

THE STRAND MUSICAL MAGAZINE

NEW SERIES

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EDITED BY

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The *Strand Musical Magazine* was first published in January 1895 and continued through December 1897. Each monthly issue contained from sixty-four to eighty pages at a cost of sixpence. The first twenty or so pages were devoted to articles and short stories. The remaining pages contained various songs complete with music, and musical pieces — usually for piano. Publication was suspended in December 1897.

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MESSAGE BY STRAND MUSICAL MAGAZINE EDITOR EMILE HATZFELD

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In issuing the first number of the New Series of THE STRAND MUSICAL MAGAZINE, the editor begs to inform the trade and the public that the Magazine is now published at 84, New Bond Street, London, W., and that Messrs. George Newnes, Ltd., have no interest in nor connection with it whatever.

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The Strand Musical Magazine will contain illustrated articles on the great musical institutions of the world, written by their principals; interviews with celebrated musicians, short stories, humorous sketches, and other literary and artistic features, which, it is confidently expected, will prove highly interesting to the general as well as to the musical reader.

The chief aim of the Editor will, of course, be to present to his readers, a varied budget of good music, so as to supply the wants of all classes of musicians. Not only will the Magazine contain Songs and Pianoforte pieces, which represent the most popular forms of music, but from time to time there will appear in its pages compositions for other instruments, as well as glees and part songs, both in the old and in the Tonic Sol-fa notation.

In order to afford some idea of the extraordinary value which is being offered, the Editor desires to point out that, apart from the literary matter, the public will be able to secure, for sixpence [1/2 shilling], through the medium of the Magazine, twelve songs and pieces of music which, in sheet form, would cost about a guinea [21 shillings].

The unprecedented success achieved by the *Strand Magazine* and other publications issued by George Newnes, Limited, affords the most striking evidence that the great public appreciate good and healthful literature, when presented in an artistic form at popular prices.

The Editor is confident that the public will equally appreciate a magazine which will provide a periodical supply of the best music by the most eminent and popular composers; and he is fortified in his opinion by the emphatic expressions of approval which have reached him from musicians of world-wide fame, including Sir Charles Hallé, Dr. A. C. Mackenzie, Sir George Grove, Prof. C. Villiers Stanford, Madame Mary Davies, Sir Joseph Barnby, Mr. Frederic H. Cowen, Mr. George Henschel, Mr. J. S. Curwen, and Mr. Eaton Fanning.

The Strand Musical Magazine will occupy a unique position in musical literature. Its contributors will include the greatest living musicians of every country. No effort will be spared to maintain the Magazine at a high level of excellence, and the Editor, convinced that the British are a music-loving people, respectfully and confidently submits the first number to their generous consideration.

London, most backward of musical centres, has at last had an opportunity of witnessing this season a performance of Wagner's master-work, "The Ring of the Nibelungen," under conditions similar to those instituted, and insisted on, by its creator. This possibility was arrived at by practically transporting Bayreuth to the metropolis as regards the scenic exigencies; by giving the work in its entirety; and by so regulating the hours of the performance and the divisions of the acts, that it may be witnessed in comfort by its many admirers. In respect to the second of these conditions, there was a little disappointment at the first series, as it was not absolutely complied with; but in the later performances the omissions were restored and the production has given entire satisfaction.

The scheme was suggested to the controllers of the already arranged Operatic season for 1898 at Covent Garden, and although the financial success was open to doubt, they decided on the experiment being made. Mr. Schulz-Curtius was plucky enough to take at his own risk all the seats that would have been offered to the general public in the ordinary way — that is, all seats not already subscribed for by the regular season-ticket holders and the Box office agents. The day following the issue of his prospectus, a sufficient number of applications had been received to justify an extension of the original arrangement, and accordingly another cycle was announced.

The demand for seats was again so satisfactory that even a third performance, speedily arranged for, would not provide for the overflow of applications, and a large public remains unsatisfied.

Beyond this third series it was not possible to go, as the engagements of the artists would not allow of any further extension this year. Next year the season at Bayreuth will not permit of a continuation, but everything will be done to arrange for a series of performances in 1900.

The prices of the tickets, being issued for complete cycles only, were, as far as Mr. Schulz-Curtius was concerned, very reasonable, but those held by the Box office agents and outside speculators soon reached a premium; some of the five-guinea stalls, for instance, being disposed of at fifteen guineas, and my other favourable positions in the house going at similar rates.

The arrangements for the comfort of the visitors were similar to those adopted at Bayreuth; the longer operas commencing at four and five o'clock in the afternoon, with ample time after the first act of each for a light dinner to be obtained. In fact, negotiations were entered into with the Hotel Cecil and the Savoy for the providing of an Opera dinner at a fixed price, and many of the neighbouring hotels and restaurants extended the idea, and made ample provision for an assured demand on their resources. There was no restriction as regards dress, excepting that all ladies were required to dispense with their hats and bonnets, or anything unnecessary in headgear that might interfere with a good view of the stage.

It is not intended, in the scope of the present article, to give a critical account of the performances, but rather to say a few words of a biographical nature concerning the principal artists engaged.

