saviour's side. Both the grail and the spear which pierced the Saviour's side are but for the holy and pure to look upon. He in whose heart is impurity or malice may not see the holy vessel. In the north of Spain, in the castle of the mountain of Monsalvat the holy grail and spear rest in the keeping of the Ecclesiastical Knights of the Holy Grail. Chief of the knights is Amfortas, with whose accession to kingly power and commandship of the knightly company the play opens.

In a neighboring castle is the malevolent knight Klingsor, servant to the Prince of Darkness, and hopeful that by gaining possession of the spear he may weaken the arm of the Knights of the Holy Grail. The new king is tempted by a fair woman, Kundry, who by sorcery is in the power of Klingsor. Forgetting his sacred duties, the king's passions are inflamed, and he is powerless to protect the spear when Klingsor seizes it. While struggling ineffectually to keep the sacred lance, Klingsor plunges it into the forsworn king's side and he is no less grievously wounded in body than in spirit.

While the knights are sorrowing the priest of the company reminds them that prophecy has it that again the spear shall be restored by means of a simple, pure-minded youth. Thus in the first act the whole play is foreshadowed.

Parsifal, a guileless youth of noble blood, but skilled only to shepherd sheep, is introduced to the knights, and for his bravery in overcoming a magician who is servant to Klingsor he receives his spurs.

In the most powerful of the four scenes of the play Klingsor in his gloomy castle is seen having speech with the Prince of Darkness. He is told that his own soul is already forfeit, but that Satan himself shall aid him to overcome the purity of Parsifal, who alone can take the spear from his hands. Kundry, the beautiful, is called into the black knight's presence and given the mission to overcome Parsifal. She resists, as a previous sight of the knight "sans peur et sans reproche" had awakened in her nobler feelings. But by sorcery her will is beaten down, and she consents to exercise her charms to the undoing of Parsifal.

In a magical garden of flowers, full of sweet odors, he is waylaid by ravishing flower damsels, led by Kundry herself, who tempt him. But in vain. The simple-minded Parsifal resists their blandishments, knowing that passion is not love. The black knight, angered at the stout resistance, hurls the spear at Parsifal, hoping to harm him. But the sacred relic may not hurt the pure in heart, and falls harmless into the possession of Parsifal.

Calling down curses upon the knight, Kundry hopes to blast him, but at her words Klingsor and all the products of his sorcery fall in ruin, and Parsifal escapes to wander for ten years, seeking the road to Monsalvat.

The last scene depicts the return of the faithful knight, who brings with him the sacred spear. In it is spiritual healing for the wounded and repentant king, and joy for the knights. Kundry, released from the magical spell of the dead Klingsor, regains her womanliness and learns the purity of the flame of love.

The spear regained, the holy grail may be again displayed to the languishing eyes of the knights, with which scene the story closes.

The duration of the play was four hours, and the intermissions were brief. The play demanded and compelled sustained attention, and this the audience gave. The nobility of Parsifal and Mr. John Lane Connor's reverent portrayal of a sublimely pure hearted knight at times disarmed the spectators, who would not if they could have looked with coolly critical eyes at the artistic merits or demerits of the work. At times the play mounts to what is almost religious service, and for this reason possibly not all the admiration and satisfaction of the public was converted into clapping of hands.

Mr. Dvorak's representation of Klingsor, the evil knight, is exceedingly powerful, and stage effects have not been spared to aid him in his portrayal of a malevolent disposition. Another part which stands out above the meritorious level of the whole cast is Miss Virginia's Keating's "Kundry."

Tonight and twice tomorrow the drama will be repeated.

23. *Vancouver Daily Province*
15 Oct. 1908, p. 8

MUSIC AND DRAMA

Parsifal.

There is a vast difference between Wagner's opera and the festival play presented at the Opera House on Saturday night. If ever music was needed to help along a drama it was in Parsifal. As a spectacular production it was excellent, the scenery was magnificent and the electrical effects were probably the most elaborate ever seen on the stage of the Opera House. But how one misses the different motives of the great composer. Imbue Klingsor, that black knight of necromancy, with a bass voice as deep as the arch-plains of evil he projects; give to Parsifal the tenor solos indicative of guilelessness. Then again Kundry Herzelede endowed with song and Wagner's music would have been twice as effective.

Apart from this great want the production is all that could be desired. Mr. Dvorak as Klingsor, the black knight, gave a splendid interpretation of the part. Mr. Connor as Parsifal, by voice and gesture, was the simple shepherd to the life. Miss Keating as Kundry, the fairest of all women, played admirably, and in her scene with Parsifal in act three made one wish more than ever for the alluring strains of Wagner. The rest of the cast was well above the average, some of the knights, by their imperfect articulation, and some of the ladies, by their apparent unfamiliarity with their knightly surroundings, struck a jarring note. Altogether the production was a notable one, and if the applause was not always as hearty as the actors by their three curtain calls desired, the reception of Parsifal was more than cordial.

24. *Vancouver Province*, 12 July 1913, p. 18

Maple Leaf

HOUSE OF BIG FEATURES

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Wednesday and Thursday, July 16-17

Wagner's Operatic Masterpiece

PARSIFAL

3 REELS 3 REELS

One of the greatest triumphs of Motion Pictures. Bigger and better than the Stage Production. Produced at the enormous cost of \$50,000.

SPECIAL MUSIC.



Scene from Parsifal, Auditorium, Sept. 17, 18 and 19.

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The Great Concert of the Year.

Parsifal

WALTER DAMROSCH, and the N.Y.
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA of Sixty
and eight vocalists.

MASSEY HALL | TUES., APRIL 5

Reserved Seats, \$2.00, \$1.50, \$1.00. Sale be-
gins Thursday next.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

Mr. Heinrich Klingensfeld gave an interesting lecture-recital last night before a select audience at the Conservatory of Music Hall on "Wagner and his operas." The development of the Wagnerian opera from "Rienzi," when the composer followed the model of Meyerbeer, to the elaborate music dramas of the composer's later period, was clearly traced and commented upon, and stress was laid upon the intimate connection between the words and the music, and the logical following of the dramatic action which Wagner finally attained. The master's superb orchestral technique was also touched upon, and the legends which provided the dramatic basis of his operas were related. In illustration of the lecture Mr. Klingensfeld played upon the Aeolian Orchestrelle the overture to the "Flying Dutchman," the prelude to "Lohengrin," and excerpts from the "Walkuere," "Parsifal," and "Die Meistersinger."



Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony Orchestra of sixty players, with eight vocalists, arrive in Toronto this afternoon from Rochester, and will present the music of "Parsifal" at Massey Hall this evening. Wherever the orchestra has appeared it has met with an enthusiastic reception both from the critics and the public. Mr. Damrosch is said to be an admirable speaker, and his analysis of "Parsifal" with his comments is one of the delightful features of the performance. The splendid orchestra is better drilled in the "Parsifal" music than any other organization in the country. The vocalists have been selected with a special regard for their suitability for the parts. Madame Mihr-Hardy, the principal soprano, an artiste of very fine voice, takes the Kundry song in the second act. Mr. Francis Archambault, the baritone, is a French-Canadian, who is fast gaining fame and reputation in New York. The programme will open with the prelude to "Die Keistersinger," and the following will be the music from "Parsifal" that will be presented:— Act I., Prelude, processional march of the Knights of the Holy Grail, and the invisible chorus; Amfortas's lament and the Divine Prophecy (Mr. Archambault). Act II., Parsifal and the Flower Maidens in Klingsor's Magic Garden; Kundry's Song (Mme. Mihr-Hardy). Act III., "Good Friday Spell," violin solo (Mr. David Mannes). Parsifal becomes King of the Grail and heals the wound of Amfortas (Mr. Beddoe).



MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

One may hazard to speak for the large and brilliant representation of the musical community attendant last night at the Princess Theatre in acknowledging a debt of gratitude to the Savage Opera Company for their admirable presentation for the first time here of Verdi's "Othello," although it was brought out so far back as 1887 at La Scala, Milan. With this opera Verdi broke the silence which he had maintained for sixteen long years after his offering of "Aida," which the world believed had terminated his musical career. "Othello" made an instantaneous success at Milan and for a time throughout Italy. It was acclaimed as Verdi's masterpiece, although more sober judgment has since hesitated to endorse the enthusiastic verdict which was passed on the spur of the moment. The criticism of to-day admits, however, that it is a work of wondrous power coming from so veteran a composer, and that it has a more logical dramatic musical setting than that of any of the operas of Verdi prior to "Aida." The performance made a most powerful impression upon the audience of last night. The company put forward their best singing and acting cast, and there being no standard of comparison by which to judge the interpretation the hearers were keenly susceptible to the influence of a first impression. The company, moreover, sang the music *con amore*, partly for the reason perhaps that they have not had to appear in it hundreds of times, as in the case of such popular operas as "Trovatore" and "Carmen" and other invariable works of the standard repertoire. The book, written by Arigo Boito, not only a versatile librettist and poet, but also the musician who composed "Mefistofele," produced in Toronto many years ago, suffers somewhat from the assumption that everybody is familiar with the tragedy of Shakspeare, and in consequence suppresses a number of incidents that are absolutely necessary for the proper understanding of the action. The whole of the first act of the Shakspearian tragedy is omitted, and the opera opens with a descriptive sketch of the storm that Othello meets with on his passage to Cyprus, followed by the beautiful fire music sung by the chorus gathered around the camp fire. Next we have the temptation of Rodrigo by Cassio and the resultant brawl between Cassio and Montano and Cassio's degradation. This is succeeded by an exquisite love duet between Othello and Desdemona under the light of the stars, one of the most enchanting inspirations that came to the composer, full of tenderness and

poetry. One may mention in this act the drinking song which is strikingly original and unique in character. In the second act the first number of importance is the "Credo" for Iago, something not found in Shakspeare, in which Iago in a soliloquy reveals his treacherous and malignant nature. The music here is well suited to the character in its sombre color. A charming morceau is the chorus with accompaniment suggestive of mandolins, which the Cyprians sing before Desdemona. The handkerchief quartette in this act may be described as little more than a double duet between Desdemona and Othello on the one hand and Emilia and Iago on the other, which while harmonizing does not in any way coalesce. This number may cause the admirers of the early Verdi to sigh for the frank melody and seizing power of the quartette in "Rigoletto." Then we have the narration of the dream of Cassio told by Iago in order to suggest to Othello the infidelity of Desdemona. Dramatically the musical setting is wonderfully faithful in its suggestion of the vile thought. At the opening of the third act the librettist has invented an episode which is perhaps open to objection. Othello, with Desdemona by his side, receives a messenger from the republic of Venice, and while replying to his address in a series of asides heaps reproaches upon her, and finally in a fit of fury dashes her to the ground at his feet. One must not pass by the dramatic monologue for Othello at the opening of this act, which is powerful and mournful in interest. The last act is short and covers the interview of Desdemona with Emilia, the willow song, the prayer or "Ave Maria" and the murder. The willow song has a strange charm in its reflective mournfulness and apparent artlessness, while the "Ave Maria" is an inspiration of elevation and purity of style and thought. The murder scene is brief and passionate; and appropriately without any special melodic interest. In this opera Verdi departed from his early method. The music is continuous without any well defined divisions or pauses, and the orchestration is an elastic and not obtrusive background and support for the voices, glowing in subdued colors, but very rarely strident. Taking the opera as a whole, it is a powerful and virile composition, notable for its fineness of workmanship.


In the roles of Othello, Iago and Desdemona, Messrs. Sheehan, Goff and Miss Rennyson respectively altogether eclipsed their former efforts in the previous operas. They sang and acted "con amore" and with surprising fervor. Miss Rennyson was in splendid voice and altogether intensified the impression she made as Elsa as a

thoroughly satisfying artist. Mr. Sheehan as Othello revealed an abandon which was denied him in the more exalted personality of Lohengrin, and Mr. Goff was admirable in his exposition both vocally and histrionically of the perfidious Iago. Praise is due, moreover, to the excellent manner in which Miss Newman sang the comparatively minor part of Emilia. The chorus sang with much spirit and with exceptional truth of intonation.

At the matinee the theatre was crowded at the representation of Verdi's "Trovatore," in which the principal characters were sustained by Miss Ivell, Miss Brooks and Messrs. Wogener and Deane. "Othello" was admirably directed by Mr. Emanuel, while Mr. Schenck was conductor of "Trovatore."


PUCCINI'S "LA BOHEME."

FIRST PRODUCTION IN TORONTO
LAST NIGHT.

 The Story Lacking in Dramatic Interest
—The Musical Setting a Work of
Skillful Illustration.

Henry Murger's novel or sketch, "Scenes de la vie de Boheme," gained a great vogue at one time in France as a fascinating narrative of the vicissitudes of fortune in the early life of a group of Bohemian artists, whose modest beginnings compelled them to reside in the Quartier Latin. The book is interesting in its description of the alternations of comparative poverty and affluence that gave variety and spice to the life of these Bohemians, and also to the well-differentiated characterizations of the personages portrayed. Love enters into the attic life of the Bohemians, and the pathetic interest of the story is found in the death from consumption of Mimi, the beloved of Rudolph, the poet of the small circle of friends. The story is one that does not lend itself to effective operatic treatment, there being neither plot nor a conflict of opposing interests in it. Two Italian composers, however, set an arrangement of the book to music, namely, Puccini and Leoncavallo. Both were probably led astray by their sympathy with a very clever representation of artistic Bohemian life. Puccini's setting was heard last night at the Princess Theatre as presented by the Savago Opera Company. As might have been expected, the general feeling was one of disappointment. Puccini's music is appropriately fitted to the humorous aspects of the story, and also to the few pathetic incidents, but he has been unable to put interest and life into scenes that have no continuous interest and no dramatic intensity. It is said that Murger's Bohemians were actually pen pictures of real personages, who in after life became successful in winning fame and fortune in the literary and artistic world of Paris, and that the author was included in his own characterizations. In the early scenes of the opera Puccini's has felicitously reflected in his music the recklessness and the humorous aspect of Parisian Bohemian life, and he has also suggestively depicted the serious situations. But he has not been able to overcome the fatal defect of want of dramatic interest in the adaptation of the book. Probably no composer could succeed in musically illustrating in an interesting manner a series of episodes in what may be considered everyday life. The cast was an excellent one, including Messrs. Sheehan, Goff, Boyle, Bennett, and the Misses Rennyson and Ivell. In the hands of less competent artists the opera would have probably been received with expressions of disapprobation; as it was their efforts saved the situation and commanded for the opera respectful attention. This afternoon the company will repeat "Lohengrin" and to-night the engagement will close with the double bill of "I Pagliacci" and "Cavalleria Rusticana."

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

 The culminating event of the week of opera at the Princess Theatre in point of the novelty, the magnitude and the interest of the offering was reached last night, when Wagner's famous music drama, "The Valkyrie," was presented for the first time in Toronto before a brilliant audience that left nothing but standing room in the auditorium. The unusually large gathering of our representative musical community must be ascribed largely to intense curiosity to hear a work about which so much has been written and of which portions of the music have been magnificently performed in concert form by the great American symphony orchestras. The repellent nature of the symbolic story that Wagner selected in enforcement of his idea counted for naught against the potent attraction of the music. It is understood that Wagner sought to show the supremacy of the moral law, and in a secondary way, in the punishment of Brunnhilde, the duty of obedience to the divine command. Mr. Henry W. Savago in undertaking to include the opera in his touring repertory embarked upon a great enterprise, one, indeed, which a few years ago would have been considered impracticable or ridiculous. But, considering the production of last night and the patronage which it commanded, his daring may be said to have been justified by results. The performance was one that fulfilled all reasonable expectations in regard to staging, dramatic power and musical exposition. On very good authority it can be stated that the scenic setting was as elaborate and picturesque as that of comparatively recent presentations in London, Munich and Dresden, while as to the principal singers the cast compared favorably in general excellence with those of the occasions referred to. It would be gross flattery to say that the ideal of one's imagination of the music was realized in the production. To have accomplished this it would have been necessary to take a single instance, for Mr. Savago not only to have had a Nordica as Brunnhilde, but eight other Nordicas to sing as her attendant Valkyrie maidens, while a Thomas orchestra would have been required to play the music of the wild ride through the air. Putting aside such fancies, the company interpreted the opera in a way that enabled one to appreciate and enjoy its general scope and its characteristic features both as to its striking music and the picturesque power of its episodes in action. The principal singers acquitted themselves admirably in their most exacting roles. The singing is mostly of a declamatory nature, unrelieved by choral interludes or moments of such restful and frank melody as are found in the composer's "Lohengrin." Their music

is, moreover, not always vocal, and is often excessively difficult of just intonation. Mr. Francis MacLennan as Siegmund, the Volsung hero, gave a vivid dramatic portrayal, and sang with impressive feeling and point and with an appealing quality of tone. From the moment when in the midst of the raging storm he enters the forest-recessed hut of Hunding and is given shelter by Sieglinde, the Volsung heroine, his work was marked by the sincerity and earnestness which convince. And in the progress of the action, in the awakening of guilty love between the couple, in the fateful scene with Brunnhilde, who tells him that his death is impending, he fully sustained the same high standard of histrionic and musical achievement. The Canadian tenor, in fact, won a pronounced triumph with an audience of his own countrymen—the most critical of hearers in such circumstances. His chief success was in the beautiful Spring Song in the first act, that entrancing proclamation of the union of Spring and Love. As Sieglinde, Miss Gertrude Rennyson was most satisfying in voice and interpretation. Her expression was true and her style free from mannerisms. Her chief opportunity was in the duet with Siegmund in the first act. She did much with music in which there is little to appeal to popular admiration. And Wotan, the god, who has to sacrifice his own offspring in obedience to the law insisted upon by the goddess Fricka, the guardian of marriage vows, was effectively figured and expressed by Mr. Otley Cranston and his sonorous and rich bass voice. Miss Margaret Crawford was not quite so happy in her declamatory role of Fricka. Probably few could sing the ungrateful intervals of her music with uniform accuracy. A similar remark applies to the calls of the eight Valkyrie maidens. Dramatically the weird, thrilling effects were secured; musically, the scene was imperfect. Miss Rita Newman, on the other hand, managed to preserve beauty of tone and accuracy in her solo cry or call with a gratifying measure of success, and the charm of her sympathetic voice was specially manifest in the duet with Wotan, in her pathetic appeal when he dooms her to the loss of her divinity. She invested this latter episode with touching pathos. Hunding is really not an important personage, except in his influence on the tragic outcome of the drama, but Mr. Robert K. Parker, who has an excellent voice, saved it from musical insignificance by his singing in the opening act.

