

Bergamo

Musical notices from Città e Provincie



A performance in Tokyo of *L'elisir* was reported in the bergamasque press; readers may note with some surprise the role of Dulcamara was sung by Giuseppe Taddei, now aged 78, a baritone justly favoured by many in the '50's and '60's. Opera in and around the city included *Trovatore*, *Rigoletto* and *Traviata*, all promoted by the Ass. Amici della lirica "G.Simonato". There was a concert of operatic arias transcribed for flute and piano, introduced however by Donizetti's *Sonata in do magg.* The Coro lirico di Bergamo presented another *Trovatore* at Albino, and at Alzano a narrator and soloists introduced Puccinian heroines in "Un teatro al femminile".

Restoration work on Donizetti's monument is complete after 3 months' work and it has been "handed back" to the city - Melopea deprived of her lyre for the time being.

L'Assessore dello Spettacolo is reported as proposing an autonomous body to be responsible for all events at the Teatro Donizetti and for public entertainments generally elsewhere. He suggests that it will enable the house to maintain a dignified role in the hierarchy of Italian theatres and avoid the current need to refer the smallest of decisions to the local authority. He also feels that the Teatro Donizetti is nearing its capacity (would that were the situation for all performances!) and suggests another 1000 seat concert hall or theatre to share audiences in the concert season. Hopes for the future of the Teatro Sociale in the Città Alta grow with the promise of a large sum of public money for further restoration work and with a view to putting the building to good use. Whatever transpires - performances of opera still seem very remote - the work will hopefully respect its history and the existing external fabric. The interior is such a fire risk presently that the Fire Brigade will only authorise its use for exhibitions and for no other purpose that envisages a seated audience. Meanwhile, various works at the Teatro Donizetti continue as previously noted, and they will now include the construction of a new ticket hall further down the east side to be ready by autumn 1995, leaving the present biglietteria to be converted to cloakrooms and a better access for the handicapped.

The very recently formed Students Union at the Istituto Musicale Donizetti is already making its voice heard with demands for better and more frequent access to the library; study rooms; and listening facilities unconstrained by any lack in custodial numbers. (Donizettian visitors to the Museo Donizettiano in the same building will sympathise, having suffered similarly over many years!). They also wish to have chamber music classes revived, but their main request is for the Istituto to find new premises - something mooted ten years ago without any concrete proposal having ever materialised - as those in the Via Arena are thought to be not only inadequate but dangerous too.

Addressing the Rotary Club, Maestro Gavazzeni reflected on the merits and faults of his native Bergamo that he feels occupies a unique place in Italy. A fault he noted particularly was the little done for Donizetti; the Festival languishes, he said, more each year, and he compared the situation with that of Pesaro and what it had done and is doing for Rossini, with, he believed, less resources than Bergamo. Referring to the Teatro delle Novità - the festival of new opera between 1937 and 1973 - the Maestro questioned the current lack of similar quasi-experimental initiatives as he feels that opera has exhausted its historical means, opera in the traditional sense, he asserts, is finished (!)

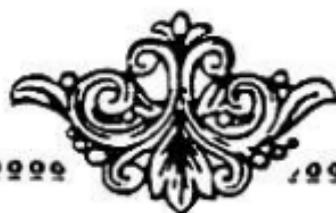
Don Valentino Donella, appointed to succeed Pedemonti as Director of the Cappella Musicale di S.Maria Maggiore (SMM) indicated that he intended, with the encouragement of MIA, to pursue the two traditional roles of the Cappella (*not*, it has to be said, obvious in recent years) viz. "corale" and "culturale" and he hopes to be giving concerts (not only in SMM) in addition to fulfilling liturgical obligations. He was the unanimous choice from thirty-eight applicants for his post because of his work as a composer, his published works on musical history, and his experience with choirs and as an organist. A number of his compositions were included in a concert he conducted in SMM, together with works by Grandi, Legrenzi and Lenzi all of whom served in one capacity or another, the Cappella. Although the performance of some participants was less than wholly satisfactory, Donella's own *Canticum Laudis* "displaying a laudable melodic gift" was encored.

Another new appointee is Don Santo Donadoni as President of the Bergamo section of the Ass. Italiana Santa Cecilia which has its school in Via S.Alessandro where he can be consulted on

matters concerning religious music every Saturday from 3pm onwards.

At Villa D'Almè, about seven miles from the city centre, there was a concert honouring Giovanni Bertuletti, born there in 1828. During his varied musical life he was a band conductor, a teacher of piano at the Conservatorio di Bergamo, and held the position of organist at SMM; he composed many religious pieces and chamber works (mainly for the piano). Other teaching posts included one with a Bavarian family in Munich where he made friends with the German composer Reinecke. He died in Bergamo in 1904.

No less than forty-three band concerts were arranged for the period leading up to Christmas and a master pastry-cook from Ponte San Pietro created a *panettone alla Donizetti* - a temptingly new interpretation of the characteristically round, cushion-shaped bergmasque confection, studded with candied fruit.



Brian Thornton

