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Oscar Wilde
Scrapbook

Vol. 3

"Osrac the Self-sufficient." The Hermes Press.
7s. 6d.

Possibly the recent revival of "Lady Windermere's Fan" at a London theatre gave Mr. J. M. Stuart-Young the idea that the time had come when the public would welcome a memoir of Oscar Wilde's life and character. In this we differ from Mr. Young, considering that we have only recently had "De Profundis." We think the publication of anything relating to the dead playwright's private life premature. The revival of his plays is one thing, the printing of a memoir, which makes the astounding statement that Wilde "was more a victim than a culprit," is another. The memoir is one long excuse for Wilde's immorality, and shows that the author, who tells us that he was one of the few privileged to call Wilde "Heart's-brother," was willing to condone, or, at any rate, shut his eyes to, any of the playwright's sins on account of his genius. He says:—"The aberration which brought his splendid life to ruins, and which had ruled him since his childhood, was known only to the favoured few; and it is one of my fondest recollections that I appreciated the work and the personality of Oscar in his hey-day." He relates with a strange gusto a dinner he had with Wilde at the Savoy:—"I remember that he was wearing a priceless fur-lined overcoat, and a blue tie, with a diamond pin. He was tall and rather bloated looking, his face clean shaven, and his fingers glittering with fine rings . . . then Oscar accompanied me to the railway station. The journey to Manchester was a remarkably short one, for my mind was absolutely be-mused by the glamour of his presence."

The description which Mr. Young gives of his visit to Wilde in the Rue des Beaux Arts after his imprisonment will touch a sympathetic chord in the hearts of most of his readers, and one cannot help a feeling of admiration for his constancy to his disgraced friend. Constance Wilde, in one of her letters, says of Wilde's imprisonment: "He has been greatly depressed in prison, and looks back upon the last three years as a hideous dream." But the poet's own description of his sufferings—told in the "Ballad of Reading Gaol"—is infinitely more touching:—

"We tore the tarry ropes to shreds
With blunt and bleeding nails;
We rubbed the doors and scrubbed the floors,
And cleaned the shining rails;
And, rank by rank, we soaped the plank,
And clattered with the pails."

One can quite understand that a man of Wilde's intellect and luxurious habits of life would feel with bitter poignancy the performance of such menial duties. At the conclusion of his memoir Mr. Young quotes Wilde's "Requiescat," and, after claiming for him immortality, states that no man who could write such verses could be wholly bad. No one will dispute that statement, but we think the author would have served his late friend's interests better by allowing Wilde's works to be revived and his delinquencies forgotten by degrees. There is, however, one amusing feature in the book, and that is the stilted and unnatural style in which it is written.

Here is one instance: "Human nature is builded upon two potential instincts—the predilection for the preservation of the ego, and the appetency for the propagation of the race." After such a sentence as that we are not surprised at the language of the poem "Osrac," which is a versified description of Wilde's life-long "aberration of mind." The book is entitled "Osrac, the Self-sufficient," and it seems to us that it has been written by Stuart-Young the self-sufficient. There are three photographs of both Wilde and Young. The book is elaborately got up by the Hermes Press, and the best thing about it, perhaps, is the binding.

The Speaker,

Oct. 14.
1905

NOT VERY GOOD.

OSRAC, THE SELF-SUFFICIENT. By J. M. Stuart-Young. The Hermes Press. 7s. 6d. net.

MR. YOUNG was a friend of Oscar Wilde's, and he has made a book, part verse and part prose, out of that fact. When Mr. Young first met Oscar Wilde he was "budding fifteen" and worshipped Mr. le Gallienne, Mr. Stephen Phillips, and other young poets. The verse of Oscar Wilde aroused something within him "which savoured more of astheny than robustness." It also gave him a taste for curious words, for in his own verse we read:

"Frangible is life and here no roses blow;
Creatures but sigh and sigger out their day."

Also:

"What gain results from grim and gnarring age?"

Very little, apparently, in Mr. Young's case, or he would not have written, still less published, most of this book. He seems to have taken everything that Oscar Wilde said to him quite seriously, and he takes it seriously still. Wilde, for him, is "a poet of the first water, exuberant, fantastic, tuneful," and he tries himself to be exuberant and fantastic.

"Somnambulated by the pine's low voice
He saw three skylarks, speeding from the blue,
With expectative throb of tested choice."

This kind of verse has gone out of fashion, and our minor poets attempt now to surprise with a different kind of epithet. (See the works of Mr. Stephen Phillips *passim*.) Mr. Young also practises a kind of simplicity which he has caught from Mr. le Gallienne:

"Roses and lilies!
How still is
My heart. It reposes
On lilies and roses."

It reminds one of

"London is the missus
Of this Narcissus."

To say nothing of:

"Mendoza's Louisa, Louisa Mendoza."

And yet Mr. Young is tired of the other poets. "Arthur Symons becomes sickly sensuous. Yates is shadowy and intangible. Swinbourne (*sic*) is our greatest living poet, but his music is often thin. Edmund Gosse has ceased to soar." In fact, "England is developing into the home of the middle-class," in whose parlours this book is not likely to be found in company with the Family Bible and a case of stuffed birds. Mr. Young probably has the middle-class rather too much on the brain. He is too anxious not to be taken for a member of it. Hence his epithets and not too melodious tears. But he must be careful. He tells us how he once dined with Wilde, who wore "a priceless fur-lined overcoat and a blue tie with a diamond pin." If he writes much in this style the middle class will claim him for its own.

FRIDAY, OCT. 6, 1905.

OSRAC, THE SELF-SUFFICIENT, and other Poems. With a Memoir of the late Oscar Wilde. By J. M. STUART-YOUNG. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$, 120 pp. The Hermes Press. 7s. 6d. n.

[Adorned with photographs of the author at different periods of his life.]

Academy. Aug. 18. 1906

'he Man Who Rose Again. By JOSEPH HOCKING. (Hodder & Stoughton, 8s. 6d.)

ONE of Oscar Wilde's delightful fairy tales ends thus :

"I am rather afraid I have annoyed him," answered the Linnet.
"The fact is, that I told him a story with a moral."

"Ah! That is always a very dangerous thing to do," said the Duck.

It is perhaps a little unfair to begin a review of a book by Mr. Joseph Hocking with a quotation from a story by Mr. Oscar Wilde; but the moral of the former is so very obvious that it called to mind the offended water-rat, who said that, had he known beforehand that there was a moral, he should certainly have said "Pooh!" Mr. Hocking does everything else as well, and, however, we know from the beginning that the cynical young man with a brilliant Parliamentary career, who is given to secret drinking will

Glasgow Herald,

"Osrac the Self-Sufficient, and Other Poems."

By J. M. Stuart-Young. 7s 6d net. (London: The Hermes Press.)

Three portraits of the author accompany this strange production, and although the volume consists largely of personal impressions of the late Oscar Wilde, the portraits are so little necessary that we should judge the author himself to be by no means lacking in self-sufficiency or at least self-complacency. The memoir which introduces the book is merely a record of scraps of conversation, chiefly literary, marked by all Wilde's biting wit, with quotations from letters—curious letters, too, as coming from a man to a lad of fifteen. We need not quote either, or any of the strange poems in which Mr Young essays to trace the growth or degeneration of the poet, and to tell how he sank more and more under the dominion of the flesh, while "day by day, and year by year, his constant aim was—art!"

It is a fine bit of verse as verse, but its moral law is all topsy-turvy, a reversal of ordinary law being apparently a necessary condition of the faithful following of art. The miscellaneous poems which follow reveal artistic quality and individuality, and are not without true poetic insight. Those entitled "Desire," "The Aftermath," "Satiety," and "A Misty Evening" are far above commonplace, and there is something altogether admirable in the lawless defiance of the Aftermath.

The child is mine.

Not all the turbulence of the poignant past,
Not all the midnight secrets that o'ercast
His little soul's clear purity can charm
The fact away. Come death, come storm or calm,
The child is mine.

The volume all in all is a curious one. We can quite sympathise with the author's sorrow over his "dead friend," we can understand his worship of the artist, but we cannot get over the belief that the general tone of the book bears witness to a moral "twist" somewhere.

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Nov. 18, 1905

Publishers' Circular

From the **Hermes Press**.—‘Osrac, the Self-Sufficient,’ by J. M. Stuart-Young. This volume of poems and reminiscences is a tribute to the memory of Oscar Wilde. While mature neither in conception nor execution, the verses have the true ring about them; occasionally they reach a height of

indisputable eloquence, and here and there is a stanza of real beauty and feeling. Mr. Stuart-Young became acquainted with the poet a short time before the catastrophe which ended so abruptly that brilliant and tragic career; though the recollections here set forth are but slight, they are nevertheless interesting and of some value. One closes the volume with sad reflections: the pity and tragedy of it all seem emphasised by the record of this friend, who instead of reproach has kind words of sympathy to offer, and who in the place of recrimination brings regret.

South

It is generally supposed that Mr. Arthur Balfour coined the phrase, an "Unfortunate entanglement." It is, however, taken from the play, "The Importance of Being Earnest":—

CECILY [*thoughtfully and sadly*]: Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it.

GWENDOLINE: Do you allude to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement?"

Free Lance.

26 May 1906

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CANTUAR.—“Lady Windermere’s Fan” and “The Importance of Being Earnest” can be obtained in acting editions from Saml. French, 1s. 6d. each, but Messrs. Methuen are going to publish a collected edition of Wilde’s works, of which full particulars will be given later in the “Diary.”

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Reynolds. 12 Nov. 1905

IS OSCAR WILDE DEAD?

AN EXTRAORDINARY RUMOUR.

("REYNOLDS'S" SPECIAL.)

In certain literary circles in the United States the opinion is being freely expressed that Mr. Oscar Wilde is still alive. It is even suggested that articles from his pen are still appearing over unfamiliar signatures. That these articles are not in all respects up to the high level of sparkling epigram associated with the brilliancy of Mr. Wilde's genius is accounted for by the depressing experiences through which he passed.

Now, we have no hesitation in characterizing this story as baseless. We have perfect confidence in the genuineness of the narratives that *Reynolds's Newspaper* has published on the subject of Mr. Wilde's sad death. The event is vouched for by several reliable persons, one of whom, M. La Jeunesse, definitely asserts that he followed the remains to the grave.

It is only in America that our narrative would be doubted for a moment. In London and in Paris the decease of the famous writer is recognised as a fact established upon irrefutable evidence.

BOYCOTTING A NAME.

Whilst we are referring to Mr. Wilde, it is just as well to enter a protest against a new method of treating his work. A play recently produced in London has been advertised upon the hoardings as "By the Author of 'Lady Windermere's Fan.'" To us this seems an insinuation that the dramatist's name must not be mentioned in polite circles. Here and there, indeed, we are in the habit of referring to a writer by the title of the work by which he or she achieved fame. Thus we correctly speak of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman." This custom does not apply to Mr. Wilde. His name was always much more widely known than that of anything he wrote.

In this connection, we are able to quote from an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The great German daily paper writes as follows:—

"The only paper that all the time had the honesty to print in black and white the hated name was *Reynolds's Newspaper*. It has a right now to scoff at its opponents. Other journals were too Christian to imitate Christ. They gratified themselves, and it seems that they gratified their readers with ridiculous periphrases and beatings about the bush, using such terms as 'the poet of Salomé' for the intellectually-gifted author who came to grief so pitifully."

We are glad to find that one journal of high standing appreciates our desire to show fair treatment to a fallen man's reputation.

Nov. 19. 1905

OSCAR WILDE.

SIR,—Referring to the article, "Is Oscar Wilde Dead?" in to-day's issue of your excellent paper, I have frequently had occasion to see O. W. in Paris after his release from prison. He, M. La Jeunesse, and other *littérateurs*, congregated nightly at the Calisaya, on the Boulevard des Italiens. Their conversation was as good as a University lecture on contemporary international literature. I sat at the next table an attentive listener.

After O. W.'s death, the waiter informed me that he died in abject poverty, and owed him 40f., mostly money lent. He had written to Lord A. D., who had come to Paris to bury his friend, that he could not afford to lose the money, being poor and having a wife and children to provide for. Lord A. D. at once sent him the money, as he seems to have paid other small outstanding debts of O. W.'s.—Your obedient servant.

London, November 12, 1905.

H. A.

Dec. 3. 1905.

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Amateurs of coincidence are offered a curious specimen for their collections. "May I draw your attention," writes Mr. Stuart to the *Daily News*, from Oxford, "to the following literary coincidence, which is surely but another instance of the truth that 'great minds think alike'?" :—

Oscar Wilde's "Ballad of
Reading Goal," Page 12.

In the heart of every man terror was lying still.

Oscar Wilde's "Picture of
Dorian Gray," Chap. vi.

Whenever a man does a thoroughly stupid thing, it is always from the noblest motives.

"Made in His Image,"
Chap. i.

In the heart of nearly every one^e in London terror was lying still.

"Made in His Image,"
Chap. iv.

When a man has done a thoroughly stupid thing . . . he always has done it from the highest and most unselfish motives.

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Star.

27 Nov. 1905

MADE IN HIS LANGUAGE.

Amateurs of coincidence are offered a curious specimen for their collections. "May I draw your attention," writes Mr. Stuart Mason from Oxford to the "Daily News," "to the following literary coincidence, which is surely but another instance of the truth that 'great minds think alike'?" :—

Ballad of Reading Gaol,
page 12.

In the heart of every
man terror was lying
still.

Picture of Dorian Gray,
chap. VI.

Whenever a man does a
thoroughly stupid thing,
it is always from the
noblest motives.

Made in His Image,
chap. I.

In the heart of nearly
every one in London
terror was lying still.

Made in His Image,
chap. IV.

When a man has done a
thoroughly stupid thing
... he always has done
it from the highest and
most unselfish motives.

For our part, says the "Daily News," we
should put the coincidence of un-
conscious memory.

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MARCH 22 1905

MARCH 22, 1905.

DAILY CHRONICLE

GRANT DUFF STORIES.

NOTES FROM A DIARY, 1896 to January 23, 1901, by
the Right Hon. Sir Mountstuart E. Grant Duff, G.C.S.I.,
F.R.S., in two volumes. London, John Murray, 18s.

Published To-day.

We spoke of Mr. Raleigh of All Souls, and he (Mr. St. Loe Strachey) mentioned a very quick reply of his. There had been talk at Magdalen about throwing a notorious person into the river. Some one protested against such a proceeding as quite illegal. "Yes," said Mr. Raleigh, "distinctly illegal under the Rivers Pollution Act."

With that we must say farewell—though, indeed, the cry rises, "Will ye no come back again?"—to the closing volumes of a modern journal Jissen Women's Brivecity Library and a style that suggest Evelyn's.

ROYALTY THEATRE—"AN IDEAL HUSBAND."

It is a true saying that he who dies pays all debts. On this showing the memory of the late Oscar Wilde stands quits with the world. If he sinned he suffered, and, now that he has passed into oblivion, that same world that flattered him in his prosperity and condemned him for his folly seems to have risen to the idea that some at least of his works deserve a better fate than befel the man himself. Some such consideration probably accounts for the recent revival upon the stage of some of his dramas. This week one of them is being performed at the Royalty Theatre. It is entitled "An Ideal Husband." So far as its literary and dramatic qualities are concerned, it might have been well had it been allowed to remain in obscurity. It compares indifferently with brilliant efforts like "Lady Windermere's Fan," and "A Woman of No Importance," and consequently suffers by the comparison. Yet it possesses much of the author's individuality both in dialogue and construction, although in both respects, and especially in the latter, there are weaknesses which are altogether too palpable. Neither is the story upon which the drama is founded strikingly original. The character which provides the title is a young and rising politician who has secured the financial means necessary to the pursuit of his career by the betrayal of a Cabinet secret. But for this false step made early in life he is otherwise a man of integrity and unblemished morality. In the interval he has married a lady of such a rigidly ethical standard that—as the wicked woman of the play puts it—the very severity of her handwriting seems to carry with it the Ten Commandments in every stroke of the pen, and the whole moral law on every page of note-paper. In her eyes her husband is the perfect man, and she naturally suffers a great shock when the wicked woman aforesaid takes a fiendish delight in informing her of his early and only lapse from conventional honesty. In the end the machinations of the wicked woman are defeated, and the rest of the play is devoted to teaching the husband the sin of ambition and the wife that ultra-high idealism is none the worse of being tempered with a little judicious common sense. As has been indicated, the dialogue is in parts characteristically brilliant. But it has the defect of all the author's stage work—it is too obviously artificial. He makes his characters constantly talk epigrams. To listen to it for a couple of hours is indeed a mental exhilaration. But to ask us to believe that in any class of society conversation is always carried on in the language of paradox, repartee, or wit and humour is to ask us to accept too much. It is clever writing all the same, and to follow it and grasp it makes an enlivening and a stimulating evening's entertainment. The play is admirably acted. Mr Edward O'Neill in the title-part, and Miss Madge M'Intosh as the wife, give distinction to their respective characters. They have several very spirited scenes, and they carry them through with appropriate intensity. Miss R. Mayne Young in the ungracious part of the adventuress fills an important part very satisfactorily; and other parts are also very ably sustained by Misses Eugenie and Janet Legros, Eve Erskine, and Moira Travers; Messrs H. Athole Forde and Herbert Dauscy. The play was well received by a good house.

TABLE TALK.

Amateurs of coincidence are offered a curious specimen for their collections. "May I draw your attention," writes Mr. Stuart Mason, from Oxford, "to the following literary coincidence, which is surely but another instance of the truth that 'great minds think alike'?"

Ballad of Reading Gaol,
page 12.

In the heart of every
man terror was lying still.

Picture of Dorian Gray,
chap. VI.

Whenever a man does a
thoroughly stupid thing, it
is always from the noblest
motives.

"The quotations from *Made in His Image* will be found," adds Mr. Mason, "in 'The Daily Mail' for November 17 and 22 respectively."

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For our part, we should put it down as a case of unconscious memory. There is such a thing; and it is hard to suppose that it could be anything else.

*Made in His Image,*  
chap. I.

In the heart of nearly  
every one in London terror  
was lying still.

*Made in His Image,*  
chap. IV.

When a man has done a  
thoroughly stupid thing  
. . . he always has done  
it from the highest and  
most unselfish motives.

## DAILY NEWS,

NOVEMBER 27, 1905.

By a sufficiently strange sub-coincidence, the same post brings us a letter from another Mr. Mason, in Reading, drawing attention to another literary coincidence. He says: "I wonder whether anyone else has discovered that Rudyard Kipling appears to be indebted to Ralph Waldo Emerson for one of the best lines in his 'Recessional'? The resemblance is, at any rate, very remarkable. Kipling writes:

Beneath whose awful hand we hold  
Dominion over palm and pine.

