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SIR J. FREDERICK BRIDGE, C.V.O.,
 PRESIDENT,
 IN THE CHAIR.

ON SOME RECENT TENDENCIES IN COMPOSITION.

BY SIR CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD, M.A., Mus.Doc. &c.

IN a most interesting reprint of Brahms' Commonplace Book, where will be found many of the most striking passages of all sorts and kinds of literature from the Bible to Macaulay and many modern authors of all nationalities, there occurs at the end a quotation from Diderot which very aptly comments on certain tendencies of the present day "Quand on désespère de faire une chose belle, naturelle et simple, on en tente une bizarre."

I often advise young composers to put this quotation on their looking-glasses, and it is the best text I could choose for anything which I have to say. We are not living in the age of beauty, of nature, or of simplicity, but in the days of extravagance. We had better face this fact and though it is bound to pass as it came (it is not improbably accentuated by war weariness), we had better consider what those facts are and where they rebel against beauty, nature and simplicity.

Let me begin by saying that I am, and always have been, essentially a Progressist, and welcome every innovation, however unfamiliar, provided that it makes for the enhancement of beauty, as I consider it. I am not in the modern, perverted sense of the word, now usually used as a term of opprobrium, "academic," but I hope that I am "academic" in the true sense, which cannot be too much insisted upon, of one who knows his business. Some of these facts jump at the eyes.

1. We see an inordinate love of writing fifths consecutively, this is not progress but retrogression; it is going back to the old Diaphony, when men discovered that two parts were more interesting than one, and that a fifth was in tune and therefore easier to sing. Regardless of their effect in sequence, they were tried for their own sakes, but only to be tabooed as ugly by later writers, and especially by Palestrina and

these of his time. Ugly because the insistence upon root basses was invariable, and accentuated by the fifth above ; and their consecutive use involved a clashing of keys which had no possible connection with each other and were destructive of tonality. An interesting discussion of the case is to be found in Helmholtz' great work on sound. I am convinced that there is an acoustical reason at the back of the " prohibition " (so called) of consecutive fifths, and it ought to be investigated and made clear to all. The masters having decided that they were inherently and naturally ugly, the avoidance of consecutive fifths grew into a so-called " rule."

At the present day when all rules are *anathema*, whether founded on nature and commonsense or not, the use of consecutive fifths, if even only as a protest against " rule," became more and more common. One recent writer has said, and with truth, that they represent in the 20th century what the Alberti bass did in the 18th. But they are rather more than this, for the Alberti bass did not offend against the law as laid down, and the indiscriminate use of the consecutive fifths did. Not that I or any sensible man dislike nice fifths, and there are such. Klengel, brother of the author of " The Canons," once told me that Moritz Hauptmann (that most strict of countrapuntists) once woke him up at six o'clock in the morning to tell him that he had written a really beautiful pair of fifths. But of all things in Music, fifths are the most difficult to handle without discretion and without intimate knowledge ; and I fear that many, too many, write them indiscriminately, mainly for the reason that they were " told not " : one more of the educational blunders of our ancestors in enforcing home truths without giving any adequate or approximate reason for them ; one more argument for allowing personal initiative to have its scope and to be its own critic, with wisely applied discretion to help it, rather than to shackle it with cast-iron and unexplained 'rule'.

Fifths were prohibited because they were ugly and they are as ugly now as they ever have been, and as they ever will be, world without end ; because their ugliness most probably depends upon natural phenomena and not upon individual taste. In physical matters I am an ignoramus, and it would be highly instructive to us all, if the Society were to discover an acoustical reason for the old banning of consecutive fifths. I am sure that there must be one, but not so sure that it has been definitely formulated.

Taste is very difficult to analyse, and purity of taste most difficult to ensure. If we play an ugly passage frequently enough we can often twist our ears into liking it. This is equally true of the human palate. A friend of mine, sitting

next a well-known musician at breakfast at an hotel in the North, heard him send away an egg because it was too fresh, and he preferred one with more flavour. I have known cases of children, who liked the taste of cod-liver oil. But in both these instances the truly pure palate rejects such a distortion as to prefer a bad oyster or a bad strawberry; and the average palate agrees that the distortion savours of abnormality—of disease if you like, for disease it is. The return of Diaphony is the return of a relic of barbarism; or rather an attempt to advance music upon lines which later genius found to be as impossible for beauty, as it is disagreeable acoustically. If it prevails, good-bye to Beauty.

