

THE FLONZALEY QUARTET.

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG'S MUSIC.

On Saturday evening at the Bechstein Hall a concert of quite exceptional beauty and interest was given by the Flonzaley Quartet. They played Mozart's Fugue in C minor, better known in the form in which he wrote it for two pianos, with the wonderful introduction which he added to it. Haydn's late Quartet in D, Op. 64, No. 5, and Arnold Schönberg's Quartet in D minor, Op. 7.

The last of these is in one movement, and our watches told us, to our surprise, that its performance took an hour. A mild fear that an Opus 7 might prove to bear the same relationship to the work of the real man that the violin concerto of Strauss does to the "Heldenleben" was allayed after the first few bars. The steady march of the first section, hardening gradually into a strong *legato*, inspired a confidence which the event proved not to have been misplaced. Broadly speaking, the work has four sections, of which the first two serve the traditional purpose of a first and second subject, but are expanded to the length of a first and second movement. After that the music works on more spacious lines through what is evidently a development section on a large scale; for there was never any doubt of the relevance of the phrases, nor of the skill with which they were being worked, nor, it may be added, of the originality of their conception. But though these things could be felt in their separate appropriateness, it was impossible at a single hearing to focus them; and there came a definite moment in the course of this section where the audience, who had clearly come to make up their minds on something that interested them, as was shown by the rapt silence with which they had hitherto listened, were aware that their attention was giving way. A few talked to their neighbours. A few others left the room in despair; and these missed a moment as fine as any, if not the finest of all—a long drawn-out coda with a sweep of melody, very unconventional, but in the broad, grand style of Brahms's Violin Concerto.

Compact and balanced as the work is, there is nothing monotonous about it. Variety is attained by methods one has not hitherto associated with the quartet. Climaxes are built hardly at all by rising tone, and not often by means of rising sequences, though these when they appear play no perfunctory part, but generally by bringing the points of interest closer together in *stretto*. Then, especially after one of these, there will be perhaps a long solo passage, to which another instrument will reply in apparently desultory fashion, but in a way which turns out to be thoroughly complementary. Or there will be, to close a paragraph, a point of rest on some long—very long—pedal of great structural importance. The treatment of pizzicato, too, is uncommon. It does not merely make formal and polite obeisance to the theme, but claims an independent existence of its own. It even, for the nonce, borrows the theme for its own use, to a bowed accompaniment; and when it does so there is no mistake about it, the melody has all the resonance of harpstrings. A passage of whistling harmonics, which in itself was rather to be endured than enjoyed, supplied a light-hearted element of value. Altogether the composer has a good deal of ammunition in the locker.

This quartet gives the key to such music of Arnold Schönberg's as it has hitherto been possible to hear. The Five Orchestral Pieces, which were played last year, and the small pianoforte pieces which those may play who can, both left behind them a sense of bewilderment. The former were too short, and too much obscured by their special instrumental colouring to give any clear impression. In the latter, where on the piano each tone is of the same size and the same faculty as its neighbour, there is no clue to the phrase as a whole; and to any one without peculiar insight and some special knowledge of the composer's aims the music stands as a meaningless procession of dissonances. But no one need now talk any more of the whole thing being a pose or a practical joke; no one need despair of living long enough to understand it. It moves with no uncertain step from the known to the unknown; with a steady hand it leads us, panting with excitement, along the razor edge of expectancy.

That it was possible to take a large stride forward in the understanding of this music was due to the very fine interpretation it received from these four players. It is hard to say whether it was their feeling for stately rhythms or their impeccable intonation or their glowing tone that contributed most to the result; it is still harder to single out any one of them for special praise. The vigour they threw into Mozart's noble fugue and the scrupulous care and light touch with which they handled Haydn's delicately pencilled figures were the measure of what they had done for Arnold Schönberg.

From the first simple statement of the theme powerful cadences (presumably his own) came. The performance was masterly in its just control and its intimate sympathy with the Beethoven's music. Under his hands the part in the dialogue slow movement became of ethereal tone. He was made to add a cadence and when he had lulled us into repose with Nocturne in F sharp major, Sir Henry Wood's orchestra roused us ruthlessly with a most violent fantasia (scored by Rimsky-Korsakoff) on the "Le Mont Chauvre," a witch's Sabbath the rest of the programme had scarcely prepared for.

"THE JONESES."

A PLAY OF WELSH LIFE AT THE STRAND.

IN THREE ACTS.

Written by LAURENCE COWEN.

John Thomas Jones	..	Mr. CADWALADER
Elizabeth Ann Jones	..	Miss NANCY ROBERTS
Plantagenet Jones	..	Mr. H. HARRINGTON
David Morgan Jones	..	Mr. H. WEST GUY
Eleanor Lewis Jones	..	Mr. TOM OWEN
Myfanwy Jones	..	Miss ELKANAH
Jane Ellen Evans	..	Miss LILLIAN MA
Moses Llewellyn Watkin	..	Mr. TED HOPKIN
Nance Ellen Davies	..	Miss MAY HOPKIN
Rev. Daniel Thomas	..	Mr. HARRINGTON
Captain Owen Thomas	..	Mr. R. A. HOPKIN

Mr. Graham Moffat has given us *So Badly Pulls the Strings*, and Mr. "Bern" has given us Ireland in *General John Bull*. Both of these have been undertaken by Mr. Cowen, who, if we may trust the "Apology" he prints in the programme of *The Joneses*, is to speak on the subject. His experience widely from the traditional English view of character of Taffy. So far from being craft to steal a leg of mutton-beef, these Welsh-ones, and he a lawyer—are so guileless picturesquely obvious humbug like Mr. P. Jones can take them all in. Mr. Plantagenet Jones seemed to us rather compounded of characters in Dickens than directly observed life, was an Englishman who, some time eighteen-fifties, chose the little town of Llyns (the author plays with the word as Mr. Shaw once played with a Polish name) for the site of his attentions, much as Get-Rich-Quick fed those Battleburgs. And the Arcadian of Farmer Eleanor Lewis Jones and Paddy Thomas Jones and others was completely by his affectionate enthusiasm for religious testaments, and other Welsh preoccupations downland came through a man of the world Owen Thomas, the vicar's son, who ran cargo boat up and down the Welsh coast; that man of the world would never have him for a rogue without an astutely contrived plan of heading his plot with Lawyer Dav Jones for the capture of Myfanwy Jones, of Eleanor Thomas Jones, and her dowry, what stirred the Captain's wrath were possible loss of his sweetheart was the English plan for robbing sailormen of their rights to an unalcoholic whisky that should spoil the wicket Scots and Irish. So he a honest run for the new-fangled brew; party, including two chapel deacons, got on and the Englishman found it best to leave the guileless Welsh out of more money-parted.

Well, Mr. Cowen has Peacock's author view of the Welsh character; and there is pleasantly Peacockian about Eleanor Thomas farmhouse, though its ornament and I do not include strong ale. The play is honestly flavoured, which is frequently the thin admixture of verbal sweetness. The ready all of it by Welsh players, as yet to London—is hearty; and Mr. Williams went easily and flamboyantly the task of playing the rogue from England a large number of people in the audience home with the characters and allusions as they play very much.

"ARE YOU THERE?"

MUSICAL COMEDY AT THE PRINCE OF WALES'S.

MUSIC BY LEONCavallo. Book by ALAN COURVILLE. LYRICS BY EDGAR WALLACE.

Percy Pellett	..	LAWRENCE
Gordon Grey	..	ALAN FRANK
Antonio	..	ERIC ROBERTS