The orchestra was scarcely powerful enough in strings to give effect to the extraordinary and startling "Ride of the Valkyries." A few of the players, in fact, were dispensed with owing to the encroachment on the space reserved to the musicians by the overflowing audience.

The dramatic plot can be judiciously passed by. No satisfying or defensible explanation could be given of it within the limits of a newspaper report. The production of the opera will undoubtedly be recorded as the most important musical event of many years.

*** PARSIFAL NOT POPULAR.**

The English production of "Parsifal," it seems, is going to be a white elephant for Henry W. Savage. Owing to disappointing patronage its New York stay was cut by three weeks. Then it was sent back to Boston for a return engagement, but the returns have been poor. Mr. Savage will lose a fortune in the venture. "Parsifal" at the Metropolitan, New York, is also a failure this season. At its first performance (this season Mme. Nordica made her debut as Kundry, a role which she is said to have regarded as the biggest undertaking of her career. Despite this there was a small gathering at the Metropolitan Thanksgiving night. The critics agree that Nordica rose to heights, but could not meet the dramatic requirements of the role because Kundry is three persons, not one, and as such is the most baffling character study on the lyric stage.

*** Dr. Ham's lecture on "Parsifal" at the Conservatory of Music April 10 will be divided as follows:—The legend of the Holy Grail; the Drama, Parsifal opens a new phase of Wagnerian art; the music of Wagner's latest and highest inspiration. The orchestral selections will include the Vorspiel to act I, and the following scenes: Amfortas, the Swan, Consecration of the Grail, "Das Liebesmahl"; in act II., Klingsor and Kundry, flower scene, "Herzeliede"; act III., Good Friday music. Seats may be reserved at Tyrell's book store.**

33. Rubin Goldmark lectures on Wagner and *Parsifal* in Canada, 1905–1906

Winnipeg Daily Tribune, 22 Feb. 1905, p. 4

WAGNER IN WINNIPEG

MR. RUBIN GOLDMARK

Lecture Recital

PARSIFAL

Y. M. C. A. AUDITORIUM.

Wednesday, February 22nd

Reserved seats 50c. Plan and tickets at Barrowclough & Semple's, Portage Avenue.

Toronto Globe, 15 April 1905, p. 15
Goldmark Lecture on "Parsifal."

A descriptive lecture on "Parsifal," by the distinguished pianist, and well-known Wagnerian historian, Mr. Rubin Goldmark, will be given at the Princess Theatre on Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Dr. Goldmark will deal with the dramatic, moral and religious motifs which lie behind, not only "Parsifal," but the legends of the "Quest of the Holy Grail," upon which "Parsifal" is based. Mr. Goldmark uses the pianoforte to illustrate the guiding motifs.

Montreal Gazette, 19 April 1905, p. 3

The Goldmark Lecture.

A "Parsifal" lecture that is without charge is to be given at His Majesty's tomorrow afternoon, April 20, at 3 o'clock, by Mr. Rubin Goldmark, who precedes in all cities in which "Parsifal" is billed. Invitation tickets to this lecture, which includes illustration of the "Parsifal" motifs on the piano, are now being given out at the box office of that theatre on request.

The "Parsifal" motifs are illustrated on the piano. This lecture recital is offered by Mr. Henry W. Savage for the purpose of explaining "Parsifal" to those students of Wagner's music-drama, who have not had an opportunity to see its production and to fit his audience for a proper reception of the masterpiece of the greatest musician that ever lived, when it is finally brought to Montreal in its English form. As Mr. Goldmark combines not only the gifts of elocution to those of the historian, with an admirable technique as a pianist, his audience can follow Wagner through the legendary and religious lore of "Parsifal," and hear the gradual evolution of the musical motifs as they are fashioned into immortal musical passages. Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Chicago paid tribute to Mr. Goldmark's interpretive capabilities, and credit him with an exhaustive acquaintance with the music of "Parsifal" and its accompanying legends.

Vancouver Daily Province, 15 May 1906, p. 16

Engagement of Rubin Goldmark by the Woman's Musical Club for May 9, 10, 11, 14, and 15, at Labor Hall, at 8:30 p.m. Subjects, Rheingold, Die Walkure, Siegfried, Goetterdaemmerung, and Parsifal. Single admission 50c. Tickets for sale at Dyke, Evans & Callaghan's.

An important event in musical circles will take place in Goldsmith's hall on Friday evening, when Mr. Rubin Goldmark will give an illustrated lecture upon Wagnerian Music: Its Inner Meaning and Scope, and will explain verbally and by piano selections, The Walkure, or as it is more generally called, The Valkyrie. Mr. Goldmark is a noted interpreter and exponent of Wagner and has made a name for himself in Germany as well as in Montreal, where he has been heard on several occasions and is always greatly appreciated.

Ottawa Citizen, 5 Jan. 1904, p. 9

GOLDSMITH'S HALL.
Under the Distinguished Patronage and presence of Her Excellency, Countess Gre
Thursday, Nov. 23rd, 8 15 p.m.
MR. RUBIN GOLDMARK,
In a Lecture Recital.
Subject: Tristan and Isolde.
Tickets—35c and 50c.

Ottawa Citizen, 22 Nov. 1905, p. 10

PARSIFAL LECTURE

Mr. Rubin Goldmark Delivers Interesting Story of Wagner's Great Music-Drama.

CROWDED THEATRE LISTENS.

Stirring Incidents of Masterpiece Reviewed, Illustrated by Motifs From Score.

Two thousand auditors, the majority of whom were ladies, heard Mr. Rubin Goldmark lecture yesterday afternoon at His Majesty's Theatre, on "Parsifal."

Mr. Goldmark is not a stranger to Montreal, and that fact, added to the intense desire of all true students to add to their knowledge, led to Mr. Goldmark being received with an audience, which, in the main, was attentive, but which, unfortunately, included just sufficient restless beings to spoil the interest with which some of the ultramontanes desired to hear all that was to be said. There was a restless sea of indecisive femininity which rolled and surged up and down the incline of the balcony in what seemed to be a never ending action of desire. Whether it was that the seats were uncomfortable or whether it was that the wonderful story of the guileless fool stirred their emotion to such a pitch that they were resolved to be off and immediately doing, cannot be told, but there was some evident force that impelled a considerable number of the fair ladies to shift from seat to seat and sometimes leave the middle of a row to the great inconvenience and serious discomfort of others who were more thoroughly versed in the great virtue of repose. Some wicked spirit suggested that vanity at seeing finer bonnets in the body of the theatre below stirred these women into a mood of desire.

Mr. Goldmark's lecture was of stirring interest and his illustrations by means of excerpts from the music played on the piano aided greatly in an intelligent understanding of the story. Told in charming language and emphasized here and there by themes and motifs from the score, the lecture proved to be a worthy preparation for the coming of Col. Savage's company which next week will present in Montreal for the first time, the sacred music-drama, which, until recently, was only for those fortunate enough to be able to attend the festivals at Bayreuth.

As is known, the story of "Parsifal" is based upon the many wonderful tales of the quest of the Holy Grail, and probably Wagner was immediately indebted to Wolfram von Eschenbach for the version of the quest on which "Parsifal" rests. The story of the search for the Grail was one of the most entrancing romances of the earlier Christian centuries. Told in song and verse to knightly men, it was a story to incite to splendid deeds. It gives the great lesson that there is no life without love, and that to love is to suffer. Upon this theme Wagner has reared a great structure, which, no matter what its faults may be, must

impress the searcher and he who gropes for truth of the power and spirit of the builder.

Mr. Goldmark outlined the story of the drama and carried the listeners through a splendid description of the three acts of the work. With the story were incorporated portions of the score and the marvellous effects obtained by Wagner were admirably illustrated. Mr. Goldmark pointed out a reminiscence of "Lohengrin," in the first act of "Parsifal." The use of the sacred swans showing unmistakable relation both physically and musically. The Bell motif and the Grail theme are introduced here and later at the procession of the Knights of the Grail comes the cry for salvation, the most important theme of the earlier portion of the drama.

At the beginning of Act II, the listener is impressed with a contrast. The first act is of sanctuary, the second of the wicked world. The first important motif of the second act is that of Kundry, the demon. This is a wild tempestuous theme that is fairly hurled out by the orchestra and is repeated no less than fifteen times during the course of the production. After the fantastic introduction comes the motif of enchantment, telling of the subtle powers of Klingsor, the magician. On the story runs through various themes, that of the Flower Maidens of Kundry's wiles, of the woman's curse, and finally to the great transformation when the enchanted gardens of Klingsor are turned into a desert, and Parsifal goes forth on his search. In the third act comes the Good Friday motif, a goodly portion of which Mr. Goldmark played to the evident appreciation of the listeners. Then is told the story of the search, the arrival of Parsifal at Monsalvat, followed by the theme of Benediction then that of "Parsifal, the Anointed." In the final scene, that in the temple of the Grail, the three great themes are incorporated and the whole terminates with a wonderful crescendo in the psalm of salvation.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

* The "Parsifal" advance sale of seats, which opened yesterday morning at 9 o'clock at the Princess Theatre, will take the record in receipts for any opera performance given in this city. Before midnight on Wednesday there was a long line of people extending from the doors of the theatre along King street west, who by 7 o'clock yesterday morning were reinforced by new arrivals, until the crowd passed Simcoe street and turned south. Although the box office opened as early as 9 o'clock, the demand for seats continued throughout the day until past 4 o'clock. As there will be four performances of "Parsifal," the sale, although surprisingly large, has not exhausted the seating capacity of the house, and will be resumed this morning. The ticket speculators were in evidence yesterday, but their operations were discounted by the management of the theatre, who made it known that it was unnecessary to pay a premium on prices for seats.

The receipts for the "Parsifal" performances approached very near \$10,000. The result will encourage Mr. Savage to bring the "Ring des Nibelungen" here should he carry out his project of producing the tetralogy in English next season.

E. R. Parkhurst.

MUSIC AND DRAMA.

Season in Montreal Is Fast Approaching the End.

Apart from the glamor which those of the Wagnerian cult may desire to throw over it, the visit of "Parsifal" was undoubtedly the most striking event of the local season. That the theatre was not filled at every performance was, doubtless, a surprise to the many lovers of the school who did attend, but it may cheer their hearts to learn that the financial returns of the Montreal dates, at least, equalled those of Toronto. There is no doubt but that a different arrangement of the prices would have netted considerably more money than was earned here. The public generally evinced a desire to attend the performances, but when, in addition to being obliged to attend at inconvenient hours, the best seats in the house ran to \$3 each, it was quite a proposition to fill such a big house, especially when it was a case of another musical attraction following closely on the heels of Paderewski, who came here at exactly the same scale of prices. There were good reasons why the Savage concern should desire good prices for the production. It costs about \$12,000 every seven days that the Wagner sacred festival play

is maintained on the road. In order to make ends meet it is necessary to bring \$2,000 into the treasury on each of the six days the music-drama is given to the public. When it is also considered what a great amount must have been expended before "Parsifal," in the English tongue saw light of day, the necessity of obtaining good prices for each seat is quite evident.

"ROYAL" Egyptian Cigarettes,
15c a box.

SALE FOR PARSIFAL.

Opening Day Record at His Majesty's Beaten.

Records were broken at the "Parsifal" advance sale, which began at His Majesty's yesterday morning.

As soon as the box office opened, the whole of the spacious lobby of the theatre was crowded uncomfortably for hours, with a considerable overflow well into Guy street.

The sale continued briskly throughout the day, there being a long line in the lobby up to the closing hour of the sale. This large advance sale in connection with the unprecedented number of mail orders which have been received, indicate that the performances of Mr. Savage's "Parsifal" in English will be the operative event of many seasons; socially as well as artistically.

Tickets are on sale for all of "Parsifal" performances, including the special "Parsifal" Saturday matinee, and despite the heavy sale there are still plenty of good seats left.

The mail orders included requests for seats from various parts of Quebec and some points in Ontario.

The Story of Parsifal

TO BE PRESENTED NEXT
WEEK IN TORONTO

THE performances of Wagner's sacred drama, "Parsifal," at the Princess Theatre next week will be an event upon which the eyes of the whole musical community of the city will turn. Toronto is to be distinguished by hearing the work in advance of its production in London.

"Parsifal" was Wagner's last creation. He put the finishing touches to the orchestration in 1882, about a year before his death. While it is true, therefore, that "Parsifal" as a whole is the offspring of his old age, he had a dim conception of the subject as far back as 1832. At that time he had intended to make the Saviour the supreme personage in his sacred drama, but abandoned the idea on finding that he would do violence to the reverential convictions of Christian people. He then turned to the legend of the Grail as sung by the old "trouvères," and borrowed enough material from it to serve as a foundation of his drama, the poem of which he finished in 1877. Some of the music, notably the Good Friday Spell, he composed twenty-five years before the production of the drama. A brief sketch of the design and story of the drama will perhaps prove helpful to many who will attend the representations next week.

At Monsalvat Castle, a sanctuary built by Titirel, is guarded by a company of pure Knights the Grail or sacred cup out of which Christ drank at his last meal with the disciples, and which contained the blood which flowed from his wounds on the Cross. At the castle is also preserved the Lance which had pierced the Saviour's side. In the vicinity of the castle dwells Klingsor, who had on account of his unworthiness been refused admission as a member of the company of Knights. In revenge he seeks instruction in the art of magic from Satan, and then uses the power so obtained in transforming a desert into a garden of sensuous delights, where grow beings of fatal beauty, half flowers and half women, who employ their charms to seduce and ruin the Knights of the Grail. Many have fallen, when Amfortas, to whom Titirel had on account of extreme age yielded the crown, determines to put an end to Klingsor's enchantments, and with that end visits the magic garden. He is, however, not only led astray like the others, but loses the sacred Lance, which in the

hands of the malignant Klingsor inflicts on him a deep wound in the side which cannot be healed. The unhappy King, suffering from agonizing remorse and his incurable wound, returns to the castle. His pain becomes almost insupportable on the occasions when as priest-king he has to celebrate the Eucharist. One day he has a divine vision in which he is assured that his wound shall be healed and his sin redeemed by a being full of purity and pity, "The Guileless Fool," who shall also restore the Grail to its immaculate condition and recover the holy Lance, one touch of which will close the King's wound. This Guileless Fool is Parsifal, predestined to accomplish this great mission. Such is the form into which Wagner cast the mediaeval legend for the purpose of constructing his action upon it. But he created a new and strange character, one Kundry, a wild, weird woman, who, because in a former existence as Herodias she had laughed at the Saviour when bearing His cross, has been doomed to perpetual laughter. Kundry falls into the power of Klingsor, who at certain periods transforms her into a being of wondrous beauty and compels her to become the chief agency in seducing the Knights. It was by Kundry that Amfortas was tempted, and Klingsor, who has learned of the mission of the Guileless Fool, determines that she shall also tempt and ruin Parsifal. When not under the spell of Klingsor, Kundry we learn is a devout servant of the Grail, seeks to benefit the Knights, and wishes for redemption herself.

