

DRESDEN

EUGEN ONEGIN.*

By Peter Tschaikowsky.

I. PERFORMANCE AT THE OPERA HOUSE,
OCTOBER 20, 1908.

The Dresden public has had to wait a good many years for a performance of Tschaikowsky's opera "Eugen Onegin," which is 29 years old, and has been produced at most of the grand operas. To a great part of the audience, therefore, Tuesday's performance had nothing new to offer, but "better late than never." A debt of honour has at last been paid to Russia's greatest composer. Tschaikowsky's fame in Germany was founded and spread abroad by Arthur Nikisch, who discovered Tschaikowsky's Symphonies and made them the common property of the civilized world. His two Concertos for piano-forte and violin are considered worthy of a place among the classics, and are well-known. As a songwriter, Tschaikowsky was a comparative stranger to Germany till a few years ago. It was Elena Gerhardt who, at the instigation of Professor Nikisch, made us acquainted with the melancholy strains of the Russian composer; and only since then have we had a complete picture of this peculiar man, this artist with a death-stricken soul. From this point of view, of pathos and lamentation, we must regard him, even when he comes before us on the stage.

"Eugen Onegin" was adapted for the stage, after Pusckin's romance of the same name, by Tschaikowsky's brother Modeste. Almost all that is psychological in the romance is lost in the dramatic form. Modeste Tschaikowsky is not a master dramatist, but only a literary man with good taste and an enthusiastic love of music, who endeavours to supply his adored brother with a scenic ground-work on which to pour forth his musical feeling. The action of the piece lacks unity and conciseness; the characters are not sharply defined, and their doings are unintelligible. True, the libretto does contain a germ of dramatic will, and dramatic complications of great force might be made out of *Eugen's*, at first disdained and later vainly cherished, love for *Tatjana*. But the librettist has not strength for this; he experiments helplessly around, and at last condemns the hero and his beloved to an aimless resignation. To what purpose are all the scenic efforts, or the jealousy scene between *Onegin* and *Lenski*, the betrothed of *Tatjana's* sister? What end is served by the duel and premature death of *Lenski*? The librettist brings before us persons who seem necessary to the dramatic evolution, but they disappear before they have fulfilled their task. We are longing for the drama, and when, after long preparatory experiments, it might at last begin, the action breaks off, and the opera comes to an end. Both the brothers Tschaikowsky felt these insufficiencies, and therefore they called their work "lyric scenes." That title is exactly appropriate, but is only a way out of a dilemma.

But Peter Tschaikowsky has given us an opportunity of realizing his lyric nature, which is very touching, particularly when he draws graceful and sad folk-choruses from the abundant springs of his national melody. His polyphony is always symphonic; the themes enter one after another in the different parts, and weave themselves together in parti-coloured harmony. We are compensated by pretty scenes for lack of dramatic force. There is dancing in every Act, sometimes peasant dances, sometimes social; and this gives the composer occasion to show his skill in dance measures. The famous waltz in the II. Act is grandly worked out; less so the Polonaise in the III. Act. But the freshness of inspiration and the lively rhythms that Tschaikowsky has made his own are always enjoyable.

Great pains had been taken by all concerned to make the performance a success. Herr Perron, as *Onegin*, was incomparable; Fräulein v. d. Osten, as *Tatjana*, looked charming, particularly in the last Act, and sang with touching expression; Herr Burrian, as *Lenski*, was perfect, both as to his vocal art and finely graded acting. Fräulein v. Chavanne represented the old servant. Well as she sang the part, she seemed to me to fall into the error of displaying merriment where fidelity and motherly sympathy would have been more in place. Fräulein Tervani's *Olga* was wanting in original freshness, and her singing needs improvement. Frau Bender-Schäfer sang the small

* Piano score published by W. Rahter, Leipzig.

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part of *Larina* well, but might have invested the character with more grace and dignity. Herr Rüdiger, on the other hand, was very graceful as *Triquet*; and Herr Rains, as *Prince Gremin*, sang and acted the part to the life. The scenery and dresses were beautiful. The audience were pleased from the first, and soon became enthusiastic. At the close the applause continued until Herr v. Schuch, who had led the orchestra triumphantly, appeared with the principal actors before the curtain.

Dr. Max Neuhaus.

The I. Philharmonic concert took place on Tuesday evening with the usual éclat, if without any very marked display of enthusiasm on the part of the audience; it was opened by the Olsen orchestra with a spirited performance of Mozart's "Figaro" Overture. The soloists were Frau Preuse-Matzenauer and M. Vianna da Motta. The former sang with some degree of feeling the Sextus Aria from Mozart's "Titus," three of the most pathetic of Schubert's songs, and four by R. Strauss. Her best productions were Strauss' "Morgen" and "Traum durch die Dämmerung," which she sang with deliberation and expression, and with well-sustained *mezza voce* tone. Those two songs and the "Ständchen," her last number, were warmly applauded, and she was compelled to give an encore. She had the advantage of Herr Karl Pretzsch's refined and sympathetic accompaniments. The rich and finely modulated tones of the new Bechstein concert grand gave the accompanist no little aid in his well-executed task, and the instrument proved itself in every way a worthy creation of the famous Bechstein firm.

