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AN ITALIAN TRIBUTE TO TOSTI.

No memoir of Sir F. P. Tosti will be entirely complete which does not include some mention of the magnificent commemoration of the artist held in the great hall of his last home, the Hotel Excelsior, at Rome, on January 12.

The commemoration was organised by the *Messaggero* newspaper, and had the double object of honouring the memory of the master, and of aiding the families of the soldiers now fighting at the Front. The programme also included a poetical tribute by a well-known Roman poet, and an appreciation by Robert Bracco, the intimate friend of Tosti:

- Sogno } .. .. . Bianca Stagno-Bellincioni.
- La Mia Canzone } .. .. .
- Ninon } .. .. . Ninon Valin Pardo.
- Chanson de Radieu } .. .. .
- Filles de Cadix } .. .. .
- Preghiera } .. .. . Gabriella Besanzoni.
- Voglio amarti } .. .. .
- Vorrei } .. .. . Gemma Bellincioni.
- Dopo } .. .. .
- Malia } .. .. .
- Nonna sarridi } .. .. . Emma Carelli.
- A mare chiare } .. .. .
- Ridonami la calma } .. .. . Leone Paci.
- Invano } .. .. .
- Vola, o serenata } .. .. . Ben. Gigli.
- Canzone d'amoranto } .. .. .
- Tristezza } .. .. .
- O dolce meraviglia } .. .. . Taurino Parvis.
- Ideale } .. .. .

The programme was completed by the execution of the only two instrumental compositions produced by Tosti, 'Inquietudine,' a sweet melody for the violin, and the pianoforte composition, 'At home.'

Of the eloquent commemoration spoken by Robert Bracco, we have only room to give a brief résumé:

ROBERT BRACCO ON PAOLO TOSTI.

'Neither mourning, nor the anguish of despair, nor lugubrious monodies do we associate with Paolo Tosti this evening, but the colours and the odour of spring, the beauty of fair ladies and the grace of children, the passing of a multitude of winged spirits, symbols of the "Eternal Woman" come from all parts of the earth to pay their respects to the fadeless memory of the master who has passed. Well might we write on the door of that room where he lay—that room yet saturated with the sense of his power—the strange and mystical exclamation of Emily Brontë: "Here is no place for Death."

'None but one who was able to enter thoroughly into the soul of the master, and who merited that privilege, could have made that suggestion for a monument to Tosti which we owe to her with whose grief and with whose pride we associate ourselves this evening. "Erect upon a pedestal," she has said, "a figure that shall represent Woman, and inscribe upon the pedestal the first notes of his first Romance and the first notes of his last Romance."

'Simple and wonderful commentary of his art! All his music he offered to Woman, for from love it drew its inspiration, and to love was it dedicated. And so every woman, loved or loving, or with the memory of a past love or the expectation of a future love in her heart, finds in his measures the interpretation or the echo of her own interior world.

'This is the psychology of Tosti's music, and the grand reason why it is known all over the world.

'We must not allow his genial and beloved personality to obscure our appreciation of his work as a musician, and particularly in that field of music devoted to Romance, the graceful lyric that was not disdained by the semi-gods, such as Lully, nor by the gods, such as Rossini. In the varying history of the Romanza Tosti has, without doubt, signalled one of the culminating periods, and we may compare his influence in this direction with that of Giuseppe Biancini, who in the 17th century did so much for the Italian Canzonetta, and whose chief characteristics—a modest simplicity marked with an inborn dignity and an untrammelled elegance that are due more to instinct than to culture—are all found in his works, retaining the imprint of the purest and most traditional forms of Italian music, amidst such rapid evolutions as have never hitherto been known in the kingdom of sound.

'For this, perhaps, criticism will deal severely with him: but to us let his poetry be sacred—that poetry which, in the heart of this gentle, lovable son of Italy, retained unchangeable light and colour and song, so truly resembling a divine faculty. It was Robert Schumann who, after hearing Italian song, wrote to his old master:

"In Italy I have learned to love the genius of music."

A grandson of the famous Italian actor Salvini, lately read to some of the most literary and cultured men of Florence a political sketch in three parts written by himself, entitled 'Dante,' which it is understood will ere long be produced, Mascagni undertaking to compose the music, which will play an important part in the production.

A new opera entitled 'Medusa' has just been completed by Bruno Barilli, one of the young Italian school of composers, and those who have heard some of it speak highly of the work.

*Musical America* (January 20) says that Percy Grainger has returned to the East after a triumphant tour of the Pacific Coast, where in addition to his winning honours as a pianist, his suite 'In a Nutshell' was produced by Alfred Hertz at a concert of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. The extraordinary amount of percussion effects employed by Mr. Grainger in this new orchestral work called forth a great deal of comment from both the public and the more analytical critics, the latter of whom found much to admire in the ingenious conceptions of the brilliant Australian.

Dr. Henry Coward writes in the February number of the *Etude* (New York) on 'Success in Choir Conducting.' The article is rather more about training than conducting, and is very practical.

The 'Alpine Symphony' of Richard Strauss was performed at Minneapolis on New Year's Day under Emil Oberhoffer.

Zandonai's opera-setting of Gabriel D'Annunzio's 'Francesca da Rimini,' produced at Chicago on January 5, and the same composer's 'Primavera' Suite, produced at New York on the same day, were not considered attractive.

RUSSIAN MUSIC IN ENGLAND.

The *Russian Musical Contemporary Review* for October 15, 1916, says:

In the October issue (No. 884) of the London journal the *Musical Times* there appeared a short article by Montagu-Nathan on Prokofiev. Despite its limited dimensions the article, which is excellent in tone, is very informative, and reveals in its writer a serious attitude towards the work of Prokofiev and a good knowledge of his compositions, even those so recently published as the 'Cello Ballade, Op. 15, issued this year. The talented writer of this article published not long ago a History of Russian Music, in the pages of which are to be found estimates of the work of such comparatively young musicians as Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Myaskovsky and others. When will these names be recognised in histories published in their native country? For the rest, Montagu-Nathan's is, if we are not mistaken, the first special article devoted to Prokofiev's work yet published, not only abroad but anywhere.

MR. H. A. FRICKER AND TORONTO.

In our April and May, 1916 issues, an advertisement appeared relating to the appointment of an organist for the Metropolitan Methodist Church, Toronto, Canada, the salary offered being £500 per annum. Numerous applications were received, but it was only recently that the authorities decided to offer the appointment to Mr. H. A. Fricker, the well-known Leeds organist and conductor. The cable that reached Mr. Fricker on February 14 also offered him the conductorship of the famous Mendelssohn Choir, hitherto conducted with such remarkable success by Dr. Vogt. No information as to the reasons for Dr. Vogt's retirement has reached us. Mr. Fricker informs us that his own engagements at Leeds and the risks of voyaging in these times have to be considered, and that he has accepted the appointments only provisionally.

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