Parsifal is divided into three acts. The action opens in the forest near Monsalvat Castle at daybreak. Gurnemanz, one of the oldest Knights of the Grail, and a couple of squires are discovered at their morning devotions. They are joined by Kundry, known to Gurnemanz and his squires as the Wild Amazon. She is exhausted by a long journey to a remote region, where she has been to get a balm to alleviate the pain of Amfortas' wound. The squires reproach Kundry with an intent to harm the King, but Gurnemanz defends her and relates how many services she has rendered to the Knights of the Grail. Gurnemanz narrates the story of the origin of the Grail. He has scarcely finished when an unknown youth, Parsifal, is brought in by attendants, who report that he has killed a sacred

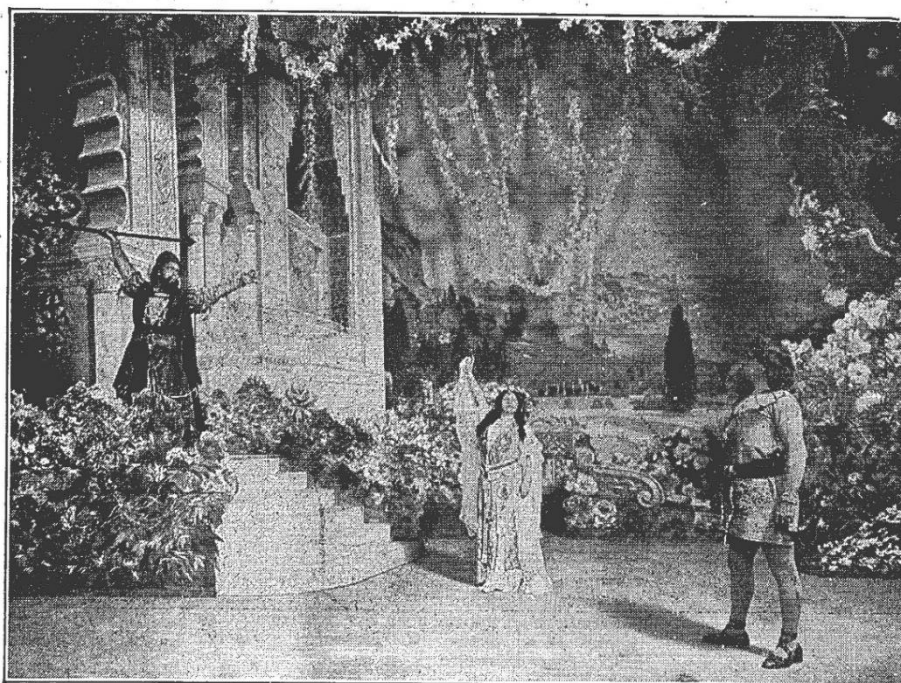


SCENES FROM PARSIFAL.—THE FLOWER MAIDENS.

swan. He is quite innocent of having done any harm, does not know his own name, nor where he was born, and can only remember that his mother was called Herzelade (Becken Heart). Kundry, who has been observing him, tells him that she saw his mother die, whereupon Parsifal flies at her in fury and tries to choke her. Gurnemanz interferes and saves her, and Parsifal is sorry for his violence. Suddenly Kundry feels stealing upon her an ir-

resistible desire for the hypnotic ale which always precedes the enchantments in which Klingsor makes her take part. She struggles against his influences but in vain, and falls in a trance behind the bushes. Gurnemanz invites Parsifal to the sacred castle to witness the holy feast of the Grail service. The two walk on, and by means of an illusion of a moving panorama they come to an immense hall surmounted by a luminous dome. The sacred Knights enter and seat themselves at tables, which cups are placed. Amfortas brought in on a litter. He shrinks from the task of officiating. He suffers all the tortures, he says, that the Saviour endured on the cross, and he is his father to perform the ceremony, but Titirel refuses. The Grail is uncovered, and as Amfortas celebrates the mystic supper the hall becomes obscured with a thick cloud, and the hall glows with a supernatural purple light. Amfortas then elevates the Grail, the cloud fades away, and as light returns the cups on the table are found full of wine. The supper completed, the Knights retire. Parsifal, who, speechless with emotion, has shown no understanding of the scene, is turned out of the palace by Gurnemanz, who is annoyed at what he considers the youth's indifference.

The second act opens with a rather melodramatic interview between Klingsor and Kundry. The woman under the curse is commanded to make Parsifal another of her victims, and she goes forth consenting. The next scene is a picture of the Enchanted Gardens. Here the flower girls, already described, endeavor unavailingly to allure Parsifal. On their failure Kundry appears. She tells the hero his name is Parsifal, tries to win his sympathy by talking to him of his mother, and, taking advantage of the situation, passionately kisses him. Parsifal is for a moment almost lost but is suddenly seized with terror and pain. He thinks of Amfortas, comprehends the cause of his sin, shares with him the agony, the remorse of a transgression and the pain of his mortal wound, and a great wave of pity comes over him. He repulses the temptress and begs her to repent. Kundry, under the operation of the curse burst into infernal laughter. When she is once more repulsed she utters curses. Klingsor comes to her aid and casts the sacred Lance at Parsifal. The weapon remains miraculously suspended over the head of the youth, who, grasping



SCENES FROM PARSIFAL.—KLINGSOR ATTEMPTS TO KILL PARSIFAL WITH THE SACRED LANCE.

it, traces in the air the sign of the cross. The enchantments of Klingsor are broken, the magician falls dead, the gardens again become a desert, the flower maidens wither and Parsifal as he departs holds out hope to Kundry of pardon and peace.

In the third act the action opens in the grounds of Montsalvat on Good Friday. Gurnemanz finds the inanimate body of Kundry and revives her. She at once resumes her domestic duties in the service of the Knights. Parsifal reappears, bearing with him the sacred Lance. Gurnemanz tells him that the sufferings of the King have increased, that Titurel is dead and that the Knights are hopeless and humiliated. Kundry washes and anoints the feet of Parsifal, Gurnemanz baptizes him and creates him King and Prince of the Grail. No sooner is he invested with these functions than Parsifal baptizes the kneeling Kundry and pronounces the words of absolution and redemption which relieve her of the curse. Parsifal arrives at the castle at the funeral of Titurel. The King is carried in on his litter still suffering. With the point of the sacred lance Parsifal touches the wound, which is immediately healed. Then, announcing himself as the servant and Pontiff of the Grail, he orders the shrine to be unveiled, and, taking the sacred cup, celebrates the Eucharist. Titurel is revived for a moment to bless all present, and the drama ends with a great Alleluia and the re-enunciation of the "motive" of Faith and the Eucharist.

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38. *Toronto Globe*, 24 April 1905, p. 10

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

"Parsifal" begins at the Princess Theatre promptly at 5.30 this afternoon, as it will every evening of the three which constitutes the "Parsifal" engagement. The matinee on Wednesday will begin at 11 o'clock in the morning. The intermission at the Wednesday matinee is from 12.45 to 1.45, the intermission at the night performance is from 7.15 to 8.30. Three rows of seats in the orchestra have been removed to make room for the sixty musicians, who require 400 square feet of space. Mr. Savage brings his own grand orchestra intact, and does not augment from among the local musicians. The cast for to-night will be as follows:—Conductor, Mr. Rothwell; Kundry, Mme. Mara; Parsifal, Mr. MacLennan; Amfortas, Mr. Egenieff; Gurnemanz, Mr. Griswold; Klingsor, Mr. Lind; Titurel, Mr. Parker; a voice, Miss George. It is desirable that the audience be seated promptly, for with the beginning of the prelude the doors will be closed. At ten minutes before the beginning of each act a quintette of trumpeters will play motifs from the opera in the lobby of the theatre. The company carries three sets of principals and numbers 200 members. It costs about \$17,000 a week to run the company, and the production has been pronounced by *The New York Musical Courier* and by *New York, Boston and Chicago* daily papers and editorially by *The Chicago Tribune* and *Record-Herald* as greatly superior to the Metropolitan Opera House production of Mr. Conried. "Parsifal" is the greatest achievement of Mr. Henry W. Savage as an artistic operatic production and contribution to the English stage.

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MUSIC OF PARSIFAL.

Richard Wagner's Work in Two Sharply Defined Classes.

The music of "Parsifal," Wagner's sacred music-drama, which Mr. Henry W. Savage will offer in English for three nights and one matinee at His Majesty's, beginning April 24, shows the composer at the highest point of his musical development. Although he was far past middle age when he wrote it, his powers of invention portray no signs of waning. He was still the creator of lovely melody; still the master who wove those melodies into wonderful fabrics of tonal color, which enravish and awe the auditor at one and the same time.

The music of "Parsifal" may be divided into two sharply defined classes, that of the spirit and that of the flesh. Nothing more ecstatically spiritual can be found than the music of the Grail scenes. Its beauty has a certain chastity and austerity which gives wonderful atmosphere to the solemn scenes which are being unfolded on the stage. In its purity and reverent spirit it carries one back to Palestrina, and the old masters of the Roman Catholic Church, whose music had rent Austria, music which was characteristic of the early Italian painters.

On the other hand, the music of the second act, that of Klingsor and Kundry, and of the whole flower garden scene, is almost barbaric in its rich and sultry notes. As the music of the Grail is full of austere purity, the music of the second act gives a wonderful mood picture of all that is the opposite. It shows the restless nature of Kundry, the biting envy, the hatred and the malice of the magician Klingsor. Then comes the languishing seductiveness of the Flower Maidens, their petulance and childish anger when Parsifal laughing, repulses them. Finally, comes what is in some ways the most astonishing achievement in the whole realm of operatic music, the scene where Kundry attempts to seduce the hero through his love for his mother. Wagner has surpassed himself here in his mingling the music of the pure mother love, which Kundry describes to Parsifal with the wicked lawless passion of the enchantress herself.

As in all his later works, Wagner uses in "Parsifal" the leading motifs, typical musical phrases designed to depict certain moods, certain thoughts, certain characteristics of the personages, and of the dramatic action. Such motifs denote the Eucharist, Faith, the Grail, the Suffering of Amfortas, Parsifal, Klingsor and Kundry, and Heart's Sorrow, Parsifal's mother.

Album Universel. 13 mai 1905.



Richard Wagner

La troupe d'opéra de Savage a donné, à Montréal, trois représentations de l'œuvre suprême de Wagner. L'*Album Universel* se devait de relater le succès de cette grande fête d'art.

On a beaucoup parlé de "Parsifal" en ces derniers temps, et il ne reste rien à dire qui n'ait été dit; cependant, nous croyons devoir résumer succinctement l'histoire et l'action de ce chef-d'œuvre religieux, avant de rendre un hommage sincère au grand effort artistique de monsieur Savage.

Le drame

Au début de "Parsifal", la colère de Dieu pèse sur le Montsalvat, un monastère espagnol où il existe un ordre de chevaliers pieux qui gardent dans un Calice, le Saint-Graal, quelques gouttes du Sang de Jésus-Christ.

Le roi Amfortas, violant ses vœux, a cédé aux séductions de la courtisane Kundry tandis que le complice de cette femme, Klingsor, déroba la lance qui fit jaillir le sang de Jésus et que l'on conservait auprès du Saint-Graal. En s'enfuyant, de cette lance, Klingsor a blessé Amfortas d'une blessure que ni les herbes de la forêt ni les eaux du lac ne peuvent rafraîchir; en plus, la seule vue du sang, exaspérant sa souffrance et son remords, le roi se soustrait à son terrible sacerdoce et suspend le rite sacré qui faisait découvrir le Saint-Graal, alors que le Sang divin s'échauffait et s'illuminait, et que tous les chevaliers pieux communiaient en souvenir de la Cène.

C'est ici que paraît le singulier sauveur, l'homme ignorant et pur qui doit guérir Amfortas. Un chevalier l'a rencontré dans les bois Montsalvat. Conduit au monastère, "Parsifal" assiste aux mystères de dévotion et de souffrance qui doivent faire de lui le Rédempteur, instruit par la compassion. Au second acte, Klingsor, pour empêcher la guérison d'Amfortas ordonne à Kundry de rompre en "Parsifal" l'innocence qui fait sa force; mais le souvenir d'Amfortas et la souffrance contemplée défendent "Parsifal" contre les tentations offertes. En vain Klingsor, furieux, brandit contre lui la lance sainte: le héros la saisit au vol et s'enfuit victorieux...

Après avoir erré longtemps dans la montagne, "Parsifal" revient, épuisé de lassitude, s'asseoir au seuil du monastère. Kundry, en qui opère la rédemption, s'approche pénitente du chevalier vierge, détache ses sandales et lave ses pieds meurtris. "Parsifal" a pitié de Kundry comme il a eu pitié d'Amfortas; il relève la pécheresse et la bénit. C'est le vendredi saint, et les chevaliers pieux adjurent Amfortas de découvrir le Calice. Il s'y refuse, et déjà ses compagnons le menacent, quand de nouveau paraît "Parsifal" qui, de la lance reconquise, guérit la blessure d'Amfortas. Proclamé roi, il monte à l'autel et de ses mains chastes il élève le Calice. La colère de Dieu est apaisée; l'œuvre de miséricorde est accomplie. Sur la foule mystique agenouillée, redescendent les grâces et les bénédictions.

La musique

Jamais peut-être la musique n'a donné de geste plus noble à la cause de la vérité que dans ce drame, ou mieux, dans ce mystère, où la beauté musicale et la beauté morale se confondent.

Wagner avait d'abord rejeté les légendes d'origine chrétienne comme impropres à inspirer et le poète et le musicien. Dans son second ouvrage, "Opéra et Drame", il entreprend l'élimination de la matière poétique et musicale, dans le christianisme, en affirmant: 1o que le merveilleux religieux pour prouver la toute-puissance divine, viole les lois de la nature, et qu'il admet seulement le merveilleux poétique qui se borne à condenser la réalité en des symboles caractéristiques; 2o que la légende chrétienne ne peut féconder la musique

"Parsifal" à Montréal

parce qu'elle va de l'agitation de la vie terrestre au repos en Dieu, c'est-à-dire du mouvement au calme, et que la musique, comme le drame, exige au contraire un mouvement toujours croissant.

Cependant, Wagner devait écrire "Parsifal", un drame religieux et chrétien, où l'exégèse wagnérienne se donne aisément carrière. Car les scènes religieuses de "Parsifal" sont sublimes, et celles-là seulement. Les autres, à l'exception du chœur merveilleux des filles-fleurs, sont souvent trop longues. Mais le second tableau, l'avant-dernier et le dernier sont de purs chefs-d'œuvre.

Quand Amfortas paraît, porté, pâle et mourant, sur une litière, d'admirables chants pieux se font entendre.

En un "Miserere" poignant, le roi implore Dieu de mettre fin à son supplice; des voix éloignées lui promettent un sauveur mystérieux et lui recommandent d'accomplir son devoir malgré ses souffrances. Amfortas, se soulevant avec peine, découvre le Saint-Graal. Alors l'obscurité se fait profonde et, tandis que l'orchestre frémit tout bas, les anges chantent là-haut des mélodies d'une envergure extraordinaire.

"Prenez et mangez, ceci est mon corps! Prenez et buvez, ceci est mon sang! Faites ceci en mémoire de moi." Entre chaque verset l'orchestre répond, tendre, plaintif, lointain, comme étouffé par les ténèbres qui l'enveloppent. Le Sang lumineux éclaire seul le théâtre, et de la coupole qui vibre comme un orgue gigantesque, tombent des concerts divins sur ces hommes qui prient, sur cet homme qui souffre. Quand le ciel s'est tu, la terre parle à son tour, et avant de se retirer les chevaliers en-

tendu à Montréal, et M. Rothwell est un artiste qui mérite un hommage spécial, de miséricorde et d'amour. Sur ces deux ailes immenses de l'âme, la pureté et la piété, les grandes phrases mélodiques s'élèvent jusqu'au ciel. "En écrivant de telles pages, a dit Camille Belligne, Wagner était peut-être assez près de mourir, pour apercevoir déjà les rayons éternels."

L'interprétation et la mise-en-scène

"Parsifal" comporte cinq tableaux avec trois changements à vue. Tous ces décors grandioses ou pittoresques ont été composés avec un soin extrême et minutieusement exécutés selon la tradition de Bayreuth. Il faut trente-deux hommes pour porter les colonnes sur lesquelles s'enroulent les toiles des changements à vue; dix-huit électriciens habiles surveillent les effets de lumière, tandis que trente-quatre machinistes manient les changements. Cette main-d'œuvre est réglementée d'une façon admirable; tout s'accomplit dans un ordre parfait et dans un silence religieux. Le directeur de la scène, M. William Lavigne, mérite des félicitations chaleureuses; les plus habiles metteurs-en-scène européens reconnaîtraient l'impossibilité de faire mieux.

Le public montréalais a fait à "Parsifal" un accueil réconfortant. Le critique de "La Patrie" a résumé dans un article d'un bel enthousiasme, l'opinion de la presse canadienne; je voudrais le remercier d'avoir si bien défini ce que tous les artistes ont éprouvé à ces merveilleuses représentations.

L'orchestre, aux mains de Walter Rothwell, semblait un merveilleux instrument;



"Parsifal" scène finale du IVe acte.

tonnent à l'unisson un choral d'une inspiration encore plus émouvante que celui de la "Passion", de Bach.

Jamais la musique religieuse n'a connu d'aussi longues, d'aussi enivrantes extases!

Nous devons encore nous arrêter à la scène de l'enchantement du Vendredi-Saint. Parsifal a racheté par sa vertu, les fautes de la pécheresse Kundry. Après que la pénitente, comme jadis Madeleine, a baigné de ses larmes et essuyé de ses cheveux les pieds de son rédempteur, le chevalier innocent la relève. Dans la forêt brille la lumière du matin, et le jeune homme regarde autour de lui avec un doux ravissement. Des fleurs exquises l'entourent et s'élèvent jusqu'à son front. Les voix se fondent avec l'orchestre dans un murmure très doux, mais pénétrant comme les parfums de ces fleurs qui renaissent sous la sainte rosée baptismale. Avant cette scène, et cette autre plus exquise encore du chœur des filles-fleurs, la nature ne s'était jamais exprimée dans un langage aussi doux, aussi troublant, aussi délicieux.