2. The second tendency is to worship and to enlarge upon the idea of the whole-tone scale. I wonder how many of those who write the whole-tone scale know what it really means. It is only applicable to the piano, the organ and the harp. For the stringed instruments it is a physical impossibility. If it were not that it relied upon every note in the scale except the octave being out of tune, it would not exist at all. Everyone here knows that for the diatonic scale to find its true octave in the ratio of 2 to 1 (and that is fixed by Nature as is proved by half the string giving the harmonic first octave), it must consist of three greater tones and two lesser tones and two diatonic semitones. It is physically impossible for a scale of whole tones to reach a half ($\frac{1}{2}$) at the octave; a scale of whole greater tones would arrive at an octave which is too sharp; a scale of lesser tones would arrive at an octave which is too flat; and any combination of the greater and the lesser tones will be found equally impossible at the octave. The only way to reach the octave by whole tones is to make each and everyone of the intervening intervals out of tune as the pianoforte is. Anybody who has been trained to learn the scale at the tempered piano will find that he is incapable, on the basis of that instrument, of judging whether a violinist or singer has pure intonation or not. He will have accustomed himself to hear every interval save the octave out of tune. Chords and progressions which sound all right upon strings will sound horrible on the pianoforte to the acute and sensitive ear, and *vice versa*. Strings will have to adopt all the false intonation of the pianoforte to play the whole-tone scale at all, or else, as I know from experience, a note will have to be altered to admit of the scale being played. I tried the whole tone scale in the "Ode to Discord," and found that in one which proceeded from G to G and A, the C $\sharp$ had to be tied to D $\flat$ in its progress, and the double basses actually could be seen to change the note at the tie.

To rely then upon the whole-tone scale is to emphasise all the worse features of the compromise which is known as equal temperament. It may be said that much of the difficulty which is experienced in preventing choral singing from flattening is due to the ascendancy of pianoforte tuning. The leading note is always trying to be too flat because the greater tone in the last tonal interval is not observed. But let me insist upon the fact that all the great Masters from Palestrina to Brahms and Wagner were trained upon the true scale. From Bach onwards they accepted the equal temperament for such instruments as were essential for its existence; but they wrote for the true scale and not for the compromise. It may not be generally known that Wagner first wrote the ascending Thirds in the introduction to the third act of *Tristan* in whole tones, which he scratched out subsequently. The tendency then of the whole-tone scale is to make for impurity of intonation; and therefore I hold that it is not progress but retrogression. If it prevails, good-bye to Nature!

3. The tendency to over-crowding Modulation.

I suggest that the physical ear is by nature incapable of assimilating too rapid and too closely-textured modulation. When a composer sits down to write music, he does not sufficiently weigh the importance of keeping the centre of his picture, or what we call the "climax," in view, and he writes quantities of notes without considering the effect that they will have in performance. If modulations, which look on paper to him to be perfectly feasible and workable, are too rapid, it is impossible for the ear to differentiate them and to give each of them its proper value. The result upon the listener will be fog. A glance even at the very latest of Beethoven's works, such as the posthumous Quartets, will show how supremely careful he was upon this point. Even the opening of the early *E♭* Sonata, Op. 31, which when it was written began with a very modern progression, is spread out over six bars: our latter-day writers would compress them into one or two. He gave time; they do not. The ear wants time now just as much as it did then. Music may have become more complicated; but the human ear is now as it ever has been. For extra complication, it wants extra time. It is as incapable of rapid assimilation as ever it was, and what is the use of music which taxes its powers beyond its natural ability? Others may love a conglomerate of sound; but it cannot analyse it in the time which is given for its assimilation. The palate may be temporarily tickled, but the body will not gain sustenance. True, some ears are more experienced and quicker than others. I know that I can hear the real meaning of many progressions which a less

tutored listener cannot. But it is no use to write music solely for the highly cultivated ear. It is not by such procedure that the great Masters made their appeal and ensured immortality.

