

January 14th, 1894.

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Mr. Edvard Grieg,
Bergen, Norway.

My dear Sir:-

You will be interested to see the accompanying comment on your article on Schumann, which we find in "The Evening Post" of this city. You will perhaps note that Mr. Seidl only inferentially denies Wagner's authorship of the attack on Schumann.

We have already sent you a copy of "The Century" containing this article, and to-day we send you three additional copies.

Remembering your request in regard to the publication of the article, we are very glad to say that we have no objection to your republication of separate portions of it in Norwegian, but should very much prefer that it should not appear as a whole.

Yours very sincerely,
R. U. Johnson
Associate Ed.

MUSICAL GOSSIP.

A beautiful portrait of Schumann in his youth goes with Grieg's article on that composer in the January *Century*. The article itself is of interest not only as the first manifesto in English, that we can recall, by the greatest of Scandinavian composers—a genius whose originality has not yet received a tithe of the recognition due to it—but for some details of Schumann's life culled by the writer during his life in Leipsic, besides a number of just criticisms on the comparative and absolute value of Schumann's works. Unfortunately, in defending his hero against the charges made against him by a certain part of the younger generation, that his orchestral works are "only instrumentalized piano-music"—a succession of "shoemaker's patches"—Grieg commits the offence of recurring to the old charge that Wagner "inspired, and probably more than inspired," the scurrilous and unjust attack on Schumann which appeared in the *Bayreuther Blätter* in 1879, signed by Joseph Rubinstein. The charge that Richard Wagner, the very

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paragon of audacity and recklessness in the expression of musical opinions, should, in his old age, have taken refuge behind the back of a pianist is simply absurd. To gain certainty on this point, however, we have written to Mr. Anton Seidl, who replies:

If Wagner had not considered it beneath his dignity to answer the disgusting accusations or insinuations made at that time, he would have done so. I happened to be at Bayreuth, in Wagner's house, shortly before Joseph Rubinstein's article appeared in the *Bayreuther Blätter*. I remember many occasions when Wagner spoke in a most admiring manner of Schumann's "Manfred," nay even of his opera "Genoveva"; he pronounced "Manfred" the inspiration of a really creative mind, adding, however, that, as in the case of Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Nights' Dream Music," it was not equalled by his later works. It is well known that in this opinion he did not stand alone. On the other hand, it is self-evident that Wagner, the energetic hero who strengthened his muscles amid the steel rhythms of Beethoven's symphonies, could not sympathize with the dreamy character of Schumann's symphonies. . . . Let me add that very often Wagner did not see the articles accepted by the editor, Hans von Wolzogen, for the *Bayreuther Blätter* until after their appearance in print. In the case of the Schumann article, too, the initiative did not come from him at all. The pianist Joseph Rubinstein (no relation of the two great Rubinsteins), who was pursuing his studies at Bayreuth, occasionally caught up certain expressions used by Wagner in conversation; these expressions, which he was unable to digest, he worked up into an undigested article, which Wagner subsequently found equally indigestible when he got sight of it. Bismarck once exclaimed, "The German fears no one except God." Was not Wagner a man whose whole life exemplified this truth? If he had entertained opinions on Schumann such as are expressed in that article, he certainly would have expressed them over his own name and not have taken refuge behind the back of a dyspeptic musician.