Anton Seidl had been retained by the management to direct the season, but his untimely death in New York, March 28th, at the comparatively early age of forty-eight, led to the services of Herr Felix Mottl being secured. This distinguished conductor was born August 24th, 1855, near Vienna. Wagner himself was a great appreciator of the young man's talents, and in 1875 entrusted to him the revision of the score of the Nibelungen Tetralogy. In 1876 he was engaged as "solo repetitor" for the first Bayreuth Festival, and ten years later conducted "Tristan" there, while in 1888 the illness of Levi gave him the opportunity of directing "Parsival." Since then his post at Bayreuth has been permanent, and his concerts in London have secured for him an unassailable position in the hearts of the English cognoscenti.

The ladies engaged, with the exception of Fräulein Ternina, are very well known to London operagoers. The new artiste has made a very great reputation for herself in some of Wagner's most trying and difficult roles, and is a regular exponent of such parts at the Munich Opera House, where her fine and sympathetic performances have been a great attraction. She earned distinguished success as Brünnhilde in both "Siegfried" and "Die Götterdämmerung," alternating the parts with Miss Brema and Madame Nordica, both of whom are well known at Covent Garden.

Miss Marie Brema has made rapid strides in her profession. Some six or seven years ago she made her debut in London artistic circles, and from being an appreciated concert singer she has attained the zenith of her ambition, both as actress and singer, in her appearance at Bayreuth during the last and previous season.

Madame Nordica, with her strong personality and beautiful voice, has for a long while been admired by London audiences, and her singing of Wagner excerpts at the Richter concerts, as well as her performances at Covent Garden, are strong evidences of her capability to maintain her unrivalled position.

Madame Emma Eames, the American soprano, and wife of Julian Story, the well-known artist, was retained for the part of Sieglinde. In England, on the Continent, and in America, her success has been invariable, and the general opinion is that the part undertaken has never had a better exponent, as far as beauty of singing is concerned.

Frau Schumann Heink, a contralto with a glorious voice and great artistic charm, again exemplified the Bayreuth traditions in the rendering of the smaller, but all-important parts, of which she has made an earnest study.

Among the other ladies, we might particularise Madame Gadsby, and Fräuleins von Artner and Heiser of Bayreuth, artistes with a great continental reputation.

The advent of Jean and Edouard de Reszke, in the severer Wagner works, was looked forward to with great interest by their many admirers.

Edouard de Reszke was born in Warsaw, December 23rd, 1855, and made his debut at the Italiens, in Paris, on April 22nd, 1876, as the King in "Aida." Since then he has played innumerable parts, and is perhaps the greatest basso and one of the finest actors on the operatic stage. Jean, his elder brother, was also born in Warsaw, January 14th, 1852, made his debut in Venice at the early age of 22, and has confirmed the prediction of his critics by proving himself the greatest lyric and dramatic tenor of the day. His repertoire is very extensive, and his performances, dramatically and vocally, of such parts as Raoul in the "Huguenots," Lohengrin, and Faust, have never been surpassed, if ever equalled. A more powerful conception of the youthful and valiant hero, Siegfried, than that of Jean de Reszke is scarcely to be imagined.

Ernest van Dyck has a great reputation for his performance of Siegmund in the "Walküre." He was born in Antwerp, April 2nd, 1861, and is comparatively a young artist. In his youth he was intended for the law, and steadily pursued his studies to that end, but ultimately he decided to devote himself to an artistic career. He studied in Paris with Professor St. Yves for the lyric stage, and sang frequently in concerts, including those of Lamoureux. In 1887 he played Lohengrin in Paris, and meanwhile worked industriously with Mottl. He appeared at Bayreuth in 1888 and 1892. Since then he has been regularly engaged for the festivals, and his artistic position is assured.

Anton van Rooy born in Rotterdam on New Year's day, 1870, was at first intended for a merchant, but at the age of 22 retired from business, and studied for the operatic stage with Stockhausen in Frankfurt. He achieved great success as a concert singer, and last year made a first appearance at Bayreuth, crowning his previous high reputation.

His performance of Wotan this season, has proved him worthy of the highest encomiums; he has rendered the seemingly thankless part with such individuality, and with such an indescribable charm, that the conception, musically and dramatically, of the character that Wagner had in his mind, has undoubtedly been realised. The entire rendering touched a point where only absolute genius could step in.

Among the other artists were Herren Dippel, Nebe, Breuer, Wittekoph, and Mr. Lemprière Pringle, the only Englishman in the extensive cast, and not the least successful.

The scenic effects, under the superintendence of the stage manager of Bayreuth, were rather discounted by certain difficulties connected with the construction of the Covent Garden stage, but on the whole were very well carried out; and the orchestra, complete in every detail, frequently arrived at perfection of rendering under the sympathetic baton of Herr Mottl. It is a much argued question whether the long waits between the acts of the last three operas were necessary in London, the surroundings on leaving the theatre being so different to those at Bayreuth, where the mind has absolute rest and repose, and the continuity of the performance is practically undisturbed. Many ladies took advantage of the interval to change their afternoon gowns for the more elaborate evening dress, and possibly were the greatest appreciators of the long wait, as an adjunct to the demands of fashion.

