

two cock-chafers spilted on the same bodkin" the dancers looked, and in the closing words of the preface to the poem, Mr. Hornem admits: "Now that I know what it is, I like it of all things," and so, I think, say all of us—Why is this?

More than any other dance the waltz stands for pure melody, whose traditions it enshrines and keeps inviolate. It is therefore not difficult to rhapsodise about it. The waltz also represents more than in any other dance the real poetry of motion. All the grace, dignity, and animation of the old min-

uet, gavotte, and saraband have, in a measure, been passed on to us in the music of the waltz, if not in its movements. Added to which it possesses its own romantic charm, and its inherent capacity for an infinite variety of moods and styles. But the waltz is not only a dance with a most engrossing musical history; it may even be said to embody in itself one of the fundamental elements of musical expression.

Of Bohemian origin, and popularised by the Germans, it gains its name from the German word "walzen"—to revolve, spin, or roll. Its first mention

in England was at the commencement of last century, when what ultimately became the German Empire comprised more than 30 sovereign states, to which an Englishman went to reside for five years. Appropriately enough his name was Robinson, and in his letters home to his brother Thomas he describes "waltzing as a form of dancing unlike anything you ever saw."

Mr. Robinson's impressions in 1805 are worthy of quotation—he goes on to say: "A fair lady may repose her head on the bosom of her partner, particularly when they embrace so closely

as to revive the idea of Plato's primitive man. Dancing makes them giddy, and a couple sometimes fall; in that case the gallant male gets undermost and receives his partner."

A century ago, Chopin, who wanted to play in Vienna, mourned the fact that "the Viennese have finished with the serious; everything is pushed into the background by Lanner and Strauss (the elder) and their waltzes." The eroticism that was the basis of the recent jazz and dancing craze was the central force of the old waltz, as many a moralist testified, and as many a self-appointed censor maintained.

The waltz-writers of those days, like their jazz descendants, had to be perpetually producing something new; a dance band would have had short shrift from its followers unless its conductor-composer gave them a fresh repertory every week. The waltz attracted some of the world's greatest composers and what Weber and Chopin did for it in transferring it from the ballroom to the concert platform was little short of marvellous. From the Teutons we have had much music of varied and beautiful character. But the annals of music know no more alluring thing than a good waltz well played by a good orchestra. They are a source of gaiety and cheerfulness for the old as well as for the young, for do not our grandparents even now love what they call "a dreamy waltz"?

On Saturday evening, from 2YA, listeners will hear some of the most popular dance melodies of bygone years, including some evergreen waltzes from the pens of the waltz kings. It will be a programme for young and old, and no doubt many hundreds of listeners will thank those responsible for the programme for drawing back the curtain of memory on scenes long forgotten, or only dimly remembered—days of delight, and nights of enduring happiness.

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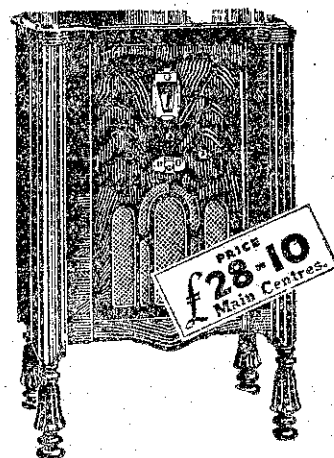
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