Au dernier tableau, même décor et même situation qu'au second; cependant, on y retrouve des beautés toujours plus belles. L'entrée de Parsifal rayonnant, symbole du Christ résuscité, est indescriptible. Quand il élève au-dessus de la foule le calice resplendissant, tous les thèmes sacrés reparaissent, élargis, apaisés, radieux.

Le miracle est accompli, les harpes pétillent, leurs accords ruissellent; l'orchestre entier s'épanche dans une adorable effusion. C'est le meilleur orchestre que nous ayons

il avait de la puissance, de l'éclat, de la délicatesse.

Le chœur des filles-fleurs était la perfection, — grâce, justesse, précision, — et les voix fraîches et les femmes jolies. Le chœur des chevaliers du Graal n'était pas suffisant. Les solistes n'étaient peut-être pas tous dignes de l'ensemble. Toutefois, Franz Egénieff fait un Amfortas remarquable; il a chanté avec une belle voix, en artiste consciencieux et distingué. M. Putman Griswold ne mérite aussi que des éloges.

Maintenant, la personnalité qui doit se dégager ici, c'est celle de M. Savage; c'est lui qui perd le plus en cette affaire, et qui gagne le plus. Il a montré une fois de plus ce dont il est capable. Les fureurs d'une foule de snobs qui ont crié au scandale parce qu'il faisait voyager "Parsifal" hors de Bayreuth, ne changeront rien à ses convictions intimes, et il continuera à travailler pour l'amour de l'art, et pour l'amour de sa patrie. Il faudrait aux États-Unis un peu plus de ces hommes-là.

ALBERT JEANNOTTE,

Professeur au Conservatoire de l'Université McGill.

Le portrait de Richard Wagner, que nous reproduisons en tête de cette page, est un des plus ressemblants qu'on ait du grand maître allemand. Il fut fait alors que le génial musicien jouissait déjà d'une gloire universelle.

40. Postcard of Klingsor's Castle from the Savage Co. production of *Parsifal* (author's collection)



41. *Montreal Gazette*, 29 April 1905, p. 11

Behind The Scene.

The great mass of scenery seen from the front at the production of "*Parsifal*" at His Majesty's would make the ordinary person feel impertinent in asking a view of the play from behind the scenes, for it would certainly appear that with the great number of people carried and the necessary stage hands, an intruder could not help but be in the way and make a nuisance of himself. Therefore it was with much timidity that the representative of the *Gazette* asked stage director William Lavine for permission to see the "wheels go round" back of the scenes. Mr. Lavine readily granted the request and explained that the mechanical operation of the scenery and lights is carried out so smoothly that a visitor would not be a cog in the wheels.

The mechanical operation of this production is most interesting and ingenious. Stage director Lavine has twenty men whom he carries with him and who tend to the operation of the scenery, and at each city he breaks in seventy-five helpers, which was quite an army when seen on the stage of His Majesty's last night. But it must be remembered that a large proportion of these men work far above the stage on ladders and bridges suspended in the flies. One of the most remarkable points in the operation of the scenery is the fact that two men operate the great panoramic scenes, in which the entire scenery moves across the stage, giving the audience a most realistic effect of following *Parsifal* on his travels from the ruined castle of the magiellan *Klingsor* through the forest scene and the flower meadow, then up the side of the rocky mountains, past deep ravines and torrential streams, on through a savage and desolate country until he comes to the open glade before the temple of the "Grail."

There are three sets of scenery used in this panoramic view, and it is necessary that the rocks, tree-trunks, thickets and grass should move simultaneously and with the utmost smoothness in order that the effect may not be destroyed. If the panorama were moved jerkily or not simultaneously, the effect would be entirely destroyed, and even the most skilful use of lights could not conceal such errors. It is most difficult to move these three sets at the same time, having trunk of tree move at exactly the same rate of speed as the adjoining rock or bit of meadow a few feet in front of it.

HOW SCENERY IS CARRIED.

In Bayreuth, Wagner had thirty-six men employed in the operation of this scenery, moving it across the stage from side to side, he having six men working on each side on each set. It was necessary that a man on each side should pull each set at exactly the same rate of speed, and it took necessarily almost incessant rehearsals to drill these men so that they could move their different sets of scenery simultaneously, and even then, after these endless rehearsals, the scenery often moved jerkily, and the trunk of a tree would move at a slightly faster speed than the rock right in front of it, and the meadow in the background would move a little slower than the trees which appeared to be growing on it. To prevent this, Mr. Savage succeeded in having arranged a most ingenious device. He has each of his sets of scenery supported on a heavy roller, there being six rollers, three on

each side of the stage. Each of these rollers is connected to a steel windlass, and is operated by steel ropes and pulleys, the three sets of scenery being moved at the same time—it taking only two men to operate the windlass on each side. This gives a most remarkable effect, and causes the soft murmur of wonderment and admiration from the audience at each transformation scene.

HOW THE LIGHTING IS DONE.

The lighting effects are most beautiful throughout the play, and one of the most impressive scenes ever beheld upon a stage is that at the close of the last act, and will be vividly remembered, probably for years, by all who have seen it. It is accomplished by the strongest flood of light ever gained by electrical effect upon the stage. *Parsifal* lifts up the chalice high above the heads of the kneeling knights, it begins slowly to become illuminated—the chalice being red—in a moment it glows with a heart of red radiance of a glowing ruby. One is electrified for the instant by the sudden glow. This is accomplished by an electric light inside of the chalice, the current coming through a wire which runs through the sleeve of *Parsifal*. The current is turned on by a boy stationed beneath the steps of the altar. From above, as *Parsifal* lifts the chalice, comes a flood of dazzling white light, which, illuminating, as it does, the great dome of the cathedral-like interior, becomes celestial in its inspiring and impressive effect. One can imagine himself sitting in the cathedral of some great oriental city gazing upward at the far-away fragment-like roof, and the sun, which for a time had been hidden, suddenly bursts from a cloud, and pours its golden glory down into the depths of the great church through the stained glass windows with a heavenly refulgence, striking directly upon the head of the high priest as he turns to the congregation with the chalice in his hands. The effect is indescribable. It must be seen to be appreciated. To give this effect there is constructed in the flies what is known as "a flying bridge." It is something like the basket of a balloon, and is suspended from above by steel ropes, and reached by means of a rope ladder. Here are the powerful lights by which the temple is illuminated.

The invisible choir chorus heard in the Grail temple scenes are guided by the conductor in the orchestra pit by means of an electrical device, which displays at the touch of the conductor's finger the figures 1, 2, 3 and 4, in harmony with the orchestra music. There are other and many stage tricks, and some of them are shared in by the principals, as, in the third act, when *Parsifal* sits upon the rockery, one of the other principals, at the proper moment, doffs his hat and sinks down behind it prepared to shove the piece off the stage on rollers. From a purely mechanical point of view, "*Parsifal*" is wonderful, and a tribute to the inexhaustible ingenuity of stage craftsmen and the sagacity of Mr. Henry W. Savage.

<p>THREE EVENINGS, STARTING THURSDAY, APRIL 27th</p> <p>MATINEE SATURDAY.</p>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">HIS MAJESTY'S</h1> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;"> <p>ALL CANADA INTERESTED</p> <p>In the Great</p> <p>WAGNER MUSICAL FESTIVAL</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;"> <p>SPECIAL EXCURSION RATES ON ALL RAILROADS</p> </div> </div> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">MONTREAL HEARS PARSIFAL BEFORE LONDON AND PARIS.</p>	<p>Evenings at 5-30 p.m. Matinee at 11 a.m.</p>
<p>HENRY W. SAVAGE'S <small>Unequaled Production of Wagner's Sacred Festival Opera,</small></p> <h1 style="margin: 0;">PARSIFAL</h1> <p style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">IN</p> <h1 style="margin: 0;">ENGLISH</h1>		
<p>The Most imposing Operatic Production ever sent on Tour. Presented with all details exactly as at Bayreuth, by a Triple Cast of Europe's Notable Artists, a Company of 200, and a Full Grand Orchestra of 60. Not a Repertory Presentation, but a Specialized Production with its Scenic, Panoramic and Electrical Effects, Greater than at the Festival Playhouse in Bayreuth.</p>		
<p>For MONTREAL'S Season Will Appear the Following Artists:</p> <p>CONDUCTORS: MR. ROTHWELL and MR. GRIMM.</p> <p>MME. MARA, MISS WICKHAM and MISS ALBRIGHT as KUNDRI.</p> <p>MR. PENNARINI and MR. MACLENNAN as PARSIFAL.</p> <p>MR. BISCHOFF and MR. EGENIEFF as AMFORTAS.</p> <p>MR. GRISWOLD and MR. CRANSTON as GURNEMANZ.</p> <p>MR. LIND and MR. COOMBS as KLINGSOR.</p> <p>MR. PARKER and MR. DAWSON as TITUREL.</p>	<p>Compared with Metropolitan Production</p> <p>ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC, MARCH 7--</p> <p>There is about the investiture of this American-made "Parsifal" a freshness of physical aspect not to be found with the other "Parsifal" production now announced to tour this part of the country.</p> <p>CHICAGO TRIBUNE, FEB. 14--</p> <p>Practically the birth of real English grand opera. The opera was produced with a degree of magnificence which equaled the splendor of the Metropolitan Opera House production and is declared by authorities to compare favorably with that of the festival theatre at Bayreuth.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">"PARSIFAL" TIME SCHEDULE.</p> <p>EVENINGS AT 5.30. INTERMISSION FROM 7.15 to 8.30 for DINNER. CARRIAGES at 10.45.</p> <p>MATINEE at 11 O'CLOCK. INTERMISSION from 12.45 to 1.45 for LUNCHEON. CARRIAGES at 4.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">SALE OF SEATS OPENS this MORNING at 9. PRICES 75c, \$1.00, \$2.00 and \$3.00.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">THIS AFTERNOON, AT 3 P.M., - - - FREE LECTURE ON PARSIFAL BY RUBIN COLDMARK.</p>		

PARSIFAL AN IMPRESSIVE WORK.

Successful First Production in
Toronto.

AUDIENCE SPELLBOUND.

First Impressions of Wagner's
Last Music-Drama.

The Principals, the Flower Girls and the
Scenery the Subjects of Warm
Praise—The Cast For To-night.

Wagner's swan song, "Parsifal," his last word in music drama, which has been invested with a glamor of religious sentiment and the tradition of wonderfully impressive performances at Bayreuth, was given its first presentation last night at the Princess Theatre by the special company of Henry W. Savage, who had previously established himself in public favor here by his admirable productions of grand opera in English. The house was well filled by an audience that represented the cultured musical community, as well as those who, without any special musical taste, were attracted either by curiosity to hear a work which has been so much discussed, or by the desire to become acquainted with a creation which is supposed to symbolize certain beliefs of Christianity. The dramatic theme of Wagner's poem was explained in the Magazine section of The Globe of last Saturday. Wagner has not treated the story of the Holy Grail with so much reverent reserve as was shown by Tennyson in his narration of the same legend. Wagner has not hesitated to reproduce in the stage the celebration of the Lord's Supper, nor to obviously parody the washing of the feet of the Saviour by the Magdalene. While these features of "Parsifal" may give offence to some, it is certain that Wagner had no intention of shocking the susceptibilities of devout Christians.

Speaking generally, the Savage company gave a splendid production, scenically and musically, of the work. The few hitches, that were unavoidable perhaps on a first performance here, were of little importance, and did not break the continuity of the interest which the audience took in the progress of the action. The three acts were followed with rapt attention, although there was an interval of one hour and a quarter between the first and second acts.

The music of the work as a whole is less complex than that of the "Ring des Nibelungen," or, perhaps, than that of "Tristan and Isolde," and the comparative simplicity of the musical fabric in the chief and vital sections does much to hold the interest of the ordinary lover of music who is not cultured in the Wagnerian system. Various commentators have traced and enumerated from seventeen to twenty-four leading or guiding motives in "Parsifal," but there are really only three or four which are insistently and vividly forced upon the attention of the hearer. The three great motives which form the basis of the work, and which are constantly modified, amplified and elaborated, are those of the Eucharist, the Holy Grail and Faith. All three of these are enunciated in the Prelude and are heard again and again with special significance in the body of the music drama itself. The other motives, such as the Lance, Faith, Kundry Suffering, the Promise, the Gallop, "Parsifal," the Desert, etc., are either not of sufficient continuity of melody or are not obvious enough to impress on first hearing. The broad and mysterious theme of the Eucharist, in addition to its appearance in the Prelude, is reiterated several times in the first act and is worked up to a majestic culmination in the final of this act, when the Grail is uncovered and the Holy Supper is celebrated. It is here that the motive of the Grail is heard in suggestive alternation with those of the Eucharist and Faith. It is the Eucharist motive that terminates with wondrous grandeur and appropriateness the symphonic epilogue of the last act, following the redemption of Kundry by Parsifal, the healing of the wound of Amfortas and the proclamation of Parsifal as the Pontiff of the Grail. The Grail motive is also heard significantly in this scene, with that of Faith. The latter, which is developed with great amplitude and pomp in the Prelude, reappears as a section of the Good Friday music, but in a peaceful, hopeful mood, and with singularly appealing sweetness. In the celebration of the Holy Supper in the first act Wagner has wrought out a marvellous combination of effects. The three themes mentioned form the basis of the musical structure, and this is expressed through the medium of three choruses which should be stationed at different heights, and the orchestra, supplemented by the pealings of the bells of Montsalvat. The effect of this superposition of choruses, the men or Knights of the Grail on the floor of the temple, the youths above them and the children at the topmost elevation has a unique effect which is not paralleled in the music of any other composer. Whatever objections there may be to the presentation on the stage of the ceremony of the Holy Supper, or, as it is really, a suggestion of the Last Supper, it is conceded that Wagner in this effort rose to the height of his genius, and created a most powerful combine in a symbolism that is overpowering in its enthralling excitement of the mystic and religious imagination.

Passing by the music of the opening of the second act, which has partly a melodramatic and partly a "Dar Freischütz" tinge, one arrives at the temptation scene, in which Parsifal, wooed first by the flower maidens and, secondly, by Kundry. The music of the song of the Flower Maidens is charming in its allurements—sensual but not sensual. In its grace, beauty and plasticity it suggests the hand of one of the representative French composers. It is one of the few distinct sustained melodies in the whole work—in one sense the only one—and for this reason comes all the more gratefully after the austerity of the first act. But Wagner does not allow himself for long to indulge in the relaxation of this graceful and seizing music. The Flower Maidens fall in their allurements, and their song is succeeded by an emotional appeal to Parsifal from Kundry, ending in the kiss intended to seduce. But Kundry repulsed, there follows a highly dramatic scene between her and Parsifal, which is more exciting than musically beautiful. In the third act the features of the music are the Good Friday spell and the repetition of the celebration of the Eucharist, but this time by Parsifal with a reiteration of many of the musical effects in the finale of the first act. The drawbacks from a musical point of view are the long prosy narratives and monologues of Gurnemanz and Amfortas. Dramatically these parts of "Parsifal" would be strangely stirring, but associated with music which for the most part is dry recitation they become somewhat tedious.

There is little in the work that gives the solo singers an opportunity of making a popular appeal by a display of vocal art. The continuous flow of well-defined melody, the "belcanto," is sacrificed by Wagner in order to secure what he thought was the appropriate association or union of the words and music. There are no ensembles in the strict sense of the word, no trios, no duets. The singers answer one another just as would be the case with the characters in the ordinary theatrical play. The method is logical, but it must give disappointment to those—and they are many—who enjoy the set solos, the concerted numbers of the old masters of opera. And one misses in the work the note of human emotion, of human passion. Parsifal is an ascetic, the whole tone of the story is mystically religious. Kundry loves no one; she is only feigning under the compulsion of an hypnotic spell. And the music faithfully reflects the characters when it is employed to illustrate them or to express their emotions.

The principals of the cast, it may be gathered from what has been said, had an exacting task. They had to depend upon dramatic realism rather than beauty of singing. Bearing this in mind, one may give warm praise to Mme. Mara, the Kundry, who has a rich contralto voice; to Francis MacLennan, the Parsifal, the Canadian tenor, who displayed a fine voice and fervor of expression whenever the music permitted, and to Mr. Egenieff, the Amfortas, and Mr. Putnam Griswold, the Gurnemanz, both of whom had ungracious parts vocally. And turning to the subordinates, one may pay a tribute to the groups of flower maidens for their graceful singing and posing.

The orchestra in the prelude and first act had not settled down to a unanimity of tonality, but in the subsequent sections of the drama they thoroughly redeemed their reputation as an effective and first-class opera organization.