Now a few words about Mr. Schulz-Curtius, the genial and plucky promoter of many interesting musical enterprises, and himself an ardent devotee of Art. With the single exception of the managers of the Richter concerts, no one else has had the courage to introduce to the English public the great German conductors, or to perceive that a large field lay open in that direction, with facilities for the introduction of modern masterpieces and for new and unconservative renderings of the works of the classical masters. By arranging, experimentally, for the advent of Herr Felix Mottl, Mr. Schulz-Curtius was the first to really grasp the situation, and supply what the public was waiting for; and he quickly followed up this success by introducing Hermann Levi, Siegfried Wagner, and this year Felix Weingartner.

The charming way in which he florally decorates his platform, and the comforts with which he surrounds his patrons, apart from the excellent programmes and fine orchestra, have secured for him an extensive clientele, and, consequently, any enterprise in which he is concerned is accepted without question; and no one has ever yet been disappointed. His activity in regard to the elaborate undertaking at Covent Garden this year has without doubt added another to his many successes.

The cyclus, as is generally known, consists of four operas, "Das Rheingold," "Die Walküre," "Siegfried" and "Die Götterdämmerung."

They all have been given previously in England, but the sequential performance, wherein the entire story can be followed in all its ramifications, has not been repeated since 1882, when at Her Majesty's Theatre it achieved but a partial success. Evidently, at that period the public was not prepared, and it is only in the last few years that a thoroughly appreciative and sufficiently educated audience has been found to support such an undertaking.

The concerts of Hans Richter, and latterly those of Felix Mottl, have aroused the desire of the public for a better acquaintance with the works of the Master.

Richard Wagner has appealed so strongly to the imagination, and so clearly called up the picture he intended to convey, that this acknowledgment on the part of the public to his genius is easily understood. Despite the popular impression, even in the most complicated passages, his meaning is never obscure.

His musical language has, from an aesthetical point of view, all the elements of popularity. The much-criticised tediousness of some of the scenes of the tetralogy is no longer such when the rendering is orchestrally, vocally, and scenically adequate.

Wagner is so versatile in his genius that he interests and attracts widely divergent appreciations; a popular promenade smoking-concert audience enjoys and applauds as well as the dignified and fashionable gathering at any strictly classical function.

In fact, it is becoming difficult for the managers of orchestral concerts to get together a financially satisfactory audience without the all-potent name affixed to a fair proportion of the numbers in the programme.

No one would have more deprecated the present position than Wagner himself, since he was an appreciator to the utmost of all his great predecessors, out of whose works and by the adaption of whose principles he has built up the colossal temple wherein the multitude have now set him up as a god.

The real reason for this enormous appreciation (it is not a "craze," pace [*with all due respect to*] certain old-fashioned critics) is that a great and clear preacher of the religion of Music and Art has at last spoken the gospel of Truth in trumpet-tones, and the People, for the first time, have arrived at the dawn of understanding.

In all the annals of music it would be difficult to find a more interesting personality than that of the great Italian violinist Niccolò [*Niccolò*] Paganini. An element of mystery surrounded him from his earliest childhood, the suggestion of the supernatural in his extra-ordinary powers being enhanced by his almost ghostly appearance when he grew to man's estate. Leigh Hunt, who elsewhere referred to him as "the pale magician of the bow," has said —



“He almost seemed,
To feeble and to melancholy eyes,
One that had parted with his soul for pride,
And in the sable [*mysterious*] secret lived forlorn.”

Many foolish and superstitious persons did indeed cherish the belief that Paganini was possessed of an evil spirit, and one even was found to publicly affirm that he had seen the devil at his elbow during a performance, directing the violin and guiding the bow. Unfortunately, Paganini was sufficient of the charlatan to seem at times to directly encourage the mystery-mongers, and only interposed to refute their statements when these became too libellous and threatened to interfere with the success of his concerts.

He was born at Genoa on February 18, 1784 [*October 27, 1782*]. His father, a ship-broker in a small way of business, was a performer of some merit on the mandoline, and essayed to teach

his child the violin; but such was Niccolò's precocity that he had very soon to be placed under the tuition of Signor Cervetto, leader of the orchestra in the Genoese Theatre. At the age of eight, the boy found a new instructor in the person of Giacoma Costa, the principal conductor in Genoa and an exceedingly able violinist, who taught him for about six months, during which time young Paganini played a good deal in the churches and composed a sonata for his instrument.

His first public appearance at a concert in his native town, when he played some variations on a French popular air, was entirely successful; and shortly after this his father took him to Parma to the renowned professor, Alessandro Rolla, who is said, after hearing the boy play a difficult concerto at sight, to have declared that he could teach him no more than he knew already. Paganini seems, however, to have studied for at least a short time with Rolla, and to have had lessons in compositions from Ghiretti.

He returned to Genoa when thirteen, devoting much of his time to composition, his violin pieces presenting such difficulties that, in his efforts to produce the proper effect, he would play the same passage over many times until compelled to stop by sheer physical exhaustion. Naturally delicate, his health must have suffered considerably from the severe nature of his studies at this period.