M. José Vianna da Motta has all the virtues of the French school of pianists, finished style, a light touch, agreeable tone, clear phrasing, and brilliant execution. He played first, with full understanding and appreciation, Saint-Saëns' fourth (C-minor) Concerto, a masterly work abounding in charming combinations and picturesque details in which he was admirably supported by the orchestra. His other piece was Liszt's Hungarian Fantasia, also with the orchestra. This was, perhaps, the sensation of the evening. M. da Motta was recalled several times and at last responded with Weber's "Polonaise." The hall was crowded, as usual.

Madame Sarah Bernhardt made her second appearance at the Central Theatre on Tuesday evening, in the celebrated drama of Alexandre Dumas fils, "La Dame aux Camélias." A numerous and distinguished audience, including T. R. H. Prince and Princess Johann Georg, had assembled to witness the piece, and in view of the circumstance that a new opera was being produced at the Opera House the same evening, the attendance at the Theatre was remarkably good. Again the maturity of Madame Bernhardt's art was displayed to excellent advantage; and she was extremely fortunate in

having the assistance of such a talented actor as M. Jean Angelo, who, in the rôle of *Armand Duval*, proved himself to be a tragedian of the very highest order. With the exception of Madame Bernhardt and M. Jean Angelo, the histrionic talent of the company left much to be desired; though this discrepancy, of course, may in no small measure be attributed to the play itself, which provides scope only for those assuming the two chief rôles. At the close of the performance the great actress was the recipient of a remarkable ovation, at which she was obviously gratified. Rarely have such salvos of cheering resounded in this theatre as on Tuesday evening, and Madame Bernhardt was compelled to come before the footlights again and again to acknowledge the enthusiastic plaudits of the audience.

Much satisfaction has been caused by the announcement that the eminent actress is to make another appearance at the Central on Monday evening next, when she will appear in Victorien Sardou's "La Sorcière."

The guards in the city today are furnished by the 2nd Jäger Battalion No. 13. The band plays in the Neustadt about 12.30 p. m.

MUSIC AND ART NOTICE.

At the Central Theatre the grand October variety programme is performed every evening, beginning at 8 o'clock. Bernhard Mörbitz will again produce his dialogue "Amme," which has been allowed by the censor.

DRESDEN CURRENT ENTERTAINMENTS.

Royal Opera House.

Tonight, beginning at 7.30, ending 10

Tiefland.

Musical drama in one prologue and two acts after
A. Guimera. Music by Eugen d'Albert.

Cast:

Sebastiano, a rich landowner	Herr Perron.
Tommaso, the oldest inhabitant	Herr Puttlitz.
Moruccio, a miller's man	Herr Büssel.
Marta	Frau Krull.
Pepa	Fräul. Eibenschütz.
Antonio	Frau Bender-Schäfer.
Rosalie	Fräul. v. Chavanne.
Nuri	Fräul. Keldorfer.
Pedro, a shepherd	Herr Sembach.
Nando, a shepherd	Herr Löscheke.
A priest	Herr Holder.
A peasant	Herr Piehler.

PLOT. Sebastiano, a supposedly wealthy landowner, finds it necessary to wed a rich girl in order to free himself from financial embarrassments. The girl's father insists upon the suppression of certain rumours regarding Sebastiano's relations with Marta, who is in his service. With this end in view Sebastiano induces Pedro, a mountain shepherd, to come down to the *Tiefland*, the Lowlands, and marry Marta. In the first act the marriage takes place. During the night Pedro sees a light in his wife's room, but she persuades him that he is dreaming. The second act finds Pedro, upon awakening, convinced that he saw the light. Marta's hatred of him turns to love when she is satisfied that he has married her for her own sake and not for money. She opens her heart to Tommaso, an octogenarian, who counsels her to tell her story to Pedro. Everybody has been deriding her husband, and upon her telling him that she has belonged to another and accusing him of having sold himself, he stabs her in the arm. She appeals to him to kill her, but he fondly embraces her and persuades her to return with him to the mountains. Sebastiano appears and asks Marta to dance for him. This Pedro forbids, whereupon Sebastiano strikes him, and Pedro is prevented from retaliating by being forcibly removed. Sebastiano then attempts to make love to Marta, but Pedro returns,—having learned in the interval that Sebastiano was in his wife's room on the bridal night,—and strangles him.

Composer: E. d'Albert, born 1864.

Friday night	I. Symphony Concert. Series B	at 7
Saturday night	Oberon	" 7.30
Sunday night	Eugen Onegin	" 7.30
Monday night	Die Folkunger	" 7.30

Royal Theatre Neustadt.

Tonight	Die Liebe wacht	at 7.30
Friday night	Jahresmarkt in Pulsnitz	" 7.30
Saturday night	Le robe rouge	" 7.30
Sunday night	Die Liebe wacht	" 7.30
Monday night	Brand	" 7

Residenz Theatre.

Tonight	Der Prinzpapa	at 7.30
Friday night	Das Modell	" 7.30
Saturday night	Der Prinzpapa	" 7.30

Central Theatre	Variety Performance	at 8
Victoria Salon	Variety Performance	" 8

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