

A MUSICAL POSTBAG

By
ERIC BLOM
(*Editor 'Master Musicians'*)

16 pages of illustrations



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PREFACE

IT is one thing to be autocratic at the breakfast table through the medium of a newspaper that may not survive the day; it is another to lay down the law in a book which may quite possibly accompany the reader to bed. These essays have all appeared at various times during the nineteen-thirties on the leader page of *The Birmingham Post*, in a weekly column headed 'The World of Music,' which catches the reader in the unguarded moment of Monday morning. The same reader and, I hope, a few others, will now see these ephemeral *causeries du lundi* (connected with Sainte-Beuve more by luck than judgment) in a more permanent form and at a time of the day or night that may find him in a more critical and argumentative frame of mind, undistracted by national and local news, not to mention advertisements and crossword puzzles. It is with diffidence, therefore, that I let a certain amount of matter that has long been food for fires and waste-paper baskets go forth, Phoenix-like, once more; for it may well be thought that what the *Post* has once delivered might have remained among the dust and ashes. But at least I have had the chance to make a selection, and if these five or six dozen essays, out of more than four hundred, are not necessarily always the best of my weekly effusions, they have at least been chosen as the most suitable for re-issue.

A newspaper article is apt to be of merely temporary value because it refers to some current topic, or of a

temporary nature if it attempts to drag in a subject of general concern by means of such a topic. Many of my contributions, though they may possibly have contained a point worth making, were thus disqualified from revival, and a large number of them were reviews of books newly published at the time of writing, but now beyond discussion, even if they gave rise to some argument of permanent interest. The present choice, made first of all with an eye for variety, had necessarily to be restricted to such subjects as were felt to be still capable of profitable discussion, or in some cases only of yielding some entertainment. Even so, some changes had to be made, including a few improvements in style and one or two corrections in statements of fact, but consisting chiefly of the removal of topical and local allusions. Several essays dealing with books have been included without the original wording that marked them as reviews of these publications, reference to which has now been relegated for the most part to footnotes. No other modifications have been made. I have purposely refrained from interfering with the expression of any of my views, though I hope I am neither so opinionated nor so fossilized as to be incapable of changing some of them.

It only remains for me to express the sincerest gratitude, on the publisher's behalf and my own, to *The Birmingham Post* for kind permission to let some of the 'World of Music' articles penetrate into the world of books.

ERIC BLOM.

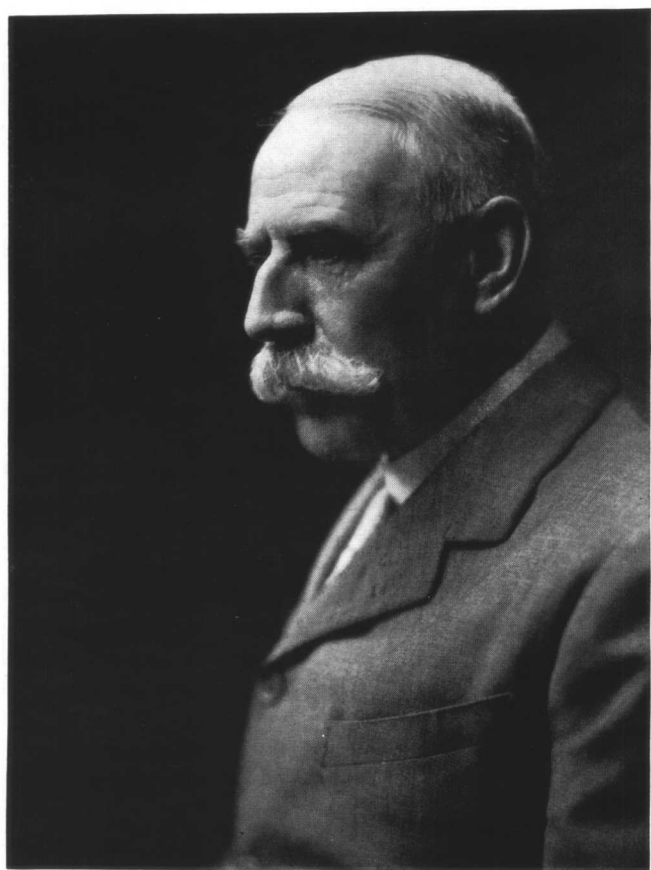
December 1940.





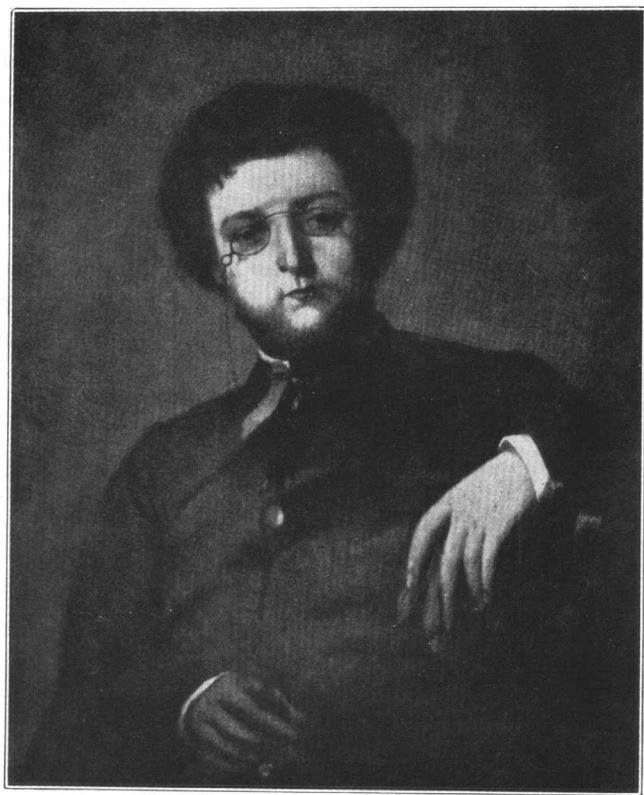












A. Stravinsky
of the
opera
1911



Handwritten musical score for "The Rose Tree" by J. S. G. The score is written on 11 staves. The instruments listed on the left are Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Cornet, Trombone, Trumpet, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The music is in 2/4 time and features a melody with various ornaments and a chorus section. The title "The Rose Tree" is written at the top right.

cuja

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notation includes various note values (minims, crotchets, quavers) and rests. The lyrics "sal - ve sal - ve" are written below the staff.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notation includes various note values and rests. The lyrics "ma - ter mi - se - ricor - diae" are written below the staff.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notation includes various note values and rests. The lyrics "ma - ter mi - se - ricor - diae" are written below the staff.