"The following is a couplet from Emerson's 'Wood Notes':

And grant to dwellers with the pine  
Dominion o'er the palm and vine."

~~~~~  
The comment we made on the preceding case seems to us to be equally proper here. It is an interesting example of unconscious plagiarism.

DECEMBER 11, 1905.

NEW OPERA BY RICHARD STRAUSS.—A Renter telegram of yesterday's date from Dresden says:—Richard Strauss's opera *Salome*, founded on Oscar Wilde's drama of that name, was produced at the Royal Opera last night. Its production in Vienna was prohibited by the censor. The opera, which has no overture and is in one act, scored an instantaneous and unequalled success. The composer, who conducted, was called before the curtain 40 times. The performance was in every respect a memorable one, Frau Wittich, who played "Salome," and Herren Perron and Burrian being especially brilliant.

DAILY CHRONICLE.

THE NEW MUSIC.

Tremendous Success of Herr Strauss's *Salome*.

TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

[From Our Correspondent.]

BERLIN, Sunday. Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera, "*Salome*," was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the élite of the artistic society, not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

The success of the performance was unequalled. Long after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration." Another critic exclaims: "Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unequalled success be repeated or be maintained?" I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three redundant passages, Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted a second-rate librettist to work for him as Gounod or Verdi did, nor has he written his own text, like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed.

Secondly, he has given the voices an entirely secondary part; the orchestra is everything. As a matter of fact, through the greater part of the opera the singers may or may not be singing, for all the audience knows, Strauss, therefore, is justified in calling his work a musical drama. Everyone seems united in marvelling at the wonderful orchestration, and in expressing the conviction that the highest attainable in this direction has been reached. Strauss has given the orchestra something which only perfect musicians, perfectly trained and conducted, could master, and so varied is the score, so full of colour, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera houses to reproduce this work as it ought to be produced.

For this reason, if for no other, the success of the opera is doubtful. There are, besides, other peculiarities which will hinder its success. Only here and there can singers be found able to master the enormous difficulties of the music entrusted to them. One of the most difficult tasks known to operatic singers is the mastery of the dreaded third act of "*Tristan and Isolde*." But the requirements of Wagner's wonderful work are nothing compared with those demanded by Strauss in "*Salome*."

Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated person can carry away with them. "*Salome*" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs. Every person has his or her motif; every passion has its motif; the result is an exasperating tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking, Is this sultry story of Oriental passion, with its taint of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is "*Dame Musica*" not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to "*Salome*." Frau Wittich sang the title-role with marvellous power and certainty, Herr Burrian was a magnificent Herod, Herr Perron as the Baptist was extremely effective, but all three artists gave the impression they were performing a thoroughly thoughtless task, and that their hearts were not in their work.

Daily Express.

Richard Strauss' new opera, "*Salome*," founded on Oscar Wilde's drama, the production of which was prohibited in Vienna by the censor, scored a sensational and unequalled success when produced at the Royal Opera, Dresden, on Saturday night.

NEW OPERA BY STRAUSS.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

BERLIN, Dec. 10. "*Salome*," a new musical drama in one act, by Richard Strauss, was produced at the Royal Opera House, at Dresden, last night, in the presence of an audience which included dramatic critics from all parts of Germany. The story is taken from Oscar Wilde's play, and the subject is treated by the composer with all the melodic skill and resource of orchestration of which he is such a master. Principals, chorus, and orchestra alike won praise for their splendid rendering of the score, whilst the composer himself received a perfect ovation when he appeared before the curtain.

Daily Telegraph

STRAUSS'S NEW OPERA.

From Our Own Correspondent.

BERLIN, Sunday. A new one-act opera, by Richard Strauss, entitled "*Salome*," was performed for the first time last night at the Dresden Opera House. The libretto is Oscar Wilde's drama of the same name. The house was crowded with musical and dramatic celebrities from all parts of Germany, as the première had been anticipated with much interest. At the conclusion of the opera, Herr Strauss was repeatedly called before the curtain. The audience agreed that he had written a wonderful composition, with marvellous skill and knowledge, and that he had shown his perfect mastery of orchestral music. Opinion, however, is divided regarding the merits of the opera itself. The music for the voices is probably the most difficult ever written, and the roughly to give effect to the score 120 musicians are required in the orchestra. There are probably only half-a-dozen opera houses in Europe which could adequately produce "*Salome*." About the new opera there is nothing popular, no airs, no melody, and the singers have only declamatory or recitative parts, which are almost wholly drowned by the orchestra. It is supposed that Strauss has largely drawn his inspiration from "*Tristan and Isolde*."

morning Post

"SALOME" IN DRESDEN.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

BERLIN, Dec. 10. Richard Strauss's "*Salome*" was produced at the Court Theatre in Dresden last night, and was accorded an enthusiastic reception by an audience drawn from all parts of the Empire, and indeed of Europe. The verdict of the critics, as pronounced in this morning's journals, is that the new work, when compared with "*Feuersnot*," marks an important advance in the powers of the composer, but that it is never likely to achieve popularity, owing to the immense orchestral apparatus required for its production.

Strauss himself describes "*Salome*" as "a one-act drama after Oscar Wilde's play." The critics, however, prefer to style it "a dramatic symphony with song," and they add that while word and tone accord in accent, yet the vocal parts of the composition are quite overpowered by the orchestration. The instrumental effects are magnificent, but the composer, it is argued, has allowed too little scope to the human voice. The various figures in the drama, however, are well characterized, and *Salome*, Herod, Herodias, Narraboth, and Jokanaan are each invested with their own musical individuality. The production was in every respect excellent. The orchestra was directed by Herr von Schuch, to whom the German critics unite in paying homage.

Evening News.

A "TERRIBLE OPERA."

Remarkable Impression Created by Richard Strauss's "*Salome*."

"*Salome*," the latest opera, by Richard Strauss, is an extraordinary, almost an awful, work, says Mr. Gilbert Burgess, the special Dresden correspondent of the Sunday "Observer." Never has music been employed as a means of expression in such a savage, relentless fashion. Animalism is the keynote of this terrible opera.

The story is a German prose translation by Hedwig Lachmann of Oscar Wilde's play of the same name. The curtain rises upon the banquet hall of Herod. One of the soldiers, Narraboth, is in love with *Salome*, the daughter of Herod. In the well-drawn, the Hebrew prophet, is held captive, and *Salome* enters, determined to see him. Narraboth reluctantly

MORNING POST.

SATURDAY.

SEPTEMBER 23, 1905.

MR. ROBERT ARTHUR'S LONDON THEATRES. CORONET THEATRE.—Tel. 1,273 Kensington.—NICELY, at 8 MATINEE TO-DAY, at 2.30, the successful Comedy, LA POUPÉE. Next Week, Special Revival of THE IDEAL HUSBAND, by the Author of "Lady Windermere's Fan."

MONDAY.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1905.

The Ideal Husband" has not been done much (save matrons) since its production at the Haymarket in 1881. The Coronet cast is, for the suburbs, extremely good, including Mr. Edward O'Neill, Mr. Herbert Dansey, and Miss Granville. There will be a matinee on Saturday.

TUESDAY,

SEPTEMBER 26, 1905.

DAILY TELEGRAPH.

CORONET THEATRE.

"An Ideal Husband," if not the most brilliant or the most dramatic of the plays of Oscar Wilde, is nevertheless a comedy of much wit and distinction. The thanks of playgoers are due to Mr. Robert Arthur for his enterprise in presenting the piece at the Coronet Theatre this week. "An Ideal Husband" is old enough to be new, while its wit is in no danger of being out of date for many a year. In fact, the play, as interpreted by the excellent company at the Coronet, is one of the most entertaining now to be seen in London. There is no need to recount the details of the plot, which is, indeed, not the strongest part of the play. It is enough to say at the story of the wife who conceives her far from useless husband to be a saint proved once again at night its power to hold the profound attention of an audience. Some of the scenes between the erring husband and the blackmailing mistress savour, it must be confessed, of rather merely melodrama, but the incidents in which the life's belief in her husband contrasts with the man's knowledge of his own baseness reach a much higher level, and these, with the great scene in which she so bravely and so nobly defends his failure to be perfect, owed the audience very deeply, and were rewarded with unstinted applause. But the chief merit of the play is, of course, the paradoxical wit of the dialogue, which due justice was done by a company which included Mr. Herbert Dansey, Mr. Eric Maxon, Miss Abel Grey, and Miss Mayne Young. Mr. Edward Neill and Miss Granville gave admirable performances as "the ideal husband" and his wife, rising to a full height of their pathetic and passionate scenes.

STANDARD.

OTHER SUBURBAN THEATRES.

The late Mr. Oscar Wilde's witty society play, *The Ideal Husband*, was revived in tasteful fashion at the Coronet, with Mr. Edward O'Neill—able, experienced actor—as Sir Robert Chiltern and Miss Granville as Lady Chiltern.

Whitehall Review.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 30, 1905.

Ideal Husband was revived at the Coronet Theatre day night. For this new proof of his enterprise will thank Mr. Robert Arthur. The play, in the of the excellent company to whom it is entrusted, is edly one of the most entertaining now running in opolis. For one thing it sparkles with wit unlikely to be stale for many a long day to come. It happens of those performances in which, it must be come plot is not all in all. The wife, who thinks her to be nearly a saint, but is not, again proves its engage the careful attention of the audience. Mr. O'Neill and Miss Granville were in every way dable, and showed a keen appreciation of their art ideal husband" and his wife.

THE SKETCH.

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The Stage.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 28, 1905.

BROMLEY (Kew).—Lyons (Lessee and Manager, Mr. Arthur Clifton, Resident Manager, Mr. H. Strong).—This theatre opened for the season on Friday last, when Messrs. Edward O'Neill and Herbert Dansey's company appeared in *An Ideal Husband*, and played on that and the following night to crowded and appreciative audiences.

THE CORONET, W.

Monday witnessed a very interesting revival of Oscar Wilde's comedy, *An Ideal Husband*. This is the first time since its production at the Haymarket that the play has been seen in London, and a crowded audience on Monday, which included Sir Charles Wyndham, demonstrated in no half-hearted manner its marked appreciation of style, sparkling dialogue and distinction of style which the able efforts of the excellent company brought out so admirably. Although perhaps not one of the strongest of Mr. Wilde's works, the poorness of the plot and the rather absurd situation at the close of the third act being blonies which at once strike even the most casual critic, the piece gave, when it was originally produced, an excellent and very real picture of society, and the author's lines were more simple, direct, and less flippant perhaps than was the case in some of his other successes. Mr. Edward O'Neill gives a very fine impersonation of Sir Robert Chiltern, and shows himself in every way capable of portraying the despair and passion which alternately take possession of the unfortunate Under-Secretary. As the devoted wife, Miss Charlotte Granville devoted the audience very deeply, and her pathetic appeal at the close of the second act obtained on Monday the unstinted applause it deserved. Miss Elizabeth Meller is the typical adventuress, and Miss Isabel Grey scores with the many humorous sayings allotted to Lady Markby. A very dainty performance is that of Miss Kitty Gratian as Mabel Chiltern. She speaks her lines clearly and effectively. Mr. Herbert Dansey gives an unconventional and telling study of Viscount Goring, and is to be congratulated on his natural and unforced methods. Mr. George Bealby does well as the old Earl of Caversham, with the exception that his movements are a little juvenile as compared with those one would expect to be in keeping with his make-up; and Mr. Lionel Glenister, who plays the small part of Phipps, Lord Goring's servant, deserves praise for the manner in which he has rehearsed the company and performed the arduous duties of stage manager.

THE ERA.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1905.

12

LONDON & SUBURBAN THEATRES.

CORONET THEATRE.

On Monday, Sept. 25.

"THE IDEAL HUSBAND."

Messrs. Edward O'Neill and Herbert Dansey's company are appearing this week at the Coronet Theatre in *The Ideal Husband*, a drawing-room drama which is replete with a fidelity inspired by wit and witicism peculiar to the talented author of *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *A Woman of No Importance*. A clever central idea pervades the plot in the shape of an ambitious and successful politician's past misdeeds and the exorcising of this phantom of the past by a family friend. The imbroiglo arising from the one solitary record of a deed of shame falling into the hands of an unscrupulous adventurer, is cleverly concocted and wittily worked out. Several strong situations are more or less stiffified by a tornado of words, witty but unessential, and which divert the interest and attention from the main idea. The part of Sir Robert Chiltern is very strongly limned and cleverly and consistently worked out, and Mr. Edward O'Neill contributes a masterly sketch of character and gives due weight and emphasis to the fine speeches put into the mouth of this noteworthy celebrity. His passion and pain, and the intense qualities which ensue him to do his friends such a remarkably good turn, as Lady Chiltern, "my lady virtue," whose ideals are so rudely shattered, and whose life's happiness stands in a fair way to be wrecked, till common-sense practically comes to her rescue. Miss Charlotte Granville carries conviction in her powerful assumption of emotional stress and tenderness. She ably depicts the mental war of high principle and womanly love and charity. Miss Isabel Grey makes her mark as the garrulous Lady Markby, and scores all along the line with her inconsequent chatter and worldly wisdom. Mr. George Bealby, as the Earl of Caversham, does well; Miss Kitty Gratian is highly effective as Mabel Chiltern; and Mr. Lionel Glenister is to be commended for his embodiment of Phipps.

MORNING POST.

TUESDAY,

SEPTEMBER 26, 1905.

LAST NIGHT'S THEATRES.

CORONET.

A revival of great interest is taking place this week at the Coronet Theatre, where "*The Ideal Husband*" is being played for the first time in London since its production at the Haymarket some ten years ago. In this play the author threw off most of the mannerisms and paradoxes which marred, if they advertised, his earlier work, and told a simple story of modern life dramatically and straightforwardly. "The Ideal Husband" may not go down to posterity as a great drama, as it has many obvious faults, notably the situation in the third act, where much is made of a letter from Lady Chiltern to Lord Goring, Sir Robert Chiltern's greatest friend, which is capable of a simple explanation that ought to have terminated the play, but it is at any rate one of the best exhibitions of modern life and manners that have been produced in this generation. As we watch its progress the footlights and the sense of the theatre seem to vanish, and we appear to be witnessing real scenes in real rooms with the men and women of to-day as the actors. At least this is so in the more dramatic scenes. In the lighter ones there are still left some of the flippancies, always clever and sometimes borrowed, in which the author delighted, but they are never obtrusive or out of place. The play is excellently produced and the acting all round did credit to the work. Mr. Edward O'Neill deserves especial praise for his remarkably fine impersonation of Sir Robert Chiltern. He held the mirror up to nature with a fidelity inspired no doubt by the simple directness and sanity of the author's lines, but he was equal to every occasion, and his acting in the big scene in the third act, in which he was most ably seconded by Miss Charlotte Granville as Lady Chiltern, was received, as it deserved to be, with unbounded enthusiasm. Smaller parts were well filled by Miss Kitty Gratian, who played Mabel Chiltern, and by Mr. George Bealby, who was the Earl of Caversham. A clever and unconventional study of Viscount Goring was given by Mr. Herbert Dansey. The whole performance was a brilliant success and the tour which started last night should be a prosperous one.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1905.

THE ERA.

TOURING COMPANIES.

EDWARD O'NEILL and HERBERT DANSEY'S Coy.

IN

THE IDEAL HUSBAND,

BY

OSCAR WILDE.

Revival Production at the Coronet Theatre, Sept. 25.

The Morning Post says:—

A revival of great interest. It is one of the best exhibitions of modern life and manners that have been produced in this generation. As we watch its progress, the footlights and the sense of the theatre seem to vanish, and we appear to be witnessing real scenes in real rooms with the men and women of to-day as the actors. Mr. Edward O'Neill deserves especial praise for his remarkably fine impersonation of Sir Robert Chiltern. He held the mirror up to nature with a fidelity inspired no doubt by the simple directness and sanity of the author's lines, but he was equal to every occasion, and his acting in the big scene in the third act, in which he was most ably seconded by Miss Charlotte Granville as Lady Chiltern, was received, as it deserved to be, with unbounded enthusiasm. A clever and unconventional study of Viscount Goring was given by Mr. Herbert Dansey. The whole performance was a brilliant success, and the tour which started last night should be a prosperous one.

The Daily Telegraph says:—

In fact, the play, as interpreted by the excellent company at the Coronet, is one of the most entertaining now to be seen in London. Mr. Edward O'Neill and Miss Granville gave admirable performances as "the ideal husband" and his wife, rising to the full height of their pathetic and passionate scenes.

ALEXANDRA THEATRE, STOKE NEWINGTON, THIS WEEK.

October 23rd and November 6th Vacant.

14

THEATRICAL GOSSIP.

A very interesting revival of Oscar Wilde's *The Ideal Husband* took place at the Coronet Theatre on Monday, by Messrs. Edward O'Neill and Herbert Dansey's company. The piece was most enthusiastically received by a large audience. Mr. Edward O'Neill's Sir Robert Chiltern was a revelation, and will long be remembered by those who saw it. A tour is booked, and should prove highly successful.

ON THE ROAD, OCTOBER 2.

IDEAL HUSBAND.—Stoke Newington.

DECEMBER 11, 1905.

NEW OPERA BY RICHARD STRAUSS.—A Reuter telegram of yesterday's date from Dresden says:—Richard Strauss's opera, *Salome*, founded on Oscar Wilde's drama of that name, was produced at the Royal Opera last night. Its production in Vienna was prohibited by the censor. The opera, which has no overture and is in one act, scored an instantaneous and unequalled success. The composer, who conducted, was called before the curtain 40 times. The performance was in every respect a memorable one. Frau Wittich, who played "Salome," and Herren Perron and Burrian being especially brilliant.

DAILY CHRONICLE.

THE NEW MUSIC.

Tremendous Success of Herr Strauss's *Salome*.

TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

[From Our Correspondent.]
BERLIN, Sunday.
Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera, "Salome," was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the élite of the artistic society, not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

The success of the performance was unequalled. Long after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration." Another critic exclaims: "Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unqualified success be repeated or be maintained?" I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three tedious passages, Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted a second-rate librettist to work for him as Gounod or Verdi did, nor has he written his own text, like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed.

Secondly, he has given the voices an entirely secondary part; the orchestra is everything. As a matter of fact, through the greater part of the opera the singers may or may not be singing, for all the audience knows. Strauss, therefore, is justified in calling his work a musical drama. Everyone seems united in marvelling at the wonderful orchestration, and in expressing the conviction that the highest attainable in this direction has been reached.

Strauss has given the orchestra something which only perfect musicians, perfectly trained and conducted, could master, and so varied is the score, so full of colour, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera houses to reproduce this work as it ought to be produced.

For this reason, if for no other, the success of the opera is doubtful. There are, besides, other peculiarities which will hinder its success. Only here and there can singers be found able to master the enormous difficulties of the music entrusted to them. One of the most difficult tasks known to operatic singers is the mastery of the dreaded third act of "Tristan and Isolde." But the requirements of Wagner's wonderful work are nothing compared with those demanded by Strauss in "Salome."

Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated people can carry away with them. "Salome" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs. Every person has his or her motif; every passion has its motif, the result is an exasperating tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking, Is this sultry story of Oriental passion, with its milieu of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is "Dame Musica" not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to "Salome"? Frau Wittich sang the title rôle with marvellous power and certainty. Herr Burrian was a magnificent Herod. Herr Perron as the Baptist was extremely effective, but all three artists gave the impression they were performing a thoroughly thankless task, and that their hearts were not in their work.

In the history of opera, the difficulty of the whole being almost superhuman. The work lasts an hour and a half. Very striking is the duet between Salome and Jochanaan, and the elaborate orchestral interludes in Salome's dance. The audience included many musical celebrities from all parts of Europe. The applause lasted nearly 20 minutes. The performance was most brilliant, especially that of the orchestra, under Herr Schuch, which was beyond praise. Frau Wittich, Herr Burrian, and Herr Perron were very fine in the chief parts.

