

THE RADIO RECORD

Published Weekly

REGISTERED G.P.O., WELLINGTON, N.Z., AS A NEWSPAPER.

Vol. II., No. 34.

WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 1929.

Broadcast Music of Coming Week

By
Bolton
Woods

"'Tis the deep music of the rolling world,
Kindling within the strings of the waved air—
Aeolian Modulations."

—Shelley.

"Il Trovatore" (The Troubadour).



FROM 2YA, next Friday (March 15), some selections from Verdi's world-wide popular opera, "Il Trovatore," will be broadcast. Included in these is the famed "Miserere," by which tune most people identify the opera itself. The libretto of "Il Trovatore," written by one, Salvatore Camanaro, is based upon a Spanish drama of that name, and is considered by some as the acme of absurdity. Of the melodiousness of Verdi's score, many will agree with Kobbe that its unbroken beauty far transcends the futility of the plot. According to that writer one of the reasons why the plot of the opera seems such a jumbled-up affair is that a considerable part of the story is supposed to have transpired before the curtain goes up. Despite the apparent necessity of having to take one's brains to the theatre when one goes to "Il Trovatore" to thoroughly understand and master this most loved musical melodrama, the music carries one on so that one forgets to worry about sequence of events and apparent inconsistencies.

Rivalled only by the famous "Intermezzo," from Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana," the "Miserere" duet has an appeal to all the musical world, from the bottom to the top. From the adjacent chapel the death-bell sounds, and we hear a male chorus singing the solemn "Miserere": "Mercy on the soul that is near to its setting out upon a journey from which there is no returning; grant it Thy mercy, O divine goodness; let it not fall into the pit of hell!" The voice of

Leonora is heard: "What voices of terror, for whom are they praying? With omens of fear unknown, they darken the air." Her song ends with a sobbing refrain, but she is answered, with an effect that the years have been unable to diminish, by the voice of the Troubadour: "It is Manrico, her lover, who exhorts her to forget him;" and she sobs out her assurance that she is his for ever. Sung by Florence Austral and Browning Mummery, two first-class Australian-born singers, one can visualise the whole scene, with its prison tower, its anguished, beautiful heroine, and the doomed Manrico. Familiarity with "Miserere" has not bred contempt.

"A Bunch of Shamrocks."

THE song suite with which the Orchestra will delight 2YA listeners on Saturday, March 16, embraces about a dozen favourite Irish tunes. From the national standpoint it will be a warm quarter of an hour, all really human people glow with affection for the Irish. As a nation they have a creditable musical past, and present-day musicians number in their ranks many talented sons of Erin. During the present century work by men of the Stanford type made Ireland's claim to be the mother of musical and poetic genius a vivid reality. Stanford published "Father O'Flynn" in 1883, in a book of fifty pieces, which were an effort to portray the varying moods of fisherman, peasant and mechanic. A man so near to the life of the common people as Father O'Flynn had to have a place in the volume, hence the song that delights and entertains whenever it is well sung.

Of an older generation, Thomas Moore is well represented in the suite by three famous tunes, each immortal and of enduring beauty. They are, "The Minstrel Boy," "Believe me if all those enduring young charms," and "The harp that once thro' Tara's halls." Each of these exquisite poems contains but sixteen lines—brevity being the soul of beauty in the case of Moore. It was the fashion, when the writer was at school, to set the scholars the task of putting certain lines of some great poet into the pupil's own words. The job usually stumped most of the class. A good test would be to set the examiners themselves one of these wonderful Moore poems to transcribe and see how they got on. It would make amusing reading!

That dainty ditty, "The Dear Little Shamrock," is by a composer named Jackson, whose centenary fell last year. His Christian name was William, but he must not be confused with Jackson, of Exeter (an eighteenth century operatic and church composer), or Jackson, of Masham (a nineteenth century Yorkshireman), author of a "Manual of Singing." The composer of "The Dear Little Shamrock" was 48 years old when he died in 1876, very little else being known about him, save his claim to a niche of fame for history. Considered as a whole the suite has many worthy points, each song having its own way of making a place for itself in the affections of the hearer. One will bring a tear to the eye, and a clutch at the heart; another will charm with its merry jingle; all are full of fragrant, wholesome sentiment and real musical beauty.

—Continued on page 3.