

## MRS. ARMSTRONG'S BENEFIT CONCERT.

The complimentary benefit arranged for Mrs. Armstrong was carried out in a manner and with a result which must be very gratifying to the charming vocalist herself, and satisfactory to all concerned. The attendance was excellent, and doubtless largely influenced by the special patronage of his Excellency the Governor and Lady Carrington, who, a few minutes before 8 arrived, accompanied by the Hon. Judith Harbord, Mr. E. W. Wallington, and Captain Terry. Mr. Charles Huenerbein received the vice-regal party and conducted them to their seats, when the National Anthem was sung.

The programme opened with "Sleep, thou wild rose" and "Spring again rejoices," both part songs being carefully sung by eight gentlemen amateurs. The first song in particular was excellently rendered. M. de Willimoff next played a grand polonaise by Wieniawski, which was heard and noticed at length during the Kruse concert season. M. de Willimoff was at a great disadvantage in playing from the text, and being compelled more than once to turn in the middle of a passage. The spirited opening went better than the second movement, which is semi-pastoral. The tone was at times weak and the time faulty, but the audience applauded lavishly at the end. Mr. Hallerwell was not in his usual form, and though his reception was of the heartiest, "The Gamester" was less successful than any solo which this artist has rendered. The weather may have been to blame, for Mrs. McDonald's singing of, "Roberto tu cho Adoro" was by no means equal to previous interpretations, or to her singing on Tuesday. She was, however, recalled at the close. Mme. Charbonnet-Kellermann played her now familiar transcription of M'Appari, for left hand only, and followed it with the brilliant and effective Arabesque of Brissou. A shower of bouquets greeted her performance. The appearance of Mrs. Armstrong was the signal for prolonged applause, and her singing of the Shadow Song from "Diorah" was undoubtedly the gem of the evening. Faithfully she sang the whole ten movements, their changes of tempo, key, and the intricacies of the very elaborate vocalisation surmounted with perfect ease—her enunciation admirable, her runs beautifully clear, the echo passages given with dainty grace, and the frequent shakes trifled to perfection. Her success was perfect, and as great a triumph as though the singer had had all the surroundings which in the opera add so much to this solo. The applause was so prolonged that Mrs. Armstrong returned and sang Testi's "Bid me good-bye." After such a furor Mr. Percy Jones had an ungrateful task, he however, went through the ordeal well, and gave an artistic version of Valentine's song "Dio possente, Dio d'Amor!" from Faust. The second part opened with Weber's quartet for piano Mr. Charles Huenerbein, violin M. de Willimoff, viola Herr Draeger, and 'cello Herr Patek. Probably in deference to those engaged Mr. Huenerbein modestly placed his instrument last, and kept it somewhat subordinate to the others; but it must be remembered that Weber was one of the greatest pianists of his time, and his instrument was intended to be the leading one. The players omitted the allegro, and commenced with the adagio, which is not in the composer's best style. The minuet is more attractive, and is the showiest for the strings; but in the finale presto, the great master is himself, freedom in treatment of the parts, and far more effect as a whole in the movement. A portion of this vividly recalls the Allegro brillante, a later work by the same great composer. The players seemed scarcely at their ease; the 'cello and pianoforte were much ahead of the violin and viola in familiarity with the work. Mrs. Armstrong's singing of Gounod's "Ave Maria" was very scholarly and enjoyable. The violin obligato and organ accompaniment were good.

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At this stage a change was made in the proceedings. Mr. Huenerbein led Mrs. Armstrong to the platform, and was followed by the Hon. D. O'Connor and several of the artists. Mr. O'Connor, addressing his Excellency, said he had been requested by Mr. C. Huenerbein to present Mrs. Armstrong with a souvenir of her friends in Sydney, in recognition of their admiration of her talents, and their personal regard for her. He referred with pride to the University, colleges, technical schools, and other institutions, which proved that in this young community there was a desire for something more than the commercial race in which so many were engaged; but while much had been done by the State and liberal donors, he felt the University was not yet all we could wish, and he hoped the time was not far distant when a great addition would be made to its usefulness by the establishment of a chair of music and an endowment by the State, which would afford means for the fuller culture of music, the most refining of the arts. He wished Mrs. Armstrong every success, and a speedy return to her many friends here. Mr. C. Huenerbein then presented the badge—a golden star with wreath intertwined, and a lyre in the centre. This was attached to a blue ribbon with Mrs. Armstrong's monogram, and on the reverse is an appropriate inscription. Mr. O'Connor's remarks were greatly applauded, and Mrs. Armstrong was also warmly cheered. Herr Patek next played an elaborate fantasia on Irish airs. Mrs. Riley sang in her most sympathetic manner "Because of thee" (Berthold Tours). Mr. Knight Aston sang "A smile for every tear" (Hennett Gilbert). The gentlemen amateurs gave a fine rendering of Fischer's "Spring Night;" and Mrs. Armstrong finished the programme by a very brilliant version of Gung's highly ornate song "Sing, sweet bird," which was encored. The company then sang "God save the Queen," after which, at Lady Carrington's wish, Mrs. Armstrong was presented to her. Both his Excellency and her Ladyship expressed the pleasure they had had in the concert, and examined with interest the badge, which Lady Carrington herself affixed in its place. Mr. Charles Huenerbein is to be congratulated on the successful management of the concert, which was largely and brilliantly attended.

(Sydney Morning Herald,  
January 23, 1886.)