OPINION OF BERLIN CRITICS.

From Our Own Correspondent.
BERLIN, Sunday.
The production of "Salome" is described by the musical critics in the Berlin newspapers as a brilliant achievement.

The success of the work is undoubted, and the effect on the audience was such that, when the curtain fell at the close of the last scene, everybody sat perfectly still, as if entranced. When the applause did break out, it was tumultuous, and Herr Strauss and the conductor, Herr Schuch, were compelled to appear before the curtain upwards of 40 times.

The critics vie with each other in finding words descriptive of the beauty, of the force, of the originality, of the revolutionary character of the music, and the only fault they find is that the "master of orchestration" makes such enormous demands on the orchestra and the singers.

It is believed "Salome" will not soon become popular, as such an immense orchestra and such unusually fine voices are required for its proper production.

The story is a German prose translation by Hedwig Lachmann of Oscar Wilde's play of the same name. The curtain rises upon the banquet hall of Herod.

One of the soldiers, Narraboth, is in love with Salome, the daughter of Herod. In the well Jochanaan, the Hebrew prophet, is held captive, and Salome enters, demanding to see him. Narraboth reluctantly consents, and Jochanaan is temporarily released. Salome is fascinated by him, and asks him to kiss her with such a look that Narraboth in an agony of love kills himself with his sword. The story goes back to his prison.

Herod persuades Salome to dance him. She dances wildly; Herod is entranced, but is terrified when she asks for reward—the head of Jochanaan. The head is brought, and the curtain falls. Salome, fondling alone in the centre of the stage, Herod tells the soldiers to kill her. It is an old story, but not all the scene nor splendour of language redeem it from desperate morbidity. But Herr Strauss chose it with a high purpose, and worked a miracle with it. It is an almost incredible amount of work in "Salome," but there is a tiny little charm.

Standard

NEW OPERA BY STRAUSS.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

BERLIN, Dec. 10.
"Salome," a new musical drama in one act, by Richard Strauss, was produced at the Royal Opera House, at Dresden, last night, in the presence of an audience which included dramatic critics from all parts of Germany. The story is taken from Oscar Wilde's play, and the subject is treated by the composer with all the melodic skill and resource of orchestration of which he is such a master. Principals, chorus, and orchestra alike won praise for their splendid rendering of the score, whilst the composer himself received a perfect ovation when he appeared before the curtain.

Daily Telegraph

STRAUSS'S NEW OPERA.

From Our Own Correspondent.

BERLIN, Sunday.
A new one-act opera, by Richard Strauss, entitled "Salome," was performed for the first time last night at the Dresden Opera House. The libretto is Oscar Wilde's drama of the same name. The house was crowded with musical and dramatic celebrities from all parts of Germany, as the première had been anticipated with much interest. At the conclusion of the opera, Herr Strauss was repeatedly called before the curtain. The audience agreed that he had written a wonderful composition, with marvellous skill and knowledge, and that he had shown his perfect mastery of orchestral music. Opinion, however, is divided regarding the merits of the opera itself. The music for the voices is probably the most difficult ever written, and thoroughly to give effect to the score 120 musicians are required in the orchestra. There are probably only half-a-dozen opera houses in Europe which could adequately produce "Salome." About the new opera there is nothing popular, no airs, no melody, and the singers have only declamatory or recitative parts, which are almost wholly drowned by the orchestra. It is supposed that Strauss has largely drawn his inspiration from "Tristan and Isolde."

Morning Post

"SALOME" IN DRESDEN.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

BERLIN, Dec. 10.
Richard Strauss's "Salome" was produced at the Court Theatre in Dresden last night, and was accorded an enthusiastic reception by an audience drawn from all parts of the Empire, and indeed of Europe. The verdict of the critics, as pronounced in this morning's journals, is that the new work, when compared with "Feuersoth," marks an important advance in the powers of the composer, but that it is never likely to achieve popularity, owing to the immense orchestral apparatus required for its production.

Strauss himself describes "Salome" as "a one-act drama after Oscar Wilde's play." The critics, however, prefer to style it "a dramatic symphony with song," and they add that while word and tone accord in accent, yet the vocal parts of the composition are quite overpowered by the orchestration. The instrumental effects are magnificent, but the composer, it is argued, has allowed too little scope to the human voice. The various figures in the drama, however, are well characterised, and Salome, Herodias, Herodias, Narraboth, and Jochanaan are each invested with their own musical individuality. The production was in every respect excellent. The orchestra was directed by Herr von Schuch, to whom the German critics unite in paying homage.

The critics vie with each other in finding words descriptive of the beauty, of the force, of the originality, of the revolutionary character of the music, and the only fault they find is that the "master of orchestration" makes such enormous demands on the orchestra and the singers.

It is believed "Salome" will not soon become popular, as such an immense orchestra and such unusually fine voices are required for its proper production.

A "TERRIBLE OPERA."

Remarkable Impression Created by Richard Strauss's "Salome."

"Salome," the latest opera, by Richard Strauss, is an extraordinary, almost an awful, work, says Mr. Gilbert Burgess, the special Dresden correspondent of the Sunday "Observer." Never has music been employed as a means of expression in such a savage, relentless fashion. Animalism is the keynote of this terrible opera.

The story is a German prose translation by Hedwig Lachmann of Oscar Wilde's play of the same name. The curtain rises upon the banquet hall of Herod. One of the soldiers, Narraboth, is in love with Salome, the daughter of Herod. In the well Jochanaan, the Hebrew prophet, is held captive, and Salome enters, demanding to see him. Narraboth reluctantly consents, and Jochanaan is temporarily released. Salome is fascinated by him, and asks him to kiss her with such a look that Narraboth in an agony of love kills himself with his sword. The story goes back to his prison.

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MORNING POST.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1905.

MR. ROBERT ARTHUR'S LONDON THEATRES.
CORONET THEATRE.—Tel. 1,273 Kensington.—NIGHTLY, at 8. MATINEE TO-DAY, at 2.30. The successful Comic Opera, *LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN*, Next Week, *THE IDEAL HUSBAND*, by the Author of "Lady Windermere's Fan."

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1905.

"The Ideal Husband" has not been done much (save by amateurs) since its production at the Haymarket in 1895. The Coronet cast is, for the suburbs, extremely strong, including Mr. Edward O'Neill, Mr. Herbert Dansey, and Miss Granville. There will be a matinee on Saturday.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1905.

DAILY TELEGRAPH.

CORONET THEATRE.

"An Ideal Husband," if not the most brilliant or the most dramatic of the plays of Oscar Wilde, is nevertheless a comedy of much wit and distinction. The thanks of playgoers are due to Mr. Robert Arthur for his enterprise in presenting the piece at the Coronet Theatre this week. "An Ideal Husband" is old enough to be new, while its wit is in no danger of being out of date for many a year. In fact, the play, as interpreted by the excellent company at the Coronet, is one of the most entertaining now to be seen in London. There is no need to recount the details of the plot, which is, indeed, not the strongest part of the play. It is enough to say that the story of the wife who conceives her far from faultless husband to be a saint proved once again last night its power to hold the profound attention of an audience. Some of the scenes between the erring husband and the blackmailing adventuress savour, it must be confessed, of rather homely melodrama, but the incidents in which the wife's belief in her husband contrasts with the man's knowledge of his own baseness reach a much higher level, and these, with the great scene in which she discovers and he defends his failure to be perfect, moved the audience very deeply, and were rewarded with unstinted applause. But the chief merit of the play is, of course, the paradoxical wit of the dialogue, to which due justice was done by a company which included Mr. Herbert Dansey, Mr. Eric Maxon, Miss Isabel Grey, and Miss Mayne Young. Mr. Edward O'Neill and Miss Granville gave admirable performances as "the ideal husband" and his wife, rising to the full height of their pathetic and passionate scenes.

STANDARD.

OTHER SUBURBAN THEATRES.

The late Mr. Oscar Wilde's witty society play, "The Ideal Husband," was revived in tasteful fashion at the Coronet, with Mr. Edward O'Neill—an able, experienced actor—as Sir Robert Chiltern and Miss Granville as Lady Chiltern.

Whitehall Review,

SATURDAY, SEPT. 30, 1905.

The Ideal Husband was revived at the Coronet Theatre on Monday night. For this new proof of his enterprise playgoers will thank Mr. Robert Arthur. The play, in the hands of the excellent company to whom it is entrusted, is undoubtedly one of the most entertaining now running in the metropolis. For one thing it sparkles with wit unlikely to become stale for many a long day to come. It happens to be one of those performances in which, it must be confessed, the plot is not all in all. The wife, who thinks her husband to be nearly a saint, but is not, again proves its power to engage the careful attention of the audience. Mr. Edward O'Neill and Miss Granville were in every way commendable, and showed a keen appreciation of their art as the "ideal husband" and his wife.

THE SKETCH.

When will the unjust farce of disassociating the name of Oscar Wilde from the plays he wrote cease? "An Ideal Husband" is being played at the Coronet Theatre this week, and is announced as "by the author of 'Lady Windermere's Fan.'" Everybody who knows anything of the theatre is aware of the authorship of that play, so that the anonymity is no anonymity at all. The high esteem in which Wilde's name is held in Germany, to which reference has been made on more than one occasion on this page, should be sufficient to ensure the literary reputation of one of the most brilliant authors of his day against this unjust exhibition of what is popularly called "Stiggins feeling."

The Stage.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 28, 1905.

BROMLEY (Kent).—LYNCH (Lessee and Manager, Mr. Arthur Carlton; Resident Manager, Mr. H. Strong).—This theatre opened for the season on Friday last, when Messrs. Edward O'Neill and Herbert Dansey's company appeared in *An Ideal Husband*, and played on that and the following night to crowded and appreciative audiences.

THE CORONET, W.

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THE ERA.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1905.

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LONDON & SUBURBAN THEATRES.

CORONET THEATRE.

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October 23rd and November 6th Vacant.

14

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ON THE ROAD, OCTOBER 2.

IDEAL HUSBAND—Stoke Newington.

MORNING POST.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1905.

LAST NIGHT'S THEATRES.

CORONET.

A revival of great interest is taking place this week at the Coronet Theatre, where "The Ideal Husband" is being played for the first time in London since its production at the Haymarket some ten years ago. In this play the author threw off most of the mannerisms and paradoxes which marred, if they advertised, his earlier work, and told a simple story of modern life dramatically and straightforwardly. "The Ideal Husband" may not go down to posterity as a great drama, as it has many obvious faults, notably the situation in the third act, where much is made of a letter from Lady Chiltern to Lord Goring, Sir Robert Chiltern's greatest friend, which is capable of a simple explanation that ought to have terminated the play, but it is at any rate one of the best exhibitions of modern life and manners that have been produced in this generation. As we watch its progress the footlights and the sense of the theatre seem to vanish, and we appear to be witnessing real scenes in real rooms with the men and women of to-day as the actors. At least this is so in the more dramatic scenes. In the lighter ones there are still left some of the flippancies, always clever and sometimes borrowed, in which the author delighted, but they are never obtrusive or out of place. The play is excellently produced and the acting all round did credit to the work. Mr. Edward O'Neill deserves especial praise for his remarkably fine impersonation of Sir Robert Chiltern. He held the mirror up to nature with a fidelity inspired no doubt by the simple directness and sanity of the author's lines, but he was equal to every occasion, and his acting in the big scene in the third act, in which he was most ably seconded by Miss Charlotte Granville as Lady Chiltern, was received, as it deserved to be, with unbounded enthusiasm. Smaller parts were well filled by Miss Kitty Grattan, who played Mabel Chiltern, and by Mr. George Bealby, who was the Earl of Caversham. A clever and unconventional study of Viscount Goring was given by Mr. Herbert Dansey. The whole performance was a brilliant success and the tour which started last night should be a prosperous one.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1905.

THE ERA.

TOURING COMPANIES.

EDWARD O'NEILL and HERBERT DANSEY'S Coy.

IN

THE IDEAL HUSBAND,

BY OSCAR WILDE.

Revival Production at the Coronet Theatre, Sept. 25.

The Morning Post says:—
A revival of great interest. It is one of the best exhibitions of modern life and manners that have been produced in this generation. As we watch its progress, the footlights and the sense of the theatre seem to vanish, and we appear to be witnessing real scenes in real rooms with the men and women of to-day as the actors. Mr. Edward O'Neill reserves special praise for his remarkably fine impersonation of Sir Robert Chiltern. He held the mirror up to nature with a fidelity inspired no doubt by the simple directness and sanity of the author's lines, but he was equal to every occasion, and his acting in the big scene in the third act, in which he was most ably seconded by Miss Charlotte Granville as Lady Chiltern, was received, as it deserved to be, with unbounded enthusiasm. A clever and unconventional study of Viscount Goring was given by Mr. Herbert Dansey. The whole performance was a brilliant success, and the tour which started last night should be a prosperous one.

The Daily Telegraph says:—
In fact, the play, as interpreted by the excellent company at the Coronet, is one of the most entertaining now to be seen in London. Mr. Edward O'Neill and Miss Granville gave admirable performances as "the ideal husband" and his wife, rising to the full height of their pathetic and passionate scenes.

ALEXANDRA THEATRE, STOKES NEWINGTON, THIS WEEK.
October 23rd and November 6th Vacant.

14

THEATRICAL GOSSIP.

A very interesting revival of Oscar Wilde's *The Ideal Husband* took place at the Coronet Theatre on Monday, by Messrs. Edward O'Neill and Herbert Dansey's company. The piece was most enthusiastically received by a large audience. Mr. Edward O'Neill's Sir Robert Chiltern was a revelation, and will long be remembered by those who saw it. A tour is booked, and should prove highly successful.

ON THE ROAD, OCTOBER 2.

IDEAL HUSBAND—Stoke Newington.

DECEMBER 11, 1905.

Tem 15.

NEW OPERA BY RICHARD STRAUSS.—A Reuter telegram of yesterday's date from Dresden says:—Richard Strauss's opera *Salome*, founded on Oscar Wilde's drama of that name, was produced at the Royal Opera last night. Its production in Vienna was prohibited by the censor. The opera, which has no overture and is in one act, scored an instantaneous and unqualified success. The composer, who conducted, was called before the curtain 40 times. The performance was in every respect a memorable one, Frau Wittich, who played "Salome," and Herren Perron and Burrian being especially brilliant.

Standard

NEW OPERA BY STRAUSS.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

BERLIN, Dec. 10.

"Salome," a new musical drama in one act, by Richard Strauss, was produced at the Royal Opera House, at Dresden, last night, in the presence of an audience which included dramatic critics from all parts of Germany. The story is taken from Oscar Wilde's play, and the subject is treated by the composer with all the melodic skill and resource of orchestration of which he is such a master. Principals, chorus, and orchestra alike won praise for their splendid rendering of the music, whilst the composer himself received a perfect ovation when he appeared before the curtain.

THE NEW MUSIC.

Tremendous Success of Herr Strauss's Salomé.

TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

[From Our Correspondent.]

BERLIN, Sunday.

Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera, "Salomé" was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the élite of the artistic society, not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

The success of the performance was unqualified. Long after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration." Another critic exclaims: "Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unqualified success be repeated or be maintained?" I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three redundant passages, Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted a second rate librettist to work for him as Gounod or Verdi did, nor has he written his own text, like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed.

Secondly, he has given the voices an entirely secondary part; the orchestra is everything. As a matter of fact, through the greater part of the opera the singers may or may not be singing, for all the audience knows. Strauss, therefore, is justified in calling his work a musical drama. Everyone seems united in marvelling at the wonderful orchestration, and in expressing the conviction that the highest attainable in this direction has been reached. Strauss has given the orchestra something which only perfect musicians, perfectly trained and conducted, could master, and so varied is the score, so full of colour, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera houses to reproduce this work as it ought to be produced.

For this reason, if for no other, the success of the opera is doubtful. There are, besides, other peculiarities which will hinder its success. Only here and there can singers be found able to master the enormous difficulties of the music entrusted to them. One of the most difficult tasks known to operatic singers is the mastery of the dreaded third act of "Tristan and Isolde." But the requirements of Wagner's wonderful work are nothing compared with those demanded by Strauss in "Salomé."

Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated people can carry away with them. "Salomé" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs. Every person has his or her motif; every passion has its motif; the result is an exasperating tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking, Is this sultry story of Oriental passion, with its milieu of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is "Dame Musica" not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to "Salomé." Frau Wittich sang the title-rôle with marvellous power and certainty, Herr Burrian was a magnificent Herod, Herr Peron as the Baptist was extremely effective, but all three artists gave the impression they were performing a thoroughly thankless task, and that their hearts were not in their work.

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STRAUSS'S NEW OPERA.

From Our Own Correspondent.

BERLIN, Sunday.

A new one-act opera, by Richard Strauss, entitled "Salome," was performed for the first time last night at the Dresden Opera House. The libretto is Oscar Wilde's drama of the same name. The house was crowded with musical and dramatic celebrities from all parts of Germany, as the première had been anticipated with much interest. At the conclusion of the opera, Herr Strauss was repeatedly called before the curtain. The audience agreed that he had written a wonderful composition, with marvellous skill and knowledge, and that he had shown his perfect mastery of orchestral music. Opinion, however, is divided regarding the merits of the opera itself. The music for the voices is probably the most difficult ever written, and thoroughly to give effect to the score 120 musicians are required in the orchestra. There are probably only half-a-dozen opera houses in Europe which could adequately produce "Salome." About the new opera there is nothing popular, no airs, no melody, and the singers have only declamatory or recitative parts, which are almost wholly drowned by the orchestra. It is supposed that Strauss has largely drawn his inspiration from "Tristan and Isolde."

in the history of opera, the difficulty of the whole being almost superhuman. The work lasts an hour and a half.

Very striking is the duet between Salome and Joachanaan, and the elaborate orchestral interludes in Salome's dance.

The audience included many musical celebrities from all parts of Europe. The applause lasted nearly 20 minutes.

The performance was most brilliant, especially that of the orchestra, under Herr Schuch, which was beyond praise. Frau Wittich, Herr Burrian, and Herr Perron were very fine in the chief parts.

OPINION OF BERLIN CRITICS.

From Our Own Correspondent.

BERLIN, Sunday.

The production of "Salome" is described by the musical critics in the Berlin newspapers as a brilliant achievement.

The success of the work is undoubted, and the effect on the audience was such that, when the curtain fell at the close of the last scene, everybody sat perfectly still, as if entranced. When the applause did break out, it was tumultuous, and Herr Strauss and the conductor, Herr Schuch, were compelled to appear before the curtain upwards of 40 times.

The critics vie with each other in finding words descriptive of the beauty, of the force, of the originality, of the revolutionary character of the music, and the only fault they find is that the "master of orchestration" makes such enormous demands on the orchestra and the singers.

It is believed "Salome" will not soon become popular, as such an immense orchestra and such unusually fine voices are required for its proper production.

Morning Post

"SALOME" IN DRESDEN.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

BERLIN, DEC. 10.

Richard Strauss's "Salome" was produced at the Court Theatre in Dresden last night, and was accorded an enthusiastic reception by an audience drawn from all parts of the Empire, and indeed of Europe. The verdict of the critics, as pronounced in this morning's journals, is that the new work, when compared with "Feuersnoth," marks an important advance in the powers of the composer, but that it is never likely to achieve popularity, owing to the immense orchestral apparatus required for its production.

Strauss himself describes "Salome" as "a one-act drama after Oscar Wilde's play." The critics, however, prefer to style it "a dramatic symphony with song," and they add that while word and tone accord in accent, yet the vocal parts of the composition are quite overpowered by the orchestration. The instrumental effects are magnificent, but the composer, it is argued, has allowed too little scope to the human voice. The various figures in the drama, however, are well characterised, and Salome, Herodes, Herodias, Narraboth, and Jochanaan are each invested with their own musical individuality. The production was in every respect excellent. The orchestra was directed by Herr von Schuch, to whom the German critics unite in paying homage.

