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FRIEDRICH RUST, HIS EDITORS AND HIS CRITICS.

By M.-D. CALVOCORESSI.

Until quite recently, Friedrich Wilhelm Rust (1739-1796) was hardly to be numbered among the composers for whose works the musical world evinced genuine interest. And for a long time after his death, little remained of him but his name.

For instance, Schillings's 'Universal Lexicon der Tonkunst' (to which one may pretty confidently refer for information as to the state of things and of opinions towards 1840), after giving a short biography of him and conceding that he was to be remembered as a good performer on several instruments, gives very perfunctorily and without a word of comment a list of his principal works, thus: Sonatas, Variations, Concertos, Odes, Songs, &c.

Things did not begin to change until after 1888, when the composer's grandson, Dr. Wilhelm Rust (1822-1892—Cantor at the Thomasschule), started republishing his principal works. At the Doctor's death, fourteen of Friedrich Wilhelm Rust's sonatas had been edited (and edited with a vengeance) and republished, and the autograph manuscripts of these and of the remaining works were bequeathed to the Royal Library of Berlin.

Now begins the amusing part of the story, which is best introduced by quoting a few paragraphs from Dr. Rust's flaming prefaces to his editions.

Dr. Rust's claim is that his grandfather deserves to be acknowledged as one of the giants of musical art, as a precursor whose powerful genius had anticipated, in the matters of form and of style, many of the most wonderful innovations of the 19th century, and more especially Beethoven's. With reference, for instance, to the Sonata in C, he writes:

'Here we have, in all likelihood, the first specimen of the principle of Variation being applied to the creation of a great work, complex in its unity . . . The introductory recitative itself, which rings like a call of despair, is a variation, leading up to the following theme, an earnest, heartfelt prayer. The same method is used in the second section, which consists of three variations. Remembering the nocturnal procession in Lenau's "Faust," we yield to the impressions that the composer has brought back from Italy. Austere pilgrims pass before us; a pageant of pious children follows. It is as if the spirit of Mozart's "Requiem" was singing with them "Voca mecum benedictis." . . . In the Epilogue, the art of variation transfigures a prayer into a triumphal march.'

And the Sonata prompts the editor to remark:

'Here music rises to the height of a contest between Titans; we acknowledge the heroic victor by the reminiscences of motives which are engraved on his shield.'

Elsewhere he writes:

'Here the fancy of the style, now free, now severe, takes its flight and reaches heights almost never touched at that period. The idiom in its brilliancy, the poetic ideas in their profound pregnancy, burst forth under the influence of egregious events in the life of the composer. Goethe had come to Dessau, where Rust lived. Is it conceivable that he should have not played this peerless work before the great poet?'

The music of the Sonatas seemed to warrant, at least in a measure, the Doctor's vindications, being at times, in style and harmonization, utterly unlike anything done during the same period, and far ahead in the very direction followed by musical art since then. So, naturally enough, a number of musicians readily endorsed, albeit *cum grano salis*, the Doctor's statements, and admitted Friedrich Wilhelm Rust among the aristocracy of great composers and great originators. They could hardly have done less for the long-neglected prophet of romanticism, the man whose bold creative imagination had, unaided and isolated, foreseen and almost mastered the spirit and the technique that crop up later, by degrees, in the achievements of Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, and Mendelssohn: for such the Sonatas, in their edited form, showed him to have been.

Doubts, however, arose before long. The first to give a warning was Dr. E. Prieger, who, in a pamphlet entitled 'F. W. Rust, ein Vorgänger Beethoven's,' diplomatically informs us that 'while the grandson, full of enthusiasm, threw his whole soul into the creations of his ancestor, he gave a reflection of the pictures that had been vividly forming in his mind.' 'The additions,' he adds, 'concern the exterior only, and do not affect the fundamental character of the works.'

'This statement,' Mr. John Shedlock remarks in his excellent book, 'The Pianoforte Sonata,' 'is to a certain extent satisfactory; and we receive it thankfully. But why, one may ask, did not the editor indicate the additions in smaller notes? Then it would have been possible to see exactly what the elder Rust had written, and what the younger one had added. At present we can only marvel at some of the writing, and long to know how much of it really belongs to the composer. There are moments in which it is really difficult to believe that the music belongs to a pre-Beethoven period' (pp. 153-155).

All expounders, however, did not display as great an amount of caution and discrimination. And among those who proved the most eager to render full justice to Friedrich Wilhelm, we find no less an individuality than M. Vincent d'Indy.

'Rust,' says this celebrated composer and theorist, in the second book of his 'Treatise of Composition,' 'is the connecting link between Haydn and Mozart on the one hand, Beethoven on the other. In style, methods, and invention, his music borders closely upon Beethoven's. Now serious, now genial, at times romantic after the

VIOLIN.

KEYBOARD.

perdendosi.

Con moto e drammatico.

ff *dim.* *p* *dim.* *p* *tranquillo.* *ff* *passionato.*

ten.

ff *sf* *sf* *ritard.* *pp*

ten. *ten.* *ten.*

Adagio.

transcendente.

pp *transcendente.* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *rit. e dim. al pp* *pp*

very fashion of the 19th century artists, he often delights us, and astonishes us when we come to think of the time at which he wrote. . . . One must consider him as *the necessary vinculum* between the tradition of Bach and the master of Bonn's novatory imagination.'

'In the works edited by his grandson appear a few reprehensible attempts at modernisation according to a practice of which Germany seems to enjoy the monopoly. However (we have evidence for it) these alterations do not amount to a real travesty: in Rust's Sonatas the chaste, pithy style is truly the author's.'