There is also a dislike to the use of the common chord. All sorts of devices are invoked to avoid it. The most common is to insert an extraneous note, most commonly the sixth, to conceal what it is unnecessary to hide, the key chord. This is no new progressiveness. It is retrogression. Half a century ago, the seventh was similarly employed, and old time organists used to add the major 7th to the common chord to get, as they said, a fine rolling effect. This heresy was abolished mainly by the efforts of Sir Robert Stewart, of Dublin, who as I remember once asked what Beethoven would have thought if the 7th was inserted in every common chord of the Finale of the 5th Symphony, and if that 7th was played by the trombones. The 6th is put in by a similar heresy, and is only one degree less obnoxious. The richness given by overtones is enough, without an undue insistence upon them, whereby purity of tonality becomes impossible. The opening of the Rheingold depends upon pages and pages of the common chord. Imagine the intrusion of the sixth, and how it would have muddled the waters of the Rhine!

4. Another modern tendency is to neglect Diatonics and to rely upon Chromatics. Chromatics, as their name implies, were the colour upon primary and simpler sounds; as such they were the only alternatives to diatonics. But if chromatics are made the basis where are we to turn for, shall I say, superchromatics? East is East and West is West; and we are, as yet at all events, incapable of grasping a third or a quarter tone as the Persians and Indians are supposed to appreciate, nor do I suppose that we can arrive at that pitch without countless centuries of evolution, if we ever do arrive at it. When Wagner wants to accentuate his great moments he returns (chromatic though he is by nature) to diatonics; as witness *The Coming of the Ship in Tristan*; the Valhalla motif in *The Ring*, the chief theme in *Lohengrin*, and the end of *Parsifal*. The influence of Spohr has had a great deal to do with the worship of chromatics, and, for music which relies upon colour rather than upon drawing, it may have its fascinations; but as all pictures which have done so have failed to hold the field, so chromatic music will. They attract but only temporarily. They excite but often unwholesomely. They are useful as servants, but dangerous as masters. Even Post-Impressionists and Cubists have found it necessary to enclose their pictures in a square or a round frame to accentuate form; and not even they, perhaps

unfortunately, have taken to exhibiting their palettes as their pictures. If chromatics prevail, good-bye to Simplicity.

What then is the test, the best and truest test, of musical composition? It has always appeared to me to be that the one and only touch-stone of greatness is the unconscious and inexplicable feeling which the French call "*frisson*," and the less poetical Britisher "water down the spine." Your worst enemy may produce it in spite of all your personal prejudice: your greatest friend may fail to touch the nerve that sets it going.

Music springs of two essential elements—Rhythm and Melody. Without rhythm melody is usually vapid. Without melody rhythm is but barbaric. The best is of both. Melody is harder to write than a complicated score, for it is both natural and simple; it is written, as all things should be, straight along; and a complicated score is not. Melody is essential to all work if it is to be of value. I was once rebuked for not getting the "melodic line" into one of my pupils, and my reply was that only God and himself could put it there. I fear that melody is nowadays *anathema*. Why? Not because it has been there and is rejected, but because it has never been there at all. No one, who has ever written a good melody, rejects it. He may improve upon it, but he will not turn his back upon it.

Many can concoct a well-sounding score; but very few can write a melody. History has shown that without it as a basis, no music, however attractively coloured, can last. Too many are trusting to fine clothes to conceal a poor body, instead of trusting to a good figure to carry off poor clothes, and to deserve good ones. To this paucity of invention is largely due the prevalent seeking after programme music. The story is often relied upon to supply the lack of form and of theme. Writers forget that such compositions must rely on themselves and not on their analyses or their titles. Neither may be available some day and then what will the music mean? So it is with music which relies upon instrumentation and colour for its acceptance. I remember sitting next a great admirer of Strauss when an amazing transcription for the pianoforte of *Till Eulenspiegel* was played by a masterly pianist. He turned round to me at the end and said: "I did not think it was possible for this to sound so horrible," "*schaüßlich*" was his word. The explanation was clear. The picture was fascinating, but it did not stand photography. The true stuff does, and the well-drawn picture does. No really great music has ever relied upon its story to produce its effect upon the ears of the absolute musician. Anybody who knows the overtures of Weber

or Wagner, knows that. The very last man to build upon such a flimsy foundation was Wagner. He has made it clear in his conversations and writings that absolute music had to be pure to be self-reliant. Berlioz did not so rely upon absolute music and he is suffering from it already, despite his clever and deft juggling with sound. He represents more than any other composer of recent times the influence of the "bizarre," the ascendancy of colour over drawing, the concealment of lack of invention by a torrent of unexpected and often extravagant sounds, seldom relieved by beauty.