Daily Express.

Richard Strauss' new opera, "Salome," founded on Oscar Wilde's drama, the production of which was prohibited in Vienna by the censor, scored an instantaneous and unqualified success when produced at the Royal Opera, Dresden, on Saturday night.

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Star. Dec. 23. '905

Jessen Women's University Library

It is announced that "Salome" will be produced this season at Turin under Signor Toscanini.

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Star. Dec. 15. 1905.

A scheme is on foot for the performance of Strauss' "Salomé" in Berlin, by the ensemble of the Dresden Opera House, including, of course, Herr von Schuch and his wonderful orchestra.

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2019-10-30

Evening News,

A "TERRIBLE OPERA."

Remarkable Impression Created by Richard Strauss's "Salome."

"Salome," the latest opera, by Richard Strauss, is an extraordinary, almost an awful, work, says Mr. Gilbert Burgess, the special Dresden correspondent of the Sunday "Observer." Never has music been employed as a means of expression in such a savage, relentless fashion. Animalism is the keynote of this terrible opera.

The story is a German prose translation by Hedwig Lachmann of Oscar Wilde's play of the same name. The curtain rises upon the banquet hall of Herod. One of the soldiers, Narraboth, is in love with Salome, the daughter of Herod. In the well Jochanaan, the Hebrew prophet, is held captive, and Salome enters, demanding to see him. Narraboth reluctantly

consents, and Jochanaan is temporarily released. Salome is fascinated by him, and asks him to kiss her with such insistence that Narraboth in an agony of jealousy, kills himself with his sword. The prophet goes back to his prison.

Herod persuades Salome to dance before him. She dances wildly; Herod is entranced, but is terrified when she demands her reward—the head of Jochanaan upon a charger. The head is brought, and when the curtain falls Salome, fondling it, is alone in the centre of the stage; and then Herod tells the soldiers to kill her.

It is an old story, but not all the beauty of scene nor splendour of language can redeem it from desperate morbidity.

But Herr Strauss chose it wilfully, and has worked a tragic miracle with it. There is an almost incredible amount of brain-work in "Salome," but there is compara-

The Stage,

THURSDAY, SEPT. 28, 1905.

BROMLEY (KENT).—LYRIC (Lessee and Manager, Mr. Arthur Carlton; Resident Manager, Mr. H. Strong).—This theatre opened for the season on Friday last, when Messrs. Edward O'Neill and Herbert Dansey's company appeared in *An Ideal Husband*, and played on that and the following night to crowded and appreciative audiences.

Jissen Woorden University Library

MORNING POST,
TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 26, 1905.

LAST NIGHT'S THEATRES.

CORONET.

A revival of great interest is taking place this week at the Coronet Theatre, where "The Ideal Husband" is being played for the first time in London since its production at the Haymarket some ten years ago. In this play the author threw off most of the mannerisms and paradoxes which marred, if they advertised, his earlier work, and told a simple story of modern life dramatically and straightforwardly. "The Ideal Husband" may not go down to posterity as a great drama, as it has many obvious faults, notably the situation in the third act, where much is made of a letter from Lady Chiltern to Lord Goring, Sir Robert Chiltern's greatest friend, which is capable of a simple explanation that ought to have terminated the play, but it is at any rate one of the best exhibitions of modern life and manners that have been produced in this generation. As we watch its progress the footlights and the sense of the theatre seem to vanish, and we appear to be witnessing real scenes in real rooms with the men and women of to-day as the actors. At least this is so in the more dramatic scenes. In the lighter ones there are still left some of the flippancies, always clever and sometimes borrowed, in which the author delighted, but they are never obtrusive or out of place. The play is excellently produced and the acting all round did credit to the work. Mr. Edward O'Neill deserves especial praise for his remarkably fine impersonation of Sir Robert Chiltern. He held the mirror up to nature with a fidelity inspired no doubt by the simple directness and sanity of the author's lines, but he was equal to every occasion, and his acting in the big scene in the third act, in which he was most ably seconded by Miss Charlotte Granville as Lady Chiltern, was received, as it deserved to be, with unbounded enthusiasm. Smaller parts were well filled by Miss Kittie Grattan, who played Mabel Chiltern, and by Mr. George Bealby, who was the Earl of Caversham. A clever and unconventional study of Viscount Goring was given by Mr. Herbert Dansey. The whole performance was a brilliant success and the tour which started last night should be a prosperous one.

MONDAY.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1905.

“The Ideal Husband” has not been done much (save by amateurs) since its production at the Haymarket in 1895. The cast is extremely strong, including Mr. Edward O'Neill, Mr. Herbert Dansey, and Miss Granville. There will be a matinée on Saturday.

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2019-03-17 Universitat de Jissen

TUESDAY,

SEPTEMBER 26, 1905.

DAILY TELEGRAPH,

CORONET THEATRE.

"An Ideal Husband," if not the most brilliant or the most dramatic of the plays of Oscar Wilde, is nevertheless a comedy of much wit and distinction. The thanks of playgoers are due to Mr. Robert Arthur for his enterprise in presenting the piece at the Coronet Theatre this week. "An Ideal Husband" is old enough to be new, while its wit is in no danger of being out of date for many a year. In fact, the play, as interpreted by the excellent company at the Coronet, is one of the most entertaining now to be seen in London. There is no need to recount the details of the plot, which is, indeed, not the strongest part of the play. It is enough to say that the story of the wife who conceives her far from faultless husband to be a saint proved once again last night its power to hold the profound attention of an audience. Some of the scenes between the erring husband and the blackmailing adventuress savour, it must be confessed, of rather homely melodrama, but the incidents in which the wife's belief in her husband contrasts with the man's knowledge of his own baseness reach a much higher level, and these, with the great scene in which she discovers and he defends his failure to be perfect, moved the audience very deeply, and were rewarded with unstinted applause. But the chief merit of the play is, of course, the paradoxical wit of the dialogue, to which due justice was done by a company which included Mr. Herbert Dansey, Mr. Eric Maxon, Miss Isabel Grey, and Miss Mayne Young. Mr. Edward O'Neill and Miss Granville gave admirable performances as "Jessen 2019-03-07 University of London Library" rising to the full height of their pathetic and passionate scenes.

THE CORONET, W.

Monday witnessed a very interesting revival of Oscar Wilde's comedy, *An Ideal Husband*. This is the first time since its production at the Haymarket that the play has been seen in London, and a crowded audience on Monday, which included Sir Charles Wyndham, demonstrated in no half-hearted manner its marked appreciation of the witty, sparkling dialogue and distinction of style which the able efforts of the excellent company brought out so admirably. Although perhaps not one of the strongest of Mr. Wilde's works, the poorness of the plot and the rather absurd situation at the close of the third act being blemishes which at once strike even the most casual critic, the piece gave, when it was originally produced, an excellent and very real picture of society, and the author's lines were more simple, direct, and less flippant perhaps than was the case in some of his other successes. Mr. Edward O'Neill gives a very fine impersonation of Sir Robert Chiltern, and shows himself in every way capable of portraying the despair and passion which alternately take possession of the unfortunate Under-Secretary. As the devoted wife, Miss Charlotte Granville touches the audience very deeply, and her pathetic appeal at the close of the second act obtained on Monday the unstinted applause it deserved. Miss Elizabeth Meller is the typical adventuress, and Miss Isabel Grey scores with the many humorous sayings allotted to Lady Markby. A very dainty performance is that of Miss Kitty Grattan as Mabel Chiltern. She speaks her lines clearly and effectively. Mr. Herbert Dansey gives an unconventional and telling study of Viscount Goring, and is to be congratulated on his natural and unforced methods. Mr. George Bealby does well as the old Earl of Caversham, with the exception that his movements are a little juvenile as compared with those one would expect to be in keeping with his make-up; and Mr. Lionel Glenister, who plays the small part of Phipps, Lord Goring's servant, deserves praise for the manner in which he has rehearsed the company and performed the arduous duties of stage manager.

STANDARD,

OTHER SUBURBAN THEATRES.

The late Mr. Oscar Wilde's witty society play, "The Ideal Husband," is given in tasteful fashion at the Coronet, with Mr. Edward O'Neill—an able, experienced actor—as Sir Robert Chiltern and Miss Granville as Lady Chiltern.

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Whitehall Review,

SATURDAY, SEPT. 30, 1905.

The Ideal Husband was revived at the Coronet Theatre on Monday night. For this new proof of his enterprise playgoers will thank Mr. Robert Arthur. The play, in the hands of the excellent company to whom it is entrusted, is undoubtedly one of the most entertaining now running in the metropolis. For one thing it sparkles with wit unlikely to become stale for many a long day to come. It happens to be one of those performances in which, it must be confessed, the plot is not all in all. The wife, who thinks her husband to be nearly a saint, but is not, again proves its power to engage the careful attention of the audience. Mr. Edward O'Neill and Miss Granville were in every way commendable, and showed a keen appreciation of their art as the "ideal husband" and his wife.

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THE SKETCH.

Sept. 27. 1905

When will the unjust farce of disassociating the name of Oscar Wilde from the plays he wrote cease? "An Ideal Husband" is being played at the Coronet Theatre this week, and is announced as "by the author of 'Lady Windermere's Fan.'" Everybody who knows anything of the theatre is aware of the authorship of that play, so that the anonymity is no anonymity at all. The high esteem in which Wilde's name is held in Germany, to which reference has been made on more than one occasion on this page, should be sufficient to ensure the literary reputation of one of the most brilliant authors of his day against this unjust exhibition of what is popularly called "Stiggins feeling."

SEPTEMBER 30, 1905.

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LONDON & SUBURBAN THEATRES.

CORONET THEATRE.

On Monday, Sept. 25,

"THE IDEAL HUSBAND."

Messrs. Edward O'Neill and Herbert Dansey's company are appearing this week at the Coronet Theatre in *The Ideal Husband*, a drawing-room drama which is replete with the epigram and witticisms peculiar to the talented author of *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *A Woman of No Importance*. A clever central idea pervades the plot in the shape of an ambitious and successful politician's past misdeeds and the exorcising of this phantom of the past by a family friend. The imbroglio arising from the one solitary record of a deed of shame falling into the hands of an unscrupulous adventuress, is cleverly concocted and wittily worked out. Several strong situations are more or less stultified by a tornado of words, witty but unessential, and which divert the interest and attention from the main idea. The part of Sir Robert Chiltern is very strongly limned and cleverly and consistently worked out, and Mr. Edward O'Neill contributes a masterly sketch of character and gives due weight and emphasis to the fine speeches put into the mouth of this noteworthy celebrity. His passion and pain, and the intensity of feeling, as he alternates between the agony of apprehension and the joy in the revulsion of feeling caused by his miraculous escape from disgrace and dishonour and the loss of all that he loves and lives for, are very finely and graphically portrayed with due appreciation of the light and shade of character. Mr. Herbert Dansey is exceedingly good as the dandified idler, Viscount Goring, who so assiduously cultivates an invertebrate manner and carefully hides the sterling qualities which enable him to do his friends such a remarkably good turn. As Lady Chiltern, "my lady virtue," whose ideals are so rudely shattered, and whose life's happiness stands in a fair way to be wrecked, till common-sense practically comes to her rescue, Miss Charlotte Granville carries conviction in her powerful assumption of emotional stress and tenderness. She ably depicts the mental war of high principle and womanly love and charity. Miss Isabel Grey makes her mark as the garrulous Lady Markby, and scores all along the line with her inconsequent chatter and worldly wisdom. Mr. George Bealby, as the Earl of Caversham, does well; Miss Kitty Crotton is highly effective as Mabel Chiltern; and Mr. Lionel Clennister is to be commended for his embodiment of Phipps.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1905.

T H E E R A.

TOURING COMPANIES.

EDWARD O'NEILL and HERBERT DANSEY'S Coy.
IN

THE IDEAL HUSBAND,

BY
OSCAR WILDE.

Revival Production at the Coronet Theatre,
Sept. 25.

The Morning Post says:—

A revival of great interest. It is one of the best exhibitions of modern life and manners that have been produced in this generation. As we watch its progress, the footlights and the sense of the theatre seem to vanish, and we appear to be witnessing real scenes in real rooms with the men and women of to-day as the actors. Mr. Edward O'Neill deserves especial praise for his remarkably fine impersonation of Sir Robert Chiltern. He held the mirror up to nature with a fidelity inspired no doubt by the simple directness and sanity of the author's lines, but he was equal to every occasion, and his acting in the big scene in the third act, in which he was most ably seconded by Miss Charlotte Granville as Lady Chiltern, was received, as it deserved to be, with unbounded enthusiasm. A clever and unconventional study of Viscount Goring was given by Mr. Herbert Dansey. The whole performance was a brilliant success, and the tour which started last night should be a prosperous one.

The Daily Telegraph says:—

In fact, the play, as interpreted by the excellent company at the Coronet, is one of the most entertaining now to be seen in London. Mr. Edward O'Neill and Miss Granville gave admirable performances as "the ideal husband" and his wife, rising to the full height of their pathetic and passionate scenes.

ALEXANDER H. M. CO., 117, NEWCASTLE ST., LONDON, W. THIS WEEK.

October 23rd and November 6th Vacant.

THEATRICAL GOSSIP.

A VERY interesting revival of Oscar Wilde's *The Ideal Husband* took place at the Coronet Theatre on Monday, by Messrs. Edward O'Neill and Herbert Dansy's company. The piece was most enthusiastically received by a large audience. Mr. Edward O'Neill's Sir Robert Chiltern was a revelation, and will long be remembered by those who saw it. A tour is booked, and should prove highly successful.

ON THE ROAD. OCTOBER 2.

Jissen Women's University Library

THE IDEAL HUSBAND. A. A. COLLIER.

IDEAL HUSBAND.—Stoke Newington.

London: Messrs. W. D. Colclough.

OCTOBER 3, 1905.

ALEXANDRA THEATRE.

A revival of the witty and epigrammatic drawing-room drama, "The Ideal Husband," was the attraction last night at the Alexandra Theatre, Stoke Newington. Considering that this play is nearly eleven years old, it "wears" remarkably well. The audience last night laughed heartily and often. That excellent actor, Mr. Edward O'Neill, plays the ideal husband, Sir Robert Chiltern, with masterly versatility. The emotional scene in which Sir Robert rejoices over his escape from a dishonourable entanglement was acted by Mr. O'Neill with singular feeling and "grip." A most sympathetic performance of Lady Granville, whose ideals are so rudely shattered, was given by Miss Granville, and Mr. Herbert Dansey gave a delightful rendering of the good-natured dandy, Viscount Goring. Well cast and mounted, the production is agreeably above the average of current pieces "on tour."

THE STANDARD.

The Stage,

OCTOBER 5, 1905.

THE ALEXANDRA. N.

An *Ideal Husband* is here this week. Messrs. E. O'Neill and H. Dansey's company are in every respect competent to do justice to Oscar Wilde's play. Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Dansey themselves appear in the parts of Sir Robert Chiltern and Lord Goring, the former infusing much earnestness and sincerity into one of the few parts in the play capable of being so treated. Mr. Dansey gives the devoted, cynical lines with which the part, and indeed, the whole play, abounds with such apparent careless ease and indifference as to make all the points, and further may be congratulated upon making something of a character of Goring, which, with less skilful treatment, would have been altogether lost. Mr. George Bealby makes, also, a character study of the Earl of Chaversham, succeeding in several scenes in making the part lifelike and interesting. Mr. Eric Maxon has little or no chance in the part of Wanjoo, but does well all there is to be done with it. As Mason, the butler, Mr. C. Redman is well cast. Phryne and Harold, two servants, are creditably played by Messrs. L. Glenister and F. Earle. Upon the part of Lady Chiltern Miss Charlotte Granville has evidently bestowed much pains, and presents Lady Chiltern as a charming and really sympathetic woman, with materials none of the most inspiring. Miss Granville is particularly successful in the scene where Lady Chiltern discovers the means by which her husband has achieved success in life. Miss Isabel Gray plays Lady Markby excellently. Miss Kitty Stratton plays the part of Mabel Chiltern gracefully. Miss Elizabeth Meller as Mrs. Cheveley takes full advantage of such opportunities as the part affords. Miss Mayne Young as Lady Basilford and Miss Gertrude Millar as Mrs. Marchmont are excellent.

The Speaker,

"THE IDEAL HUSBAND."

MR. EDWARD O'NEILL'S company played *The Ideal Husband* at the Coronet Theatre last week every night to a full house. All the plays of Oscar Wilde are remarkable for the two qualities which go furthest to make a good play—ingenuity of construction and brilliancy of dialogue. Probability is not the guide to dramatic criticism, whatever it may be to life; and as long as the course of theatrical events has a certain logical coherence and suspends and surprises us without making too exacting demands upon our credulity, there is no need to destroy our pleasure by reminding ourselves that it is not very likely to have taken place. The case of the philosophic drama, of course, is different. There the author undertakes to show you the way of the world and the hearts of men and women, and if you can catch him "cooking" the answer you have the right to be contemptuous or indignant, as becomes you best. But the ordinary play is a frank concoction, and if the dish is appetisingly flavoured with sentiment, wit, or lively comment it is unfair to turn up the nose because it does not nourish or inspire. There is even a distinct pleasure in noticing how the hopeless inconsistencies of character and plot are glossed over and given a momentary probability. Oscar Wilde was a master in this art, and the plot of *The Ideal Husband* is a good instance of his mastery. The hero is a young Minister of State, over whom the adventuress holds a terrible secret. To gain a sum of money, which was necessary to him in the struggle for success as was ever a coat of mail to a knight in the days of errantry, he sold a political secret and shared the spoils. This happened long ago, and now he is a man of whom his wife can think no kind of wrong; and for himself he has become a statesman of stainless honour. The adventuress, interested in a fraudulent scheme of political importance on which a report is to be made before the House, induces her victim, by threatening to publish the letter which he wrote to his old accomplice, to promise that he will suppress the report and speak in favour of the scheme. His wife learns that the adventuress has persuaded him to a right-about-face on this matter. She cannot believe that her husband's past could make blackmail a possibility, yet such conduct is inexplicable.

He assures her that there is no blot on his past; but the sight of her troubled perplexity is harder to bear than the thought of future disgrace, and at her bidding he sits down to write a letter recalling his promise to the adventuress (Act I.). These scenes have taken place during and after an evening party at Sir Robert Chiltern's house, where his friend, Lord Goring, happens to find by chance a curious bit of jewellery which seems to interest him. Sir Robert cannot confide in his wife; she thinks too well of him ever to forgive him; and here is the little moral of the play; a woman must be ready to believe the worst of a man she thinks she loves. But she may forgive him the easier when she finds him out—to forgive, *c'est son métier*. So Sir Robert confides in his friend, who does his best to prepare Lady Chiltern for disillusionment. The adventuress, to induce her to persuade her husband to avoid exposure at all costs, tells her everything, and she, in her distraction, writes to Lord Goring: "I want you; I trust you; I come to you." The note arrives as he is just going out to an evening party. He instructs his valet to show a lady, who will call, into the drawing-room and to refuse all other comers.

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Mr. O'Neill and his company should have a successful tour. DESMOND MACCARTHY.

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A Prodigious Opera.

A correspondent, who has just returned from Dresden, where he witnessed the production of Mr. Richard Strauss's "Salome," writes to me of the profound impression made upon the audience by that extraordinary work. The opera is based upon Oscar Wilde's play, but it is the composer's treatment of the theme that has excited extreme enthusiasm on the one hand, and intense exasperation on the other. It is evident that over this production the musical world will again be divided into two camps, pro-Strauss and anti-Strauss, and that we shall have the sharp controversies of the Wagnerian era over again. Mr. Strauss has defied precedent by employing one hundred and twenty instrumentalists in his orchestra. The opera is in one act, and is played for over an hour and a half. It is thus, next to "Das Rheingold" (which takes two hours and a quarter), the longest one-act opera in existence, though some single acts of the "Ring" take longer still to perform. The prelude is also a record in its brevity, consisting of one bar only, but to compensate for this abbreviation some of the intermezzi are of symphonic dimensions and importance.

Dec. 13, 1905

Manchester Guardian

STRAUSS'S "SALOME."

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

DRESDEN, SUNDAY NIGHT.

A writer on music has seldom been confronted with a more difficult task than that set him by Richard Strauss in his latest opera, "Salome." It is singularly new, not so much in respect of musical technique, though in this respect it is daring enough in ill conscience, as by reason of the speculations which it opens up as to the relations between text and music in opera or music-drama.

