

Gottschalk

Extract from the french critic by Théophile Gautier
feuilleton de la Presse,
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Translated by R. E. Peterson, 1881

An originality, marked by good taste and a little eccentricity, devoid of charlatanism, have always appeared to us the two chief qualities in an artist of true talent; we have likewise submitted ourselves unreservedly to a sentiment of sympathy and of admiration for Mr. Gottschalk from the first time that we had the pleasure of hearing him. Among our popular pianists to-day there are but few who have known how to create for themselves an incontestable individuality. Liszt, Prudent, and Thalberg are the points of comparison ordinarily chosen by the public when it desires to measure the value of their imitators or of their followers without knowing it.

It is, then, more difficult than one might think to depart from the beaten track, and to have his own tent placed alongside those of the masters. If Mr. Gottschalk has been able, although still young, to acquire this individuality which escapes so many others, it is perhaps owing to the fact that, after having formed his talent by solid studies, he has left it to wander carelessly in the fragrant savannas of his country, from which he has brought back to us the colours and perfumes. What pleases us in music, as in all other things, is novelty; and we have also been as much charmed by the melodious *écrin* of the American artist, as we already have been by the chants of the Muezzin, and the reveries under the palms which Felicien David and Ernest Reyer have noted with their souvenirs of the East.

At his last concert, Gottschalk had the applause of the whole hall. They often cried encore, and the young artist yielded himself without affectation, and with the most perfect courtesy, to the demands of his audience.