One of the most curious and inexplicable signs of our times has been the hero-worship of the disciples of so-called modernity for Mozart; of all the composers of the past they have chosen the very one who represents the complete antithesis of all their theories. He is always clear, always simple in all his work. He writes plenty of notes but never a note too much, or in the wrong place. He is a master of all technique, but a greater master of concealing it. He is before all things the great economist, reaching all his effects by the slightest possible means. This admiration for him cannot but be on the lines of an absolute opposition to his principles. *Lucus a non lucendo*. His quickest movements are so perfect in detail, that they could be played at any speed without showing a flaw. Nowadays a clumsy progression is excused on the ground of the rapidity with which it passes. He fitted his mosaics to the hundredth part of an inch. Now they are hammered together whether they fit or not, and are even chipped to make them combine. If work is done as it is now, in heaven's name let it be done without invoking the patronage of the cleanest composer the world ever saw. We live in the days of Monteverde, not of those of Palestrina. Experiment is worshipped. It is not without its uses, nor was the music of Monteverde. But Palestrina lives; Monteverde is no more. The chief use of the modern development of orchestration has been to advance the technique of orchestral players, who now face difficulties, even impossibilities, with a courage which was lacking half a century ago. And they have profited thereby. What we want to see is if under this gorgeous panoply of colour, there lies the real invention of beautiful music without which all is vanity. I for one am always searching for it. I keep hoping that many mines will turn out to be goldfields, even if their first output is not promising and the assays not at first encouraging. I have even mistaken, I confess it, some propositions for goldmines which have turned out in process of time to be unworthy of the promise. It is better to make mistakes in the optimistic direction than to guard against them by an over-cautious

pessimism. But of one thing after an experience of many years I am quite sure. The most naturally gifted composer will never progress unless he knows his technique so completely to perfection that he has reached the point of forgetting it. So it is with painters—to name only perspective which they must know and forget. So it is with sculptors and anatomy, or the portrayal of the living form will be condemned by the first young student from “Bart’s.” So it is with architects and the laws of strain and stress, or human life will be sacrificed. Music will not endanger life, but it can fatally corrupt that most delicate part of our organisation, the ear. It was once truly said: “We cannot write any more with such beauty as Mozart, but let us try to write with such cleanliness,” unmoved by the allurements of *Vanity Fair* and *Society* on the one hand, or of brutality and barbarism on the other. We cannot all be Palestrinas and Bachs, but there is no cream without plenty of milk, and the milk must, more often than not, be content to produce the cream without complaining of its lot. We cannot do better than write as we sincerely feel, which means that we are trying to attain beauty, nature and simplicity, and not for effect, which will lead into unhealthy extravagance. If we cannot attain to the former, we can at least eschew the “bizarre.”

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN: I confess that I wish someone else was occupying this Chair in order to do justice by his remarks to the Paper that has just been read. But I have the honour of occupying this position as President of the Association; and I may say in passing that the Association would be made even more valuable than it is if we could get Sir Charles Stanford, and people of his calibre, to come oftener than they have done in the past. We welcome Sir Charles; and I am sure that every member of the Association will join me in saying how glad we are that he should have found time to write this paper—and have the courage to read it! I think it wanted a bit of courage. But we have all listened to it with the greatest interest and pleasure. If there is anybody responsible for the best work done by our young musicians in this country at the present moment it is Sir Charles Stanford. I have been connected with the Royal College of Music since it was started, and I have been witness time after time to the extraordinary success with which Sir Charles Stanford has trained his pupils. It has been my unfortunate lot to grovel along in that some-

what despised academical class, Counterpoint. I have trained many of the younger men, among them, Coleridge Taylor, and they were always handed on afterwards to the Composition Master. Some of these students were none too bright, but somehow or other Sir Charles Stanford stirred them up to do something; so when he comes here and expresses the opinions he has expressed there must be something in it. I am older than he is, and I don't suppose my opinion is thought much of; but I know that modern music has run past me a great deal. Fortunately, I do not bother myself about it. I don't go to concerts much, for why should I pay to be annoyed? I only go when I know I shall hear something good. I used to delight in taking a work, sitting in a chair, smoking a cigar—reading the music over and enjoying it. But I'm dashed if I can do so now, and I ask myself "What the dickens is the matter? I've absolute pitch. I can see very well; I enjoy good music; but I'm bothered if I can read the stuff; there's something in it that beats me." So there is a lot to be said for what Sir Charles has pointed out.