Judged by any of the standards we have hitherto been able to apply—even by the standard appropriate to "Egmont," to use the most modern instance that suggests itself—the music of "Salome" is just the last sort of music that suits Wilde's drama. We have in the music nothing mysterious, nothing primitive, nothing archaic. Everything is the exact reverse. Naturally, any attempt at archaism would have been foredoomed to failure if only because to be archaic is totally alien to Strauss's essentially modern mind. This brings one to the real puzzle of Salome, and at the moment it is easier to ask oneself than to answer the question why he should have chosen Wilde's Salome as a subject for a musical drama. That Salome pure and simple should have appealed to him is natural enough; the contrast between unbridled passion on the one hand and sanctity on the other, and between two kinds of passion, is a fascinating subject for a composer with his unequalled gift for depicting the abnormal in music. But what is psychologically so interesting and so baffling is the fact that he should have read into Wilde's words the feelings that he should have seen in the play, the colours which storm and flash in the score.

The score of "Salome" is certainly one of the most tempestuous and lurid ever put on paper. Yet with all its frenzy it is controlled by a powerful logic, and the sense of unity which the whole gives, with its complexity, is such as is possible only with a real master. The figures which he has created, though they are the antipodes of those imagined by Wilde, are living, consistent, and convincing. The animalism of Salome, the spiritual austerity of Jochanaan, the neurotic restlessness of Herod—all are depicted in the music with astonishing forcefulness, and that one is in the presence of something very new one cannot doubt for a moment. What it means, however, and whether it tends, he would be a bold man who should attempt to say here and now.

The orchestra is the largest ever employed in an opera. One hundred and twenty men played in the Opera-house last night, and it is said that Strauss regards that number as the irreducible minimum. Besides demanding an unusual number of brass and woodwind instruments (I believe there were five oboes, for instance), the composer employs, as is his wont, extra instruments such as the celesta, the xylophone, and the Heckelphone which is now for the first time heard in an

orchestra. It is a wind-wood instrument called after its inventor, Herr Heckel, and fills the gap between the bassoon and the clarinet and adds softness and richness to the tone of the wood-wind. Besides this Strauss uses a rattle. This enormously complex superstructure is, however, built up on a comparatively slight foundation, for the leading motifs, which are incessantly being tossed from instrument to instrument, are singularly few—and this, of course, is not accident, but design. Further, there is, as far as one hearing enables one to judge, comparatively little interweaving of themes, except in the symphonic interludes which occur before and after the appearance of Jochanaan and in Salome's dance. Perhaps it is by these two characteristics that Strauss has aimed at doing justice to the simplicity of the text. Composers are known to have strange powers of self-deception on this point; Brahms called his second Piano Concerto "simple." The themes themselves are full of dramatic significance and the skill with which the utmost is made of them is dazzling. The very important Salome theme with which the drama—for that is the description Strauss himself applies to it—opens is one of those sinuous chromatic phrases of abrupt rhythm which bear the hall-mark of his individuality and is a little reminiscent of one of the most prominent subjects of "Also Sprach Zarathustra," and the broad diatonic melody associated with the prophecies of Jochanaan is (not unnaturally) closely akin to the now well-known "redemption" theme in "Tod und Verklärung." An astonishingly clever passage is the ensemble of Jews arguing as to Jochanaan's claims to sanctity. It is a triumph of musical characterisation and sardonic musical humour; but the Jewish German Jews of 1905, and are cousins German to the opponents in "Ein Heldenleben," and the Munich Philistines of "Feuersnot." The two orchestral intermezzi which are played when Jochanaan emerges from his well and when he descends into it again are among the finest things that Strauss has written, and are deeply moving; while Salome's address to the severed head of Jochanaan touches great heights. There is also near the end of the elaborate dance a long-drawn melody (sung by the strings) of singular sensuous beauty. On the whole the music has a broad sweep and carries the hearer onwards from start to close; but here and there the composer seems almost wilfully to stop himself by one of his orchestral audacities as though afraid of being more than a moment or two pleasing. The effect of realism produced in the orchestra at the moment when Jochanaan is being killed is the most salient example of this.

The vocal difficulties of Salome are almost insuperable. It is enough to say that Frau Wittich—whose enunciation in Wagner's most difficult music is always clear—often had to be content to be unintelligible. With this exception her singing of the music was a great achievement. She was specially admirable at the point where she continues her violent protestations of love to Jochanaan after Narraboth has killed himself and his dead body lies between them in the closing scene. Frau Wittich has not the temperament suitable for a Salome but acted forcibly, and she is not a trained dancer but strove hard with the dance. Herr Burrian's Herod was a splendid piece of character-acting and dramatic singing. He represented the cruel, fickle, and cowardly voluptuary to the life, and with occasional touches of grim comedy which were quite justified by the music if not by the text. Herr Perron sang superbly, and infused just the right colour into his voice as Jochanaan, and Herr Jäger was very good as Narraboth. The staging, under Herr Wirk, was completely artistic. It is perhaps inevitable that the scene should for most of the time be so dark that one cannot see the faces of the characters. The most effective feature of the scene was the absence of sky borders, a device which I believe had never been tried before in Germany. The chief burden of the performance, however, after all, falls on the orchestra, and it was most nobly borne. It is impossible to praise too highly the playing of the band and the masterly conducting of Herr von Schuch.

As already telegraphed, the fall of the curtain was the signal for a scene of enthusiasm such as rarely takes place in a German theatre. The cheering, the calls, and the recalls lasted for over a quarter of an hour. The audience which filled every corner of the Opera-house was a representative one of musicians from all parts of the Continent. These were so numerous that the Dresden public, much to its disappointment, was practically excluded.

DAILY NEWS.

STRAUSS'S NEW OPERA.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

BERLIN, Tuesday Night.

Presuming that the Royal Opera in Berlin for various reasons will not permit the performance of Richard Strauss's opera "Salome," although he is conductor at the Opera House here, the Dresden Court Theatre manager is ventilating the idea of coming to Berlin with the whole Dresden orchestra and singer. In this way, the musical world of Berlin would be made acquainted with the newest work of one of the greatest composers now living.

DAILY NEWS.

DECEMBER 18, 1905.

Strauss's "Salome."

A correspondent, who was a friend of Oscar Wilde, has written to "The Observer" protesting that the play is burlesqued in its operatic version. The opera, he says, is an insult to the author. Most of the criticisms I have read notice the disparity between the character of the music and the character of the play. Those who admire the sensuous, languorous atmosphere of "Salomé" as drama naturally cannot appreciate Strauss's strenuous and passionate treatment. The fact is, the composer has not attempted to become a musical Oscar Wilde. He has treated the drama subjectively. That treatment may be true enough as an expression of the emotions of the drama, although it may not accord with the literary atmosphere of the play.

Daily Telegraph.

DECEMBER 19, 1905.

Our Berlin Correspondent states that between Richard Strauss, the composer of "Salome," and the authorities of the Royal Berlin Opera House an estrangement exists which, in all probability, will result in the withdrawal of the composer from his position as one of the conductors of the Berlin Opera Orchestra. It is an open secret that the Kaiser was displeased with Strauss for turning his attention to such a subject as Salome, and that he took care that Strauss should know of his displeasure. Strauss, in reply, declined to be dictated to, even by his Majesty.

After the first burst of enthusiasm for "Salome" has passed, a good deal of fun is being poked at the new methods employed by Strauss in achieving his effects. The orchestra of 120 men is passed under review. It seems that it contained 14 first violins, 14 second violins, 10 violas, 8 double-basses, 10 cellos. It is, however, the subordinate instruments which are most ridiculed—two pairs of cymbals, four pairs of triangles, two triangles, a tambourine, tam-tam, and a peal of bells. One critic in a Munich paper suggests the addition of a locomotive whistle, a fog-horn, and a battery of howitzers to improve the drum effects.

"Salome" has little, if any, prospect of being brought forward in any other opera house in Germany or, for that matter, in Europe. Mr. Courcier, of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, seems inclined to produce it, but makes it a condition that Richard Strauss, the composer, shall himself conduct.

Whether owing to the fact that opera will not be played this year in Russia, or from some other cause, in no previous year has the supply of singers been so great, or the salaries they demand so low. The official organ of the German stage-players contains an advertisement in its last issue, in which ladies with "brilliant voices," "elegant dresses," and "handsome figures" offer their services for 100 marks a month. Dancers who advertise themselves as "beautiful as a picture," and offer to take subordinate parts, or fill the rôle of the "youthful bride," may be secured for 80 marks, while "beautiful society ladies," otherwise the sylphs who stroll about at the back of the opera stage, offer their services for 40 marks.

Munich County News.

Jan. 6, 1906

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OCTOBER 3, 1905.

ALEXANDRA THEATRE.

A revival of the witty and epigrammatic drawing-room drama, "The Ideal Husband," was the attraction last night at the Alexandra Theatre, Stoke Newington. Considering that this play is nearly eleven years old, it "wears" remarkably well. The audience last night laughed heartily and often. That excellent actor, Mr. Edward O'Neill, plays the ideal husband, Sir Robert Chiltern, with masterly versatility. The emotional scene in which Sir Robert rejoices over his escape from a dishonourable entanglement was acted by Mr. O'Neill with singular feeling and "grip." A most sympathetic performance of Lady Granville, whose ideals are so rudely shattered, was given by Miss Granville, and Mr. Herbert Dansey gave a delightful rendering of the good-natured dandy, Viscount Goring. Well cast and mounted, the production is agreeably above the average of current pieces "on tour."

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The Stage,

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Lady Markby excellently. Miss Kitty Grattan plays the part of Mabel Chiltern gracefully. Miss Elizabeth Meller as Mrs. Chevely takes full advantage of such opportunities as the part affords. Miss Mayne Young as Lady Basildon and Miss Gertrude Jissen as Mrs. Worsley are excellent.

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THE EDITOR.

July. Oct 11 1905

I journeyed the other evening to Notting Hill, where I noticed that the management of the Coronet Theatre were putting on Oscar Wilde's delicious comedy, *An Ideal Husband*. It is less popular, I think, than either *Lady Windermere's Fan*, or *The Importance of Being Earnest*; but it is no less witty and epigrammatic than those delightful indiscretions. One is always sure of novelty at the Coronet, however; in which Notting Hill is blessed above suburbs. Mr. Lytton, whom I disdain to describe as "genial," is, nevertheless, the most amiable of acting-managers, and one who can tell a good story! He told me one, which I am not going to print, because it concerns the crowned heads of Europe, or, at any rate, Mr. W. S. Penley, and is diluted with whisky; and I print nothing under champagne. The attraction at the Coronet this week, Mr. Lytton informs me, is *The Orchid*. If you doubt him, go and see.

THE EDITOR.

Dec. 12, 1908

Manderley is patch

A Prodigious Opera.

A correspondent, who has just returned from Dresden, where he witnessed the production of Mr. Richard Strauss's "Salome," writes to me of the profound impression made upon the audience by that extraordinary work. The opera is based upon Oscar Wilde's play, but it is the composer's treatment of the theme that has excited extreme enthusiasm on the one hand, and intense exasperation on the other. It is evident that over this production the musical world will again be divided into two camps, pro-Straussian and anti-Straussian, and that we shall have the sharp controversies of the Wagnerian era over again. Mr. Strauss has defied precedent by employing one hundred and twenty instrumentalists in his orchestra. The opera is in one act, and is played for over an hour and a half. It is thus, next to "Das Rheingold" (which takes two hours and a quarter), the longest one-act opera in existence, though some single acts of the "Ring" take longer still to perform. The prelude is also a record in its briefness, consisting of one bar only, but to compensate for this abbreviation some of the intermezzi are of symphonic dimensions and importance.

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Dec. 13. 1905

Manchester Guardian

STRAUSS'S "SALOME."

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

DRESDEN, SUNDAY NIGHT.

A writer on music has seldom been confronted with a more difficult task than that set him by Richard Strauss in his latest opera, "Salome." It is singularly new, not so much in respect of musical technique, though in this respect it is daring enough in all conscience, as by reason of the speculations which it opens up as to the relations between text and music in opera or musical drama.

Judged by any of the standards we have hitherto been able to apply—even by the standard appropriate to "Feuersnot," to use the most modern instance that suggests itself,—the music of "Salome" is just the last sort of music that suits Wilde's drama. We have in the music nothing mysterious, nothing primitive, nothing archaic. Everything is the exact reverse. Naturally, any attempt at archaism would have been foredoomed to failure if only because to be archaic is totally alien to Strauss's essentially modern mind. This brings one to the real puzzle of Salome, and at the moment it is easier to ask oneself than to answer the question why he should have chosen Wilde's Salome as a subject for a musical drama. That Salome pure and simple should have appealed to him is natural enough; the contrast between unbridled passion on the one hand and sanctity on the other, and between two kinds of passion, is a fascinating subject for a composer with his unequalled gift for depicting the abnormal in music. But what is psychologically so interesting and so baffling is the fact that he should have read into Wilde's words the feelings that he should have seen in the play, the colours which storm and flash in the score.

The score of "Salome" is certainly one of the most tempestuous and lurid ever put on paper. Yet with all its frenzy it is controlled by a powerful logic, and the sense of unity which the whole gives, with its complexity, is such as is possible only with a real master. The figures which he has created, though they are the antipodes of those imagined by Wilde, are living, consistent, and convincing. The animalism of Salome, the spiritual austerity of Jochanaan, the neurotic restlessness of Herod—all are depicted in the music with astonishing forcefulness, and that one is in the presence of something very new one cannot doubt for a moment. What it means, however, and whither it tends, he would be a bold man who should attempt to say here and now.

The orchestra is the largest ever employed in an opera. One hundred and twenty men played in the Opera-house last night, and it is said that Strauss regards that number as the irreducible minimum. Besides demanding an unusual number of brass and woodwind instruments (I believe there were five oboes, for instance), the composer employs, as is his wont, extra instruments, such as the celesta, the xylophone, and the Heckelophone, which is now for the first time heard in an

orchestra. It is a wind-wood instrument called after its inventor, Herr Heckel, and fills the gap between the bassoon and the clarinet and adds softness and richness to the tone of the wood-wind. Besides this Strauss uses a rattle. This enormously complex superstructure is, however, built up on a comparatively slight foundation, for the leading motifs, which are incessantly being tossed from instrument to instrument, are singularly few—and this, of course, is not accident, but design. Further, there is, as far as one hearing enables one to judge, comparatively little interweaving of themes, except in the symphonic interludes which occur before and after the appearance of Jochanaan and in Salome's dance. Perhaps it is by these two characteristics that Strauss has aimed at doing justice to the simplicity of the text. Composers are known to have strange powers of self-deception on this point; Brahms called his second Piano Concerto "simple." The themes themselves are full of dramatic significance and the skill with which the utmost is made of them is dazzling. The very important Salome theme with which the drama—for that is the description Strauss himself applies to it—opens is one of those sinuous chromatic phrases of abrupt rhythm which bear the hall-mark of his individuality and is a little reminiscent of one of the most prominent subjects of "Also Sprach Zarathustra," and the broad diatonic melody associated with the prophecies of Jochanaan is (not unnaturally) closely akin to the now well-known "redemption" theme in "Tod und Verklärung." An astoundingly clever passage is the ensemble of Jews arguing as to Jochanaan's claims to sanctity. It is a triumph of musical characterisation and sardonic musical humour; but the Jews are German Jews of 1905, and are cousins German to the opponents in "Ein Heldenleben" and the Munich Philistines of "Feuersnot." The two orchestral intermezzi which are played when Jochanaan emerges from his well and when he descends into it again are among the finest things that Strauss has written, and are deeply moving; while Salome's address to the severed head of Jochanaan touches great heights. There is also near the end of the elaborate dance a long-drawn melody (sung by the strings) of singular sensuous beauty. On the whole the music has a broad sweep and carries the hearer onwards from start to close; but here and there the composer seems almost wilfully to stop himself by one of his orchestral audacities as though afraid of being for more than a moment or two pleasing. The effect of realism produced in the orchestra at the moment when Jochanaan is being killed is the most salient example of this.

The vocal difficulties of Salome are almost insuperable. It is enough to say that Frau Wittich—whose enunciation in Wagner's most difficult music is always clear—often had to be content to be unintelligible. With this exception her singing of the music was a great achievement. She was specially admirable at the point where she continues her violent protestations of love to Jochanaan after Narraboth has killed himself and his dead body lies between them in the closing scene. Frau Wittich has not the temperament suitable for a Salome but acted forcibly, and she is not a trained dancer but strove hard with the dance. Herr Burrian's Herod was a splendid piece of character-acting and dramatic singing. He represented the cruel, fickle, and cowardly voluptuary to the life, and with occasional touches of grim comedy which were quite justified by the music if not by the text. Herr Perron sang superbly, and infused just the right colour into his voice as Jochanaan, and Herr Jäger was very good as Narraboth. The staging, under Herr Wirk, was completely artistic. It is perhaps inevitable that the scene should for most of the time be so dark that one cannot see the faces of the characters. The most effective feature of the scene was the absence of sky borders, a device which I believe had never been tried before in Germany. The chief burden of the performance, however, after all, falls on the orchestra, and it was most nobly borne. It is impossible to praise too highly the playing of the band and the masterly conducting of Herr von Schuch.

As already telegraphed, the fall of the curtain was the signal for a scene of enthusiasm such as rarely takes place in a German theatre. The cheering, the calls, and the recalls lasted for over a quarter of an hour. The audience which filled every corner of the Opera-house was a representative one of musicians from all parts of the Continent. So numerous at the Dresden public, much to its disappointment, was practically excluded.

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DAILY NEWS.

STRAUSS'S NEW OPERA.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

BERLIN, Tuesday Night.

Presuming that the Royal Opera in Berlin for various reasons will not permit the performance of Richard Strauss's opera "Salome," although he is conductor at the Opera House here, the Dresden Court Theatre management is ventilating the idea of coming to Berlin with the whole Dresden orchestra and singers. In this way, the musical world of Berlin would be made acquainted with the newest work of one of the greatest composers now living.

DAILY NEWS,

DECEMBER 18, 1905.

Strauss's "Salome."

A correspondent, who was a friend of Oscar Wilde, has written to "The Observer" protesting that the play is burlesqued in its operatic version. The opera, he says, is an insult to the author. Most of the criticisms I have read notice the disparity between the character of the music and the character of the play. Those who admire the sensuous, languorous atmosphere of "Salomé" as drama naturally cannot appreciate Strauss's strenuous and passionate treatment. The fact is, the composer has not attempted to become a musical Oscar Wilde. He has treated the drama subjectively. That treatment may be true enough as an expression of the emotions of the drama, although it may not accord with the literary atmosphere of the play.

Daily Telegraph.

DECEMBER 19, 1905.

Our Berlin Correspondent states that between Richard Strauss, the composer of "Salome," and the authorities of the Royal Berlin Opera House an estrangement exists which, in all probability, will result in the withdrawal of the composer from his position as one of the conductors of the Berlin Opera Orchestra. It is an open secret that the Kaiser was displeased with Strauss for turning his attention to such a subject as Salome, and that he took care that Strauss should know of his displeasure. Strauss in reply declined to be dictated to, even by his Majesty.

After the first burst of enthusiasm for "Salome" has passed, a good deal of fun is being poked at the new methods employed by Strauss in achieving his effects. The orchestra of 120 men is passed under review. It seems that it contained 14 first violins, 14 second violins, 10 violas, 8 double-basses, 10 'cellos. It is, however, the subordinate instruments which are most ridiculed—two pairs of castanettes, four pairs of cymbals, two triangles, a tambourine, tam-tam, and a peal of bells. One critic in a Munich paper suggests the addition of a locomotive whistle, a fog-horn, and a battery of howitzers to improve the drum effects.

