NOTES ON THE PROGRAMME

If the following seems a little rudimentary to many readers, the Conductor asks them to excuse him and to remember that there are also many boys among the audience.

THE Beethoven Sonata is one of three in that composer's Opus 10 which are dedicated to the Countess Browne. A sonata is a full concert work for solo instrument, written in a definite form. (Where the instrument is accompanied by orchestra the work is known as a Concerto, and where it is for orchestra alone, as a Symphony.) Such a work is in several movements (frequently three in number) of differing types; and in each movement there are two or more " subjects " or tunes on which the movement is based—the extension and development of these tunes and, sometimes, their modulation also into other keys, being the essential characteristic of this form of composition. Two of the three movements of the sonata are being played, the first in very slow time, but having, nevertheless, occasional quite rapid passages, and the second very fast and lively. It would be hard to consider a concert programme complete without the introduction of at least one work by Beethoven, whom many hold to have been the greatest of all composers. MANY of the audience will have heard Miss Dorothy Greene last year, and others will know of her great concert reputation. The two songs she has chosen are well-known favourites, the first being in the more formal classical style by a composer whose symphonies, chamber music, and oratorios have a permanent place in the list of great works, and the second by a Czech composer whose songs are of rare beauty, and are not so well known or as frequently sung in this country as they should be, but whose symphonies (especially that called " From the New World ") and chamber music have earned him a place among the world's masters. MISS Sharpe's first piece is by a composer who was prominent in the brilliant school of French musicians which, at the end of last century, seemed likely to make their country musically predominant. An Élégie is a lament, and compositions of this nature are usually of a broadly melodious, though solemn, nature. This particular example is no exception to type, save that it contains an implied quality of " storm " in its middle passages which makes it rather remarkable. Incidentally, in spite of its apparent simplicity, it is of no little technical difficulty, which is why it is not more frequently heard. The second of Miss Sharpe's solos is the third movement of a sonata for violoncello and piano by a composer of the classical period. It is very lively, being actually in the mode of a jig—for musicians of that time frequently used existing dance forms as the basis of their compositions and, at a period when most dances were in slow time, the jig provided an admirable rhythm when a very rapid tempo was required. SCHUMANN, who has been called " the Noblest of the Romantics," was an influence for good on music of his day through his example and criticism. Originally intending to be a pianist, he turned to composition as a result of injuring his hand beyond remedy in attempting exercises of impossible technical difficulty. His works are mostly for piano or orchestra, but, shortly after his marriage, he wrote a very large number of songs which are marked both by an unusually rich vein of melody and considerable beauty of accompaniment—as " Moonlight " amply illustrates. Mr. Moore-Coulson's second song has been included in memory of a British song writer who died this year. The words are from Laurence Housman's " Shropshire Lad." CHOPIN, who is represented twice in Mr. P. F. Pearson's second group of items, was a Pole who arrived in Paris as a young man with a stock of new and unusual melodies, and, by the rich harmonies of his method of treating them, took the world by storm. He wrote music of all types, but was only truly successful as a composer for the piano, in which sphere, however, he possibly has no rival. His richness of harmony is well illustrated by the simple " Prelude," and the fire and verve of his writing (when he was not, as often, in a contemplative mood) by the " Polonaise." Albeniz was a Spaniard whose works are very distinctly coloured by native charcteristics and who is held by some to rank among the moderns because of his unusual harmonic method. The Tango that is being played is from an early set of his national pieces.

The Conductor cannot sufficiently express his thanks to Mrs. Whittington for singing at very short notice when an accident deprived him of an item originally on the programme. Her first song, though it appears simple, is by one of the greatest of the symphonic composers, whose vocal works are notoriously far from easy. Her second song is by a composer who has succeeded Wagner as the uncrowned king of German music, and is an admirably beautiful example of his command of broad flowing melody.