The scenery was very beautiful both in its illusion and color scheme. The lighting, too, was admirably contrived, especially in the temple of the Holy Grail, the forest glade of the first act, and the landscape of the third. The mechanism of the moving panorama in the first act which transports the spectators, and also Parsifal and Gurnemanz, to the sanctuary of the Holy Grail, worked very smoothly. The effect when the dome of the temple was gradually flooded with light from above was inspiring in connection with the sacred mystery celebrated.

The conductor was Mr. Walter H. Rothwell, whose direction gave every proof of thorough familiarity with the score, and, so far as one could judge on a first hearing, of a sympathetic insight into the intent of the music. Owing to the sacred nature of the theme of "Parsifal," neither the conductor nor the singers received any applause, but they obtained due recognition in the concentrated attention of the audience from the beginning to the end of the performance.

The summoning of the audience to the different acts by the sounding of the principal motives by trumpeters was a pleasing novelty. Their assistance, however, was not required, as the audience made a record for occupying their seats in good time.

The cast for this evening will be:—Conductor, Mr. Moritz Grimm; Kundry, Miss Florence Wickham; Parsifal, Mr. Alois Pennarini; Amfortas, Mr. Johannes Bischoff; Gurnemanz, Mr. Otley Cranston; Klingsor, Mr. J. Parker Coombs; Titirel, Mr. Robert Kent Parker; A Voice, Miss Charlotte George.

THE PARSIFAL PRODUCTION.

The production of Wagner's sacred festival play in Toronto this week is an event of more than passing musical importance. Never before perhaps has an operatic representation so stirred the imaginations of so large a variety of people or been so widely discussed. "Parsifal," in its triple aspects of music, drama, and symbolic religion, enlists the interest of a very extended constituency. To the lovers of opera it appeals with special force, for Wagner, the greatest opera reformer the last century produced, said in this work his final word as to what the modern music drama should be in regard to the union of music, action, and scenery.

The presentation of such an elaborate work on the stage is necessarily costly, involving the employment of a large cast of principal singers, a numerous chorus, a strong orchestra of from fifty to sixty members, and elaborate scenic equipment. In these circumstances "Parsifal" can be produced only in the large centres of population or in cities that are known to be generous patrons of what is good and great in art. That Toronto has not been overlooked in the tour of the "Parsifal" company would seem to warrant the assumption that the city enjoys a wide reputation for being the home of a cultured community, prompt to recognize the merits of artistic work, whether in music or the drama.

Toronto is fortunate in hearing "Parsifal" so soon after its first performance on this side of the Atlantic, which, it may be remembered, took place at New York in December, 1903. It is safe to say that those who have already heard the work will not readily forget their experience, which has been an education in itself to thoughtful students and lovers of music, while in some cases it has awakened the dormant religious sense of many whose imagination has been stirred by its sacred symbolism. Mr. Savage's company has on the whole given an interpretation which has revealed in a clear light the conspicuous beauties of the work.

WAGNER'S PARSIFAL

Sacred Music Drama From Bayreuth Produced Here for the First Time.

PRODUCTION IMPRESSIVE.

Capable Company Gives Splendid Rendition of Music-Drama at His Majesty's Theatre.

"Parsifal," Richard Wagner's sacred festival music-drama, received its first presentation in Montreal yesterday evening, before an audience which filled about three-quarters of His Majesty's Theatre.

Ordinarily one may say of a production that it is good, bad or even indifferent, not so of "Parsifal." Having seen the last great production of Wagner's prolific genius, the difficulty of forming an opinion is so great that the natural process of analysis only adds to the difficulties which beset one. As it is difficult to form an individual opinion, it is doubly difficult to form one from the audience itself. All the ordinary rules are thrust aside. The audience comes here prepared to sit in reverent attention; applause is tabooed; though there are Huns, Goths and vandals who would want to show visible appreciation of the culmination of earth's great drama, so there were some yesterday who dared inflict their hand-claps, though this seeming profanation was hastily hushed under a stern storm of angry hisses. In an atmosphere impregnated with the spirit of Bayreuth, impressive silence greeted the most dramatic situations. It would have been sacrilegious to have applauded the scenes of "Parsifal," and after one or two faint attempts had been stilled under a reproof, there was no repetition of the offence, and the two final acts of the drama were listened to with awe, as would some great church ceremony.

Now at once must be apparent the difficulties of opinion, and when continents have set against each other over the whys and wherefores, it would be painful presumption to set forth a definite opinion after seeing one performance in a city far from the home of the original production. It may be, though, that between a performance in Bayreuth and one in Montreal there would not be much difference, and, though this may be true, yet the effect of environment cannot be overlooked. In the case of Wagner himself it was apparent. Wagner told a friend that when he had taken possession of a charming new home in Zurich, delighted with his surroundings and influenced by the beauties of a balmy spring day, then and there he sat down and wrote out a sketch of the Good Friday music which plays such an important part in the last act of "Parsifal." This was in 1857, and though the ideas of the great drama were then born, it was only in 1877 that the poem was completed. The sketches of the acts were concluded in 1879, and the instrumentation completed only in 1882. Now, if the great composer occupied so many years in building up his great idea, of what little effect would one man's opinion, gained in a few short hours, have against the work of a master mind? Hence mere opinion is thrust into depthless oblivion.

COUNTLESS THINGS TO SEE.

"Parsifal" is many sided. There are countless things to see and to hear, and many weighty matters to impress the auditor. It cannot be judged by ordinary standards, for it is not an ordinary music-drama, nor yet is it opera. If comparison were suggested, it would be likened unto the music of a high mass. Here is a striking point in the presentation of "Parsifal," and that is, that the ceremony of the Roman Catholic Church offered many suggestions to the composer of "Parsifal." In the staging of the play there is much reminiscent of the service, though the details and the essentials are lacking. It is possible to see every day ceremonies much grander than the Grail scenes of "Parsifal," and scenes with much more meaning. It occurs that if there is a weakness in the structure of "Parsifal" it is in the final scene. Grand as a stage picture, and intended to form the conclusion to a great moral drama, it lacks force, because one-half of the audience cannot appreciate the motives which drew upon such a source, and the other half recognizes the emptiness of it.

So long as Wagner confined himself to mysticism and restrained his hands from efforts to boldly wrest a religious ceremony from out its accustomed place, and set it upon the boards, his work is strong and forces home its lesson with telling blows, but the final Grail scene is worse than hollow mockery beside the daily sacrifice, and to see a grand ceremonial accompanied by the music of a Messe Royal, one would wonder at Wagner's daring, else laugh at his folly.

Musically and scenically "Parsifal" is like unto nothing upon the earth. Bold in score, stirring in picture, it stands alone. Take away from it the faulty Grail scene; and even that must receive a word of commendation because of its excellent stage presentation, and it is easy to see why Mme. Cosima Wagner fought against its public presentation, else than in the historic orange groves at Bayreuth. In fact, early one is struck with the daring and the originality that first thought of bringing the drama across the ocean and playing it before audiences, supposedly cold and not likely to be impressed with the great idea which illumines the work. It is a striking lesson in many things, and the stagecraft of the play is really marvellous. There are two transformation scenes of wondrous beauty, and the settings throughout are worthy.

STORY OF THE MUSIC DRAMA.

The first act is spent in explaining the woes of Amfortas. It is related that he will be cured only by the coming of a guileless fool. Thither comes Parsifal, who seems to be the destined one, but he does not comprehend what is told him, nor does he realize the import of the adoration of the grail in the closing scene of the act. He is driven forth as a fool.

In the fantastic introduction of the second act with its insistent theme of worldly enchantment, there ensues a harmonic distortion which aptly prepares for the scenes that follow. There is seen Klingsor, the magician. He calls Kundry, tells her that she must enslave the youth Parsifal, who even now is approaching Klingsor's magic castle. The youth fearlessly stands the charges of Klingsor's knights, they cannot harm him, while he wounds them one after another, eventually dispersing the knights. Then he resumes his way toward the castle and enters the enchanted Flower Gardens. Here his senses are enthralled with the beauty of the scene. Presently he meets the Flower Maiden, who come out lamenting the dis-

comfort of their lovers the knights and reproaching Parsifal for the sorrow which has befallen them. Soon their shallow depth is reached, and the new note is their interest in the youth. They gather around Parsifal trying their allurments upon him, but while he wonders at the scene of bewildering loveliness, he refuses their advances.

The Flower Maidens having failed to achieve Klingsor's object, Kundry appears upon the scene. Now she comes as a creature full of wiles and allurements, as an enchantress who would despoil. She is in the power of the wicked magician and must perforce do as she is bid. This marks the approach of the psychological crisis in Parsifal's life. Kundry tells him of his past career, for she is all-knowing, and relates incidents of his earlier life. She tells him of his mother's death, of which until now he had been ignorant. As Parsifal sinks to the ground in the sorrow of the moment, tragic chords are sounded. Kundry turns on her couch, kisses the reclining youth. Instantly he is ablaze, the woman's kiss has swept life into the moribund soul. Something shoots through him, but it is not the desire of the moment. He sees Amfortas. Swept by some unwonted force, Parsifal is filled with a knowledge of his failure. Now he knows what Amfortas suffers, now he realizes how he, Parsifal, possessed the means to comfort and cure the tortured monarch. In his anguish the seductive wiles of Kundry are overwhelmed, and as the boy springs to his feet, the magic spell of Klingsor is broken. He sees the wound and immediately is filled with the realization that it is his duty to heal the king. He repulses Kundry. She again attempts to work her art, this time through pity. If he has pity for the suffering king, she asks, why not for her. He replies that she must cast off the slavish chains that bind her. Her portion is to be self-renunciation and reparation. She must work to save the souls of those whom she has led to sin.

Klingsor now appears. Angry at the failure of Kundry, he hurls the spear at Parsifal. Wonderful. It remains poised in the air. The youth seizes it, with it makes the sign of the cross. The beautiful gardens are changed into a desert, the mighty castle crumbles and falls into ruins. Then the music rings out with the theme of the Holy Grail, and as the act closes Parsifal starts his journey in search of the castle of Monsalvat, where lies the sorrowing and suffering king.

The third act tells of Parsifal's finding of the castle of Monsalvat, his coming into the Grail chamber, the curing of Amfortas by the touch of the sacred spear, and the final ending shows the knights bowed in adoration as Parsifal holds aloft the Grail-cup.

ORCHESTRA AND CAST.

The vocalists and the orchestra are both of an exceptionally high standard. The principals are all admirable in their respective parts. Mme. Mara, as Kundry, brings out all the variations of this many-sided character. Her voice is rich and full, and her acting splendid. Mr. Pennarini is satisfying as the Pure Fool, and the scene between him and Mme. Mara in the second act was probably the most powerful one of the whole evening. While the role of Gurnemanz is not one that offers great opportunity, Mr. Putnam Griswold did some splendid work. He is the possessor of a rich bass voice, and his enunciation is particularly to be commended.

The chorus is one of the greatest features of the production. The flower maidens sang their chorus really beautifully, and the male voices, while not powerful, are of excellent quality. The orchestra is much better than one would expect in a travelling company, and they give an excellent rendering of the intricacies of Wagner's score. Mr. Rothwell conducted, and throughout kept everything well in hand. In short, "Parsifal" has suffered not at all in the hands of this splendid company.

AUDIENCE IN TIME.

While the audience which witnessed the first local presentation of "Parsifal" was a large one, there was some room in the rear of the lower floor, though the balcony and gallery were crowded and standing room was sold up there. However, it is just possible that the difficulty which a majority of business men have of absenting themselves from offices on a week day was one of the causes which tended to reduce the size of the audience. Indeed it was noticeable that the major portion of the auditors were ladies.

Generally the audience arrived in time, but not all that had been said beforehand could induce everybody to arrive on time, and there were a dozen or so who slipped into their seats after the curtain had gone up. This occurred after the opening of the first act, and again in the evening after the opening of the second act. It was unfortunate. The banging seat is a most annoying interruption to a Wagner Vorspiel.

The unique method of summoning the audience by stationing the trumpeters in the front of the house and playing motifs from the music was an innovation quite appreciated, and as a means of affording ample warning to the audience it proved successful, saving, of course, the late comers, whom nothing could bestir.

It was a marvellous thing to sit through the hours of the long performance and see the silent audilation with which the audience listened to the music. Applause being forbidden; though a few reckless souls cast regulations to the winds until promptly squelched by stern Wagnerites, it was strange to look upon the still audience, the greater majority of whom drank in the festival of sight and sound in spell bound manner.

There was good reason for this, for stripped of the extravagance which is the usual sign of the Wagner cult, Henry M. Savage has done a good work in braving the anger of Cosima Wagner, and his production is one worthy of earnest criticism.

THOSE AMONG THE AUDIENCE.

Among those who occupied seats in boxes and in the orchestra were: Lady Van Horne, Lady Shaughnessy, Rev. Dr. Gordon, principal of Queen's University; Judge Davidson, Ald. Sadler and Mrs. Sadler, Prof. R. S. Lea, of McGill University; Prof. George G. Chown, registrar of Queen's University; Mr. Geo. E. Drummond, Rev. Mel-dola De Sola and Mrs. Clarence I. De Sola, Mrs. R. T. Macdonald, of Sutton, Que.; Prof. J. J. Goulet and party, H. G. Elliott and Mrs. Elliott, Mr. George Caverhill and Mrs. Caverhill; Mr. R. B. Angus and Mrs. Angus, Dr. Lockhart and Mrs. Lockhart, W. F. Tye, W. H. Biggar, Prof. McBride, of McGill University; Mr. H. Sadler, of Toronto; Dr. A. MacPhail, W. Arnold, F. H. Mathewson, J. Carruthers, Miss Clara Lichtenstein, Mr. D. S. Walker, Miss Graham, Mr. L. E. Small, Dr. Drummond, Mrs. Monsarrat, Mr. Recorder Weir, Mr. Stephen Dawson, Mr. J. H. Burland, Mr. W. Arnold and Mrs. Arnold, Mrs. James Peck, Mrs. Frank Stephen, Mr. E. M. Skelton, Mr. W. F. Levis, Mr. Fred W. Evans, Mr. Victor Pelletier, Mr. Daniel Fraser, Mr. W. J. Pitt.

Miss Eva Maude Smith, who is one of the principal flower maidens in "Parsifal," will be remembered in Montreal as being formerly the principal contralto in both St. James Methodist Church and at the Church of St. James the Apostle. Miss Smith was born here, and studied under Mme. Gould and Mr. Frederic H. Blair before going on the operatic stage.

PERSONAL.

Mrs. Maclellan, the wife of Mr. Francis Maclellan, who sang the role of Parsifal in last evening's production at the Princess Theatre, is a Toronto lady. Before her marriage to Mr. Maclellan in London, England, last May she was Miss Florence Easton. She had sung with great success in opera in the old country for two years before her marriage, but then retired from the stage. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Easton, will be well remembered by many people in connection with the choir of the Parkdale Methodist Church ten years ago, and Mr. Easton particularly, through his early effort upon behalf of the Toronto male choir.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

Another splendid audience attended the "Parsifal" performance at the Princess Theatre last night—splendid in numbers and in appreciative reception of the music. There was a change of cast in the principals, Miss Florence Wickham taking Kundry; Mr. Pennarini, Parsifal; Mr. Bischoff, Amfortas, and Mr. Cranston, Gurnemanz. This quartette sang with much fervor and expressive power, and the performance went without a hitch, either scenic or otherwise. The conductor was Mr. Grimm, under whose direction the work was interpreted with clearness and artistic unity. The scenes in the Temple of the Grail once more made a most powerful impression, while the music of the Flower Maidens came as a delightful contrast to the seriousness of the first and second acts. Mr. Henry W. Savage has done wonders in his production of this exacting and massive work, and the people of Toronto are indebted to him for the opportunity offered of hearing it. Had the idea not occurred to him to organize a company to present "Parsifal" in English it is probable that many years would elapse before it could be introduced in this city. As it is, thanks to the Savage enterprise, the musical community of Toronto have heard the opera, while they are only talking about producing it in London, the great metropolis. There will be a matinee performance to-day, commencing at 11 o'clock, and a final presentation in the evening, commencing, as usual, at 5.30.

48. Montreal Gazette, 15 April 1905, p. 7

NOTES OF THE PLAYHOUSES.

"Babes in Toyland" and Lawrence D'Orsay, in "The Earl of Pawtucket," are among the spring bookings for Montreal.

For the Flower Maidens in the English production of "Parsifal," 1,200 young women were examined for these twenty-four places. In the course of time these twelve hundred were reduced to eighty, and finally, the requisite number were secured. Musically the result is remarkable. The purity and freshness of their voices, and the skill with which they sing the very difficult music has excited the admiration of musicians.



50. Montreal Gazette, 8 April 1954, p. 12

Sight & Sound

By Thomas Archer

THE PARSIFAL SETUP

The gentlemen of the Show Mart were kind enough yesterday to give me a sort of preview of what the staging of Wagner's Parsifal there is going to be like. After a pleasant lunch yesterday I was taken up to the Exhibition Hall where the great music-drama is to open on Saturday for five performances.

I was sincerely impressed with what has been done to give Parsifal under the best conditions possible considering the obstacles the promoters of this noble venture are up against. The hall, of course, is not an ideal place for a work of this nature, but most certainly no expense, no trouble has been spared to make it viable under the circumstances.

