

Why CESARONI can Produce a Concert of BRITISH Songs Orchestrated by BEETHOVEN

by

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On the advance programmes I noticed that, set down for 2YA on Monday, October 26, is a concert of British (including Scottish) songs, to be produced by the well-known Italian maestro, Lucien Cesaroni. All these songs have been set to music by Beethoven. German, Italian and British—surely, I thought, an unusual combination, but I happened to see Cesaroni a few days later and this is what he told me in explanation:

halb so hübsch wie Lo-re?
schenkt'ich mei - ner Lo-re:
führ' ich heim die Lo-re:
half so sweet as Sal-ly;
give it all to Sal-ly;
then I'll ma - ry Sal-ly;

This fragment from "Sally in Our Alley" illustrates typical British musical construction.

common practice to sing many of them without musical accompaniment. Of course, the musical accompaniment can be overdone, and the melodies made subservient to the music, but there is no doubt that a proper blending of voice and instrument or instruments can produce better results than when the two are divorced.

And so it occurred that a Scottish editor, who was collecting these folk and national songs, came to send a collection of them to Beethoven to arrange the music for violin, piano and 'cello. The violin part was written because that instrument, more than any other, approaches the voice in quality and can, if the part is well arranged,

PEOPLE will, no doubt, think it strange that I should be producing a concert of British songs, orchestrated by a German, none other than the great Beethoven. But what of that? Beethoven, before he could set to music the national and folk songs of the British people, must have known something of them—he had studied the people as they expressed themselves in music, and with his master pen set down their emotions in a manner that met with their entire approval. He put into his own glorious music everything they wanted to express.

One of the features of early British songs was the simplicity of the tunes or melodies. It was quite possible and indeed quite a

quieter, more reserved, yet nevertheless joyous melodies of the English.

TAKE, for instance, "Sally in Our Alley," that well-known air written by Henry Carey in 1728 and later rearranged by Beethoven. There is something undeniably English about this tune. For example, examine the few bars (reproduced) at the end of the verse. You will note that little upward inflection ending with the words "to Sal-ly," where the music takes a sudden little jump from A to D. That inflection is essentially English and is found in no other music. But this is only one of the small things that make songs like this dear to the English people. Listen when we broadcast that little air and you will see exactly what I mean.

Talking about "Sally," I might mention that a popular error exists concerning this song. It is not written about anyone in particular, but merely to set forth the beauty of a chaste and disinterested passion even in the lowest class of human life. The real occasion was this: a shoemaker's apprentice making holiday with his sweetheart, treated her with a sight of Bedlam, the puppet-show, the flying chairs and all the elegances of the Moorfields, from whence (Con-

cluded on page 29.) support it to a great degree. The 'cello fills in the gap between violin and piano and gives body to the combination. The specification of the voices was not always done by the great musician, as in many cases it was not in the original manuscript. Beethoven often marked the vocal parts with "voce" only, very likely because the Scottish editor generally sent him the air without the words—a negligence Beethoven often complained of, thus being left in ignorance as to the character of the song.

Beethoven studied the people with whom he came in contact, mainly through their songs. Just as he studied people, any ordinary person, no matter what his nationality or creed may be, must study people if he is to be an interpreter of emotions as expressed in literature, plays or operas.

Some years ago I was associated with the Castellano Opera Company, a more or less well-known group who were divided between Russia and England. During this period, I gained some very valuable experience in contacting the people of various countries and in studying them. Incidentally, I picked up a working knowledge of some eleven languages, but that is quite by the way. In studying people through their songs, one sees the essential difference in their make-up. Contrast the fiery emotional songs of the Italians as they work themselves to a pitch of excitement with



Signor Lucien Cesaroni as Mephistopheles.

—S. P. Andrew photo.