

## ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG.

By HAVERGAL BRIAN.

THE recent broadcasting of this composer's "Verklärte Nacht" appears to have stimulated a genuine interest in this neglected genius. One hopes that the interest in this composer will develop, for a first-hand acquaintance with him is long overdue in this country. The first reports which reached us in days gone by of the early performances in Vienna, were shrouded in a vague mystery, which did not help those who, living in distant countries, depended upon printed reports for their acquaintance and information. The publication of the works has lifted this early veil of mystery and we now know, to a large extent, what this composer's ultimate fate will be, or can guess at it.

The position of Schönberg, as with Delius in some ways, goes to prove the definite truth that the finest music is a subtle exclusive art. It goes without saying that probably at the present moment there are not sufficient people in the British Isles, with a real understanding of this composer's music, to fill the Queen's Hall. It does not even follow either, that the success of Community singing proves that we are a musical nation, any more than a child's frantic beating on a drum proves him to be a genius. We know from the present position of affairs in the highest branches of the art, that we are not a musical nation at all—when we find it an impossibility to keep the finest art in a flourishing condition. Whilst this state of affairs really exists, composers of the finest and most sensitive temperament can depend upon very little sympathy. Happily, at this juncture, the British Broadcasting Corporation fulfils a genuine mission in broadcasting works which for various reasons are either exclusive or withheld altogether. Thus it is through the broadcasting of "Verklärte Nacht" that one hears of steps being taken by which other works by this composer shall be broadcast.

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An acquaintance with the published Schönberg works allows us a fuller acquaintance than an isolated performance, however fine, would give. One can but admire this solitary genius in his unflinching belief and faith in his mission. Tormented by an adventurous, unsatisfied soul which is directly akin to William Blake, the poet and painter, Schönberg has kept his vision continuously on the far distant horizon, and never faltered in his belief that he would reach the distant goal. We can but stand by and take our hats off to a genius who can write such works as the "Harmonielehre" for his pupils, wherein he betrays a real affection for the classics, mostly for Bach himself, whom he worships with real idolatry. Or yet the "Gurrelieder," "Das Buch der hängenden Gärten," and "Pelleas and Melisande."

In each of these works there is a marvellous spring

of spontaneous invention, and his partwriting, ever so delicate and intricate—yet never muddily or choked up—is so wonderfully and fastidiously contrapuntal, that we believe John Sebastian himself would be the first to salute, were he living with us. Schönberg has the mind of a seer, he feels deeply and sees life tragically.

One cannot listen to such things as "Du wunderliche Tove," or "Nun sag ich dir zum ersten Mal," from the "Gurrelieder" unmoved. Equally so, one holds one's breath in wonderment at most of the things which flash with such brilliant sadness in the 15 Songs which make up "Das Buch der hängenden Gärten."

With what joy and rapture we would hail a performance of the still remarkable "Pelleas and Melisande," an orchestral poem lasting an hour, every page pregnant with new force and new life, yet which perforce must remain dead, for its printed pages cannot speak until awakened by a master craftsman and his magic orchestra. That such a work as this should have been published as far back as 1911 and yet not hitherto heard here, is only another proof of the narrow exclusive confines in which music has been compelled to move in this country.

## THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY OF MUSICIANS.

THE Thirty-Eighth Annual Conference of the I.S.M. will be held in London from Monday, January 2, to Saturday, January 7. The president of the Society, Dr. E. Markham Lee, and members of the London Centre will hold a reception at the Hotel Metropole on Monday evening. On Tuesday the Conference will be opened by the Lord Mayor of London at the Mansion House, when the President of the Society will read his address. The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Hotel Metropole on Wednesday morning, and in the afternoon Professor Percy C. Buck, M.A., will read a paper at a joint meeting of the Music Masters' Association and Members of the Society. On Thursday Mr. H. C. Colles will read a paper to be followed by a discussion, and the Incorporated Society of Musicians Lodge will hold a Meeting, which will be followed by a Luncheon at which many Masonic Brethren have promised to be present. In the afternoon there will be a debate. Mr. Norman O'Neill will read a paper with orchestral illustrations on Friday morning.

MR. OSCAR KRONKE, a native of Danzig, whose death we announce today, was for many years the late Mr. Augener's trusted adviser in all matters musical, and continued with the Company until last September.

With the exception of some years, when he conducted the Highbury Athenæum music school, he devoted his exceptional capabilities to the work of Editor and proof-reader, and the Augener Edition owes much of its reputation for accuracy to his unflinching care.

As a man he was of the most retiring and unassuming disposition.