After a professional tour through Lombardy, he broke away from the parental control and visited Lucca, Pisa, and other places, playing at concerts wherever he could find a manager to agree to his terms. His father, who considered himself entitled to at least the major portion of his son's earnings, appears to have done all in his power to induce him to return, but without success.

As the result, perhaps, of his early independence — he was now only fifteen — he began to lead a very dissipated life. His gambling propensities were continually leading him into debt, and once, at Leghorn, after losing all his money and even his violin, he found himself under the necessity of borrowing an instrument in order to fulfill an engagement. Eventually he succeeded in securing the loan of a valuable Guarnerius from a well-known local amateur, M. Livron. This gentleman attended the concert, and was so impressed by Paganini's playing that when the latter called to return the violin he refused to take it, saying, "Never will I profane the strings which your fingers have touched." This instrument, which was used by the great violinist at most of his concerts, is now preserved in the museum at Genoa.

Later, Paganini won another violin at Parma in somewhat similar fashion. A certain distinguished painter, who was also an excellent amateur violinist, refused to believe that Paganini could perform at sight, as well as if previous practice had been expended upon them, some difficult passages which he considered almost beyond the reach of any virtuoso. So he brought the manuscript, and with it a fine specimen of a Stradivarius [*Stradivarius*], and, placing both in the young maestro's hands, said, "This instrument shall be yours if you can play, in a masterly manner, the concerto at first sight." "If that is the case," was the reply, "you may bid adieu to it at once;" and the violin indeed soon became Paganini's property, its former owner being loud in his praise of a performance which far exceeded anything he had heard before.

After leading a wild life for three or four years, Paganini seems to have realised the folly of the gaming habit; and by succeeding, by a stroke of good fortune, in freeing himself from debt, he wisely determined to gradually sever the ties which bound him to a companionship scarcely calculated to assist him to the fame which it was his ambition to secure.

To this good resolution he consistently adhered, and for a time retired from the world, spending three years in the country at the house of a lady of position, who, besides being an ardent admirer of the young virtuoso, was an accomplished performer on the guitar. Paganini, for the time abandoning the violin, took up the study of, and was soon able to produce wonderful effects on, the guitar, for which he wrote several sonatas.

On his return to Genoa in 1804, he was chiefly occupied with composition, and in the following year he again went on tour in Italy, first visiting Lucca, which he made his headquarters until 1808. He entered the service of the Princess Bacciochi, Napoleon's sister, as director of her private music and conductor of the opera orchestra, and made many appearances at the Court concerts. His predilection for effects on the G string alone, appears to have dated from this period.

On one occasion his performance of a concerto in a convent chapel at Lucca so profoundly moved his audience that the monks were obliged to leave their seats to quell the applause which followed.

On the Princess Bacciochi becoming Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Paganini went with the Court to Florence. In 1808 he obtained leave to travel, and visited, amongst other places, Leghorn, where at a concert an incident occurred which may be described in his own words.

“A nail,” he says, “had run into my heel, and I came on limping, at which the audience laughed. At the moment I was about to commence my concert, the candles of my desk fell out. Another laugh. After the first few bars of my solo my first string broke, which increased the hilarity; but I played the piece on three strings, and the sneers quickly changed into general applause.”

His next tour was through Central Italy, and it furnished an exciting experience at Ferrara, where he had literally a narrow escape for his life. The arrangements for his concert in this town were at the last moment thrown into confusion by a singer refusing to appear, and Paganini, with some difficulty, enlisted the services of Madame Pallerini, the principal dancer at the theatre, who, although possessing a fine voice, had never before sung in public. Mingled with the applause which greeted her efforts were one or two audible hisses, and Paganini, with his usual impetuosity, determined to avenge the insult. So, at the close of the concert, he proposed to the audience to reproduce on his violin the notes of various birds and animals, and concluded with an admirable imitation of the braying of a donkey, at the same time calling out, “This is for those who hissed.” But he did not then know that the Ferrarese [*citizens of Ferrara, Italy*] had a special reputation for stupidity, a very sore point with them indeed, and the last tones of the violin had scarcely died away when the occupants of the pit made a combined rush for the stage, Paganini being only saved from their violence by instant flight.

He remained in the service of the Grand Duchess until 1813, when the engagement very abruptly terminated. At one of the grand Court galas, he appeared in the orchestra in his uniform of captain of the royal gendarmerie, and when she saw him the Grand Duchess sent an order that the uniform was to be changed for ordinary evening dress. To this Paganini replied that his commission entitled him to be so habited, and a repetition of the order was ignored, whilst the offence was aggravated by the musician wearing the uniform at the ball which followed. As the price of his independence he was obliged to leave the Court suddenly in the night, and although afterwards offered a pardon if he would return, did not do so.

Whilst at Genoa in 1816, Paganini, learning that Lafont, the celebrated French violinist, was at Milan, went to hear him. Afterwards, Lafont challenged him to a public trial of skill, and Paganini, although at first averse to the proposal, considering the experiment impolitic, finally agreed to the meeting. Lafont was responsible for the programme.