But, of course, on the other hand, one has to be careful. You remember what people have said in the old days when writing musical history; how people have recognised that their judgment was wrong; and that things they decried have come to be regarded as masterpieces. In this connection my mind goes back to a curious incident that occurred when I first came to London. I did not know much about orchestral music, but I went to the Philharmonic, and heard for the first time Wagner's Overture to *Die Meistersinger*. I must confess it was very puzzling to me; but what interested me in particular were two Directors of the Philharmonic sitting in front of me. One had been brought up in the old school, a delightful man, who was fond of Beethoven and so on; the other was more advanced; and they had a most frightful row about the Overture when it was over. To-day, we know that there are not two opinions about *Die Meistersinger*; and speaking for myself I enjoy Wagner almost more than anything. So it does not do to say that everything you do not like, and everything you do not understand, is bad. When this Paper appears in our Proceedings its chief value will be, I think, the influence it will have upon our younger and rising men, coming as it does from a man of Sir Charles Stanford's experience and achievements; for it will make them pause before considering that everything *outré* and everything queer is necessarily right; and that everything anyone has heard before and enjoyed is bad. Further than that I do not know that one can go. But I am sure the Paper will have good effect upon our younger members, upon rising

composers, if they will consent to be guided at all by the advice of men older than themselves, which is not usually the case!

MR. R. J. PITCHER: The opinions expressed to-night by Sir Charles Stanford are most valuable and necessary. We are often asked for our opinion and we sometimes turn aside and fail to give one. We feel that it is either not worth having, or that we have not had experience enough to venture upon one. But to-night with such views coming from an authority like Sir Charles, we may feel on safe ground; and it seems to me that his Paper should be circulated not only amongst musical people, but even amongst ordinary newspaper readers so that they may hear and know what musicians feel about certain modern tendencies. I was much struck by what Sir Charles said in regard to Rhythm and Melody. A great many of my pupils I look upon as being thorough musicians, and they sing in $11/4$, $5/4$ times, and in all sorts of time except 3 and 4 in a bar, yet they cannot keep 4 in a bar and certainly cannot keep 6 in a bar. There is too much striving now for some sort of form which is no form at all. In the lectures I have given under the L.C.C., to a great many students not all highly cultured, I take the trouble often to play some of these terrible pieces of music which really and truly form no music at all. One little piece I played the other day is entitled "Twilight Dream." I suggested that it would more worthily be called "Terrible Nightmare."

MR. HERBERT ANTCLIFFE: I should like to support the last speaker in what he has said regarding our appreciation of Sir Charles Stanford's Paper. I have not enjoyed a paper upon any subject for a long time so much as I have enjoyed this—and I am constantly hearing lectures. There are two little technical points that I should like to raise with Sir Charles. He tells us that intonation must be pure, that our music must be pure; from which I take it that he would abolish all arbitrary scales. As he says, the scale as we play it on piano or organ is an unnatural scale, and it had to be adapted. He mentioned the question of playing on orchestral instruments, upon stringed instruments particularly, and mentioned where they had to bring down $C\sharp$ to make it $D\flat$. Surely that is also a most arbitrary thing to do!

From the little acoustical knowledge I possess I understand it is the other way about. Sir Charles suggested that the ear is precisely the same now as it always has been and always will be. But there has been and there is undergoing a process of evolution in our ears. For long centuries it may have evolved very slowly; but there are periods when the process moves more quickly. I suggest that at the present time the

ear is undergoing this quicker process of evolution ; and that some of the music which we cannot understand is produced under this condition of rapid evolution.

Mr. F. G. WEBB : Perhaps I may be permitted to say a few words as a critic who during the past may claim to have been as much tormented and troubled by modern dissonances as anyone present. I think consecutive fifths are objectionable because they suggest unrelated tonalities. The mind is twisted rapidly from one point of view to another in an uncomfortable way. The brain works by connection of ideas. Consecutive fifths present disconnection. But because they do this they become an expressive force and there are times when they are appropriate. Used without specific purpose they are objectionable. With regard to avoidance of the common chord, I think it generally arises from the inability of young composers to deal effectively with anything simple. It is difficult to be profound, but easy by adopting a confused style of expression to make many people think you are too profound for them to understand. It seems to me that when a composer writes in two keys at once, that what he is striving for is to get the effect of a third key. It is to produce a muddled effect : sometimes this is justifiable. You remember that Wagner once asked Richter if a certain horn passage would be played, and that Richter answered " Yes, but it would sound very foggy." " That, is just what I want," said Wagner.

