



Gordon Short.

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tells readers something of

The Melodies of Brahms

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-S. P. Andrew, photo.

THE music of Brahms, the last of the great line of German composers, has often been criticised as being too austere, obscure and lacking in sweet melody. A few of his works, however, possess such elements of immediate appeal that the frequent performance of them borders on the hackneyed. Who does not know, and immediately respond to the melody and strong rhythm of his orchestral Hungarian dances? In how many different forms has one heard his much-beloved waltz in "A" flat, with its haunting sweetness? His songs, "Sapphic Ode," "Cradle Song," and his children's song, "The Little Dustman," rival some of the well-known drawing-room ballads for popularity.

Of such a type of melody are the "Love Song" waltzes. They suggest the typical Viennese waltz of sentimental sweetness. It was a new idea to write a set of waltzes as pianoforte duet and then surround them with a vocal quartet as obligato. Their rhythm and melodiousness give them a frequent place on concert programmes abroad, and they have probably done much to popularise Brahms in providing a stepping-stone to an appreciation of his more serious compositions.

It has been stated that the two sets of these waltzes were among the first things that made for Brahms's real popularity with the English public, and since the date of the second set this has never declined. In recent years the love for Brahms's works has grown in England to such an extent that once a fortnight a special programme of Brahms's works at the celebrated Promenade concerts regularly draws crowded houses.

Brahms's own love of crystal-clear Schubertian melody is shown in his pianoforte arrangement, much played, of an old-world gavotte from an opera by the early Gluck, a melody of exquisite simplicity. He is also said to have confessed that he would dearly love to have been the composer of the "Blue Danube" waltz. Upon hearing that the Viennese critic, Hanslick, had written that his works lacked melody he wrote the now well-known set of waltzes for piano duet recently broadcast from 2YA, to which belongs the much-heard waltz in "A" flat, to show that he, too, could write

with the same sweet simple melodiousness of Schubert if he so wished. It is possible that the great popularity of these waltzes gave him the idea of writing some more with an obligato of four voices. The addition of the voices lends further colour and richness of harmony. Several of these numbers will be played on Monday evening next by Mrs. Cimino and myself, and the vocal quartet will be supplied by Mrs. Amy Woodward, Mrs. Wilfred Andrews, Ray Trewern and Keith Grant. * * *

And now for a few words about Gordon Short himself. He was born and educated in South Australia, and it would appear that he was born with music in his soul, for, at the age of eleven years, he made his first public appearance before an audience of 1000 concert patrons. This was the beginning of what was destined to be a distinguished musical career. His next achievement was to win a scholarship open to pianoforte students throughout the State, entitling him to four years' training at the Elder Conservatorium, which is affiliated with the University.



Johannes Brahms.

SO well did he use this great opportunity that he became the youngest holder of the diploma of Associate in Music of the Adelaide University. Thereafter, Mr. Short became one of South Australia's busiest pianists, being called upon to fill innumerable engagements in all parts of the State, including a number of appearances with orchestras of high standing.

But the young musician was not satisfied with his attainments, and several years before the War went to Europe to continue his studies. His star was in the ascendant, for he had (Concluded on page 30.)