The following is Paganini's own version of the affair: — "We each played a concerto of our own composition, after which we played together a duo concertante by Kreutzer. In this I did not deviate in the least from the composer's text whilst we played together, but in the solo parts I yielded freely to my own imagination, and introduced several novelties, which seemed to annoy my adversary. Then followed a Russian air, with variations, by Lafont, and I finished the concert with my variations called 'Le Streghe'." He adds, modestly enough, "Lafont probably surpassed me in tone; but the applause which followed my efforts convinced me that I did not suffer by comparison."

Two years later, at Placentia, he played by request at the same concert with Lipinski, the Polish violinist, with whom he was afterwards for a time on terms of considerable intimacy.

In 1817, Paganini was in Rome, where he was associated with Rossini and Meyerbeer, and on one occasion, at Carnival time, the three disguised themselves and sang Rossini's part song, "Carnavale, Carnavale," in the streets. Paganini gave several concerts, which excited much enthusiasm.

After a tour in Upper Italy he proceeded to Naples, where his health broke down, and he was reported to be dying of consumption. His landlord, hearing that the malady was contagious, became alarmed, and actually turned him into the street, where he might have perished of exposure and exhaustion, but for the opportune passing of a friend, who, after treating the landlord to a sound and well-deserved thrashing, had Paganini removed to comfortable lodgings. In return for this kindness, the good Samaritan received some special instruction which is said to have transformed him from a violoncellist of only moderate ability into an artist of the first rank.

On his return to Milan, in 1820, Paganini helped to found a society of musical amateurs, “Gli Orfei,” and conducted several of their concerts. Afterwards, going to Rome, he conducted, at very short notice, three representations of Rossini’s opera, “Matilda di Sabran,” which was being produced for the first time at the Apollo Theatre, and led, Fétis tells us, “with an energy that struck the band with amazement.”

Next year he was back again in Naples, and after a short stay there went to Palermo, Placentia, Venice, Turin, Genoa, and Trieste, and continued to tour in Italy until the middle of March, 1828, when he arrived in Vienna. Pope Leo XII had meanwhile conferred upon him the Order of the Golden Spur.

A magnificent reception awaited him in the Austrian capital [*Vienna*]. He at once became the popular idol, press and public vieing with each other in the effort to do him honour. All kinds of articles, from hats and gloves to choice dishes, bore his name, and an enterprising individual did so well with a “Paganini” cab that he had soon made enough money to enable him to settle down as hotel-keeper on a moderate scale.

Paganini gave a large number of concerts in the city, and after one of these given for the poor, the magistrates presented him with the gold medal of St. Salvator, whilst his pre-eminence as a musician was directly recognised by the Emperor.

There is an interesting story which tells how once, when walking through the streets of Vienna, he found a poor boy playing Neapolitan songs on a violin. On hearing that he was an Italian, Paganini spoke to him, and, learning that he was the sole support of an invalid mother, took the violin and bow and commenced to play. A large crowd soon collected, and at the close Paganini passed round the boy’s hat. Quite a large sum was obtained, which the player handed to the lad, saying, “Take this to your mother.”

Prague, the next town on his itinerary, received him rather coldly, but Berlin endorsed the verdict of Vienna. It is gratifying to note that the malevolent and calumnious attacks made at this time by his enemies did not in the least stem the tide of his triumph.



After a tour of three years’ duration through Austria, Bohemia, Saxony, Poland, Bavaria, and Prussia, Paganini made his first appearance in Paris, at the Opera House, on 9th March, 1831. His fame had preceded him, and with his first concert he became firmly established in the affections of the Parisian public. A pen portrait of him at the time describes him as being nearly six feet [*some sources indicate five feet five inches*] in height, with a long pale face, large nose, brilliant eyes like those of an eagle, long curling black hair which fell upon the collar of his coat, and so thin and cadaverous looking as to be in some respects only the shadow of a man.

Whilst in Paris, Paganini was asked to play at a Court concert at the Tuileries, and agreed to do so, but on inspecting the concert room he considered that the many heavy curtains would interfere with the sound. A request to an official to have this attended to was ignored, and Paganini, greatly incensed, decided not to play. On the night of the concert the great violinist did not appear, and the royal messenger sent to find him was informed at his hotel that Paganini had not gone out, but that “he went to bed very early.”

London was reached at the end of May [1831], and Paganini gave his first concert in the metropolis in the King’s Theatre on the 3rd of June. Unfortunately, the prices of admission had been raised by the management, and this, being erroneously attributed to greed on the part of the eminent artist, resulted in a great deal of hostile criticism. Nevertheless, immense interest was taken in his appearance. The entire audience rose from their seats when he entered, ladies waved handkerchiefs, from the stalls and boxes, and the scene was altogether one of the wildest enthusiasm. Subsequent concerts in London and the provinces were equally successful.

After his long foreign tour — six years in all — Paganini returned to Italy a rich man, and bought a country house near Parma, besides several other properties. He was now approached by a famous Parisian publisher with a view to the publication of his compositions, but named such an enormous sum as his terms, that this could not be arranged. It has been said that his terms were purposely prohibitive, in order that he might disappoint other violinists who wished to see his music in print, whilst he doubtless also felt that its publication would lead to a decline of the interest taken in his performances.