The present tendency in music is psychological. The modern composer is not content with trying to convey a concrete idea, he endeavours to indicate the working of thought and mind, in its evolution. He is often vague about the process, and his music takes a like character. As Sir Charles has said, many young composers have blinded themselves to the fact that there are laws and rules to be obeyed, and they think that progress can only be made by avoiding, or breaking them. They do not realise that it is only by a process of expansion that you get progress. But I think we must admit that the majority of so-called " advanced " composers are sincere in their endeavours to increase the significance of music.

The Rev. W. J. FOXELL : I should like to say a word or two though I am not a professional musician : but I am a student of music and I have listened with great pleasure to what Sir Charles Stanford has said. I cannot say that I was entirely in agreement throughout and, therefore, would venture to ask one or two questions. First of all—Is there to be no progress at all in music ? Are we to be content with the style and form of Palestrina ? Or may we not progress

beyond that? If we are to progress, whether it is a matter of progression or retrogression, it must to a certain extent be a matter of taste; and there individual preferences will come in—a realm in which no law can be laid down. With regard to fifths, for instance, I understand that Sir Charles is not entirely against the use of all fifths; I think he said there were some that even he could admit. What one does observe is, for instance, in the double choruses of *Israel in Egypt*, that Handel undoubtedly writes consecutive fifths: but how does he write them? By crossing the parts. That is, he will keep the rule literally, but will break it virtually. What is that but an admission that after all a fifth can be admitted and is very good in its place? But then the impression I received was that Sir Charles thought we should stop short at a certain stage in music—that Palestrina, and Mozart represented the acme of musical invention and musical genius. Take the passage in the *Eroica* symphony where the horn enters with first notes of the subject against the dominant harmony of the violins—

SIR CHARLES STANFORD: Is it dominant harmony?

Rev. W. J. FOXELL: I won't urge that point. The point I do urge is that the novelty of the passage was so startling to Ries, the friend of Beethoven, that, thinking the horn-player had entered wrongly, he cried out: "Hark at that d—d horn-player; can't he count?" I got that story from M. Brenet's *History of the Symphony*. And Ries, as a man of conservative instincts, would have stood beside Sir Charles Stanford this evening against Beethoven; for he found fault with Beethoven for that particular novelty.

Then with regard to the question of equal temperament, I ask whether, when the full orchestra is playing, the strings will be playing in just intonation, while the oboe, flute and clarinet, for instance, are playing in equal temperament... (No). Again, with regard to the whole tone scale, if you are to object to that on the ground of its not being a natural scale, you might on the same ground equally well object to any scale under our system of equal temperament. There may be other objections—æsthetic objections, for instance—but I cannot understand any objection with reference to equal temperament. Having raised these points, I should like to add that I yield to no one in admiration for Sir Charles Stanford. I found his Paper very stimulating.

MR. H. H. STATHAM: It seems to be rather a heresy, but a common one—the way in which people think of Progress in connection with Art. Progress is a necessary condition of Science, because progress in this case depends upon the accumulation of facts. But with Art it is different. It does

not follow that the art of a later period must be better than the art of an earlier period. What has pleased me so much in listening to the Paper is that it furnishes an explanation of my recent disappointment at concerts. I have been going to concerts all my life; and of late you generally see a new orchestral work in the programme; but the themes do not appear to me to consist of well conceived melody. It is the conscious working up of material instead of melody which arises out of inspiration. although it is a question whether melody does not depend as much upon working up as upon inspiration. We find in Beethoven's notebook, melodies which he afterwards worked up. However, in the programmes of our concerts I want to see something included which excites pleasurable feeling instead of exciting curiosity.

In regard to rhythm I agree with Sir Charles Stanford. But it is obvious that Wagner was much concerned to get rid of rhythm if he could. You see in the Second Act of *Tristan*, the elaborate way in which he mingles triplets with couplets and brackets them together. And generally it is worth mentioning that Wagner had a contemptuous way of regarding other music as merely dance tunes; and wanted, therefore, to get rid of rhythm.

