

THE CINCINNATI MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

The outward show of festivity during the late musical festival in Cincinnati was much more general than it was in Boston during the jubilee excitement, and also much prettier. The streets were decorated as if for a great victory, every public building was hung with banners, streamers, and festoons. There was hardly a hovel so poor, or a store so small, as not to have its flags flying, and the locomotives, the steamers on the river, and the street-car horses were all dressed for the occasion.

The festival opened on the 11th of May, and was held for four days. The total expense of getting it up was \$40,000, and before it was half over the receipts were \$30,000. The chorus numbered 825, and the band 102 pieces, the former mostly Cincinnatians, the latter Theodore Thomas's own orchestra, brought on from New York. When Thomas was invited to take charge of a musical festival at Cincinnati, in 1873, he had to create a chorus for the occasion; and yet, after a few weeks' preparation, he gave a superb performance of the Choral Symphony, which filled the whole West with enthusiasm. With one enormous stride, pork-packing Ohio overtook æsthetic Massachusetts, and it was predicted, on the strength of what was done then, that at its next festival Cincinnati would rival, in the serious character and scientific importance of the programme, the most ambitious efforts of New York or Boston, and even the achievements of the great choral festivities of England. This prediction was fulfilled.

The correspondent of the New York Tribune, whose report we are condensing, says the series of programmes, in many important particulars, surpassed those of any previous American festival. The great vocal works produced were—

1. Triumphal Hymn, op. 55, Brahms.
2. Scenes from "Lohengrin," Wagner.
3. Oratorio, "Elijah," Mendelssohn.
4. Magnificat in D, Bach.
5. Chorus in Ninth Symphony, Beethoven.
6. Cantata of "Prometheus," Liszt.

Of these the first, fourth and sixth numbers were given for the first time in America.

The great instrumental works were—

1. Symphony No. 7, in A, op. 92, Beethoven.
2. Symphony No. 9, in D minor, op. 125, Beethoven.
3. Symphony No. 9, in C, Schubert.
4. The "Lohengrin" Music, Wagner.
5. The Meistersinger Music, Wagner.
6. The Walknere Music, Wagner.
7. The Symphonic Poem, "Prometheus," Liszt.

There were minor vocal and instrumental works by the same and other great composers, all of them of a high, and some of the very highest, class of music. In colossal majesty, dignity and grandeur, nothing has been heard like the "Magnificat," the "Triumphal," "Lohengrin," and the Ninth Symphony, and in short works it would be difficult to exceed the Liszt cantata of "Prometheus" in dramatic construction and harmonious effects. So far as technical work is concerned, nothing has ever before been attempted in this country so elaborate, so involved and complex, so much like a succession of musical problems in fact, as the "Magnificat" and "Triumphal," the latter running throughout in eight parts, the two choirs on opposite sides of the stage, and each part in each choir going its own way without help from the others. Mr. Thomas said it was the hardest work he had ever led, and complimented the chorus that they had learned it at all. They not only learned it but performed it "gloriously." Of "Lohengrin," as heretofore heard in this country, they made a new revelation, and it was received by the audience of 5,000 with an enthusiasm at times amounting to wildness. In "Elijah," the chorus went on increasing in spirit, precision, and sonority, from one beautiful number to another, and in all the familiar choruses, which have made the "Elijah" loved

wherever music is cultivated, the singers covered themselves with glory.

The correspondents, especially those from the East, where musical culture is supposed to be most advanced, seem at a loss for words to fitly praise the performance, whether of chorus, soloists, or orchestra. "Glorious," "indescribably fine," "more exquisite than I can tell," "left nothing to be desired," "grandly, superbly, exquisitely, eloquently, charmingly done," "could hardly be praised too warmly," are phrases culled at random from the N. Y. Tribune's report. "The climax," says this report, "came in the performance of the Ninth Symphony, which it was worth a 1,500 miles' journey to hear. I doubt whether a more brilliant and eloquent interpretation of the Scherzo, or a more intensely spiritual rendering of the great Adagio was ever given in America. The orchestra was in such a sympathetic mood as comes to the best of orchestras only rarely; the twenty violoncellos and basses thundered forth the recitative at the beginning of the second part with astonishing fire and unanimity, and then began the terrible vocal portion at which, for my part, I always tremble with apprehension. The quartet was well done by Mrs. Smith, Miss Cary, Mr. Winch and Mr. Reinmetz, all four distinguishing themselves highly. As for the chorus, I felt at the first attack that it was going through grandly, and so in truth it did. Its success was not only complete, it was electrical. Whatever little imperfections there may have been in the delivery were lost in the magnificent rush of song; and when the end came the whole vast assemblage leaped to its feet and shouted. Thomas received the honors of a conqueror. The chorus applauded him with the rest, and the audience stood upon the chairs and waved hats and handkerchiefs in a sort of frantic delight. There are said to have been more than eight thousand people in the hall."