In 1834 he gave a concert at Placentia for the poor, and also in this year played at the Court of the Duchess of Parma, from whom he received the Imperial Order of St. George. His malady, phthisis of the larynx, became, however, very much worse, and he was at times almost deprived of the power of speech.

Two years later, his health having improved, he was unfortunately persuaded by some Parisian speculators to establish what was ostensibly a concert-hall, but really a gambling-house, called the Casino Paganini. It was opened in 1837, but refused a licence as a gambling-house by the Government, and, the concerts proving unremunerative, Paganini suffered heavy financial loss.

His last concert was given at Turin in June, 1837, in aid of charity. He then set out with the intention of appearing at the ill-fated Casino, but his health again failed him, and a lawsuit was brought against him for breach of contract owing to non-appearance. The judges ordered him to pay 50,000 francs to the creditors and to be deprived of his liberty until the amount was paid. He seems to have been treated very badly, not being allowed to make any defence.

A dying man, his physicians ordered him back to Italy, and he passed away at Nice on the 27th of May, 1840, at the age of fifty-six [*fifty-seven*].

The death-bed scene has been described by an Italian writer, as follows: — “On the last night of his existence, he appeared unusually tranquil. He had slept a little; when he awoke he requested that the curtains should be drawn aside that he might contemplate the moon, which, at its full, was advancing calmly in the immensity of the pure heavens. While steadily gazing at this luminous orb he again became drowsy, but the murmuring of the neighboring trees awakened in his breast that sweet agitation which is the reality of the beautiful. At this solemn hour he seemed desirous to return to Nature all the soft sensations which he was then possessed of; stretching forth his hands to his enchanted violin — to the faithful companion of his travels — to the magician which had robbed care of its stings — he sent to heaven with its last sounds the last sigh of a life which had been all melody.”

His fortune, estimated at about £80,000, passed to his legitimized son, Achilles, who also inherited the title of Baron, which his father had acquired in Germany. Paganini's remains were for a long time refused interment in consecrated ground, as for some reason he had incurred the displeasure of the Church; and were only finally buried, within the Duchy of Parma, with the formality of a funeral service, five years after his death.

The eccentricities of genius were never more pronounced than in the case of this extraordinary man at all stages of his career. Often he would spend the whole evening in his room without a light, and sometimes remain for hours motionless and lost in thought. On the day of a concert he would be in a state of extreme nervousness, and take large quantities of snuff, but would be almost invariably calm and cheerful when it was time for him to go on the platform. He was very severe with the band at rehearsal, and flew into a violent temper if they failed to attend to or understand his instructions, but he had generally a word of encouragement for them when all went smoothly. When travelling by coach, even in the hottest summer weather, he always seemed to be cold, and would remain wrapped in a cloak in a corner of the carriage, with the windows closely fastened.

Although a fairly prolific composer, his completed works which have come down to us are only nine in number. These, however, and the unpublished compositions that bear his name, are remarkable alike for their originality and for the many difficulties they present. Paganini once told his secretary, “I have my own peculiar style; in accordance with this I regulate my composition. To play those of other artists, I must arrange them accordingly.” As a matter of fact, he did not often play anything of which he was not the author. In his well-known variations, “Le Streghe,” the air of which is taken from Virgano's ballet, “Il Noce de Benevento,” he introduced many wonderful and hitherto undreamed-of effects.

His playing does not seem to have been marked by exceptional purity or fullness of tone, its most noteworthy feature being the extremely novel sounds he drew from the violin, and by which he often succeeded in completely bewildering his audience. His partiality to the single G string and the frequent use of harmonics are instances of his attention to the mechanical side of the art. Moscheles, who confessed that at first Paganini's dazzling style had created a great impression on his mind, after hearing him frequently, wrote, "Completely as he may annihilate his less showy colleagues, I long for a little of Spohr's earnestness, Baillot's power, and even Mayseder's piquancy." His fingers were extraordinarily supple — they have been likened to a handkerchief tied at the end of a stick — and enabled him to overcome obstacles that would have been found insurmountable by others. But there can be little doubt that all the fire and passion of a warm and impulsive Italian nature, making itself felt in the music which sprung from his bow, did very much to make Paganini the greatest violinist of his time.

Under the energetic direction of Mr. Eaton Fanning, [1850-1927], the Harrow School Musical Society has risen to heights superior to those attained by most institutions of its kind. [*Harrow School is located in north-west London. It is an all-boys boarding school.*] One has only to compare the very modern and splendidly equipped building at present in use at Harrow with the old music schools hard by to understand what an advance has been made by the Society in the past decade, and to trace the reforming hand and organising skill of the accomplished musician at its head.



The history of the new schools is best told in Mr. Fanning's own words:—

“When I first came to Harrow,” he said, “I did not consider the then existing buildings at all suited to the importance of the [*music*] school, and began at once to see what could be done to amend matters. It was not very long before Mr. Edward S. Prior, an architect and old Harrovian was commissioned to draw up a plan for the erection of a new building, at an estimated cost of £3,000. Mr. Welldon, the headmaster, fell in with the project at once, but told me that £1,500 must be promised before he could undertake to lay the matter before the governing body. ‘How am I to get it?’ I asked. ‘That I must leave with you,’ was the reply. ‘Shall I send round the hat?’ ‘No, don’t do that for Harrovians are always putting their hands in their pockets as it is.’”