Mr. THOMAS F. DUNHILL: I would like to add a word of appreciation of Sir Charles Stanford's paper. I feel sure that all of us, young or old, have found in it a great deal with which we can agree: and there are young composers present who, I am sure, feel no resentment at any of the things he has said, for we all understand, and to a certain extent appreciate, his point of view. With regard to the vexed question of consecutive fifths—it has peculiar interest for me because what small reputation I may have as a musician has been largely made, firstly by writing consecutive fifths, and secondly by telling other people that they must not write them! Sir Charles Stanford, talking to me the other day, gave me a sort of hint that this question was going to come into his paper, and so I took the trouble to look up one or two matters with regard to it, because if there was time I thought you might be interested to have the views of other people. Sir Charles Stanford said that fifths were forbidden because they were ugly. Now with all due deference to the lecturer I do not think that is precisely true. We know that consecutive fifths were in common use in music up to the end of the 13th century: and the reason why they were banned in the first instance was not because they were objectionable or ugly, certainly not because they were ugly. John of Dunstable was, I believe, the first person to prohibit consecutive fifths, and I have seen it stated on good authority that what he said

was that they were too sweet ; they were forbidden because they were too cloying in their sweetness. Of course there are other views also on this subject. The most interesting I have come across are to be found in a very learned and interesting book by Dr. Henry J. Watt recently published, I think, by the Cambridge Press. It is a book in which the author endeavours to find scientific reasons for the things which we have been taught about in music. It is a scientific book and I should think the author is probably not a musician, although evidently he is acquainted with music to a certain extent.

THE SECRETARY: He is a Member of this Association.

MR. DUNHILL: Well, I wish he were here, because he could explain much better than I can, although perhaps he might be tempted to explain at very great length. After having been through several chapters of his book, I think I may say that his idea is mainly this:—The sounds produced by octaves and fifths are particularly or specially concordant. He uses the word *Symphony* to express the unity of these intervals. And the opposite to this unity of octaves and fifths is *Diaphony*, or *dissonance*. Then he arrives at this conclusion: the more stringently *Symphonic* or *Diaphonic* intervals are, the less good they are in succession. You understand what I mean by that: The more discordant intervals are, or the more concordant, the more likely they are to be ineffective consecutively. Octaves or unisons, and after these fifths, are the most *Symphonic* intervals; minor 2nds and major 7ths are the most *Diaphonic*, and these are objectionable in succession. Major 2nds and minor 7ths are less objectionable than minor 2nds and major 7ths in succession, as they are less *Diaphonic*. 3rds and 6ths are neither *Symphonic* nor *Diaphonic*, and can be used with impunity in any succession—in any way we like. That is a rather interesting theory, but I do not know that it can be accepted altogether. Of course, the curious point is that consecutive fifths and octaves are not always ugly, and are not always found too sweet. I would like some scientist of Dr. Watt's calibre to write a book and tell us why consecutive fifths are beautiful! Perhaps that may be done some time in the distant future.

MR. HERBERT WESTERBY: The lecturer has expressed the hope that some acoustical explanation of "nice consecutive fifths" might be forthcoming; that acoustical reasons might be given as to why they were agreeable. Personally, I do not think this is possible, simply because the laws of sound are not the laws of mind: like parallel lines they can never meet. Consecutive fifths are agreeable or disagree-

able by reason of some purely psychological phenomena. In my opinion it is a question of false relation. You cannot have a chord in two different modes at one time, nor in two different keys—

(SIR CHARLES STANFORD: Oh, can't you!)
in two different keys—not without false relation; that is, confusion of tonality. All consecutive fifths, however, are not unconnected; and I would recommend that the old Rule should be amended so as to forbid the use of all fifths that are un-connected.

MR. W. W. COBBETT: In regard to what Sir Charles Stanford has said about simplicity we need to remind ourselves that modern life is more complex than it was in the days of Mozart; so that music may be alike complex, and—yet simple, just the expression of a composer's own individuality, and Spohr was very chromatic and it was natural to himself to write in that way. We do not want too much Spohr; at the same time I think he is undeservedly neglected now. But when a man, as Sir Charles says, adds sevenths or sixths to the common chord for originality's sake that is detestable, and I think this crazy craving for originality is the curse of modern musical life.

SIR CHARLES STANFORD: Though I am not prepared to accept every criticism that has been made, yet the only thing I will venture to say in regard to them is that I am not quite sorry I was in front and you behind me. I welcome every progress you can make that is sound. My only reservation is—I think it ought to be sound; that is all. I tried not to be nasty, but I have spoken out, and now I thank you very much for having listened to me and for being so kind in your remarks concerning the statements I had put on paper.

With a vote of thanks to Sir Charles Stanford, the proceedings terminated.