The festival ended with the performance of "Prometheus," closing in the midst of an indescribable burst of enthusiasm, singers and audience all hurrahing together, and loud shouts for Thomas rising above the din. Like its predecessor of 1873, upon which in most respects it was a great improvement, it has become part and parcel of the musical history of the west. Among the elements of its success—a superb chorus, command of all the solo talent of the country, and Mr. Thomas's orchestra, which he has been training nearly fifteen years—not the least was the enthusiastic interest taken in it by the city of Cincinnati. Its success was made a matter of pride with the entire city. The whole population joined in the general decoration. Cincinnati took three-fourths of the seats in the building for the season. The executive committee was composed of the wealthiest business men in Cincinnati. They were not ornamental appendages, but live, active, stirring men, who let their business go for a time, and gave themselves to work, attending to every detail. When the ushers had more work on hand than they could do with the vast crowds, the executive committee were not too dainty to turn in and help, and millionaires showed hundreds of seats, kept hackmen orderly, and helped to sell tickets. When the festival closed, these men said: "We will have another." Was the chorus ready? Every man and woman. When Thomas said to Singer (his assistant): "Will you be ready for my next programmes?" Singer proudly replied, "Anything you can suggest, my chorus can do." Said John Shillits, the dry goods king of Cincinnati, to John Church, the music dealer—"The festival is over, don't you think we ought to put up a building on a scale as grand as our festival?" "Yes," said Mr. Church. "Then we will do it," said the other John. And it will be done.

"And now," says the Chicago reviewer of the affair, from whom we have largely quoted, "does Chicago know that Cincinnati, that sooty, smoky Queen of the Ohio river, is the musical center of the United States, and is leaving New York, Boston, and Chicago far in the distance from the musical point of view? And if so what are you going to do about it?"

We may be sure that Chicago at least will spare no effort to keep abreast of Cincinnati, and meanwhile it may occur to many of our readers to ask—"What is Salt Lake

doing in this respect? This and preceding great musical festivals come and go and mention is hardly made of them in Salt Lake. Should we not at least inform ourselves as to the progress of musical culture in the country? Should we not rather endeavor to take part in, and be a part of it, according as we may and can?" We are glad to be able to say that an earnest effort is being made here in this direction. A society has been informally organized in this city, it has been in training for the performance of the "Messiah" for four months, and, considering the circumstances, it has worked well, and on the evening of Thursday, June 3, it will perform the "Messiah" at the Salt Lake Theatre, and thus inaugurate a work which we cannot afford to longer neglect, and which will grow and develop and unfold with the future to the almost infinite improvement and enjoyment of the community. H.

"Pleas cum around and talk me to the spelin mach this evenin," wrote an Oshkosh girl to her beau.

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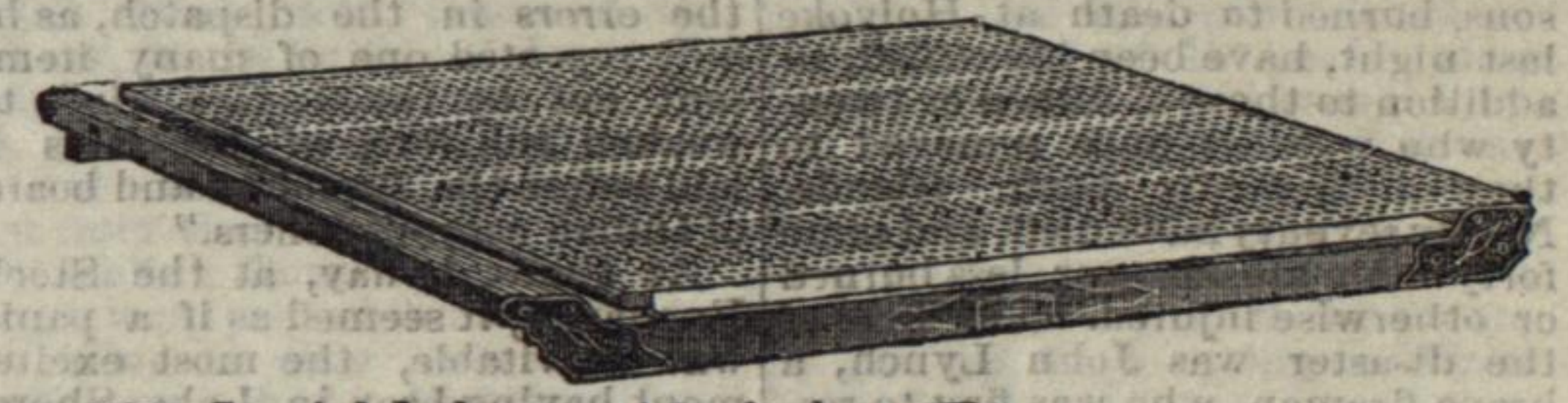
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