“However, Mr. Welldon promised to assist me with a good subscription, so with some others — a few personal friends, masters at the school, and old Harrovians — I started the nucleus of a fund. In a few months, when we had got together about £1,200, owing to the exertions of the Musical Committee, I felt justified in once more approaching the headmaster. ‘Well, how are you getting on?’ he asked me. ‘Oh, very well so far, and I hope you won’t forget that you were to give us a good subscription.’ Then I told him what we had already collected, and he immediately announced his intention of contributing £500 to the fund. I think this was truly magnificent, more particularly as Mr. Welldon is not himself intensely interested in music, and shows how closely he has the interests of the school at heart. The matter was then referred to the governing body and taken up by them, and, after many delays, the schools were erected in 1891 at a cost of £6,000.”

Although the building upon which this large sum has been expended stands at present in a somewhat isolated position, its founders recognised that it might not always remain so, and every effort was therefore made at the time of its erection to secure that it should be, as nearly as possible, sound-proof. It is flanked by two towers, which communicate with the different practice rooms, fitted with zinc tubes, lined with silicated cotton, this, in the opinion of experts, being the best method yet devised of deadening sound. Added to this the fact that the walls, windows, doors, and ceilings are in duplicate, whilst the very ventilators are of special construction, and it will be conceded that even the blare of wind-instruments within is not likely to interfere materially with the peace of mind of the inhabitants of the little town on the hill.

Standing in one of the rooms, I could only just hear a piano when played vigorously next door, and by causing the instruments in the two rooms to be played upon simultaneously, Mr. Fanning demonstrated to me that it is quite impossible for teacher and pupil in one apartment to be caused any annoyance or distraction in consequence of practice proceeding in the other. This is of course of very great importance where instruments are being played at the same time in the different rooms in the building.

If the new schools have an unpretentious, and even rather plain exterior, it is difficult to find fault with their internal arrangement. The rooms, in two tiers [*the rooms are each two stories high*], open into cloistered passages, the general effect of which is exceedingly good. The orchestra hall, in which the practice of the choral and orchestral classes is conducted, is spacious and lofty, well-lighted, and with excellent acoustic properties. Round its walls are hung portraits of the great Masters, and the names of those who have gained distinction in music at the school are here permanently recorded in all the glory of gold paint and carved lettering. This is a happy idea of Mr. Fanning's, intended to point the moral that proficiency in music is just as worthy of recognition as is a talent for classics, mathematics, or the sciences.

The rooms have been much admired by musicians who have visited them, many having come to Harrow expressly for this purpose.

Besides a large choral class, the School Musical Society can boast of an orchestral class of about thirty. During the past twelve years there have been performed at the terminal concerts twelve of Haydn's orchestral symphonies, eight symphonies by Mozart, and three by Beethoven; with overtures by Mozart, Handel, Gluck, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, and Auber; and numerous other orchestral pieces, including many of the best waltzes of Strauss, Gung'l, and Lanner. Nearly fifty madrigals, part songs, choruses, and glees have also been given, and about forty pianoforte solos and duets by the best composers, as well as violin, violoncello, organ, and other instrumental solos.

Other important features are the Oratorio Concerts given in the Speech-room before the whole school. These are considered of great musical value, and a professional orchestra and chorus are engaged. The school has on these occasions had the pleasure of hearing Mrs. Henschel, Miss Evangeline Florence, Madame Alice Gomez, Miss Ada Crossley, Mr. Edward Lloyd, Mr. Ben Davies, Mr. Plunket Greene, Mr. Andrew Black, Mr. Santley, and many other distinguished artists. There are also occasional Chamber Concerts in the Orchestra Hall given by the most musical of the boys under Mr. Faning's direction.

It is the custom at Harrow in all the thirteen or fourteen houses to hold a fortnightly "house-singing." These gatherings are quite informal, as may be supposed; practically, every boy attends and endeavours, whether he has a voice or not, to join in the singing of a large number of national and school songs. Mr. Faning's predecessor, Mr. Farmer, is responsible for the music for many of the latter, and Mr. Faning has composed the music for the last twelve songs written for the school, the words being in most instances by the Harrow poets, Messrs. E. E. Bowen (a brother of the late Lord Justice Bowen) and E. W. Howson. The songs include some with such suggestive titles as "Willow the King," "The Niner" (cricket songs), "Forty Years On," "Play Up" (football songs), "Euclid," "Here Sir," and "Ducker."

The house-sings, as Mr. Faning points out, are a peculiar and important feature of the school life, although of little value from an artistic point of view. In fact, he told me that the tendency of this large amount of unison singing was to make the study of part-singing more difficult. But they are of the utmost value socially and in promoting the esprit de corps so noticeable among Harrovians, who, when they meet in after-life in foreign climes, often sing together one or more of the old school songs.

The instrumental teaching is mainly entrusted to seven able assistants, amongst whom may be specially mentioned Mr. Otto Peiniger, who has been the principal teacher of the violin at the school for twenty-five years. Mr. Faning, however, exercises a very close personal supervision over the whole work, and by attending the house-sings probably knows more boys than any other master in the school.

