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The Dresden Amen

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LISZT AS A BOY.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

DEAR SIR,—Apropos the Liszt Centenary and the valuable articles in your paper upon it, it may interest readers of the *Musical Times* to know that I have in my possession a copy of *The Harmonicon* for June, 1823, which contains the first notice of Liszt in the English musical Press. Here it is: 'A prodigy has lately sprung up in Germany in the person of Franz Liszt, a boy of only eleven years of age, whose wonderful powers as a pianoforte player are mentioned in a very recent letter from Vienna, communicated to us by a correspondent, in the following terms: "On Sunday, April 13, the Hungarian boy, Franz Liszt, eleven years old, gave at noon a concert, which was very well attended. He performed three times during the morning. His chief piece was Hummel's Concerto in B Minor, one of the most difficult compositions extant, which he played with so much precision, correctness and execution, united to such tastes and elegances, that he is already placed side by side of the greatest pianoforte players of the present day. As to physical powers of hands, his leaves us nothing to wish for; and he indeed seems destined to attain the highest rank in the art."'

The writer obviously was at once a discerning critic and a true prophet.—Yours truly,

WILLIAM PEARSON.

323, Victoria Road,
Aston, Birmingham.

ACCRINGTON CLEF CLUB.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

DEAR SIR,—I notice that mention has recently been made in your columns to our little village of Oswaldtwistle in Lancashire and its musical attainments. It may be interesting to relate to you that in this district of Oswaldtwistle, Church, and Accrington, we have what is known as the 'Accrington Clef Club' illustrated as

which holds its meetings once or twice monthly. These meetings are devoted solely to the best chamber music, both vocal and instrumental, of ancient and modern composers. In connection with the Club there is an excellent string quartet. We have several members whose compositions often appear on the programmes.

In 1903 we started with sixteen members, which we now call the original sixteen, these having power to make new rules in regard to the Club.

At the annual meeting, September 21, a committee of five are re-elected with a secretary and president, the latter being generally a person of some high musical standing.

I may add that through one of our old Father Musicians, Mr. R. W. Kenyon, another musical club, which is also in a progressive stage, was formed at Keighley.

Yours faithfully,

HERBERT TOMLINSON.

'HOW IMPERFECT IS EXPRESSION.'

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

DEAR SIR,—With reference to the letter from Dr. Gratton Flood, printed in your November issue: although E. R. James, of Dublin, and McGown, of Glasgow, issued sheet songs of the above tune and song as 'composed by Dibdin,' there was not the slightest justification for it. Dibdin never claimed either tune or words, and it does not appear in any collected edition of his works. It is significant also that in numerous contemporary flute-books the air is expressly designated as 'French.'

What is evidently the original English publication now lies before me. Its title runs:

'The new song in the pantomime of The Witches . . . to which are added the new comic tunes in the Witches, and a favourite French Air, sung in the comedy of Twelfth Night; by Mrs. Abington . . . London, John Johnston, near Exeter Change, in the Strand.' Folio, c. 1772.

On the second page of this are the words and music of the song 'How imperfect is expression,' with the heading 'The French Air in Twelfth Night, sung by Mrs. Abington, the words translated from the French by M. Kelly, Esq.' Underneath is: 'The original words to the above air by the Duke of Orleans.' These begin:

'D'une manière imparfaite
Je vous dirai mon ardeur,' &c.

In Fielding's 'Vocal Enchantress,' 1783, this song and air and the French words are also reprinted, apparently from the above work. I think there can be no doubt about its French origin, and the air has practically nothing of Dibdin's characteristics.

The 'M. Kelly' who translated the words cannot, of course, be Michael Kelly, the composer, who was only born in 1762.

It is interesting to note that the other chime tune is also French (as pointed out by Mr. Arkwright), and occurring in the opera 'The Haunted Tower,' produced in 1789. It may be also noticed that this tune became so popular as a dance as to be called 'The Haunted Tower,' being apparently one of the most popular in that opera. In J. Dale's 'New instructions for playing the harpsichord, piano-forte, or organ,' c. 1795-1800, the air is present and named 'Le Plaisir de L'été' or 'The Haunted Tower.' Whatever the parish books fail to chronicle, I think there can be no question that the above-named tunes cannot have been placed on the chime-barrel much prior to 1775-80.

FRANK KIDSON.

THE DRESDEN AMEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—Mr. F. J. W. Crowe has been good enough to send me a copy of 'The Ancient Plain Chant and Daily Choral Use of the Cathedral Church of Chichester, arranged and harmonized by Thomas Bennett, organist,' containing a further arrangement of the Dresden Amen, as follows:

with this explanatory paragraph: 'The famous "Dresden" Amen, now (1909) used at Chichester Cathedral, is added. It is given in the form in which it has been sung in the State Church, Dresden, ever since circa 1500, which has been taken down by Mr. F. J. W. Crowe, with the assurance of the organist at that church that it is the ancient version.'

Yours faithfully,

CECIL BARBER.

[An article on the Dresden Amen, by Mr. Cecil Barber, appeared in our November issue.—Ed. M.T.]

THE DATE OF THOMAS BRITTEN'S BIRTH.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

DEAR SIR,—I have found the following in addition to the information given in my letter of last month:

1610. xxv. day of October Rycharde Brittainne & Elizabeth BEEBYE married in the yere above written.

1624. The xxvthe day of November Richard Britten and JOANE MAPLEY was married.

1652. [? day]
Elizabeth the daughter of John Brittin baptized in the year above written.

[All from the Parish Church Register,
Rushden, Northants.]

These names may lead to much, for they show that the family name existed about Thomas Britton's time. The spelling of a name is of no great account.

Yours truly,

JOSEPH ENOS SMITH.