We shall have a Parsifal that should be a memorable experience. In the first place the seating arrangements have been vastly improved over those at Jeanne d'Arc au Bucher last summer. A new and much higher ramp has been installed and the audience is to be limited to 2,800 for each performance.

The stage has been raised and reconstructed with a handsome-looking proscenium arch. It will be divided in half with the Grail scenes at the back and the Magic Garden (Act II) and the Good Friday Spell (Act III) played in the front half.

This is the practice at the Metropolitan. I know of no practical theatre on this continent with the revolving stage called for by Wagner. The Show Mart stage is better than the Metropolitan's because it is much deeper. A depth of 22 feet is available for the scenes done in the front half of the stage. The width of the proscenium is 44 feet.

The production here follows the scenic policy now in force at Bayreuth under the management of Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner. That is to say it will be stripped bare of all but what is absolutely necessary, the main illusion being created by curtains and what looks like a very elaborate lighting scheme.

The Grail Altar and Amfortas' throne are impressive in the severity of their lines. The knights will be seated in a sort of semi-circular span of choir stalls, enclosing throne and altar on three sides.

I got one piece of good news. The Show Mart authorities refused point blank to hire the costumes from New York. "For this production," they said, "we wanted nothing second hand." The costumes were specially ordered according to chosen designs and made in Canada directly for the production. I need not say that this involved a considerable additional outlay in expense money.

49. Montreal Gazette, 3 March 1954, p. 12

"PARSIFAL"

Richard Wagner's Masterpiece
at the

SHOW MART HALL

Featuring:

Ramon Vinay, Martial Singher, Dezzo Ernster, Doris Doree of Metropolitan, Napoleon Bisson.

Musical dir.:
Charles Houdret

Stage dir.: Desire DeFrere

APRIL 10 (mat) 11, 13, 15, 16

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1600 Berri, Montreal

Michel Ambrogi, who did the admirable setting for the Montreal Festivals production of Moliere's Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme at the Chalet last summer, showed me his scale sketches of those for Parsifal. On paper they look eminently artistic.

Librettos in French and English will be available to the public. This is good because the text will be sung in the original German and the words of Parsifal are almost equally as important as the music. Indeed they condition and explain every step in the music and the action.

I would advise all those who read French to secure the libretto in that language. The reason is that it is the classic translation made by Judith Gautier with the personal blessing and editorial supervision of Wagner himself. Judith, daughter of the great French poet, Theophile Gautier, was very intimate with the poet-composer during the Bayreuth days. In fact the authoritative Lettres francaises de Richard Wagner implies that the friendship of the old man and the young girl was just a shade more than platonic.

The Gautier translation, which I read carefully many years ago, surpasses anything done with Parsifal in English. Moreover it is not a bowdlerized one made for singing purposes but a poem in its own right and is remarkably faithful to the original.

Sight & Sound

By Thomas Archer

'PARSIFAL' OPENS

Richard Wagner's Parsifal opened the first of five performances at the Show Mart on Saturday and kept us literally enthralled from approximately 2 p.m. until 6.30 p.m. with a couple of 10-minute intervals to catch our breaths in. The production of what is pretty well universally accepted as the most difficult of the greater works from a theatre point of view in the repertory, was brought off as only Montreal on this continent probably could do it.

Wagner's story of sin and redemption was written exclusively for the Bayreuth Festival Theatre and was never intended to be given anywhere else but on home ground. Its intention was to consecrate art in terms of religion. In this respect it requires a feeling for liturgical form which places it half way between the church and the theatre, those two basic centres of human expression which were once one but, for centuries have been all but divorced.

Saturday's performance proved how closely Wagner came to reuniting that which was once a whole. And I think, after having seen two Parsifals elsewhere, that this city alone on the North American continent could have done it. It was vocally, instrumentally and scenically a most moving and beautiful formed interpretation. But, more than this, it fulfilled Wagner's concept. It was a religious act.

Behind the Grail scenes, what amounts in the first act to a Communion Service, there were centuries of liturgical tradition, of the instinctive knowledge that this is not a conventional repertory opera to be given with a respectful and, alas, slovenly bow in Holy Week, but an act of faith. This I never felt in the other two North American Parsifals I have seen. It was a Passion play in the way, I am convinced, only Quebec Province could give it. And it was sung clearly and understandably in the original German with all except five of the six principals recruited locally. This means, of course, the chorus of knights, squires, celestials and flower girls, and an orchestra of between 80 and 90 musicians.

This Parsifal might very well be taken as the timely culmination of the wonderful, but too often, heartbreaking efforts that have been made in Montreal over the past 15 years to give us our due place in the musical sun. I think of the Montreal Festivals production of Wagner's Tristan and Debussy's Pelleas, the Opera Guild's of Mozart's Magic Flute and Beethoven's Fidelio. Without them this Parsifal would not have been possible. Nor without the orchestral tradition so slowly and often painfully built up here by the Montreal Orchestra, Les Concerts Symphoniques and the Little Symphony of Montreal.

Musically Parsifal is one of the seven wonders of the art. The intensity of the deliberately unhurried exposition, the rapt, otherworldliness of it all, the golden flow of tone, the old master's withdrawnness that, except in the second act, is sometimes Gae-gorian in its remoteness, this is the Parsifal that keeps you entranced hour after hour. Wagner never lets you down.

It is essentially a visual and orchestral opera. The singers, generally speaking, tell the story as seen from a fascinating other world. The orchestra sings at the slightest opportunity. And what an orchestra it is! I happen to know the score extremely well and there didn't seem to be a flaw from beginning to end.

And here was one of the chief revelations of the afternoon, the absolute knowledge and the complete authority with which Charles Houdret conducted. It must never be forgotten that in any Wagner opera (or any opera for that matter) music comes first and the conductor is the chief protagonist. Just where Mr. Houdret imbibed his Wagner I wouldn't know, for he is a modest, impersonal man not given to unnecessary speech. But the magnificently right tempi (a Parsifal hazard), the plastic phrasing, the calm, resolute command of what is probably the biggest instrumental aggregation of its kind ever assembled here proved the master. Mr. Houdret is an asset we have surely not yet taken advantage of. If he can give us such a gigantic Parsifal he can give us anything.

Among the six principals Rose Bampton's Kundry was a deeply moving interpretation. It is Wagner's most difficult role, calling for Isolde singing in the second act, mainly pantomime in the first and literally all pantomime in the third. Miss Bampton not only looked beautiful and sang beautifully but revealed herself as a thinking symbolist. The Magdalene business in the third act did just what Wagner intended it should do in terms of fundamental pathos.

Another revelation was Martial Singher's Amfortas, a figure of frightening grief and agony. Mr. Singher, however, never allowed the enormous stress of the part to interfere with a vocally classical rendering perfect in German diction. I might add, too, classical in dignity and style of movement.

I have seen two famous basses in the role of wise old Gurnemanz but none so noble, natural and always human as Dezso Ernster. The part is his own, as much as anyone's. For him it is a natural act of devotion. I need hardly add more.

Ramon Vinay sings a beautifully restrained and dignified Parsifal, sometimes I felt a little too restrained for the benefit of a very fine heroic tenor. He will, I think, make a greater Parsifal eventually than now. And this is no reflection on a very artistically timed performance of what must surely be the most difficult role in the entire tenor repertory, especially in the first act.

Napoleon Bisson, the Canadian baritone, has the brief but wickedly trying role of Klingsor. He acquits himself nobly and bravely and even manages to make his declamatory phrases sound like real singing. Vocally Klingsor, next to Alberich in The Ring, was one of Wagner's worst crimes committed against potentially good singers.

There isn't space to list the names of leading knights, squires and flower girls but what they did was better than I have seen and heard elsewhere. The charming singing and Francoise Sullivan's equally charming choreography for the girls in the Magic Garden would surely have delighted Wagner, who wanted but could never get his frauleins to do it with this kind of Massenet

delicacy. The liturgical reverence of the squires was a very significant factor.

Young Michel Ambrogi of this city was given a free hand with locally tailored costumes and settings and shows great imagination in adapting the best modern traditions to the requirements of the Showmart stage. Throne and stalls in the Grail scenes are most impressive and the idea of presenting Klingsor as a spider in his web outstanding. I would, however, have liked a little more light for the Good Friday Spell which should surely be a brilliant, almost blinding green.

George Little's management of the off and on stage chorus is the kind of expert job we would expect from him. Just how, with short notice, he taught his choristers not only musically but phonetically a proper declamation of the text is his secret and one worth knowing. Offstage choral work was perfectly timed with no visible effort.

The actual staging of this Parsifal is easily the finest job Desire Defrere has ever done here. Parsifal must be exceedingly hard to stage because it concerns timed placing rather than actual movement. Mr. Defrere's handling of it is not only artistic and discreet but shows a profound knowledge of the nature of the work.

Acoustics are excellent and so is vision.

Parsifal was repeated last night and will be given again tomorrow, Thursday and Friday evenings.

'PARSIFAL' AND 'LOVE OF 3 KINGS' SUNG TO HOLIDAY AUDIENCES

Mme. Florence Easton in the
Role of 'Kundry' at the
Metropolitan.

By W. J. HENDERSON.

"Parsifal" was performed at the Metropolitan Opera House yesterday afternoon to usher in the new year of opera. The sacred music drama was heard by a large audience. It was again given in English, which seems to be the order for the present season. Mme. Florence Easton was the *Kundry*. The Metropolitan is fortunate in possessing more than one competent impersonator of Wagner's singular heroine. Mme. Easton's interpretation commands the highest praise that can be given because of its remarkably fine dramatic and musical qualities.

The singer brings to the part a large intelligence, which has developed a well rounded and satisfying presentation of the meaning of the text and music. In action Mme. Easton is discreet in the employment of gesture, pose and facial expression. She neither overacts nor slights anything. One is never in doubt as to the significance of her doings. So, too, in her singing she delights the ear with a continual outpour of beautiful tone, while she reaches the mind with well planned methods of expression.

The other members of the cast were Mr. Whitehill in his touching representation of *Amfortas*; Mr. Sembach as *Parsifal*, Mr. Blass as *Gurnemanz*, and the same company of competent minor singers usually heard in this work. Mr. Bodanzky conducted, and the drama moved through its various episodes with its customary solemn effect.



Mme. Florence Easton, who sang
Kundry in "Parsifal."

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54. H. Napier Moore, "Edward Johnson of Guelph," *Maclean's Magazine* (1 July 1939): 16 [excerpt]

Triumph in "Parsifal"

THE season progressed and reports of this amazing young tenor began to spread. They reached the management of La Scala in Milan. They sent an agent to Rome to hear him. The scout was impressed. A few days later, Johnson's manager burst in with the breathless announcement that La Scala was asking his terms and particulars of his repertoire.

Carelli, in Rome, was unwilling to let Johnson go. He was now box-office, a drawing card. But Edward knew when the going was good. He signed a contract with the Milan organization, and with it received the honor of being chosen as the first tenor to sing "Parsifal" outside of Bayreuth. Copyright for this opera ended on December 31, 1913. In January, 1914, "Parsifal" was produced at La Scala, with Edward Johnson in the title role.

The responsibility of such an undertaking was not lost on him. It was more than just a singing part. It meant the maintenance of a great tradition. "Parsifal" is more than an opera. It is a religious drama; and to become an interpreter of Wagner's message meant a preparation almost comparable to that involved in becoming a servant of the church. Johnson not only learned the music; he studied every book pertaining to Wagner and his ideas.

At last he was ready. In the great opera house were critics from all over the world. The audience, for the most part, was composed of people who knew the work intimately.

Johnson's success was immediate, and real. Only a few loyal Italians longed for their much beloved Wagnerian tenor, Borgatti; and to please them, the management brought him in to do one performance. But the years had told on Borgatti's figure, if not on his voice, and he failed to create the illusion of youth and innocence which Johnson had given.

Twenty-seven performances of "Parsifal" were given in three months, and Johnson sang twenty-five.

And note this: After the opening night's performance, when Edward's dressing room was filled with admirers, the conductor, Maestro Serafin, cleared a path through the throng and pulled a thickset, heavily-jawed young man within Johnson's arm range. "Edoardo," quoth the maestro, "I want you to meet one of our rising young critics, who is very enthusiastic over your performance this evening—Senor Benito Mussolini."

Then a reporter for a Socialist paper, *Avanti*. Now, Il Duce.

55. "C. [initial only given; perhaps Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi?]," "Royal College of Music," *Musical Times* 1002 (1 August 1926): 740

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

'Parsifal,' at the Royal College, was divided between two evenings—a capital plan, particularly appreciated in July weather. The first performance was on July 14 and 15. Mr. Aveling's translation was used.

The choice of 'Parsifal' was courageous to the point of audacity, and few (even though knowing that the students had been at work on it for nearly a year) can have gone expecting anything like so complete an achievement. Everything was surprising—and less, perhaps, the ability of the orchestra, which Mr. H. Grunebaum conducted, than that of the singers, who were naturally not beyond criticism, but did, every one of them, put up a very serious and defensible representation. (Somehow we usually expect instrumental students to be on a higher plane than the vocalists.)

As for the staging, it was in some respects far better than we get in full-fledged performances. Covent Garden has certainly never seen the Grail Scene or the opening of Act 3 so beautifully lighted. A defect of the otherwise attractive landscape in Act I was the too military alignment of the fir forest. The striped background of the apse in the second scene was hardly a success. It suggested an awning. And we were not sure about the illuminated flower-bed in Act 2. The mind went back to Wembley.

We were seriously impressed by the singers' grip on their formidable parts. The music was thoroughly well known, and one had not the unhappy feeling, common at students' operatic performances, that the singers were straining their interpretative faculties before they had laid a foundation of good vocal technique. Not that anyone was perfect. Gurnemanz (Mr. John Andrews) acted with nobility and yet not pompously. He sang the big things best. A certain stiffness was betrayed by the murkiness and indistinct diction of some of his more casual utterances. Parsifal (Mr. Trefor Jones) was extraordinarily good in Acts 1 and 2, where he succeeded in making the impression of eager, simple youth. In Act 3 he wanted a few more inches for dignity's sake. He sang English clearly, with a Welsh accent. This young man will certainly have a successful career, for no one can resist such a good voice used so spontaneously and buoyantly. His tone-colour was hardly enough varied for Parsifal. After a time we felt we knew how he was going to sing. Perhaps he could manage to reflect more clearly the changes of mood. It was an admirable accomplishment, anyhow, to do as he did in Act 2.



Kundry was a Canadian soprano, Miss Odette de Foras, who had an uncommon voice and general ability. If she develops the full-throated (which means the fully open throated) style she may well become a great singer. Mr. Leyland-White's Amfortas struck us favourably. It was truly sung, and with measured pathos. With experience, he will intensify the great Lament in the Grail Scene. Neither he nor the Klingsor (Mr. Charles Draper) forced—which is the expected fault when young singers tackle tremendous Wagnerian parts. The treble voices in the Grail Scene had moments of insecurity. The men were vigorous. There was charming quality in the Flower Maidens' chorus.

It was, then, a notably successful undertaking, but we hope the R.C.M. opera classes will now put aside Wagner for a little. Let them give us a Handel opera! That tropical chromaticism of 'Parsifal' was made to turn the heads of the young. Fancy being drenched in it for a year! The experience must have left a lifelong impression on some of the 1925-26 students. Now for an antidote.

C.

56. *Montreal Gazette*, 9 January 1888, p. 3

ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

The National Opera produced two operas on Saturday, Gounod's 'Faust' at the matinee and Wagner's 'Lohengrin.' Both were elaborately, even lavishly, put on and in most respects the performances were as complete as accurate. In 'Faust' Amanda Fabris sang *Marguerite* with taste and sweetness, and even though she can hardly compare with many famous *Marguerites* she gave the test numbers very fair. Mr. Barrett essayed *Faust* and if by as may be remarked, he is hardly equal to the position of a leading tenor in such a pretentious organization, he sings intelligently. Mr. Frank Vetta as *Mephistopheles* sang and acted with vigor. Miss Emma Baker was a rather colorless *Siebel* but was fairly successful in the flower song, while Mr. Stoddard was an acceptable *Valentine*. The Walpurgis night scene presented a fine opportunity for spectacular effect, which was liberally taken advantage of.



'Lohengrin' was presented at night to a large audience. Barton McGuckin was the *Lohengrin* of the occasion and he agreeably filled the demands of the legendary hero. Bertha Pierson appeared as *Eka*, in which, however, she was not at her best. William Ludwig sang with force and power as *Telramund* and Clara Poole as the treacherous and scheming *Ortrud* added greatly to the cast. Frank Vetta was *Henry*, and William Merten the *Herald*. The operas were elaborately mounted, the costumes were rich and beautiful, while the orchestra was in every respect admirable, in fact, the engagement is a marked event in Montreal, and is not likely to be soon repeated on the same magnificent scale.

RECHERCHES SUR RICHARD WAGNER.

