



## William Rea at the BMS

### Newspaper reviews, October 1950

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#### **BRITISH MUSIC SOCIETY MEMBERS' NIGHT**

The British Music Society's 'Members' Night' in the Smyth Hall, Belfast on Tuesday evening was specially notable in bringing to a first hearing some piano music written by a Belfast composer, Mr. William Rea.

This consisted of four pieces — three Improvisations and a Fairy Tale — which were played by the composer himself. Their 'wrong note' harmony, it must be confessed, sometimes grated on the ear, and at first seemed merely perverse. They none the less contain some sincerely felt and expressive music which shows considerable power in capturing a specific mood, and the harmonic acerbity even adds to the effect at times, as in the puckish second piece.

The remainder of the programme raised no problems of the same kind and provided a good deal of music that made very pleasant listening. The Mozart Variations for piano duet, played by Dr Ivor Keys and Mr. Evan John, were delightful even if they would I think be still more effective in a two piano form.

Schubert's 'Shepherd on the Rock', sung by Miss Mary Johnston with Mr John Johnston, clarinet, and Dr. Havelock Nelson, piano, gains in attraction with repeated hearings, and there was much beauty in this expressive performance. There was, too, a good deal of romantic expressiveness in the slow movement of Weber's Concertante for clarinet and piano, played with a fine command of style by Mr Johnston and Dr Keys. Elsewhere it is often merely brilliant but always written with supreme understanding of both instruments.

There was a charming musical quality in the duets sung by Rev. and Mrs Graham Craig, two of them unaccompanied, the rest with Mrs. Edith Taylor at the piano. The concluding rounds, conducted by the Society's President, Mr. F. W. Leonard, in which everyone joined, were unrehearsed performances and enjoyable even if less polished in their effect.

RATHCOL.

*Belfast News-Letter* review overleaf

## **BRITISH MUSIC SOCIETY**

### **Members' Night in Belfast**

**(By Our Music Critic)**

Members' Night, the first event of the season in the programme of the British Music Society of Northern Ireland, was attended by a large audience at the Smyth Hall, Belfast, last night.

The president, Mr. F. W. Leonard, welcomed many new members, and said there was still room for more. He expressed also the hope that members would avail themselves of new facilities for borrowing music and scores.

The programme of music performed by members was delightfully unusual in character. Most of the items were in duet form, the exceptions being the pianoforte solos of Mr. William Rea and the rounds in which all present took part.

Mr. Rea gave the first performance of some of his own compositions, Three Improvisations, and Fairy Tale, these showing an imaginative outlook and individual approach to tone colour. The facile playing fell very pleasantly on the ear.

Welcome novelties were Mozart's Variations in G for pianoforte duet, played by Ivor Keys and Evan John, and Weber's Grand Duo Concertante, performed brilliantly and in the grand manner by Dr. Keys and John Johnston, clarinet. Mr. Johnston played also a sympathetic part in Schubert's lovely "Shepherd on the Rock", which was sung gallantly by Miss Mary Johnston (who had a cold) and accompanied by Havelock Nelson.

Nothing gave more pleasure to the audience than the vocal duets sung with charming simplicity by the Rev. Graham Craig and Mrs Craig, accompanied by Mrs. D. R. Taylor.