A long section of the chapter on 'the Sonata before Beethoven' is devoted to the study of Rust's works, which are analysed so as to show, with lengthy quotations, Rust's innovations in

the matters of form and of style. The Sonata in C especially is upheld, in accordance with Dr. Rust's assertions, as an instance of the very principle of the modern 'cyclic' Sonata—in M. d'Indy's opinion, the climax of the art of musical architecture.

From that time, Rust's music found many partisans in France, especially among M. Vincent d'Indy's followers, and became a current feature of the concerts given at the Schola Cantorum.

A new stage was not reached until the end of 1912, when Dr. Ernest Neufeldt, president of a 'Rust-Gesellschaft,' having bethought himself of examining Rust's manuscripts with the hope of discovering more masterpieces, gave the startling results of his investigations in the German periodical, *Die Musik*.

The Sonatas published by Dr. Rust, he told us, have very little in common with the grandfather's original output. All the feats of daring harmonization and novel architecture upon which the 18th century Rust's new-fangled glory rested, belonged to the 19th century Rust. The clever, intricate variations, the 'thematic unity' of the Sonata in C, its 'recitative,' its suggestions of pageants, its triumphal march, were additions to the original text, which consists of 286 bars in all, whereas the Sonata as published in 1891 comprises no fewer than 500.

Likewise, the 'Titanic contest,' the 'reminiscences engraved upon the hero's shield' are not Friedrich Wilhelm's, but Dr. Wilhelm's.

'Now that the true facts are known,' Dr. Neufeldt concluded, 'Rust the giant returns into nothingness; and the true Rust, an interesting, graceful, shrewd, and sensitive artist shall endure, our sympathy for him resting on more normal and firmer foundations.'

To this very moderate article M. Vincent d'Indy retorted by taking up the cudgels in favour of the 'precursor' theory, and boldly abiding by his former statements. Dr. Neufeldt, he said ('S.I.M.', April, 1913), was a 'merry humbug,' who talked on subjects which he either misunderstood or had not sufficiently studied. He was incapable of detecting, under the surface, the originality and intrinsic beauty of Rust's music. 'It is a great good,' he wrote, 'that those admirable works should at last be purged from the tinsel frippery in which they had been clumsily accoutred. Should one, because the unimportant polyphonic garb has ceased to exist, remain blind to the *music*, the admirable *music*, of F. W. Rust?'

M. Vincent d'Indy ended by saying that he was about to publish Rust's Sonatas in their true form, and then all musicians would be able to judge between his theory and Dr. Neufeldt's.

Until the time when this new edition will be available, many will probably think that Dr. Neufeldt's statements and quotations are fairly convincing. In his treatise, M. Vincent d'Indy obviously founds his assertions as to the merits of Rust upon the texts that Dr. Neufeldt gives us as garbled, and which (unless we admit that Dr. Neufeldt has deliberately misrepresented facts) differ from the originals by far more than by the 'unimportant polyphonic garb.'

The better to understand M. Vincent d'Indy's views on that point, one should remember his general views in respect of musical, and especially of melodic, style, which are somewhat austere. For instance, talking in the same treatise (p. 454) of Chopin, he remarks that certain of that composer's motives, 'when deprived of their ornaments,' are very poor, and that their merit consists in their 'form' far more than in their 'substance.'

This quotation (but the passage alluded to deserves to be read in whole) throws light on the

spirit of his statements respecting Rust. But even then, it remains difficult to agree with him as to the unimportance of Dr. Rust's 'ornamentation.' He concedes, it is true, that two out of the fourteen republished Sonatas have been completely deformed: those in A and in D minor. Whence we are to suppose that the addition of 214 bars to a Sonata originally comprising 286 did not 'completely deform it,' but merely clad it in 'unimportant polyphonic garb.'

On the previous page we have quoted from Dr. Neufeldt's article in the 'S.I.M.' for December, 1913, the two versions of one of the Sonatas which M. d'Indy does not consider as 'completely deformed.' Rust wrote the first line; his editor the remainder.

About a score of no less typical examples, taken from the Sonata in B, and from others, are given in that and in the former article.

In short, the whole of Dr. Rust's doings has resulted in one of the most striking hoaxes to be found in the whole history of musical erudition. It stands to reason that if compositions 'doctored' to that extent may appear to so well-known a judge as M. Vincent d'Indy as 'far superior to Mozart's Sonatas' ('S.I.M.', April, 1913, page 50); if a Sonata, carried by spurious additions almost to twice its original length, may be given by him as an instance of firm and beautiful architecture ('Treatise of Composition,' pages 228-230); then may we all, critics and scholiasts, grieve. For such facts show how precarious are our standards, and how easy it is for us to go astray.

In the following number I shall attempt to draw from this little story, from the point of view of the critical judgment in general, a few of its natural consequences. And as soon as M. Vincent d'Indy's edition of Rust's Sonatas shall have appeared, a paragraph will be devoted to any new light it may throw on the subject.

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE WHOLE-TONE SCALE.

BY H. C. COLLES.

One of the departments of musical technique which most exercises the minds of theorists and the ingenuity of composers at present is the serviceableness or otherwise of melodies and harmonies constructed upon a basis of whole tones. The dual nature of the problem—their use in succession for purposes of melody and their use in conglomeration for purposes of harmony—has not been always sufficiently distinguished, possibly because those who have examined the case have drawn their evidence too exclusively from compositions of the present day in which the two are almost inextricably entangled, shall have formed a judgment in accordance with that evidence.

It may be worth while to record here some earlier uses of the whole-toned device, be it melodic or harmonic, with the object of bringing wider evidence to the notice of the judges. I do not mean to propound the question of the small

* For the sake of concision, the further articles published by Dr. Neufeldt and M. Vincent d'Indy in the same 'S.I.M.' (November and December, 1913) are noticed simultaneously.