Wagner n'est connu dans notre pays que par les nouvelles à la main de quelques journaux, par les racontars fantaisiste, ridicules et le plus souvent hostiles de reporters en vacances. Les gros mots, les plaisanteries sales, les épithètes boursouflées, les quolibets les plus grossiers—plus à la portée de certains esprits—n'ont pas été ménagés à R. Wagner, même en Allemagne. M. W. Tappert en a réuni la plus grande partie en un volume publié à Leipzig, chez Frizsch, intitulé : "Lexique Wagnérien, dictionnaire d'incivilité, contenant les expressions grossières méprisantes, haineuses et calomnieuses qui ont été employées envers Maître Richard Wagner, ses œuvres et ses partisans, par ses ennemis et ses insulteurs, réunies dans les heures d'oisiveté pour l'agrément de l'esprit."

Il ne manque pas de gens, ici, à Montréal, qui ne connaissent de Wagner ni le système, ni les compositions et trouvent de bon goût, croient faire preuve d'esprit et d'intelligence en le prouffant. Il en est heureusement d'autres qui, par curiosité, — curiosité bien légitime — ou désirant s'instruire, soupirent après une bonne audition d'orchestre qui les initierait à l'œuvre du grand maître allemand.

Les vœux de ceux-ci vont être réalisés. L'orchestre Thomas sera à Montréal la semaine prochaine et nous fera entendre des fragments du "Tanhàuser", des "Maîtres chanteurs", de "La Walkyrie", de "Lohengrin" et de "Tristan et Isolde".

C'est pour eux que je publie des "Recherches sur Wagner". Je regrette de n'avoir pu commencer plus tôt ce travail. La publication en est retardée par la série des Concerts-Wagner aurait été de quelques secours aux auditeurs qui aiment à se renseigner d'avance sur le caractère et la valeur d'un musicien et de ses œuvres.

Ainsi que l'indique le titre de cet article mon travail, mon travail se borne à une compilation. J'ai puisé çà et là l'opinion des plumes les plus autorisées, des critiques les plus compétents, des musiciens les plus en renom. Ce sera une vue d'ensemble, permettant aux esprits droits et sincères de connaître Wagner et de juger son œuvre sciencieusement.

Une des qualités que les détracteurs de Wagner lui ont le plus obstinément refusée et devant laquelle ils ont enfin dû s'incliner, c'est le génie. Lier, dans une lettre adressée à un de ses amis, à Paris, disait déjà, en 1840, avec ce feu qu'il apporte dans toutes ses convictions :

Weimar, 14 mai 1840.

"Richard Wagner, maître de chapelle à Dresde, est ici depuis hier ; c'est un homme d'un génie admirable, d'un goût juste et trépassé, comme il convient à ce pays ; c'est une nouvelle et brillante apparition dans l'art."

Wagner n'avait alors que vingt-six ans, et il avait composé "Lohengrin," œuvre, selon M. Pougin—un des plus rares ad-

versaires du maître—puissante, émouvante, sans doute inégale et d'une longueur longue, mais où éclat, en élan, en élan, le feu du génie. La passion, si elle n'y domine pas toujours, s'y fait du moins une large place, l'étude des sentiments, bien que parfois exagérée, y est traitée avec beaucoup d'art, le style en est d'une ampleur rare, et la richesse orchestrale, trop souvent poussée à l'excès, n'en est pas moins souvent aussi splendide et lumineuse. Aussi, de tous les opéras de Wagner, "Lohengrin" est-il resté partout le favori du public, celui qu'on revoit le plus souvent et qui attire le plus volontiers les spectateurs.

GUILLAUME COUTURE.

(A continuer)

RECH. RECHES SUR RICHARD WAGNER.

(Second article.)

M. O. Fouque, ex-assistant-bibliothécaire du conservatoire de Paris, écrivait en Septembre 1881, après une représentation des *Maîtres-Chanteurs* au "Hof Theater" de Munich : "Sans le moindre fa-ctisme, on est obligé de reconnaître sur chaque page des *"Maîtres-Chanteurs"* le *gœus* du génie et de saluer cet opéra comme un chef d'œuvre." A propos de "*Parzival*" le même écrivait quelques jours plus tard : "Telle est cette œuvre étonnante qu'on n'écouterait peut-être pas jusqu'au bout dans la Babylone moderne et qui fit naître ici des enthousiasmes délirants. Que l'impression ressentie au premier abord tiennent autant de la surprise que de l'admiration, je n'essaierai pas de le nier, mais il est incontestable que l'artiste qui l'a conçue et réalisée est un génie d'une singulière audace et d'une force irrésistible."

"Le Ménestrel," journal de musique, non favorable à Wagner, mais impartial, s'exprime de cette manière :

"Si Richard Wagner est encore discuté comme compositeur dramatique, il ne l'est plus et il ne saurait l'être au point de vue de la mise en scène de ses talents. Jamais, à aucune époque, on ne vit pareil déploiement de publicité et de charlatanisme au profit d'un musicien et de ses œuvres. Les esprits les plus sérieux s'y laissent prendre et ce n'est pas l'une des moindres qualités de Richard Wagner, que de savoir ainsi s'imposer même à ceux qui doutent de sa musique. Que qu'il advienne, ce massacre des temps modernes traversera les âges futurs à l'état de personnage légendaire ; nos arrière-petits-fils parleront de Bayreuth comme nos enfants d'aujourd'hui parlent de Lourdes."

C'est vraiment miracle que de voir l'Europe entière accourir à l'appel des trompettes de Richard Wagner ! Il n'y a qu'à s'incliner devant un pareil fait, si anormal qu'il puisse paraître.

Quant à vous qui songez de ceux qui contestent l'application normale au théâtre du système de Richard Wagner, — dernière manière — nous proclamons au toi le *gœus* de la légende lyrique, sorte de composition d'essence allemande qui peut se placer entre l'Oratorio et l'épique proprement dit. Voilà jusqu'ici ce qui ressort des *Faits* acquis, sans parti pris de vanter les dernières œuvres de Bayreuth ou d'en médire."

Cet éloge — boutade du "*Ménestrel*" — en on dit certainement plus en faveur de Wagner qu'il en voulait dire.

La seule la plus spirituelle que l'on ait encore trouvée contre Wagner est celle qui

consiste à représenter sa musique comme une cacophonie insupportable, un cliquetis de vieille ferraille, un charivari infernal de jappements, de hurlements, de braiements, de hennissements, de miaulements, etc, etc. On a inventé de jolies histoires à ce sujet : tantôt c'est Rossini à qui l'on prête des mots bêtes ; tantôt c'est Cherubini à qui on fait commettre des irrévérences indignes d'un homme bien élevé. Ces insanités ont fait le tour de la presse.

Quelques citations suffisent pour répondre à ceux qui accusent Wagner de faire de la musique trop discordante ou trop bruyante.

II

M. Eugène de Bricqueville, d'un seul coup, répond à toutes ces critiques saugrenues : "L'œuvre de Wagner est complexe. Celui qui essaierait de la juger en ne s'arrêtant qu'aux dissonances peu préparées de certains accords, ou aux sonorités excessives de certaines phrases, tomberait dans l'erreur des critiques qui ont vu seulement dans la peinture de Delacroix des anatomies discutables ou des étrangetés de coloris. La poésie romantique ne consiste pas dans l'abus des enjambements, pas plus que le naturalisme n'a d'autre objectif que d'accumuler dans la littérature les expressions dégoûtantes. Ce sont là des défauts qui tiennent au *procédé*, défauts voulus, la plupart du temps, et dont le but est de détourner violemment l'attention des exagérations contraires."

D'ailleurs, en ce qui concerne le reproche fait à Wagner d'abuser des instruments de cuivre, je mets en fait qu'il y a moins de bruit dans tout le *Tannhäuser* que dans la plus petite opérette d'Offenbach ; et ces accords bizarres qui blessent si fort les oreilles chatouilleuses ont été employés, bien avant le maître de Munich, par Bach, par Beethoven, par Weber, par Schumann, par Berlioz.

M. O. Fouque exprime la même opinion sur "*Lohengrin*".

"— Vous dirai-je ce qui m'a le plus frappé dans l'audition de *Lohengrin*, c'est l'extrême douceur de cette musique ! Deux ou trois fois seulement dans la soirée, l'orchestre atteint son maximum de puissance, et ces explosions sont préparées avec un tel art, une telle habileté, une entente si profonde du crescendo combiné avec l'effet dramatique, qu'elles paraissent à peine suffisantes. Voilà qui étonnera peut-être quelques lecteurs, habitués à se figurer Richard Wagner sous la forme d'un monstre soufflant et trompétant dans une embouchure fantastique qui fait vibrer ensemble et à la fois mille tubes sonores aux mugissements d'airain."

Encore la même opinion, exprimée cette fois par M. Armand Guizien, à l'occasion de "*L'Or du Rhin*" aux fêtes de Bayreuth."

Guillaume Couture (1851–1915) *Recherches sur Richard Wagner*, from *La Patrie* [Montreal] in 3 parts. **Part 2**: Tuesday, 24 June 1884, p. 2 (conclusion)

« — L'orchestre conduit par Hans Richter (les instruments à cordes dirigés par Wilhelm), est d'une perfection incontestable. Il se trouve placé plus bas que d'ordinaire, et cette innovation produit le meilleur effet. La sonorité est merveilleuse et l'accompagnement le plus riche ne couvre pas, grâce à cette nouvelle disposition de l'orchestre, la voix des chanteurs qui, sans peine et sans efforts, peuvent faire valoir toutes leurs qualités, même quand les instruments déchaînés versent des torrents d'harmonie. Il est certain que la moindre opérette fait plus de bruit que l'*Or du Rhin*. Quand on a vu la partition, quand on vu ce prodigieux travail d'orfèvrerie, on éprouve quelque peine à voir toutes ces ciselures réintégrées au dernier plan et sacrifiées à l'effet général. Wagner a agi comme les artistes du moyen-âge, qui sculptaient une cathédrale comme ils auraient fait d'un meuble.

GUILLAUME COUTURE.

(A continuer)

Guillaume Couture (1851–1915) *Recherches sur Richard Wagner*, from *La Patrie* [Montreal] in 3 parts. **Part 3**: Saturday, 28 June 1884, p. 2

RECHERCHES SUR WAGNER.

TROISIÈME ARTICLE.

Le correspondant à Bayreuth de la «*Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*», qui n'a jamais été tendre pour Wagner, est obligé d'embêter le pas des critiques précédents, non toutefois sans se faire tirer l'oreille. «*Wagner musicien est, par bien des côtés, un homme de génie. Mais là, encore, on sent le défaut de mesure. Il aime trop à frapper fort (et par là, je ne veux pas dire faire beaucoup de bruit) pour frapper toujours juste.*»

C'est dit drôlement. La phrase est tirailée. Tout de même l'aveu y est. Il est précieux malgré, ou plutôt, à cause de ses réticences.

M. C. Saint-Saëns, un des plus grands critiques, sinon le plus grand, que la France ait produit, s'exprime au sujet de l'opérasation de Wagner, d'une manière analogue à MM. de Bricquerville, Pouque et d'autres : La puissance et une insupportable variété s'allient à une extrême douceur ; et cet orchestre si compliqué est comme un riche tapis sur lequel se promènent les personnages du drame. «*Qui n'embête pas certains gens d'écrire tous les jours que la musique de Wagner est un bruit assourdissant qui déchire les oreilles ; ces mêmes personnes trouvent harmonieux et mélodieux des opéras où l'on frappe sans relâche sur la grosse caisse et les cymbales, où les trombones et les cornets à pistons font rage, où les chanteurs, malgré des cris désespérés, ne peuvent parvenir à se faire entendre que par intervalles.*»

Obligés de convenir que Wagner avait du génie, obligés d'avouer que sa musique n'était pas d'un bruyant à rompre les tympans même les plus délicats, ses ennemis se sont jetés sur la mélodie. Là, la forteresse leur semblait inaccessible. Bien osé serait celui qui tenterait de les faire déguerpir. Qui oserait jamais soutenir que Wagner peut écrire une mélodie, une belle mélodie, une vraie mélodie, à la Mozart, à la Schubert, quelque chose venant du cœur vous empoignant, vous étreignant l'âme et la baignant d'émotions indigibles ! Cette armée redoutable, au milieu de laquelle M. Chouquet se faisait tout particulièrement remarquer, semblait vouloir défier l'univers ! Hélas ! soudain retour des choses d'ici-bas ! tant de dépense ne devait rester stérile !

Comment pouvait-il en être autrement quand la trahison pénètre parmi les siens ! Comment pouvait-il en être autrement quand un de leurs plus fidèles adeptes, Félix Clément, se permet d'écrire :

«*Enfin Siegfried arrive à la montagne où dort Brünnhilde ; il la réveille avec un baiser et chante avec elle un duo final de la passion la plus intense !*»

Comment pouvait-il en être autrement quand Victor Wilder affirme qu'il y a dans «*l'Or du Rhin*» des pages absolument admirables, que Beethoven lui-même n'a pas trouvés de mélodie plus superbe que la phrase pompeuse qui s'élève de l'orchestre, au moment où les tours du Walhall émergent des nuages, et qu'il ne trouve rien de plus gracieux et de plus charmant que la mélodie qui s'envole des lèvres du dieu Loge, lorsqu'il conte à Wotan ses lointains voyages ?

Comment pouvait-il en être autrement surtout quand Gounod, à la première représentation du *Tannhäuser*, à Paris, faisant hardiment face aux bordées de sifflets, s'écriait : "Je donnerais tout mon sang pour avoir écrit une phrase comme celle-là !" La pauvre fortissime est bien déçiquelée. Mille brèches y donnent accès de toutes parts. Les papyrus combattants qui y sont restés, brisés, anéantis, dédaignés, trop honteux pour essayer d'en sortir, sont encore à méditer ce que M. G. Saint-Saëns écrivait dans "L'Estafette," à son retour de Bayreuth. Il s'agit du monologue de Siegfried et de sa scène avec Sieglinde : — "Les fleurs mélodiques le plus parfumées naissent à chaque pas, la poésie égrena ses perles, et l'orchestre, comme une mer infinie où chatouillent toutes les couleurs du prisme, berce les deux amants sur ses flots magiques. Voilà bien le théâtre de l'avenir ; ni l'opéra ni le drame n'ont lyrique ne verseront jamais dans l'âme une émotion pareille.

L'auteur n'aurait-il complètement réussi que dans cette scène, c'en est assez pour prouver que son idéal n'est pas un rêve irréalisable ; la cause est entendue. Mille critiques, écrivant mille lignes chacune pendant dix ans, stralèrent ce chef d'œuvre à peu près comme le soleil d'un enfant renverserait les pyramides d'Égypte.

"Il s'agit maintenant du troisième acte de la *Walkyrie* : — "Emportés par l'ouragan, les nuages volent comme des flèches, et les Walkyries, dont la tempête est l'élément, possèdent à l'envi leur cri de guerre, gravissent les rochers, s'appellent, se répondant, agitant leurs lances et leurs boucliers. Qui n'a pas entendu cela ne sait pas à quelle puissance la musique peut atteindre ! Malgré la défense du maître qui a interdit les applaudissements, une clameur immense s'élève de la salle ; il est impossible de se contenir à l'audition d'une scène pareille. L'acte se soutient d'un bout à l'autre ; les imprévisions de Wotan, les cris désespérés des Walkyries, le désespoir

de Sieglinde. Peraltation de Brünhilde ne laissent pas aux spectateurs un moment de repos ; et quand les Walkyries se sont enfuies, lorsque, dans le crépuscule du soir, se déroule la dernière scène entre Wotan et Brünhilde, l'œuvre atteint à la grandeur achilléenne. Longtemps le dieu et la Walkyrie se tiennent embrassés ; et pendant ce temps, l'orchestre fait entendre de tels accents que bien des spectateurs ne peuvent retenir leurs larmes. Le drame lyrique triomphe.

Les derniers survivants de la fortissime démantibulée font entendre des gémissements et des grincements de dents.

Puisque nous en sommes sur la mélodie j'en profite pour mettre sous les yeux de mes lecteurs quelques considérations tirées de Berlioz et de Meyer, son successeur comme critique musical aux "Débats."

Le sujet est d'autant plus en situation que c'est à propos de Wagner que les lignes suivantes ont été écrites : — "Les préventions, favorables ou hostiles, dictent la plupart des jugements sur les œuvres des maîtres reconnus et consacrés. Tel, acclamé comme un grand mélodiste, écrira un jour une œuvre entièrement dépourvue de mélodie, et n'en sera pas moins admiré pour cette même œuvre par des gens qui l'auraient sifflée si elle eût portée un autre nom. La grande, la sublime, l'entraînante ouverture d'*Elisabeth*, de Beethoven, passe auprès de beaucoup de critiques pour une composition dépourvue de mélodie, bien qu'elle en soit pleine, bien que tout chante, que tout pleure mélodieusement dans l'allègre comme dans l'andante ; et ces mêmes juges qui la dénigrent applaudissent et aient été fort souvent après l'ouverture de *Don Juan* de Mozart, où il n'y a pas trace de ce qu'ils appellent mélodie ; mais c'est de Mozart, le grand mélodiste !"....

