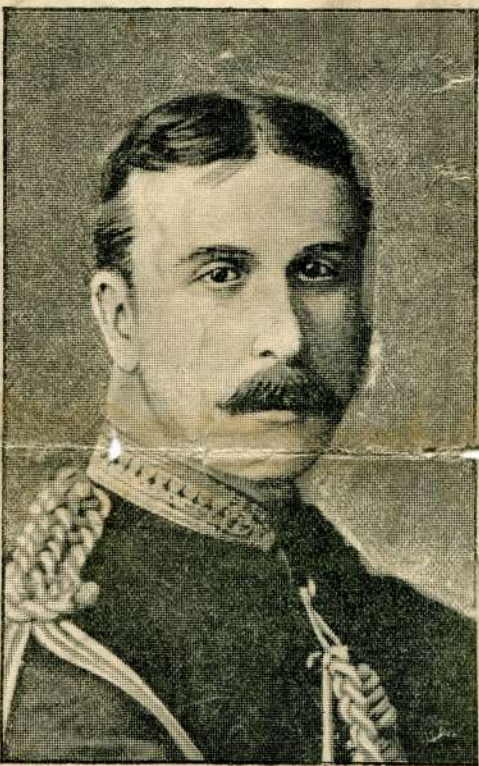


THE 36th ANNUAL BELLE VUE CHAMPION BRASS BAND CONTEST, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1888.

TEST PIECE

THE "FLYING DUTCHMAN."



CHARLES GODFREY.



JOHN GLADNEY.



ALEXANDER OWEN.



EDWIN SWIFT.

STORY OF THE OPERA.

ALTHOUGH Wagner, in his later years, would fain disown this child of his early prime, yet "The Flying Dutchman" holds a very high place in the regard of critical lovers of opera, and is always greeted with warmest welcomes whenever it is announced for presentation. The legend is as follows: A Dutch sea-captain, Vanderdecken by name, in trying to sail around the Cape of Good Hope in the teeth of a furious gale, swore that he would keep on sailing for ever, but he would accomplish his purpose. The devil hearing his oath, condemned him to sail on, without aim or purpose, until the Day of Judgment, without hope of release, unless he should find and espouse some maiden who would be faithful until death, and he was to be allowed to go ashore every seven years in search of a bride. The opera opens with the appearance of the Dutchman's ship, with blood red sails, in a harbour on the coast of Norway into which Daland, a Norwegian captain, has just been driven by stress of weather. A term of seven years having just expired, he asks hospitality of Daland, shows him his wealth in his cargo, and is invited to sail to the house of Daland, which is but a few miles distant. Learning that Daland has a daughter, he asks permission to woo her, and Daland, desirous of securing a wealthy son-in-law, consents, and the two ships set sail for Daland's home. The second act opens in Daland's house, with a "Spinning Chorus" by Senta, Daland's daughter, Mary, her former nurse, and a number of Norwegian girls, who are at work with their spinning-wheels. (See "Spinning Chorus" below.) Senta, who has heard the legend of the Flying Dutchman, is fascinated by his portrait, which hangs upon the wall, and in a ballad she recites his sad story. (Opening motive of selection.) Now Erik, Senta's lover, enters and announces the approach of the two ships, and the eager maidens at once prepare food for the sailors who are expected. Erik pleads his suit with Senta, fearing that if he does not secure her hand at once, her father will find a richer husband for her. Senta listens as one who is absorbed in some one far away, and the youth tells her a dream, in which he saw her father bringing the sailor, whose portrait hangs on the wall, to her for a husband. Senta is much excited and cries out that she will be the bride of the unknown mariner. Erik departs in despair, leaving Senta wrapped in thought, gazing at the picture. Meanwhile, Daland and his guest reach the house. She recognizes him as the original of the portrait; gazes spellbound at him, while he gazes at her, charmed at her beauty and simplicity. (Third movement of selection.) Daland asks her to receive the stranger as a guest and as a husband, and in a long scene he asks her hand; she promises to be faithful unto death, and he receives her assurances with rapture. Daland announces the betrothal to his crew, who are about to have a feast after the hardships of the voyage.