"Salome" has little, if any, prospect of being brought forward in any other opera house in Germany or, for that matter, in Europe. Mr. Conried, of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, seems inclined to produce it, but makes it a condition that Richard Strauss, the composer, shall himself conduct.

Whether owing to the fact that opera will not be played this year in Russia, or from some other cause, in no previous year has the supply of singers been so great, or the salaries they demand so low. The official organ of the German stage-players contains an advertisement in its last issue, in which ladies with "brilliant voices," "elegant dresses," and "handsome figures" offer their services for 100 marks a month. Damsels who advertise themselves as "beautiful as a picture," and offer to take subordinate parts, or fill the rôle of the "youthful bride," may be secured for 80 marks, while "beautiful society ladies," otherwise called "sympas who chatter about at the back of the opera stage, offer their services for 40 marks.

Hunts County News.

Jan. 6. 1906.

A BERLIN Correspondent states that between Richard Strauss, the composer of "Salome," and the authorities of the Royal Berlin Opera House an estrangement exists which, in all probability, will result in the withdrawal of the composer from his position as one of the conductors of the Berlin Opera Orchestra. It is an open secret that the Kaiser was displeased with Strauss for turning his attention to such a subject as "Salome," and that he took care that Strauss should know of his displeasure. Strauss, in reply, declined to be dictated to, even by his Majesty.

Jessen Women's University Library

his utterances, and just here and there he gets the right atmosphere, the right colour; but there is not the true ring of sincerity about the music; the effect is theatrical, not really dramatic.

LAST night the long-expected musical setting of a German version of Oscar Wilde's play, "Salomé," was produced at the Dresden Opera House. And, seeing that the music was by Richard Strauss—the man of the moment, or, as many people say guardedly, the man of the future in his profession—enormous interest has been aroused.

Well, Strauss's "Salomé" was worth coming to hear. It is the biggest piece of music ever written. It is huge, colossal, tremendous. It takes the thoughtful, Maeterlinck-like play, and rends it; it dominates scene, singers, and story. In fact, despite its length—an hour and a half—it might well be played, as it doubtless will be, in Symphony form.

In the play the horror of the thing is more or less hidden by the simple—and indeed beautiful—imagery of the language; the daughter of Herodias dances so that she may claim the head of John the Baptist upon a charger as a reward; everything seems natural, inevitable, part of the barbaric period which lends its atmosphere to the play. But Richard Strauss has written music to illustrate it which makes passion become frenzy, love and life and death horrors unspeakable. His emphasis is Titanic. In one respect he is most assuredly right. He has attempted, in his score, no bastard archaism. The period of the play is placed nearly two thousand years ago in the past; the period of the music is 1905—to-day, now, hot upon the moment. Here, at any rate, he is logical and artistically correct. But the inevitable effect is that story and music do not blend. The play is remote, intangible, suggestive in the higher sense. But it is morbid to a pathetic degree; it belongs to the curious psychological—I had almost said physiological—phase of art which the French have nearly always with them, which we had with us a decade or more ago, which is now, in its turn, passing through Germany. The wonder is that Richard Strauss was attracted by it. I hate to use the word decadent—it has so often been chosen mistakenly as a shibboleth. But decadent is the adjective which properly describes the play. Richard Strauss is no decadent. He is a fighter, a worker; in all his music I think we may see plainly written for those who care to read a great sweeping sense of humanity, of health; a cry as of those who press ever and strenuously forward; rich-blooded life, almost insolent independence. But of the thoughts of those doubting in the by-ways, of those who sing the songs of the underworld of pain and despair, he has no trace in his artistic nature. And this is why, for Richard Strauss, the subject he has chosen for his latest opera is amiss. He does not allow it to hamper him; he himself kills it.

Of the music, as music, it is impossible to feel anything but the sense of its overwhelming power. Strauss's technical equipment, as well as his originality and superb command of the orchestra, has never been so amazingly manifest. The huge band of over a hundred musicians, which nearly half filled the floor of the Dresden opera house last night, must have spent many laborious days in rehearsing their respective parts.

Melody, save in isolated fragments, and of rare occasion for the singers, does not exist in "Salomé," in the sense in which melody was understood a few years ago. In comparison with this last work of Strauss even the more difficult parts of "Die Meistersinger" become simple, "Parsifal" becomes quite straightforward. Here, I think Strauss is something too relentless. The modern opera goer does not demand that he shall leave the theatre humming "Ah, che la morte" in affectionate remembrance of a performance he has just witnessed. But just something. . . .² And this fact will militate against the success of the opera in Germany—and I do not think it will be a success except among musicians. For the Germans are very sentimental at heart, and melody and sentiment go hand in hand in their world-view. Also the Germans are really very conservative in their artistic tastes, and they are prone to be suspicious of the New Thing. This is why they do not all accept the music of Richard Strauss as yet; and why the present fashion of New Art—"L'Art Nouveau," call it what you will—will not last. Under this heading they include poems such as "Salomé" and the quasi-aesthetic wall papers and book-bindings which are now in vogue. The Germans, like the English, will come back eventually to their "Adams period." It is their nature to do so. So, for these two reasons, Richard Strauss's "Salomé" will not make instant appeal, if it make any appeal save that of curiosity at all.

The production of Strauss's "Salomé" must be accounted, I suppose, the most noteworthy musical event of the last few days. Full particulars of this remarkable work are not yet available, but the shorter accounts that have been received are sufficiently alarming. One reads of "appalling difficulties" and "unprecedented monstrosities." Strauss, says one, has surpassed himself and left poor Wagner far behind. According to another such music has never been known before, and the Kaiser himself has been moved to appeal to the composer to write no more of this kind—though whether in the interests of the singers, the instrumentalists, or the public is not quite clear. "No doubt" is the cryptic remark of one correspondent "Richard Strauss has given his very best, and perhaps even more than that, for in some parts his music was sheer madness." The applause, says another report, lasted nearly twenty minutes, and the composer was compelled to appear before the curtain upwards of forty times. It is not true, I understand, that "Salomé" is to be mounted at Covent Garden next season.

"Salomé" is a peculiar position in English literature; like Beckett's "Vathek," it was written in French, and in the German translation has been more often performed than any other modern English play. It was not only condemned by the English Censor in the midst of Madame Bernhardt's rehearsals at the Palace Theatre; it was greeted by a chorus of ridicule when published in book form. Then the late Aubrey Beardsley embellished an English translation with his fantastic inventions and it achieved a scandalous success, uncomplimentary both to the author and the artist. At the beginning of this year the enterprising New Stage Club gave a clandestine performance of the English version, and every dramatic critic expressed his horror, rendering up a prayer of thanksgiving that we have a Censor. Never did that official enjoy such praise. Even Mr. Max Beerbohm, whose business it is to shock us, became orthodox, and assumed the mask and domino of the late Clement Scott for the occasion. And now Dr. Richard Strauss, the most advanced of modern musicians, has taken the play for his new opera, produced last Saturday in Dresden. He has not merely used Wilde's version of the well-known story, but the actual words of the play in Hedwig Lachmann's translation, and set them to what you are asked to accept as music. Musicians are never very scrupulous in handling the sources of their material. Gluck spoilt the story of Orpheus, and Wagner destroyed the significance of Tannhäuser; but Dr. Strauss has approached "Salomé" with what English critics would think unnecessary reverence, and, except to omit the more striking psychological passages, he has adhered faithfully to the text—not with any view of making it palatable to an English audience, let me hasten to add (all the improprieties are there), but to suit his score. This was no doubt inevitable, and the result was inevitably grotesque. The opera as an interpretation of the play (and this was claimed for it by Dr. Strauss) is simply ridiculous. Those who remember Mr. Tree's fine performance of Macbeth as "Intruder" will recall the disastrous results of cutting the precarious dialogue. The music of Dr. Strauss so effectively smothered Wilde's libretto that the young English ladies completing their education at Dresden will be able to witness his opera without coming to very much harm. To anyone unacquainted with the play it would have been quite impossible to realise the relations of the different characters to each other, or to know that John the Baptist was anything else but a baritone. Such bad acting even in opera I have never seen. Each artist seemed to be crying out, "It only the music would stop I might get a word in edgeways." A new instrument, called appropriately the "Heckelphon," answered from the orchestra. Jochanaan's voice, more like that of a genie confined in a bottle than of a prophet not allowed to prophesy on the English stage, seemed to say, "Wait till I get out of this system." His emergence was only one of many disappointments. Further removed, however, from Wilde's invention was the Salomé of Frau Wittich—further even than the music! Dressed as a poster in l'Art Nouveau fashion, she tripped out of Herod's palace as Vanoni used to trip on at the Empire to sing "Vive Boulanger!" A smirk was on her face, and anyone less like a little princess of the moon, even a very full moon, as we are invited to expect from the text, it would be difficult to imagine. It was impossible, however, to dissent from Herod's opinion that she was truly her mother's daughter, as the Herodias of Frau Schavanne, by her acting and girth, more than scaled this putative daughter, who can never have had Puvion for a parent. The comic, superstitious king has not been seen for some years in English lyric opera, but Herr Burrian found in Herod an opportunity for a Pre-Raphaelite revival of a type that was thought to be extinct. Germany is always preserving traditions and works of art lost to our country. It must be left to the admirers of Dr. Strauss, who greeted with enthusiastic applause this tawdry production, to discuss the intellectual music of a very undomestic symphony. To the many admirers of Wilde's play in Germany and the few admirers in England it was an insult.

In spite of the cultus for Wilde in Germany, the friends of Dr. Strauss felt that he was going rather far in coupling his name with an author admiration for whom is too often found among Anglophobes. A violent pamphlet attacking the authorities for permitting "Salomé" at the Royal Opera House was being circulated freely in Dresden. By way of counterblast, an inspired interview appeared in one of the Berlin papers in which a conversation between Frau Wagner and Dr. Strauss was recorded. Frau Wagner is said to have inquired how the master could find any inspiration in "such dreadful rubbish" (the lady is obviously the spokeswoman of the English critics). Dr. Strauss explained that Oscar Wilde had a message for him. His attention was first drawn to the possibilities of "Salomé" by a Viennese, who had prepared a libretto based on Wilde's work. This, however, seemed to him unsatisfactory, and he turned to the original. Here he found a dramatic work, even a work of art, which, however, required music—the music of Dr. Strauss—to render it perfect. Frau Wagner, though obviously thinking of the exquisite librettos of her late husband's operas, did not urge that Herr Siegfried should supply one for "Salomé," but Dr. Strauss brought the interview to a close by saying that he was going to see the Dresden Gallery, which was better than any music—even his own. With this view I heartily concur. The only pictorial complement in that collection is the sham Holbein which decorated two centuries of critics.

(FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.)

It is impossible to imagine a work more baffling to a listener who is anxious to make up his mind as to what he hears than Strauss's one-act drama *Salome*, which was produced last Saturday at the Royal Opera-house, Dresden, before one of the most competent audiences of musicians imaginable, and with every outward sign of an epoch-making success. That the enthusiasm was spontaneous, genuine, and deeply felt there can be no doubt; but when we try to consider dispassionately what it means and what augury it has for the future of the work we find ourselves beset with doubt and difficulty. *Salome* is certain to give rise to a vast deal of controversy, and, so far as the criticism which have already appeared afford a means of judging, the attack will be delivered along two lines. Leaving for a moment out of account those who are convinced that all Strauss's music is only a particularly aggressive form of twentieth-century lunacy, there are those who find that the music is wholly unsuitable to the text, and there are those who find that it is symphonic and not dramatic—in other words, those who say it expresses too much and those who complain that it expresses too little. Considerations of space make it necessary to assume that the main outlines of Oscar Wilde's drama *Salome* and the nature of his treatment of the subject are generally known. The mysticism and studied *naïveté*, the exuberant Oriental imagery, the deliberately narrow range within which the whole is confined—all these things are well reproduced in Frau Hedwig Lachmann's German version, which the composer has slightly abridged. It is worth pausing here a moment to point out that Strauss calls his work "drama," not "music drama," and he is one of those who ponder deeply on such things. One must assume, therefore, that he desires words and music to be considered in more than the ordinary sense as being one and indivisible. There is no doubt, too, that he has striven, perhaps more consistently than any of his predecessors, to give to each line, to each idea suggested by the text, its appropriate musical setting, regardless of the usual laws of musical form, and that he is an apostle of the gospel of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* who regards the drama as the end and the music as the means. So far all is plain sailing; but when we consider the net result we are confronted with one of the strangest puzzles in the history of dramatic music.

The chief impression left by the work on the present writer is one of wonder that such a text could have inspired a composer with such music; and the wonder grows when one considers the theories which we know to be Strauss's. As one of the leading German critics has already said, between text and music there is a great gulf fixed. In effect the gulf is so deep that one can hardly talk of a conflict between the two; they are too far apart. Or if there is conflict at all, it is short and sharp, and after twenty bars it ends in the complete rout of the poet. It is Niagara diverted into the bed of a lakelet, and in the twinkling of an eye the banks have disappeared and there is a scething torrent where a few minutes before the placid mirror of the water reflected the surrounding landscape. Strauss, however, does not merely destroy—he recreates. The skill and power with which he makes an atmosphere, and with which he gives to each character in the drama its appropriate idiom while yet preserving an essential unity, are proofs of real dramatic genius. He has made Salome, Herod, and Jochanaan to live, but the life-blood that flows in their veins is that of Strauss, not that of Wilde. The

DURING the last twenty years, or even more, Dr. Richard Strauss has been producing a series of orchestral works which have caused much discussion. He is a musician possessed of great gifts, but of late he has shown a tendency to bizarre effects, or, to be fair to him, the attempt to extend his art beyond its natural limits has resulted in strange, and at times uncouth, sounds. In his latest instrumental work 'The Domestic Symphony,' there are sudden changes of mood, also harsh discords and fits of noisy orchestration which are most unpleasant. As the music is of the programme order, there might be some explanation, if not justification of these peculiarities. But in this and former symphonic poems Strauss gives mere titles to his works, while he leaves to writers of various essays or analyses the task of explaining the "inner" meaning of the music, basing their opinions on statements more or less serious made by the composer, and the result is confusion worse confounded. To hear, therefore, a music drama, in which the text would at any rate make clear the aims and intentions of the composer, seemed to us an excellent opportunity of judging him.

But first something must be said about the subject selected. There is strong objection in this country to an opera or drama based on a Biblical story; and even in Germany, in the case of the very work under notice, objections in certain cities have been raised by the censorship. To persons liberally minded, Méhul's masterpiece, "Joseph," Goldmark's "Queen of Sheba," or Saint-Saëns's "Samson et Dalila" might not appear objectionable. But if these were allowed, every new work on a Bible story would lead to a profitable discussion; and hence it has no doubt been found wisest, and perhaps the only thing of the kind. That Strauss was certainly not yet been recognized as a great writer for the stage—should have chosen not only a Biblical subject, but also one dealing with a dark, cruel page of Jewish history, is to be regretted, but he apparently takes pleasure in doing anything which will provoke criticism.

It seemed impossible to avoid reference to the source of the drama; but with regard to 'Salome,' which was produced at Dresden last Saturday evening, our comment will deal with it purely from an artistic point of view. The story presents two personages—the Tetrarch, a slave to his passions, and the voluptuous, cruel Salome—which enable Strauss to indulge in some of his wildest strains; but it must be conceded that Herod is depicted with considerable force, and Salome in an appropriately hysterical manner, except at the close, when music not lacking in charm, and of dramatic intensity, is weakened by the ignoble, indecorous scene with which it is connected.

Jochanaan stands out as the stern preacher of righteousness, and here was Strauss's opportunity for writing impressive music, making the repulsive, alienated, self the dark background to set in striking relief the one noble figure of the tragedy. He is at first associated with music of a certain dignity, of one special theme is, however, soon weakened by over-repetition. Moreover, the style of the music is not properly maintained; it finally becomes somewhat Wotan-esque. What ought to have been the strongest turned out to be the weakest part of the work, not only musically, but also dramatically, for the stage presentation of the Preacher was undignified. Strauss did, we believe, attempt to give a certain solemnity to

"Mr. Henderson,
"My account of Mary,
disregard of the ecclesiastical assumptions, with which her
woman in her great trouble, it seemed to indicate a strange
without significance. Besides a sincere desire to comfort the
of her attendants,"
is certainly not
"Mr. Henderson,
woman in her great trouble, it seemed to indicate a strange
without significance. Besides a sincere desire to comfort the
of her attendants,"

Temple House, Temple Avenue, London.

"Salome.

A scheme is in foot for the performance of Strauss' "Salomé" in Berlin, by the ensemble of the Dresden Opera House, including, of course, Herr von Schuch and his orchestra. Those who know Strauss's method are familiar with Wilde's poem on which this opera is based will not be surprised to hear of the stir "Salomé" has made in Germany. Herr Wirk (of Munich and Covent Garden) won great praise for his staging of "Salomé." One of the features of the scenery was the absence of sky borders, which is said to have added greatly to the effect.

The year which has just come to an end does not seem to have witnessed the production of any epoch-making work, unless indeed Richard Strauss's "Salomé" should prove to be one. The nature of the subject and the complexity of means employed, however, will probably prove a bar to the German master's work achieving any real popularity.

The Kaiser disapproved of Richard Strauss taking Oscar Wilde's *Salome* as a subject for an opera, and told him so. Strauss may have to withdraw from the Royal Berlin Opera.

The orchestral music—and for the occasion there was a specially large orchestra—forms naturally an important feature of the work. The composer has built up his score on Wagnerian lines, i.e., he has representative themes from which is evolved nearly the whole of the instrumental music. Now Strauss is master of the technique of his art, and a mere perusal of the vocal score shows with what skill he has dealt with his material, modifying it according to circumstances, combining one theme with another, and colouring the music, certain savage outbursts excepted, with no small skill. Wagner's methods have been used by many composers. There is a reasonableness about the system of representative themes which may justify the adoption of it in a moderate degree. But Strauss seems as if he wished to surpass Wagner himself. The boldness of his attempt deserves recognition, but with few exceptions the effect is in inverse proportion to the skill displayed. The art is everywhere visible, but the true spirit of inspiration is wanting: the music has body, but no true soul. Was Strauss hampered by his subject? or is it really that he lacks genuine creative power? With Wagner the system of representative themes was the means suggested to him from within as the best to express his thoughts and feelings; with Strauss the imitation is often mechanical. So is it with the classical forms, which by many moderns are considered exhausted; forms cannot be exhausted, but the race of composers able to fill them successfully may be.

One thing more. As in 'Heldenleben' and the 'Domestica,' there are uncouth harmonies. We may be told that from Bach onwards all composers now held in honour were apt to astonish the ears of their contemporaries by the boldness of their harmonies and harmonic progressions. That is so, but it does not follow that Strauss's harsh effects will entitle him to a seat among the immortals. The difference between Strauss and his great predecessors is this: the latter were more given to following the rules handed down than to disregarding them: while Strauss takes the opposite course.

The music which accompanies Salome's dancing before the tetrarch is fantastic and full of Eastern colour, and the interweaving into it of certain quite suitable themes is without doubt effective. This section of the work we expect to find making its way into the concert-room; anyhow, it is the only one which would bear such transplantation. The music represents Strauss at his best.