THE CHORAL WORKS

(*Polonaise with Chorus—In Praise of the Tsaritsa.*) We understand that this is the first performance of this work in Great Britain. This is surprising, for not only is it a melodious and entertaining excerpt (it is taken from the Opera " Christmas Night "), but the composer is well known as one of that famous group of Russians who established the Russian National School of Music in the later part of last century after their country

had for generations imported all its " Arts " from foreign sources. It was typical of the enthusiasm of this group that Rimsky-Korsakov started his musical career whilst an officer in the Imperial Navy, and resigned his commission to take up an appointment at the Conservatoire at St. Petersburg. A Polonaise was a dance originating, as its name shows, in Poland, and, in spite of the impression of rapid movement given by the number of notes to a bar and the continual repetitive beat of the same chord which is a distinctive feature of its rhythm, it was a slow and stately measure, in time not very different from a Minuet. The Polonaise itself lies in the accompaniment, and one can picture the brilliance of the operatic scene with the Tsaritsa dancing this measure, while her people add to its general effect by the chorus in her praise.

(*I Sowed the Seeds of Love.*) Holst, despite the sound of his name, was an English composer who gained a high reputation. In common with other English moderns, he sought much of his material in the simple traditional folk songs of the countryside. This particular song had its origin at some untraceable time in Hampshire : Holst has re-set it in modern form.

(*In Dulci Jubilo.*) The words of this carol are macaronic, *i.e.,* they are partly in English and partly in Latin, thereby achieving a rather quaint effect. The tune is well-known, and, in slightly altered form, has been used for several carols. The first three verses are being sung to the traditional version, and the last verse to a special setting by J. S. Bach, the great German composer of the eighteenth century.

(*The Spirit of England.*) The words of this Cantata are three poems by Laurence Binyon, taken from his verses " The Winnowing Fan," published in 1914—the musical setting dating from two years later. Although Sir Edward Elgar died only recently, his work is not more than slightly tinged with modern harmonic practices, and in style he is a descendant of the great " romantic " composers of the nineteenth century. Even in his lifetime he had an outstanding reputation, and has claims to be considered not only the greatest of English composers, but among the masters of all time. And, though his work included symphonies, concertos, and compositions of all types, this cantata also has its claims to be considered as at the highest level of his genius—not even excepting his famous " Dream of Gerontius." In its original form it is, of course, scored heavily for orchestra; but the innate beauty and grandeur of the music are such that little or nothing is lost by playing the orchestral part upon the piano only, apart from the effect of the drum taps which add to the emphasis of the use of marching rhythms for which Elgar is well known. The first section—" The Fourth of August "—starts with a most noble and dignified phrase to the words " Now in thy splendour go before us, Spirit of England ardent eyed," and the music soon passes to one of those marching rhythms typical both of the composer and of this particular work. The middle of this short section contains a vigorous alteration of tune, which gives place to a brief unaccompanied passage of great beauty which, in its turn, yields to a repetition of the noble opening to bring this portion of the work to a close. As its title would imply, " To Women " is much quieter in tone and of a solemn dedicatory nature. In the " Fourth of August " the passages for the soloist were mingled throughout with those for the Choir, but this short second section of the work opens with the soloist only, the Choir entering later, at the words " Swifter than those hawks of war, those threatening wings that pulse the air," in a passage which, though subdued, has considerable dramatic intensity. This is followed by a further passage for the soloist, who is later joined by the choir echoing the words of her final phrases. Soon, the tune that preceded the unaccompanied portion of "the Fourth of August " is recognised in the accompaniment and is modulated by the choir to a quiet and solemn finale. The third section of the work, " For the Fallen," forms about half the Cantata. It is in part of an elegaic and dedicatory nature, like " To Women," but rises to a tremendous pæan of pride triumphant. There is a short introduction for the accompaniment, formed of three of the four themes of which the work chiefly consists; all three of a pronounced marching rhythm : at first solemn, changing to a more flowing movement, and ending with a hint of the triumphant chords with which the work is to culminate. The choir enters softly, rising in power at the words " Solemn the drums thrill " to form as dramatically contrived an entry for the soloist as can be imagined, the music immediately striking the note of transcendent pride with which the work is to end. There shortly follows the flowing march tune for the accompaniment, which continues to predominate after the choir again enters, and provides the melody—the part written for the choir being here so contrived as to give almost the impression of a monotone, conveying a strong hint of the drum taps that accompany marching men. A third, and slower, section of a reflective nature succeeds this to the words " They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old," the soloist and choir echoing one another in the subdued avowal " We will remember them." With great suddenness this gives place to a final triumphant section, introduced by the soloist with the words " Where our desires are and our hopes profound," which gathers great marching force and brings the work to a climax before the brief quiet phrase with which it ends.