

MR. FRANCIS J. FOOTE'S
CHOIR.

SUCCESSFUL CHORAL AND
ORCHESTRAL CONCERT AT THE
OPERA HOUSE.

LAST NIGHT.

The Opera House was well filled yesterday evening with a brilliant and enthusiastic audience assembled for the purpose of hearing the above choir, and full professional orchestra of 160 performers in all, under the baton of that exceedingly clever musician and composer, Mr Francis J. Foote.

We had the pleasure of referring at some length to the previous performance given by this choir at the Great Hall in May last, and unmistakable evidence on that occasion was forthcoming of the state of proficiency they had attained to. The fame of that performance had evidently aroused considerable interest in their future doings, and the excellent attendance last evening was, therefore, not to be wondered at.

Mr Foote had selected for performance the following works: The 23rd Psalm (for men's voices), arranged by Max Bruch. This beautiful work of the celebrated German composer was written in August, 1896, being a great favourite in Germany, but never before rendered in England.

The other was the 149th Psalm, by Anton Dvorak, a massive and scholarly work for mixed chorus and full orchestra, which has also never been performed in this country.

The third work for mixed chorus was Brahms' "A Song of Destiny," which for beauty and expression is the most perfect of Brahms' smaller choral works.

The evening's bill of fare also included Schubert's (unfinished) Symphony in B minor; Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, and the first performance of a Tone Poem for full orchestra entitled "Lancelot and Elaine" (Tennyson's Idylls), the composer being the gifted conductor.

The programme opened with the Schubert Symphony, well known to music lovers, and always finding a place in the repertoire of all great orchestras.

The performance of the two movements by the magnificent orchestra (under the leadership of Mr Rowsey Woolf, 60 in number, and certainly the largest and finest ever heard in Tunbridge Wells, comprising the great majority, as it did, of London professional players from the Philharmonic Society, London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Academy of Music, and Royal College of Music, with the help of a few of our best amateur instrumentalists), brought into great prominence the necessary tone colour throughout being received with loud and continued applause.

The next item was "A Song of Destiny" for mixed chorus and orchestra, and here the listeners had an opportunity of hearing the capabilities of the choir, the rendering of this composition proving a triumphant success. Orchestra and chorus alike, whether in the graceful, quiet, and melodious treatment of the first movement, or in the declamatory and passionate second portion, vied with each other in obeying the wishes of the conductor, and with those wishes the undoubted views of the composer, with us before-mentioned result.

Local interest was naturally centred in the first production of Mr Francis J. Foote's Tone Poem for full orchestra, adapted to "Lancelot and Elaine," from Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." The story is, of course, well known, lending itself readily to portrayal by orchestral music.

The key chosen by the composer commences in G minor, including various themes, and concluding in the major key. The performance of this, apart from evoking sustained vociferous applause, once again amply proves the fact that in Mr Foote we have a composer of much ability, the originality of the work being most marked, and suggesting genius of a high order.

Max Bruch's setting of the 23rd Psalm for men's voices and orchestra was next given, and beautifully sung, the orchestration being of a very interesting description. After this came Mendelssohn's famous Violin Concerto in E minor, with full orchestral accompaniment, and a great musical treat was therefore in store for those present, when we mention that Herr Hans Wessely was the soloist. The technique and brilliant executive abilities displayed by this artiste created a furor at the last concert given by Mr Foote's choir, and his splendid achievement on this occasion, caused unbounded enthusiasm from audience and choir alike, this wonderful performance being recalled no less than four times.

The concert concluded with the musical setting of the 149th Psalm, by Anton Dvorak, arranged for mixed chorus and full orchestra, sung with much precision and taste.

One of the features of last evening was the admirable analytical programme, dealing in an interesting manner with each item, and from which we gleaned much valuable information. It is exceedingly gratifying to note that the tendency for appreciating thoroughly good music is rapidly growing, encouraging the conductor and his devoted choir to still carry on the good work they have commenced; and here we may mention that Bach's Passion Music, according to St. Matthew, perhaps one of the most difficult and greatest of the choral works ever written, will be next rehearsed, and possibly performed at or after Easter.

To the untiring energy of the hon. secretary, Mr C. H. Strange, much praise is due for the excellent arrangements made in connection with this concert, and it is worthy of note that the conductor at the last rehearsal expressed deep gratitude for the kindly help he had received from Mr Strange during the present occasion.

November 16th, 1906.

OPERA HOUSE TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Thurs. Dec. 13th at 7.45

GRAND
CHORAL & ORCHESTRAL CONCERT
by
MR. FRANCIS J. FOOTE'S
CHOIR

Choir and full professional orchestra of 160 performers.
Solo violin Herr Hans Wessely

(Notice repeated on November 23rd.)

Nov. 30th, 1906

Opera House, Tunbridge Wells

Thursday, Dec. 13th at 7.45 precisely

Doors open at 7.15 Carriages at 10

Mr. Francis J. Foote's Choir (Choir and full professional orchestra 160 performers.)

Beg to announce a performance of the following works:-

23rd Psalm (for men's voices) opus 68 No.2 Max Bruch

149th Psalm. Anton Dvorak. op.79

(the above 2 compositions have never before been performed in this country).

A Song of Destiny. Johannes Brahms op. 54

Symphony in B minor, unfinished, Schubert.

Violin concerto, Mendelssohn, and a first performance of a tone poem for full orchestra entitled Lancelot and Elaine (Tennyson's Idylls) Francis J. Foote.

Herr Hans Wessely will play the Mendelssohn concerto with full orchestral accompaniment.

Leader of orchestra Mr. Spencer Dyke.

Conductor Mr. Francis J. Foote.

Tickets etc.....

Full rehearsal at 2.30 open to the public. Pit entrance only, on payment of 2/-.