Act third opens with a chorus by the Norwegian sailors, the two ships lying side by side near the shore—(second movement of selection)—the maidens come with food and refreshments for both crews, but being unable to arouse the Dutch crew, leave all the provisions they have brought, for the Norwegians. While the latter are feasting, the Dutch crew arouse themselves and sing the story of their captain. A dark bluish flame is seen, and the sound of a rising storm is heard. They attempt to drown the noise with their own singing, but are silenced, and in fright quit the ship's deck, signing the cross, seeing which the Dutch crew utter a shrill laugh, and all is quiet again; the storm subsides, the blue flames, which have flitted about the rigging, cease, and all is dark and silent.

Erik now appears with Senta, urging her to give up her new fancy, and reproaching her for her faithlessness to him. (See euphonium solo.) The Dutchman entering, overhears what Erik says to Senta, and supposing that the maiden, having been unfaithful to her first lover, may also forsake him, runs to his ship in despair, in spite of Senta's entreaties. Erik urges her not to rush to her own destruction, as she follows the Dutchman, evidently determined to link her fate with his, and cries for help. The Dutchman declares who he is, goes aboard his ship, and sets sail. Senta follows, but being unable to reach the ship, ascends a high cliff overhanging the sea, into which she casts herself, calling to the Flying Dutchman, and protesting her faithfulness unto death. The Dutchman's ship immediately sinks with her crew, the sea rises high and sinks back in a whirlpool, and in the glow of the sunset, over the wreck of the ship, are seen the forms of Senta and the Dutchman embracing each other, rising from the sea and floating upwards.

In this opera, the great composer doubtless took his first steps towards the music of the future in his use of motives, his wonderful treatment of the orchestra in enforcing the expressions of the text, and his combination of the voices, and instrumentation in what he terms "the music drama."

MR. GODFREY'S SELECTION.

Without a doubt this selection is the very best that has ever been heard at Belle-vue, and every reader attending the contest should secure a solo cornet conductor's copy, if he does so he will get a valuable musical lesson. No showy cadenzas, no difficulty is introduced for the sake of difficulty—all is legitimate. The test is artistic rather than executive. The selection opens (pp.) with the motive in which Senta, in the second act, sings the "legend." Mr. Godfrey has given the motive as it occurs in the overture—

Andante, 100 crotchets.



"Yet can the spectre seaman be freed from the curse infernal," &c.

The opening bars, as above, are given to the horns, euphonium, and baritone, for the first four bars; then it is repeated by the cornets and trombones, which will produce a beautiful effect, by contrast of tone colour. After this, the horns, baritone, and euphonium take up the second portion of the melody. Then the basses, which hitherto have been silent, give out the remarkable phrase—



"Yo-ho-hoe! Yo-ho-hoe! Yo-ho-hoe!"

The melody—for it certainly is no less—is constructed out of two notes only. Instantly you hear it, you know that it is a seaman's song—it smells of ships and the sea. The phrase is heard all through the opera when any reference is made to the Flying Dutchman.

This leads us into the second movement of the selection—

Animato ma non troppo. Allegro, 80 crotchets.



"Mariner! Drink with us. Mariner! Drink with us," &c.

This is the "Sailors' Chorus" from the third act of the opera, and surely no music was ever written which will bring before the mind's eye a crew of joyous sailors drinking, singing, and dancing in boisterous sailor fashion, as this music does. Why, one can positively see them skipping about and hitching up their trousers.

The two first movements will be recognised as the same which Mr. H. Round has used as the first two movements of his selection, "Wagner."

The 3rd movement of the selection is taken from Act 2

Sostenuto, 80 crotchets.



The Dutchman's song (trombone). (See description of opera above where Daland introduces the Flying Dutchman to Senta.) After gazing, captivated at Senta (cornet) the Dutchman sings—

Trombone Solo.



"Oft mid the torment of my night eternal
I gazed upon some vision fair,
Still was I driven by Satan's power infernal
O! my dread course, in anguish and despair." Etc.

Senta listens, as one in a dream, to the Dutchman's song, then she gives vent to her feelings (duett, cornet and trombone).



Cornet (Senta)— "He standeth there with all his griefs, believe me,
He tells me all his sorrows, his despair." Etc.