We must add that the drama is in one act, lasting an hour and a half, and the whole of the action takes place on the terrace of Herod's palace. A division into two acts, with a brief interval, would have been a welcome relief from the storm and stress of the piece.

The principal dramatic persons were Frau Wittich (Salome), Herr Burrian (Herodes), and Herr Perron (Jochanaan), and all three deserved praise for their acting and singing. Frau Wittich's voice was not, however, sufficiently powerful to struggle against the heavy orchestration. The orchestral playing was very fine: the music is excessively difficult, but the players were determined to do their best; while as to Hofrat von Schuch, no words of praise could be too strong for the skill and mastery he displayed as conductor. At the close there were many recalls, for composer, conductor, and artists. The work, then, has made a successful start. Whether it will continue to enjoy prosperity remains to be seen.

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RICHARD STRAUSS' NEW OPERA.

By GILBERT BURGESS.

DRESDEN, Sunday Morning.

LAST night the long-expected musical setting of a German version of Oscar Wilde's play, "Salomé," was produced at the Dresden Opera House. And, seeing that the music was by Richard Strauss—the man of the moment, or, as many people say guardedly, the man of the future in his profession—enormous interest has been aroused.

Well, Strauss's "Salomé" was worth coming to hear. It is the biggest piece of music ever written. It is huge, colossal, tremendous. It takes the thoughtful, Maeterlinck-like play, and rends it; it dominates scene, singers, and story. In fact, despite its length—an hour and a half—it might well be played, as it doubtless will be, in Symphony form.

In the play the horror of the thing is more or less hidden by the simple—and indeed beautiful—imagery of the language; the daughter of Herodias dances so that she may claim the head of John the Baptist upon a charger as a reward; everything seems natural, inevitable, part of the barbaric period which lends its atmosphere to the play. But Richard Strauss has written music to illustrate it which makes passion become frenzy, love and life and death horrors unspeakable. His emphasis is Titanic. In one respect he is most assuredly right. He has attempted, in his score, no bastard archaism. The period of the play is placed nearly two thousand years ago in the past; the period of the music is 1905—to-day, now, hot upon the moment. Here, at any rate, he is logical and artistically correct. But the inevitable effect is that story and music do not blend. The play is remote, intangible, suggestive in the higher sense. But it is morbid to a pathetic degree; it belongs to the curious psychological—I had almost said physiological—phase of art which the French have nearly always with them, which we had with us a decade or more ago, which is now, in its turn, passing through Germany. The wonder is that Richard Strauss was attracted by it. I hate to use the word decadent—it has so often been chosen mistakenly as a shibboleth. But decadent is the adjective which properly describes the play. Richard Strauss is no decadent. He is a fighter, a worker; in all his music I think we may see plainly written for those who care to read a great sweeping sense of humanity, of health; a cry as of those who press over and strenuously forward; rich-blooded life, almost insolent independence. But of the thoughts of those doubting in the by-ways, of those who sing the songs of the underworld of pain and despair, he has no trace in his artistic nature. And this is why, for Richard Strauss, the subject he has chosen for his latest opera is amiss. He does not allow it to hamper him; he himself kills it.

Of the music, as music, it is impossible to feel anything but the sense of its overwhelming power. Strauss's technical equipment, as well as his originality and superb command of the orchestra, has never been so amazingly manifest. The huge band of over a hundred musicians, which nearly half filled the floor of the Dresden opera house last night, must have spent many laborious days in rehearsing their respective parts.

Melody, save in isolated fragments, and of rare occasion for the singers, does not exist in "Salomé," in the sense in which melody was understood a few years ago. In comparison with this last work of Strauss even the more difficult parts of "Die Meistersinger" become simple, "Parsifal" becomes quite straightforward. Here, I think, Strauss is something too relentless. The modern opera goes too far; it does not demand that he shall leave the theatre humming "Ah, che la morte" in affectionate remembrance of a performance he has just witnessed. But just something. And this fact will militate against the success of the opera in Germany—and I do not think it will be a success except among musicians. For the Germans are very sentimental at heart, and melody and sentiment go hand in hand the world over. Also the Germans are really very conservative in their artistic tastes, and they are prone to be suspicious of the New Thing. Which is why they do not all accept the music of Richard Strauss as yet; and why the present fashion of New Art—"L'Art Nouveau," call it what you will—will not last. Under this heading they include poems such as "Salomé" and the quasi-aesthetic wall papers and book-bindings which are now in vogue. The Germans, like the English, will come back eventually to their "Adams period." It is their nature to do so. So, for these two reasons, Richard Strauss's "Salomé" will not make instant appeal, if it make any appeal save that of curiosity at all.

Truth,

The production of Strauss's "Salomé" must be accounted, I suppose, the most noteworthy musical event of the last few days. Full particulars of this remarkable work are not yet available, but the shorter accounts that have been received are sufficiently alarming. One reads of "appalling difficulties" and "unprecedented monstrosities." Strauss, says one, has surpassed himself and left poor Wagner far behind. According to another such music has never been known before, and the Kaiser himself has been moved to appeal to the composer to write no more of this kind—though whether in the interests of the singers, the instrumentalists, or the public is not quite clear. "No doubt" is the cryptic remark of one correspondent "Richard Strauss has given his very best, and perhaps even more than that, for in some parts his music was sheer madness." The applause, says another report, lasted nearly twenty minutes, and the composer was compelled to appear before the curtain upwards of forty times. It is not true, I understand, that "Salomé" is to be mounted at Covent Garden next season.

STRAUSS'S "SALOMÉ" AT DRESDEN.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

"Salomé" has a peculiar position in English literature; like Beckford's "Vathek," it was written in French, and in the German translation has been more often performed than any other modern English play. It was not only condemned by the English Censor in the midst of Madame Bernhardt's rehearsals at the Palace Theatre; it was greeted by a chorus of ridicule when published in book form. Then the late Aubrey Beardsley embellished an English translation with his fantastic inventions and it achieved a scandalous success, uncomplimentary both to the author and the artist. At the beginning of this year the enterprising New Stage Club gave a clandestine performance of the English version, and every dramatic critic expressed his horror, rendering up a prayer of thanksgiving that we have a Censor. Never did that official enjoy such praise. Even Mr. Max Beerbohm, whose business it is to shock us, became orthodox, and assumed the mask and domino of the late Clement Scott for the occasion. And now Dr. Richard Strauss, the most advanced of modern musicians, has taken the play for his new opera, produced last Saturday in Dresden. He has not merely used Wilde's version of the well-known story, but the actual words of the play in Hedwig Lachmann's translation, and set them to what you are asked to accept as music. Musicians are never very scrupulous in handling the sources of their material. Gluck spoils the story of Orpheus, and Wagner destroyed the significance of Tannhäuser; but Dr. Strauss has approached "Salomé" with what English critics would think unnecessary reverence, and, except to omit the more striking psychological passages, he has adhered faithfully to the text—not with any view of making it palatable to an English audience, let me hasten to add (all the improprieties are there), but to suit his score. This was no doubt inevitable, and the result was inevitably grotesque. The opera as an interpretation of the play (and this was claimed for it by Dr. Strauss) is simply ridiculous. Those who remember Mr. Tree's fine performance of Maeterlinck's "Intruder" will recall the disastrous results of cutting the precarious dialogue. The music of Dr. Strauss so effectively smothered Wilde's libretto that the young English ladies completing their education at Dresden will be able to witness his opera without coming to very much harm. To anyone unacquainted with the play it would have been quite impossible to realise the relations of the different characters to each other, or to know that John the Baptist was anything else but a baritone. Such bad acting even in opera I have never seen. Each artist seemed to be crying out, "It only the music would stop I might get a word in edgeways." A new instrument, called appropriately the "Heckelphon," answered from the orchestra. Jochanaan's voice, more like that of a genie confined in a bottle than of a prophet not allowed to prophesy on the English stage, seemed to say, "Wait till I get out of this cistern." His emergence was only one of many disappointments. Further removed, however, from Wilde's invention was the Salomé of Frau Wittich—further even than the music! Dressed as a poster in l'Art Nouveau fashion, she tripped out of Herod's palace as Vanoni used to trip on at the Empire to sing "Vive Boulanger!" A smirk was on her face, and anyone less like a little princess of the moon, even a very full moon, as we are invited to expect from the text, it would be difficult to imagine. It was impossible, however, to dissent from Herod's opinion that she was truly her mother's daughter, as the Herodias of Frau Chavanne, by her acting and girth, more than scaled this putative daughter, who can never have had Puvis for a parent. The comic, superstitious king has not been seen for some years in English lyric opera, but Herr Burrian found in Herod an opportunity for a Pre-Raphaelite revival of a type that was thought to be extinct. Germany is always preserving traditions and works of art lost to our country. It must be left to the admirers of Dr. Strauss, who greeted with enthusiastic applause this tawdry production, to discuss the intellectual music of a very undomestic symphony. To the many admirers of Wilde's play in Germany and the few admirers in England it was an insult.

In spite of the cultus for Wilde in Germany, the friends of Dr. Strauss felt that he was going rather far in coupling his name with an author admiration for whom is too often found among Anglophobes. A violent pamphlet attacking the authorities for permitting "Salomé" at the Royal Opera House was being circulated freely in Dresden. By way of counterblast, an inspired interview appeared in one of the Berlin papers in which a conversation between Frau Wagner and Dr. Strauss was recorded. Frau Wagner is said to have inquired how the master could find any inspiration in "such dreadful rubbish" (the lady is obviously the spokeswoman of the English critics). Dr. Strauss explained that Oscar Wilde had a message for him. His attention was first drawn to the possibilities of "Salomé" by a Viennese, who had prepared a libretto based on Wilde's work. This, however, seemed to him unsatisfactory, and he turned to the original. Here he found a dramatic work, even a work of art, which, however, required music—the music of Dr. Strauss—to render it perfect. Frau Wagner, though obviously thinking of the exquisite librettos of her late husband's operas, did not urge that Herr Siegfried should supply one for "Salomé," but Dr. Strauss brought the interview to a close by saying that he was going to see the Dresden Gallery, which was better than any music—even his own. With this view I heartily concur. The only pictorial complement in that collection is the sham Holbein which deceived two centuries of critics.

R. R.

MUSIC.

STRAUSS'S "SALOMÉ."

(FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.)

It is impossible to imagine a work more baffling to a listener who is anxious to make up his mind as to what he hears than Strauss's one-act drama *Salomé*, which was produced last Saturday at the Royal Opera-house, Dresden, before one of the most competent audiences of musicians imaginable, and with every outward sign of an epoch-making success. That the enthusiasm was spontaneous, genuine, and deeply felt there can be no doubt; but when we try to consider dispassionately what it means and what augury it has for the future of the work we find ourselves beset with doubt and difficulty. *Salomé* is certain to give rise to a vast deal of controversy, and, so far as the criticisms which have already appeared afford a means of judging, the attack will be delivered along two lines. Leaving for a moment out of account those who are convinced that all Strauss's music is only a particularly aggressive form of twentieth-century lunacy, there are those who find that the music is wholly unsuitable to the text, and there are those who find that it is symphonic and not dramatic—in other words, those who say it expresses too much and those who complain that it expresses too little. Considerations of space make it necessary to assume that the main outlines of Oscar Wilde's drama *Salomé* and the nature of its treatment of the subject are generally known. The mysticism and studied naïveté, the exuberant Oriental imagery, the deliberately narrow range within which the whole is confined—all these things are well reproduced in Frau Hedwig Lachmann's German version, which the composer has slightly abridged. It is worth passing here a moment to point out that Strauss calls his work "drama," not "music drama," and he is one of those who ponder deeply on such things. One must assume, therefore, that he desires words and music to be considered in more than the ordinary sense as being one and indivisible. There is no doubt, too, that he has striven, perhaps more consistently than any of his predecessors, to give to each line, to each idea suggested by the text, its appropriate musical setting, regardless of the usual laws of musical form, and that he is an apostle of the gospel of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* who regards the drama as the end and the music as the means. So far all is plain sailing; but when we consider the not result we are confronted with one of the strangest puzzles in the history of dramatic music.

The chief impression left by the work on the present writer is one of wonder that such a text could have inspired a composer with such music; and the wonder grows when one considers the theories which we know to be Strauss's. As one of the leading German critics has already said, between text and music there is a great gulf fixed. In effect the gulf is so deep that one can hardly talk of a conflict between the two; they are too far apart. Or if there is conflict at all, it is short and sharp, and after twenty bars it ends in the complete rout of the poet. It is Niagara diverted into the bed of a lakelet, and in the twinkling of an eye the banks have disappeared and there is a seething torrent where a few minutes before the placid mirror of the water reflected the surrounding landscape. Strauss, however, does not merely destroy—he recreates. The skill and power with which he makes an atmosphere, and with which he gives to each character in the drama its appropriate idiom while yet preserving an essential unity, are proofs of real dramatic genius. He has made *Salomé*, Herod, and Jochanaan to live, but the life-blood that flows in their veins is that of Strauss, not that of Wilde. They are as new and as striking types as any one can recall in the whole literature of opera. The complaint that composers of opera stifle and trample on their texts is no new one. It has been made consistently ever since Humperdinck wrote *Hänsel und Gretel*. There, however, it is obvious that author and musician started from the same view of their theme; here we are face to face with an essential difference of idea. One expected music such as Fauré, Debussy, Hahn, or even Charpentier might have written; we have something which can best be described as *Tristan*, raised to a higher power, but without the suggestion of the hothouse which we occasionally find there. To continue the metaphor, the thermometer is higher than at Tintagel or Karol, but it is the temperature of the open air. Nor is there any chivalry or romance; it is all crude and violent passion. It has been described as hysterical, but this is only partially true. The passion is closely studied, but the observer keeps his head in the midst of it, and here we come to the limitations of the composer. There are passages where he seems to feel too little with his creations.

To come to specifically musical aspects of the score, it is unmistakably Strauss in his latest developments. He carries one step further than in the Domestic Symphony his economy of thematic material, and there is probably no opera based on *leit-motifs* which has so few of them. The score is a monument of complexity and subtlety, but it seems to be a complexity of harmony and orchestral colour rather than of polyphony. This, from the technical point of view seems the most remarkable feature of the music; but from one hearing it is impossible to speak of this with more certainty. Possibly, it is by this that Strauss means to reproduce the simplicity of the text. Still there are passages of polyphony in which Strauss's well-known mastery asserts itself triumphantly. He has written nothing more impressive than the passages for the orchestra which precede and follow the only appearance on the stage of Jochanaan and *Salomé*'s final soliloquies over his severed head. Here we have themes subtly interwoven and splendid musical drama. The zardonic humour of Strauss has never been more characteristically shown than in some of the music of Herod and in the ensemble of disputing Jews.

The performance at Dresden was masterly. Though Frau Wittich was not a sensuous *Salomé*, her singing was extremely fine, when the composer allowed her to sing; Herr Burrian was splendidly dramatic as Herod, and Herr Perron declaimed nobly as Jochanaan, and made the most of the impressive contrast between his broad phrases and the torrential passion of the rest. The orchestra of 120 played in a way which will be a memory to all who heard it, and Herr von Schuch's achievements as conductor were beyond words remarkable.

RICHARD STRAUSS'S 'SALOMÉ' AT DRESDEN.

DURING the last twenty years, or even more, Dr. Richard Strauss has been producing a series of orchestral works which have caused much discussion. He is a musician possessed of great gifts, but of late he has shown a tendency to bizarre effects, or, to be fair to him, the attempt to extend his art beyond its natural limits has resulted in strange, and at times uncouth, sounds. In his latest instrumental work, "The Domestic Symphony," there are sudden changes of mood, also harsh discords and fits of noisy orchestration which are most unpleasant. As the music is of the programme order, there might be some explanation, if not justification of these peculiarities. But in this and former symphonic poems Strauss gives mere titles to his works, while he leaves to writers of various essays or analyses the task of explaining the "inner" meaning of the music, basing their opinions on statements more or less serious made by the composer, and the result is confusion worse confounded. To hear, therefore, a music drama, in which the text would at any rate make clear the aims and intentions of the composer, seemed to us an excellent opportunity of judging him.

But first something must be said about the subject selected. There is strong objection in this country to an opera or drama based on a Biblical story; and even in Germany, in the case of the very work under notice, objections in certain circles have been raised by the censorship. To persons liberally minded, Mchul's masterpiece, "Joseph," Goldmark's "Queen of Sheba," or Saint-Saëns's "Samson et Dalila" might not appear objectionable. But if these were allowed, every new work on a Bible story would lead to unprofitable discussion; hence it has no doubt been found wisest and simplest to forbid anything of the kind. That Strauss—who has certainly not yet been recognized as a great writer for the stage—should have chosen not only a Biblical subject, but also one dealing with a dark, cruel page of Jewish history, is to be regretted, but he apparently takes pleasure in doing anything which will provoke criticism.

It seemed impossible to avoid reference to the source of the drama; but with regard to "Salomé," which was produced at Dresden last Saturday evening, our comment will deal with it purely from an artistic point of view. The story presents two personages—the Tetrarch, a slave to his passions, and the voluptuous, cruel *Salomé*—which enable Strauss to indulge in some of his wildest strains; but it must be conceded that Herod is depicted with considerable force, and *Salomé* in an appropriately hysterical manner, except at the close, when music not lacking in charm, and of dramatic intensity, is weakened by the ignoble, indecorous scene with which it is connected.

Jochanaan stands out as the stern preacher of righteousness, and here was Strauss's opportunity for writing impressive music, making the repulsive elements of the story a dark background to set in striking relief the one noble figure of the tragedy. He is at first associated with music of a certain dignity; one special theme is, however, soon weakened by over-repetition. Moreover, the style of the music is not properly maintained; it is here and there somewhat Wotan-like. What ought to have been the strongest turned out to be the weakest part of the work, not only musically, but also dramatically, for the stage presentation of the Preacher was undignified. Strauss did, we believe, attempt to give a certain solemnity to

his utterances, and just here and there he gets the right atmosphere, the right colour; but there is not the true ring of sincerity about the music; the effect is theatrical, not really dramatic.

The orchestral music—and for the occasion there was a specially large orchestra—forms naturally an important feature of the work. The composer has built up his score on Wagnerian lines, i.e., he has representative themes from which is evolved nearly the whole of the instrumental music. Now Strauss is master of the technique of his art, and a mere perusal of the vocal score shows with what skill he has dealt with his material, modifying it according to circumstances, combining one theme with another, and colouring the music, certain savage outbursts excepted, with no small skill. Wagner's methods have been used by many composers. There is a reasonableness about the system of representative themes which may justify the adoption of it in a moderate degree. But Strauss seems as if he wished to surpass Wagner himself. The boldness of his attempt deserves recognition, but with few exceptions the effect is in inverse proportion to the skill displayed. The art is everywhere visible; the true spirit of inspiration is wanting; the music has body, but no true soul. Was Strauss hampered by his subject? or is it really that he lacks genuine creative power? With Wagner the system of representative themes was the means suggested to him from within as the best to express his thoughts and feelings; with Strauss the imitation is often mechanical. So is it with the classical forms, which by many moderns are considered exhausted; but forms cannot be exhausted, but the race of composers able to fill them successfully may be.