— "..... Alors on n'entendrait plus tant de gens vous dire : Je ne suis pas musicien, mais j'aime la musique quand elle est bonne, et elle est bonne quand elle me plaît et quelle éveille en moi des sensations agréables ; profusion de foi que l'on peut appeler la fatuité de l'ignorance. Que de prétendus amateurs me l'ont faite après les *Trois*, qu'ils avaient entendus sans les comprendre, et qu'ils critiquaient parce qu'ils ne les avaient pas compris.

Fredonner un motif de l'œuvre qui se joue pour la première fois, c'est la joie du public qui sort, c'est l'espoir du public qui entre. Après la première représentation des *Trois*, personne ne chantait la plus petite phrase de l'opéra de Berlioz, et le public, trop présomptueux pour s'accuser lui-même, accusait le compositeur. Il reprochait à Berlioz de manquer de mélodie, de cette mélodie facile qui se passe d'accompagnement, qui secoue toute harmonie, cette guenille, et dont les orgues de Barbarie s'emparent. Il lui reprochait de n'avoir pas refait quelque opéra très goûté et très populaire ; il lui reprochait l'originalité de ses rythmes, la coupe neuve de ses morceaux, la science de son orchestration, la richesse de ses harmonies, et il appelait tout cela les extravagances d'un cerveau malade."

Les temps ont bien changé depuis ! Que n'ont-ils changé plus tôt ! Berlioz aurait pu dire : heureux !

GUILLAUME COUTURE.

1. Ad for the concerts [*La Patrie*, 23 June 1884, p. 2]:

GRAND FESTIVAL
Concerts Wagner
 Les 26, 27 et 28 Juin, sous la direction de
THEODORE THOMAS,
 Le fameux trio de Wagner,
MATENA, WINKELMAN, SCARIA
 ET
CHRISTINE NILSSON,
 JUCH, WINANT, TONDT, REMMERTZ,
 ET
L'ORCHESTRE *sans rival* **de THOMAS**
 — Billets de saison (cinq grands concerts) \$10.00
 Détails particuliers en s'adressant aux ma-
 gasins de musique de MM. Lavigne & Lajola,
 Boucher, Henry Prince et J. J. Lemplough.

2. Friday, 27 June 1884, p. 2 – review of the 1st Thomas concert

**1er concert de l'or-
chestre Thomas**

L'effet a été merveilleux et irrésistible. L'émotion gonflait les cœurs et semblait vouloir les briser ; elle a surtout acquis un degré d'intensité extraordinaire dans l'introduction de "La Walküre." Cette constante répétition du *Ré* des seconds violons, accompagnée par cette phrase gémissante et non moins persistante des basses, ne commande d'abord que la surprise ; bientôt l'admiration lui succède, l'idée de l'auteur se fait de plus en plus jour ; la tenacité du dessein finit par vous envahir de toute part et vous donne le vertige ; vous ne vous possédez plus ; un autre monde vous attire, vous entraîne ; et loin de penser à résister, vous vous abandonnez complètement à ce pouvoir inconnu qui vous transporte dans un monde surnaturel et vous fait éprouver des jouissances qui vous font oublier les misères de cette vie et compensent au centuple les peines et les souffrances de dix années.

Malheureusement, notre fièle organisation, notre pauvre nature humaine ne saurait résister longtemps à cette terrible tension de toutes les fibres de son être.

C'est de la musique titanesque, demandant en effet des titans comme Mme Materna, MM. Wilkermann et Scaria pour son exécution.

Le peu d'espace dont le journal peut disposer m'empêche de détailler le concert le plus extraordinaire dont Montréal a été témoin. Je ne puis que plaindre sincèrement ceux qui n'ont pu s'y rendre. Heureusement pour eux, il y en aura encore deux aujourd'hui et deux demain.

GUILLAUME COUTURE

SECONDE ET TROISIEME CON- CERT DE L'ORCHESTRE THOMAS.

Et c'est trop de deux malheurs, je crois
que c'est trop aussi de deux bonheurs. Il
y en a toujours un qui, forcément, neutra-
lise, annihile l'autre. C'est ce qui nous
arrive en ce moment avec le 50^{me} anniver-
saire de la St Jean-Baptiste et la série des
concerts de l'orchestre Thomas. Toute
l'attention, toute l'ardeur de la population
française s'est portée sur notre fête natio-
nale. Le banquet et le congrès en ont
retenu un grand nombre. Les amis, les
soirées, les invitations particulières de
toute espèce, la fatigue des promenades de
la journée ont été aussi une source d'em-
pêchement pour plusieurs. En somme, la
présence de l'orchestre Thomas, à Mont-
réal, aura été perdue pour l'élément français.
La chose est regrettable plus qu'on ne
pourrait le croire.

Elle est regrettable pour nous qui per-
dons ainsi l'occasion d'entendre des chefs-
d'œuvre inconnus ici, des merveilles musi-
cales que nous ne pouvons espérer connaî-
tre que par l'orchestre Thomas dont le
défaut va se chiffrer par plusieurs milliers
de dollars. Elle est surtout regrettable en
ce sens, que ce flaccid flaccid va détour-
ner à jamais l'orchestre Thomas de Mont-
réal.

Contre la fatalité nous ne pouvons rien ;
rien que nous soumettons humblement et
gémir sur la malencontreuse coïncidence
qui a amené ici l'orchestre Thomas pen-
dant le cinquantième de la société Saint
Jean-Baptiste.

Le programme du second concert paraît
avoir été composé principalement en vue
d'un auditoire féminin : Mendelssohn avec
son léger fantastique et sa délicate poésie ;
Gluck avec sa sobriété et sa classique ac-
tion ; Mozart avec son style pur et gra-
cieux ; Weber avec son "Invitation à la
Valse" si populaire ; Beethoven avec son
allure fière, pompeuse, et son âme tour-
mentée ; Wagner dont on a choisi ce qui se
rapproche le plus du moule ordinaire ; voi-
là ce qu'on a cru devoir offrir aux dames
de Montréal, et ce que les dames de Mont-
réal ont cru devoir ne pas accepter. En
effet, salle vide, vide, vide !

En revanche le troisième concert, celui
d'hier soir, a fait salle comble. Faut-il
l'attribuer à Nilsson ? C'est fort probable.
Et nous le déplorons. Comment ! une sim-
ple cantatrice l'emporterait sur tous les
chef-d'œuvre ! Une simple cantatrice se-
rait préférée aux mille voix de l'orchestre, à
l'agent musical le plus complet et le plus
puissant ! Il n'y a qu'à Montréal que pa-
reille chose puisse se voir.

Enfin, puisqu'il en est ainsi, je dirai au
public de Montréal : allez au concert, cet
après-midi, vous entendrez Nilsson dans le
grand air de donna Elvira et dans l'air
"Connais-tu le pays ?" ; allez au concert, ce
soir, vous entendrez Materna, de beaucoup
supérieure à Nilsson ; vous entendrez Wil-
kermann, Fioria et Mlle Fuch.

J'ajouterais, comme musicien : Allez en-
tendre l'Allegretto de la huitième sympho-
nie de Beethoven ; allez entendre la "Dan-
ce Macabre" de Saint-Saëns ; allez entendre
la symphonie en Si mineur de Schubert ;
allez entendre l'immortelle "Ouverture"
de Fidelio ; allez entendre le "Tasse" de
Liszt ; allez entendre la "Walküre" de
Wagner.

Allez, et seriez-vous assez ingrat pour ne
pas me bien, nous n'en aurons pas moins
votre amis.

GUILL. L'UNE COURE

**QUATRIÈME ET CINQUIÈME
CONCERT DE L'ORCHESTRE
THOMAS.**

Tout est fini.

De la solennité musicale donnée par l'orchestre Thomas il ne reste plus qu'un souvenir d'une suavité ineffable et l'incrustation dans nos cœurs de l'œuvre puissante, colossale, incommensurable de Richard Wagner.

Les quolibets bêtes sur Wagner ont fait leur temps ; du moins ne sont-ils plus de mise à Montréal.

La masse, chez qui il n'y pas de parti pris, chez qui ce qui parle au cœur trouve toujours de l'écho, a été émue, entraînée, subjuguée.

Tous les partisans de systèmes étroits ou immuables se ruent en vain contre l'impression reçue, contre l'enthousiasme ardent et spontané dont furent empoignés les auditeurs du "Tannhäuser," des "Maîtres chanteurs," de Tristan et Yseult, de "Lohengrin," et surtout de "La Walküre."

D'ailleurs, ces partisans sont aussi peu nombreux que les monarchistes et les radicaux, en France et en Canada. Plaignons-les. Ils ne connaissent pas mieux. Fâchons de leur ouvrir les yeux. Cherchons à les instruire, même s'ils se refusent à l'évidence, même sans espérance de succès. Le véritable apôtre ne se rebute jamais, ne s'empporte jamais, pardonne toujours.

La *Madame* Armand, agenouillée devant la musique de *Wagner*, a dit qu'on pouvait fonder une religion rien qu'avec l'air de Calchas : *Au faite des grandeurs* ! On dirait-il donc aujourd'hui s'il entendait l'œuvre de Wagner ! Il dirait sans doute que cette nouvelle religion est fondée. Il nous le prouverait par Beyreuth : Là, dirait-il, est son temple : Wagner en est le dieu ; Liszt, Richter, Wilhelmj en sont les grands prêtres ; Rabinstein, Royer, Roff, Mendès, Gouzien, Joachim, Fischer, Fourcaud, Benoit, Gavaert, Auguste Colmes, Judith Gautier en sont les disciples ; tous les musiciens pour qui la musique est un art et non un simple passe-temps en sont les adeptes ; tous ceux qui sont susceptibles de sentir un accent vrai, tout ceux que la vérité peut atteindre, tous ceux qui vivent du cœur et de l'âme en sont les fidèles.

Religion sublime qui a eu comme toutes les autres, ses détracteurs, ses défenseurs et ses martyrs.

Religion universelle puisqu'elle a une langue comprise de tous.

Et l'éloquence de cette langue est tellement irrésistible qu'on a pu construire le temple de Beyreuth et le munir de tous ses accessoires au moyen de souscriptions.

Et l'éloquence de cette langue est telle-

Et l'éloquence de cette langue est tellement irrésistible que le dieu Wagner s'est vu, en un instant, entouré des premiers chanteurs d'Allemagne et des premiers instrumentistes de l'Europe lui offrant leurs services gratuitement pour les exécutions de "La Tétralogie !"

Et l'éloquence de cette langue est tellement irrésistible que, malgré le voyage, ses fatigues et ses dépenses le temple était littéralement assiégé d'adorateurs !

Le temps de la prédication et du prosélytisme est passé, la conviction rentre d'elle-même, librement, naturellement dans les âmes. L'Allemagne, la Russie, l'Angleterre et les Etats Unis son wagnériennes et le deviennent de plus en plus tous les jours ; la France, revêche au pre-

mier abord,—en raison d'événements dont je parlerai dans la continuation de mes "Recherches sur Wagner"—prend un élan vigoureux, facilité par l'exécution des œuvres de Berlioz et—selon M. Fourcaud—de Félicien David.

A Montréal, les néophytes sont nombreux, malgré l'énorme désavantage de n'entendre que des œuvres fragmentées, malgré le texte allemand, malgré l'immensité de la salle, si peu en rapport avec le nombre d'instrumentistes relativement restreint dont se composait l'orchestre.

Les quelques récalcitrants se recrutent parmi quelques partisans du système statoculaire et une momie parisienne dont la langue a résolu le problème du mouvement perpétuel d'une manière malheureusement inutile et pour ses semblables et pour elle-même.

Le trio Materna, Winkelmann, Scaria, a eu le don de contenter tout le monde. Materna, surtout, avec sa voix pure, franche, sonore, vibrante, éclatante, a eu un succès d'admiration sans pareil. Elle a la majesté d'une vestale, la stature d'une déesse, la passion d'une Branchu, l'art d'un Titién. Comme elle aime son art, comme elle le respecte, comme elle vénère Wagner qui l'a choisie entre toutes pour interpréter son œuvre ! Quel soin elle apporte à chaque phrase, chaque note, chaque mot, afin que tout soit selon la teinte voulue, afin que tout soit bien compris et que la satisfaction de l'auditoire soit complète ! Ce n'est pas pour elle qu'elle chante : c'est pour Wagner ; peu lui importe son succès à elle : c'est celui de Wagner qu'elle veut.

Aussitôt en scène, un délire, une extase artistique s'empare de toutes ses facultés ; c'est son âme qui chante pour *Lui, Lui* qui l'écoute sans doute encore et lui sourit quand elle rend *Sa* pensée telle qu'*Il* l'a conçue, telle qu'*Il* veut qu'elle soit interprétée. C'est là l'impression que m'a causée Mme Materna. Je ne pense pas que je puisse lui faire un plus bel éloge.

MM. Wincelmann et Scaria paraissent être animés du même esprit, mais n'ont pas un talent aussi souple et aussi complet, tout en étant de bons, de nobles et de grands artistes.

C'est beaucoup plus que je n'en pourrais dire de Mme Nilsson. Sa réputation est bien assise, elle a un genre de beauté qui plaît à un grand nombre, elle doit donc se sentir à l'aise, sûre d'elle-même, au-dessus de vulgaires succès ; il me semble qu'elle devrait éviter tout ce qui pourrait rabaisser l'art et dédaigner tout applaudissement qui ne prendrait pas sa source dans les traditions les plus pures de l'art lyrique. Au lieu de cela, que fait-elle ? J'ai hâte d'avoir à l'écrire : elle a chanté "Ah ! perfido"—ce qu'elle a le mieux réussi—avec négligence et insouciance ; elle a chanté l'air des bijoux en transformant l'innocente, la candide, la pure, la chaste Marquise en une coquette, une rouée, je puis dire une courtisane ; elle a chanté l'air de Judas Maccabees, à From Mighty Rings—substitué à "Miserere" de Don Giovanni—d'une manière impossible, incroyable ; se trompant constamment et de notes et de mesure, changeant les mots, respirant au milieu des mots, introduisant dans l'air de cadences à la Bellini ! elle a chanté "Connais-tu le pays ?" de manière à causer un désarroi complet à l'orchestre, tellement, malgré la simplicité du morceau, elle y a apporté peu de soin... Elle n'a cherché le succès que dans mièvreries et des mignardises. Tout incroyable que ce puisse être ; ce n'est pas. Je n'exagère rien.

Ma civilité ne va pas jusqu'à croire que Mme Nilsson ne peut pas faire mieux. Sa réputation, les éloges que lui ont décernés les plus grands critiques de l'Europe me sont un sûr garant de ses capacités. Mais alors, j'en dois conclure qu'elle nous a traités avec un saut-gêne sans pareil ! j'en dois conclure qu'elle nous a insultés ! j'en dois surtout conclure qu'elle a perdu tout sentiment et toute dignité artistique.

Une artiste qui n'est pas qu'une marchande de notes, quelque petite opinion qu'elle puisse avoir d'un auditoire, a toujours soin de se présenter devant lui bien préparée et de chanter, sinon avec enthousiasme, du moins consciencieusement. Je suis sûr que c'est ainsi que ferait une Carvalho, bien au-dessous pourtant de Mme Nilsson.

Mademoiselle Juch, mieux avisée, a remporté un véritable triomphe. Elle n'était qu'une inconnue ; son nom n'avait pas encore traversé nos frontières. Elle ne doit donc son succès qu'à son mérite très-réel, à la manière admirable dont elle a détaillé l'air "Die Lorelei" de Liszt.

M. Torit a chanté l'air de Joseph sans accent, sans couleur, sans chaleur ; aussi, l'air et le chanteur sont-ils passés inaperçus.

La juteuse et M. Remmeriz se sont horriblement querellés dans "In questa Tomba" de Beethoven et "Les deux Grenadiers" de Schumann. Cela a jeté un froid qui a gâté ces deux célèbres morceaux.

Malgré les taches que nous venons de signaler, la série de concerts de l'orchestre Thomas n'en est pas moins l'événement musical le plus extraordinaire dont Montréal ait été témoin.

L'orchestre lui-même était naturellement le point culminant du programme. Il excelle plutôt dans les "Pièces de genre" dans la musique descriptive, à programme, que dans les symphonies classiques. Il enlève surtout Wagner et Liszt avec une verve, un brio étonnant, étourdissant. Les bois sont particulièrement remarquables, du moins comme son et comme mécanisme.

Les trompettes étaient remplacées par des cornets ; c'est désespérant !

La "Danse macabre" gagnerait à être jouée un peu moins vite. Le Xilophone de l'orchestre Thomas manque de réalisme : il a un son trop cristallin. Celui de l'orchestre Colonne lui est de beaucoup supérieur. Pour finir, un mot à l'adresse des organisateurs ou entrepreneurs de ces concerts :

Si vous voulez réussir financièrement avec l'orchestre Thomas, faites-le venir seul, sans solistes ; comme vous ne faites venir que la moitié de l'orchestre, donnez vos concerts dans le Queen's Hall, là où il produira dix fois plus d'effets qu'au Victoria Skating Rink. De cette manière l'éducation du public s'améliorera ; les conversations feront le reste. La partie sera gagnée.

GUILLAUME COUTURE.