Trombone (Flying Dutchman)—
"As oft through weary ages of my dreaming,
Before mine eyes her form I see." Etc.

This magnificent duett gains in dramatic intensity as it proceeds. The peroration is splendidly worked out, concluding with a double cadenza.

This leads into the 3rd movement, which is the celebrated Spinning Chorus, opening 2nd Act of opera. Chorus of girls at their spinning-wheels, spinning, and singing merrily. Allegretto, 66 crotchets; after 4 bars of introduction the chorus commences.

Cornets.



mf Baritones and 2nd Horn.

The maidens sing

"Hum and hum, good wheel go whirling,
Lively, lively dance around,
Spinning thousand threads a-twirling,
Let thy pleasant hum resound."

Un poco, 50 crotchets:

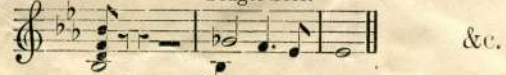
"My love doth sail the ocean o'er,
For home he sighs and sweetheart's eyes;
My faithful wheel, oh, rush and roar,
Ah! if thy breeze but ruled the seas,
I would soon my love to me restore."

While the maidens (cornets, soprano, flugel, and solo horn) are singing thus, the whirr and hum of the spinning wheel is heard from the euphonium, baritone, and second horn.

This movement leads into the beautiful cavatina which Erik (euphonium) sings in the last act of the opera, when reproaching Senta for her faithlessness to him. The euphonium solo is introduced by flugel horn, who plays a wailing prelude of eight bars pure solo (no accompaniment).

Andante, 50 crotchets.

Flugel Solo.



Then Erik's (euphonium) cavatina with obligato for solo horn—



Erik's song (euphonium) as he reproaches Senta—
"Is that fair day no more by thee remembered,
When from the vale thou calld'st me from the height,
When fearlessly o'er rugged peaks I clamber'd,
And gathered for thee many a wild flower bright?"

This solo finishes with a cadenza (euphonium) leading into the last movement of the selection—duett, Senta and Dutchman (Allegro molto, 96 crotchets)—

Solo Cornet (Senta). Trombone (Dutchman).



With prominent Baritone and Horn accompaniments in arpeggio.

Senta (cornet)—"Why is my heart so wildly beating?" Etc.
Dutchman (trombone)—"Thou evil star for ever faded,"
Senta (on repetition of above phrase)—
"Such joys I breathe with every breath."
Dutchman—"Hope's glorious light shall shine anew."

At the end of this repetition the basses commence a figure, which is several times repeated, and which will, we guess, provoke some of the basses to indulge in language not quite fitted for Sunday. Here is a specimen of the BB-flat bass part—



When it is remembered that the pace is about 194 crotchets to the minute, it will be seen that the basses do not get off very easily, even if they had no other difficult passages; but they have many. The second portion of the finale is piu vivo—104—being a continuance of the duett (cornet and trombone). This brings us up to the two pauses where the duett finishes in the opera. But to wind up, Mr. Godfrey has added the first eight bars of Senta's song as a tutti ff, the selection concluding with a rushing scale passage from the bass against the sustained harmony of the cornets, horns, and trombones.

There are two things which we wish our Readers to bear in mind—as they listen to the Selection as played by most of the Bands at Belle Vue—firstly, that Wagner could not write melody; secondly, there is no music in a brass band. Old Fogeyism has harped on these two themes ever since "Wagner" and "Brass Bands" began each their respective careers. Therefore, according to dear Old Fogeyism, the music of Wagner should be well fitted for brass bands, being full of noisy, unmeaning discords such, in fact, as one might fancy he had written expressly to show off the lung power of the brass band. When you are at Belle Vue, listening to the best bands, just turn your eyes around the immense concert-room for a moment. See the thousands of eager faces of those who drink every sound like nectar. Look again—Are they not all honest, genuine sons of toil? Did you ever in your life see such enthusiasm amongst them who wear silk, broadcloth, and fine linen? Never! The people have, perhaps, a keener love of music than any other class in the world. It is not a mere pastime with them. It is their sole study and engrossing pursuit outside their daily labour.