One thing more. As in "Heldenleben" and the "Domestic," there are uncouth harmonies. We may be told that from Bach onwards all composers now held in honour were apt to astonish the ears of their contemporaries by the boldness of their harmonies and harmonic progressions. That is so, but it does not follow that Strauss's harsh effects will entitle him to a seat among the immortals. The difference between Strauss and his great predecessors is this: the latter were more given to following the rules handed down than to disregarding them; while Strauss takes the opposite course.

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The principal dramatis personae were Frau Wittich (*Salomé*), Herr Burrian (Herod), and Herr Perron (Jochanaan), and all three deserve praise for their acting and singing. Frau Wittich's voice was not, however, sufficiently powerful to struggle against the heavy orchestration. The orchestral playing was very fine; the music is excessively difficult, but the players were determined to do their best; while as to Hofrat von Schuch, no words of praise could be too strong for the skill and mastery he displayed as conductor. At the close there were many recalls, for composer, conductor, and artists. The work, then, has made a successful start. Whether it will continue to enjoy prosperity remains to be seen.

Sunday Sun.

Temple House, Temple Avenue, London.

"Salomé."

A scheme is on foot for the performance of Strauss's "Salomé" in Berlin, by the ensemble of the Dresden Opera House, including, of course, Herr von Schuch and his orchestra. Those who know Strauss's method and are familiar with Wilde's poem on which this opera is based will not be surprised to hear of the stir "Salomé" has made in Germany. Herr Wirk (of Munich and Covent Garden) won great praise for his staging of "Salomé." One of the features of the scenery was the absence of sky borders, which is said to have added greatly to the effect.

The year which has just come to an end does not seem to have witnessed the production of any epoch-making work, unless indeed Richard Strauss's "Salomé" should prove to be one. The nature of the subject and the complexity of means employed, however, will probably prove a bar to the German master's work achieving any real popularity.

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Dec. 14.
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Vanity Fair.

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Melody, save in isolated fragments, and of rare occasion for the singers, does not exist in "Salomé," in the sense in which melody was understood a few years ago. In comparison with this last work of Strauss even the more difficult parts of "Die Meistersinger" become simple, "Parsifal" becomes quite straightforward. Here, I think, Strauss is something too relentless. The modern opera goer does not demand that he shall leave the theatre humming "Ah, che la morte" in affectionate remembrance of a performance he has just witnessed. But just something. . . . ? And this fact will militate against the success of the opera in Germany—and I do not think it will be a success except among musicians. For the Germans are very sentimental at heart, and melody and sentiment go hand in hand the world over. Also the Germans are really very conservative in their artistic tastes, and they are prone to be suspicious of the New Thing. Which is why they do not all accept the music of Richard Strauss as yet; and why the present fashion of New Art—"L'Art Nouveau," call it what you will—will not last. Under this heading they include poems such as "Salomé" and the quasi-æsthetic wall papers and book-bindings which are now in vogue. The Germans, like the English, will come back eventually to their "Adam's world." It is their nature to do so. So, for these two reasons, Richard Strauss's "Salomé" will not make instant appeal, if it make any appeal save that of curiosity at all.

Truth,

The production of Strauss's "Salomé" must be accounted, I suppose, the most noteworthy musical event of the last few days. Full particulars of this remarkable work are not yet available, but the shorter accounts that have been received are sufficiently alarming. One reads of "appalling difficulties" and "unprecedented monstrosities." Strauss, says one, has surpassed himself and left poor Wagner far behind. According to another such music has never been known before, and the Kaiser himself has been moved to appeal to the composer to write no more of this kind—though whether in the interests of the singers, the instrumentalists, or the public is not quite clear. "No doubt" is the cryptic remark of one correspondent "Richard Strauss has given his very best, and perhaps even more than that, for in some parts his music was sheer madness." The applause, says another report, lasted nearly twenty minutes, and the composer was compelled to appear before the curtain upwards of forty times. It is not true, I understand, that "Salomé" is to be mounted at Covent Garden next season.

STRAUSS'S "SALOMÉ" AT DRESDEN.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

"Salomé" has a peculiar position in English literature; like Beckford's "Vathek," it was written in French, and in the German translation has been more often performed than any other modern English play. It was not only condemned by the English Censor in the midst of Madame Bernhardt's rehearsals at the Palace Theatre; it was greeted by a chorus of ridicule when published in book form. Then the late Aubrey Beardsley embellished an English translation with his fantastic inventions and it achieved a scandalous success, uncomplimentary both to the author and the artist. At the beginning of this year the enterprising New Stage Club gave a clandestine performance of the English version, and every dramatic critic expressed his horror, rendering up a prayer of thanksgiving that we have a Censor. Never did that official enjoy such praise. Even Mr. Max Beerbohm, whose business it is to shock us, became orthodox, and assumed the mask and domino of the late Clement Scott for the occasion. And now Dr. Richard Strauss, the most advanced of modern musicians, has taken the play for his new opera, produced last Saturday in Dresden. He has not merely used Wilde's version of the well-known story, but the actual words of the play in Hedwig Lachmann's translation, and set them to what you are asked to accept as music. Musicians are never very scrupulous in handling the sources of their material. Gluck spoilt the story of Orpheus, and Wagner destroyed the significance of Tannhäuser; but Dr. Strauss has approached "Salomé" with what English critics would think unnecessary reverence, and, except to omit the more striking psychological passages, he has adhered faithfully to the text—not with any view of making it palatable to an English audience, let me hasten to add (all the improprieties are there), but to suit his score. This was no doubt inevitable, and the result was inevitably grotesque. The opera as an interpretation of the play (and this was claimed for it by Dr. Strauss) is simply ridiculous. Those who remember Mr. Tree's fine performance of Maeterlinck's "Intruder" will recall the disastrous results of cutting the precarious dialogue. The music of Dr. Strauss so effectively smothered Wilde's libretto that the young English ladies completing their education at Dresden will be able to witness his opera without coming to very much harm. To anyone unacquainted with the play it would have been quite impossible to realise the relations of the different characters to each other, or to know that John the Baptist was anything else but a baritone. Such bad acting even in opera I have never seen. Each artist seemed to be crying out, "If only the music would stop I might get a word in edgeways." A new instrument, called appropriately the "Heckelphon," answered from the orchestra. Jochanaan's voice, more like that of a genie confined in a bottle than of a prophet not allowed to prophesy on the English stage, seemed to say, "Wait till I get out of this cistern." His emergence was only one of many disappointments. Further removed, however, from Wilde's invention was the Salomé of Frau Wittich—further even than the music! Dressed as a poster in l'Art Nouveau fashion, she tripped out of Herod's palace as Vanoni used to trip on at the Empire to sing "Vive Boulanger!" A smirk was on her face, and anyone less like a little princess of the moon, even a very full moon, as we are invited to expect from the text, it would be difficult to imagine. It was impossible, however, to dissent from Herod's opinion that she was truly her mother's daughter, as the Herodias of Frau Chavanne, by her acting and girth, more than scaled this putative daughter, who can never have had Puvis for a parent. The comic, superstitious king has not been seen for some years in English lyric opera, but Herr Burrian found in Herod an opportunity for a Pre-Raphaelite revival of a type that was thought to be extinct. Germany is always preserving traditions and works of art lost to our country. It must be left to the admirers of Dr. Strauss, who greeted with enthusiastic applause this tawdry production, to discuss the intellectual music of a very undomestic symphony. To the many admirers of Wilde's play in Germany and the few admirers in England it was an insult.

In spite of the cultus for Wilde in Germany, the friends of Dr. Strauss felt that he was going rather far in coupling his name with an author admiration for whom is too often found among Anglophobes. A violent pamphlet attacking the authorities for permitting "Salomé" at the Royal Opera House was being circulated freely in Dresden. By way of counterblast, an inspired interview appeared in one of the Berlin papers in which a conversation between Frau Wagner and Dr. Strauss was recorded. Frau Wagner is said to have inquired how the master could find any inspiration in "such dreadful rubbish" (the lady is obviously the spokeswoman of the English critics). Dr. Strauss explained that Oscar Wilde had a message for him. His attention was first drawn to the possibilities of "Salomé" by a Viennese, who had prepared a libretto based on Wilde's work. This, however, seemed to him unsatisfactory, and he turned to the original. Here he found a dramatic work, even a work of art, which, however, required music—the music of Dr. Strauss—to render it perfect. Frau Wagner, though obviously thinking of the exquisite librettos of her late husband's operas, did not urge that Herr Siegfried should supply one for "Salomé," but Dr. Strauss brought the interview to a close by saying that he was going to see the Dresden Gallery, which was better than any music—even his own. With this view I heartily concur. The only pictorial complement in the Dresden Gallery which received two centuries of critics.

MUSIC.

STRAUSS'S "SALOME."

(FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.)

It is impossible to imagine a work more baffling to a listener who is anxious to make up his mind as to what he hears than Strauss's one-act drama *Salome*, which was produced last Saturday at the Royal Opera-house, Dresden, before one of the most competent audiences of musicians imaginable, and with every outward sign of an epoch-making success. That the enthusiasm was spontaneous, genuine, and deeply felt there can be no doubt; but when we try to consider dispassionately what it means and what augury it has for the future of the work we find ourselves beset with doubt and difficulty. *Salome* is certain to give rise to a vast deal of controversy, and, so far as the criticisms which have already appeared afford a means of judging, the attack will be delivered along two lines. Leaving for a moment out of account those who are convinced that all Strauss's music is only a particularly aggressive form of twentieth-century lunacy, there are those who find that the music is wholly unsuitable to the text, and there are those who find that it is symphonic and not dramatic—in other words, those who say it expresses too much and those who complain that it expresses too little. Considerations of space make it necessary to assume that the main outlines of Oscar Wilde's drama *Salome* and the nature of his treatment of the subject are generally known. The mysticism and studied naïveté, the exuberant Oriental imagery, the deliberately narrow range within which the whole is confined—all these things are well reproduced in Frau Hedwig Lachmann's German version, which the composer has slightly abridged. It is worth pausing here a moment to point out that Strauss calls his work "drama," not "music drama," and he is one of those who ponder deeply on such things. One must assume, therefore, that he desires words and music to be considered in more than the ordinary sense as being one and indivisible. There is no doubt, too, that he has striven, perhaps more consistently than any of his predecessors, to give to each line, to each idea suggested by the text, its appropriate musical setting, regardless of the usual laws of musical form, and that he is an apostle of the gospel of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* who regards the drama as the end and the music as the means. So far all is plain sailing; but when we consider the net result we are confronted with one of the strangest puzzles in the history of dramatic music.

The chief impression left by the work on the present writer is one of wonder that such a text could have inspired a composer with such music; and the wonder grows when one considers the theories which we know to be Strauss's. As one of the leading German critics has already said, between text and music there is a great gulf fixed. In effect the gulf is so deep that one can hardly talk of a conflict between the two; they are too far apart. Or if there is conflict at all, it is short and sharp, and after twenty bars it ends in the complete rout of the poet. It is Niagara diverted into the bed of a lakelet, and in the twinkling of an eye the banks have disappeared and there is a seething torrent where a few minutes before the placid mirror of the water reflected the surrounding landscape. Strauss, however, does not merely destroy—he recreates. The skill and power with which he makes an atmosphere, and with which he gives to each character in the drama its appropriate idiom while yet preserving an essential unity, are proofs of real dramatic genius. He has made *Salome*, Herod, and Jochanaan to live, but the life-blood that flows in their veins is that of Strauss, not that of Wilde. They are as new and as striking types as any one can recall in the whole literature of opera. The complaint that composers of opera stifle and trample on their texts is no new one. It has been made consistently ever since Humperdinck wrote *Hänsel und Gretel*. There, however, it is obvious that author and musician started from the same view of their theme; here we are face to face with an essential difference of idea. One expected music such as Fauré, Debussy, Hahn, or even Charpentier might have written; we have something which can best be described as *Tristan*, raised to a higher power, but without the suggestion of the hothouse which we occasionally find there. To continue the metaphor, the thermometer is higher than at Tintagel or Kareol, but it is the temperature of the open air. Nor is there any chivalry or romance; it is all crude and violent passion. It has been described as hysterical, but this is only partially true. The passion is closely studied, but the observer keeps his head in the midst of it, and here we come to the limitations of the composer. There are passages where he seems to feel too little with his creations.

To come to specifically musical aspects of the score, it is unmistakably Strauss in his latest developments. He carries one step further than in the Domestic Symphony his economy of thematic material, and there is probably no opera based on *leit-motifs* which has so few of them. The score is a monument of complexity and subtlety, but it seems to be a complexity of harmony and orchestral colour rather than of polyphony. This, from the technical point of view seems the most remarkable feature of the music; but from one hearing it is impossible to speak of this with more certainty. Possibly, it is by this that Strauss means to reproduce the simplicity of the text. Still there are passages of polyphony in which Strauss's well-known mastery asserts itself triumphantly. He has written nothing more impressive than the passages for the orchestra which precede and follow the only appearance on the stage of Jochanaan and *Salome*'s final soliloquies over his severed head. Here we have themes subtly interwoven and splendid musical drama. The sardonic humour of Strauss has never been more characteristically shown than in some of the music of Herod and in the *ensemble* of disputing Jews.

The performance at Dresden was masterly. Though Frau Wittich was not a sensuous *Salome*, her singing was extremely fine, when the composer allowed her to sing; Herr Burrian was splendidly dramatic as Herod, and Herr Perron declaimed nobly as Jochanaan, and made the most of the impressive contrast between his broad phrases and the torrential passion of the rest. The orchestra of 120 played in a way which will be a memory to all who heard it, and Herr von Schuch's achievements as conductor were beyond words remarkable.

RICHARD STRAUSS'S 'SALOME' AT DRESDEN.

DURING the last twenty years, or even more, Dr. Richard Strauss has been producing a series of orchestral works which have caused much discussion. He is a musician possessed of great gifts, but of late he has shown a tendency to bizarre effects, or, to be fair to him, the attempt to extend his art beyond its natural limits has resulted in strange, and at times uncouth, sounds. In his latest instrumental work, 'The Domestic Symphony,' there are sudden changes of mood, also harsh discords and fits of noisy orchestration which are most unpleasant. As the music is of the programme order, there might be some explanation, if not justification of these peculiarities. But in this and former symphonic poems Strauss gives mere titles to his works, while he leaves to writers of various essays or analyses the task of explaining the "inner" meaning of the music, basing their opinions on statements more or less serious made by the composer, and the result is confusion worse confounded. To hear, therefore, a music drama, in which the text would at any rate make clear the aims and intentions of the composer, seemed to us an excellent opportunity of judging him.

But first something must be said about the subject selected. There is strong objection in this country to an opera or drama based on a Biblical story; and even in Germany, in the case of the very work under notice, objections in certain cities have been raised by the censorship. To persons liberally minded, Méhul's masterpiece, 'Joseph,' Goldmark's 'Queen of Sheba,' or Saint-Saëns's 'Samson et Dalila' might not appear objectionable. But if these were allowed, every new work on a Bible story would lead to unprofitable discussion; hence it has no doubt been found wisest and simplest to forbid anything of the kind. That Strauss—who has certainly not yet been recognized as a great writer for the stage—should have chosen not only a Biblical subject, but also one dealing with a dark, cruel page of Jewish history, is to be regretted, but he apparently takes pleasure in doing anything which will provoke criticism.

It seemed impossible to avoid reference to the source of the drama; but with regard to 'Salome,' which was produced at Dresden last Saturday evening, our comment will deal with it purely from an artistic point of view. The story presents two personages—the Tetrarch, a slave to his passions, and the voluptuous, cruel Salome—which enable Strauss to indulge in some of his wildest strains; but it must be conceded that Herod is depicted with considerable force, and Salome in an appropriately hysterical manner, except at the close, when music not lacking in charm, and of dramatic intensity, is weakened by the ignoble, indecorous scene with which it is connected.

Jochanaan stands out as the stern preacher of righteousness, and here was Strauss's opportunity for writing impressive music, making the repulsive elements of the story a dark background to set in striking relief the one noble figure of the tragedy. He is at first associated with music of a certain dignity; one special theme is, however, soon weakened by over-repetition. Moreover, the style of the music is not properly maintained; it finally becomes somewhat Wotanesque. What ought to have been the strongest turned out to be the weakest part of the work, not only musically, but also dramatically, for the stage presentation of the Preacher was undignified. Strauss did, we believe, attempt to give a certain solemnity to

his utterances, and just here and there he gets the right atmosphere, the right colour; but there is not the true ring of sincerity about the music; the effect is theatrical, not really dramatic.

The orchestral music—and for the occasion there was a specially large orchestra—forms naturally an important feature of the work. The composer has built up his score on Wagnerian lines, i.e., he has representative themes from which is evolved nearly the whole of the instrumental music. Now Strauss is master of the technique of his art, and a mere perusal of the vocal score shows with what skill he has dealt with his material, modifying it according to circumstances, combining one theme with another, and colouring the music, certain savage outbursts excepted, with no small skill. Wagner's methods have been used by many composers. There is a reasonableness about the system of representative themes which may justify the adoption of it in a moderate degree. But Strauss seems as if he wished to surpass Wagner himself. The boldness of his attempt deserves recognition, but with few exceptions the effect is in inverse proportion to the skill displayed. The art is everywhere visible, but the true spirit of inspiration is wanting: the music has body, but no true soul. Was Strauss hampered by his subject? or is it really that he lacks genuine creative power? With Wagner the system of representative themes was the means suggested to him from within as the best to express his thoughts and feelings; with Strauss the imitation is often mechanical. So is it with the classical forms, which by many moderns are considered exhausted; forms cannot be exhausted, but the race of composers able to fill them successfully may be.

One thing more. As in 'Heldenleben' and the 'Domestica,' there are uncouth harmonies. We may be told that from Bach onwards all composers now held in honour were apt to astonish the ears of their contemporaries by the boldness of their harmonies and harmonic progressions. That is so, but it does not follow that Strauss's harsh effects will entitle him to a seat among the immortals. The difference between Strauss and his great predecessors is this: the latter were more given to following the rules handed down than to disregarding them; while Strauss takes the opposite course.

The music which accompanies Salome's dancing before the tetrarch is fantastic and full of Eastern colour, and the interweaving into it of certain quite suitable themes is without doubt effective. This section of the work we expect to find making its way into the concert-room; anyhow, it is the only one which would bear such transplantation. The music represents Strauss at his best.

We must add that the drama is in one act, lasting an hour and a half, and the whole of the action takes place on the terrace of Herod's palace. A division into two acts, with a brief interval, would have been a welcome relief from the storm and stress of the piece.

The principal dramatis personæ were Frau Wittich (Salome), Herr Burrian (Herodes), and Herr Perron (Jochanaan), and all three deserve praise for their acting and singing. Frau Wittich's voice was not, however, sufficiently powerful to struggle against the heavy orchestration. The orchestral playing was very fine: the music is excessively difficult, but the players were determined to do their best; while as to Hofrat von Schuch, no words of praise could be too strong for the skill and mastery he displayed as conductor. At the close there were many recalls, for composer, conductor, The work, 408en, has made a successful start. Whether it will continue to enjoy prosperity remains to be seen.