

MR. ANTON SEIDL'S brief set of evening concerts in the Madison Square Garden could not be other than acceptable. The programs, as usual, have been worthy any time and place. The selections in the programs have been favorite works rather than novel ones—excerpts from the Wagnerian operas and music dramas, and Weber and Beethoven overtures, agreeably varied by Strauss waltzes and ballet-music.

For some time past unofficial rumors have been in circulation regarding the project of the changes and additions (almost entirely limited to the stage) in the new Music Hall on Fifty-seventh Street that would convert that superb edifice into an opera house of the first order. Such rumors were supplemented by reports of a scheme of opera, presumptively in German, on a strong pecuniary basis and thoroughly artistic, under the auspices of well-known members of the Music Hall association. On the heels of the partial destruction of the Metropolitan Opera House, last month (its rebuilding not determined as these lines are written), comes the announcement by cable from Mr. Morris Reno and from Mr. Andrew Carnegie, both so notably concerned in the Music Hall's edification and career, that the building is to receive immediately the needful changes, thereby securing a stage of the finest capabilities and equipment; and that opera will be established in direct connection with the Hall at the earliest practicable date on an ample pecuniary basis and a carefully planned artistic one. Mr. Reno has already negotiated with artists in Germany for the proposed company. The stage alterations will require only some three months' time. For a very large auditorium the Hall is a model one, with its sixty-four boxes, ample parquet and galleries and the excellent disposition of every seat for seeing or hearing. Details of the plan are to be speedily made known to the public.

The annual music festival under the auspices of the Worcester County (Mass.) Musical Association will occur in the city of Worcester during the last week of the present month, beginning with the usual general public rehearsals on Monday the 26th. The list of choral works embraces many, chiefly familiar ones—Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise," Gade's cantata, "The Erl-King's Daughter," Rubinstein's sacred oratorio, "Paradise Lost," selected numbers from Mascagni's opera, "Cavalleria Rusticana," selections from Xaver Scharwenka's unproduced opera, "Matiswintha," and Handel's perennial oratorio, "The Messiah." The orchestral works include no novelty—tho the list is not unattractive with such favorites as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Gluck's "Orpheus" ballet-music, Liszt's E flat Polonaise, Mozart's E flat Symphony, Wagner's "Parsifal" prelude and "Huldigung's March," Svendsen's "Carnival in Paris," Bizet's "Arlesienne Suite," Mozart's "Magic Flute" Overture, Saint-Saëns's "Phedre" Overture and Goldmark's "Prometheus" one, Saint-Saëns's "Omphale's Spinning Wheel," a Concerto Grosso of Handel (introduced here last winter by Mr. Nikisch but not much relished save as an archaic curiosity), Xaver Scharwenka's B minor Pianoforte Concerto, and the Overture to his "Matiswintha" aforesaid—all the three numbers given here by Mr. Scharwenka when he first came to America. Among the vocal soloists are Mme. Marie Tavy, Mrs. Corinne Moore-Lawson, Miss Priscilla White and Miss Emma Juch, sopranos; Mrs. Belle Cole and Miss Henriette Whiting, contraltos; Mr. Italo Campanini, Mr. Willis E. Bacheller and Mr. William H. Rieger, tenors; Mr. Max Heinrich, Mr. Antonio Galassi and Mr. Carl Dufft, baritones; and Mr. Myron W. Whitney and Arthur Beresford, basses. Instrumental artists taking part are Xaver Scharwenka, pianist; Franz Kneisel, violin; and Frank Taft, organist. The conductors will be Mr. Carl Zerrahn, assisted by Mr. Scharwenka. The Festival promises to receive its full measure of popular local attention this year, and, if the comment may be properly made that it has the complexion of a Scharwenka festival, this obvious fact is not to its loss in musical interest throughout its province of influence and support.

The following paragraph is a fragment of an exceptionally sound and appreciative article on Johannes Brahms, by Mr. J. G. Hunneker, of the *Musical Courier*, of this city:

"Brahms is not a reactionary; he simply has taken the older classical forms and filled them with the modern spirit, and often when seemingly the most classical he is in reality most modern. He has a grim sort of humor, and as an interpreter of the homelier phases of life—homelier in its true, near sense—he is without a superior. At times he has the lyric fervor and concision of Burns. America, with its volatile, fickle admiration for color and brilliancy, might profitably study Brahms as a corrective for the gaudy platitudes of Liszt. But then earnest, high thinking attracts not the mass of music lovers, and the symphony is not a vehicle for amusement, like the opera or the regenerated music drama. The consolation that the serious music lover has is that Brahms, who is caviare to the public to-day, is sure to become in a decade as near and as dear as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, the three symphonic kings. To that end the Vienna composer has worked, and he has given us so much that is pure and undeffiled in music that gratitude alone should impel us to listen oftener to his utterances."

Now these are true and valuable words, especially that reference to Brahms as an antidote for music of the Lisztian genus. And the prediction, too, concerning the safety of Brahms's future seems one of the few things of its sort centering on a particular contemporary composer that has every sign of accuracy in these quicksandy days. But Mr. Hunneker is more conservative, not to say more amiable, than he need be in restricting Brahms's unpopularity to the public. Perhaps nothing in musical feeling or prejudice is odder than the inappreciation of or aversion to Brahms among the very kind of practical musicians, and of musical men not so practical, that would be thought inevitably sure to understand and admire him with all their hearts. Of two men in music, one far back

in art's past, the other of our own time—of two men with a quite unlike field of artistic self-expression may it be said that what they have written seems often like music from some loftier and graver sphere than ours, where the matter and manner alike are a weighty inspiration—Gluck and Brahms. Gluck being dead yet speaketh after such individualized wise; and, like Gluck, Brahms lifts up his earnest voice in an epoch that has degenerated in purity and directness of musical purpose. Brahms is a sort of mountain, a whole one and a big one, of real earth and real rock, full of exquisite lights and profound shadows; many, many great writers who appeal strongly to us when a score from him is not in one's ears or memory seem like mountains of *papier-mâché* and paint in contrast with him. In a gainsaying world and a time that patently seeks after effect in music more than anything else, with a denial of that intent often amusing, Brahms is unique and solemn in what he means to say and says. If he be not heard it is deafness, not the fact that the communication is weak in sentiment or utterance.