A brief sketch of his own career should be of interest to a large circle outside the school. He was born at Helston, near Land's End, in 1850, and played the violin at a local penny reading before he was five. The old instrument, costing originally about five shillings, upon which this notable feat was performed, has since been renovated and is now being used by one of Mr. Faning's children. He continued to show a great aptitude for the violin, and had lessons on it from local masters, but when he was ten his family moved to Ipswich, where he went to school. Whilst in the old Suffolk town he was taught by Mr. Lindley Nunn, the organist of the Tower Church, and played the three-manual organ there every night of the week for five or six years. Coming to London, in 1870, he entered the Royal Academy of Music.

“At this time,” remarked Mr. Faning, “I learnt all sorts of things under all sorts of masters, taking up the pianoforte, organ, cello, singing, harmony and counterpoint, and composition. My masters were F. B. Jewson, Dr. Steggall, Aylward, Ciabatta, Goldberg, and Sir Sterndale Bennett. When Bennett died Sir Arthur Sullivan took his class, and I was with him for about three years. I think I learned more from Arthur Sullivan than from anyone else. I used sometimes to act as his deputy, and about this time was appointed assistant professor of the pianoforte, afterwards a professor, and, later on, professor of harmony and composition.”

Whilst a student at the Academy, Mr. Faning won the Lucas silver medal for composition, besides other silver and bronze medals, and the Mendelssohn scholarship. He played the violoncello and timpani in the orchestra. When he left, he carried with him certificates of ability to teach the piano, organ, cello, harmony and composition, and singing, and was made an Associate.

Mr. Faning did an immense amount of work as a professor at the National Training School of Music, where he taught the piano and harmony, and conducted the choral class, and when it was merged into the Royal College of Music he remained a professor, but resigned some of his duties in 1885 when he accepted his present position at Harrow.

It is interesting to note that at one time he held professorships at the Guildhall School of Music, Royal Academy of Music, and Royal College of Music; was organist of St. John's, Lewisham; had five choral societies to attend to during five nights of the week, with a choir practice on the sixth night — and was writing all the time! Indeed, he told me he composed a great deal at this particular period.

One of the drawers of the desk in Mr. Faning's study at Harrow is filled with letters from musicians, amongst them many of the foremost composers of the day. From this treasure chest he drew forth for my inspection two interesting documents received during his tenure of office at the Royal College of Music at a time when he was finding the pressure of work rather more than he could bear. They take the form of petitions — one from the members of his harmony class, who expressed the hope that there was no foundation for the rumour that he intended to devote himself in future entirely to the pianoforte students; the other, from the pianists, protesting against any undue monopoly of his services by the harmony class. This little incident speaks volumes both for his ability as a teacher and his great personal popularity.

He has written two operettas — “The Two Majors” and “The Head of the Poll.” The first of these was produced at the Royal Academy of Music in 1877, with Miss Mary Davies and other eminent people in the cast. “Sullivan used to attend the rehearsals,” said Mr. Faning, “so we had a very lively time. You see, nothing so frivolous as a comic opera had been presented within the walls of the institution before, and whole place had practically to be turned up, a stage erected, and footlights laid down.” The performance of “The Two Majors,” however, even if it exercised the minds of the authorities at the time, led to the establishment of a permanent operatic class at the Academy. The second operetta, “The Head of the Poll,” produced for the first time by the German Reeds in 1882, was commissioned by the late Corney Grain after he had heard “Mock Turtles,” a “curtain-raiser” of the composer’s, at the Savoy.

Amongst Mr. Faning’s best-known compositions are the very successful “Song of the Vikings,” for four-part chorus and orchestra, the first performance of which he conducted at the opening of the Alexandra Palace, and of which nearly a quarter of a million copies have been sold; “Daybreak,” and his more recent choral ballad, “The Miller’s Wooing.” During the scoring of the “Song of the Vikings,” Sir Arthur Sullivan, who took an interest in the work, made a suggestion as to the oboes, and actually wrote the first few notes of the oboe part in the refrain.

Other compositions, besides those already mentioned, are a symphony in C minor, a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis for full orchestra, a special anthem performed at the laying of the foundation stone of Alexandra House by the Princess of Wales, a cantata for children’s voices, two quartets, three overtures, and a number of songs, including the popular “Something Sweet to Tell You,” duets, and part-songs, and pieces for the pianoforte.

Mr. Faning, who, by the way, is Mus. B. of Trin. Coll., Cambridge, and a Fellow of the R.A.M., has held many important appointments as a conductor. He was formerly joint conductor with Sir Frederick Bridge of the London Madrigal Society, conductor of the London Male Voice Club, and he also conducted several rehearsals of “Parsifal” for the late Sir Joseph Barnby when it was first produced at the Albert Hall. He is an examiner to the Associated Board of the R.A.M. and R.C.M., and was sent out to South Africa, in 1895, to conduct the examinations in music in connection with the University of the Cape of Good Hope. He still finds time to examine at a number of important public schools, and his services as conductor and adjudicator are in much request by choral societies throughout the country.