Some Principles of Accompaniment to Liturgical Music

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supposed. For instance, the whole of one volume of the complete works of Palestrina was devoted to settings of the Plainsong Office hymns. These settings were not complete in themselves, as only the alternate verses were set, the remaining verses being intended to be sung to the Plainsong in unison. This method gave scope to the skilled choir without silencing the congregation, besides providing a fine musical effect by the contrasting of simple unisonous melody with elaborate unaccompanied singing. Even better than the work of Palestrina in this respect was that of Vittoria. The London Gregorian Association has included striking examples of these settings at its last three Annual Festivals at St. Paul's Cathedral. It is to be hoped that more of them may be made available for use in churches where the ancient Office hymns are used, and where there is a well-trained choir available. Their use would be one more step in the direction of apportioning the singing between choir and congregation, on the lines advocated in the lecture on 'The organization of singing.'

Mr. Martin Shaw was to have followed with a paper on 'Some Principles of Accompaniment to Liturgical Music.' In his unavoidable absence, the lecture was given by his brother, Mr. Geoffrey Shaw. It will be found *in extenso* below.

Friday's discussion on 'The choice of organ voluntaries,' opened by Mr. Sydney Nicholson, was disappointing, because, before the proceedings had got fairly under way, we organists found ourselves defending the use of voluntaries of any kind. Evidently some of the assembled clergy had suffered like the *Spectator* of 1712 from 'Jigging Voluntaries,' and instead of demanding good organ music, demanded none at all. One of the clerical speakers described the voluntary before the service as useless, because it was spoilt by the noise of the squeaking boots of the assembling faithful, and objected to the voluntary after the service because he liked his flock to disperse in perfect silence, those who wished for organ music returning therefor after a decent interval! One can only suppose that if his congregation came into church with protesting boots, and left in meditative silence, they must have changed their footgear during the service. On the whole we heard no convincing reason why good organ music should not be played. There are reasons galore in its favour. This country is rich in good organs, large and small, and there is a generally high and rapidly rising standard of playing. We have, too, a magnificent library of beautiful organ music, much of which, being based on traditional church melodies, is most fittingly played in connection with divine service. Why should it not be heard? We may regard it as a tonal decoration of our churches, just as helpful to the musical as pictures and carving are to other folk. Those to whom voluntaries and recitals are an offence may easily avoid them. But there are in most congregations a very considerable number of people to whom some well-chosen, well-played organ work is as edifying as any other church music outside the Office.

It struck some of us organists that the leading spirits of the school adopted a superior pooh-pooh-ing attitude towards organ music. The first four or five services in chapel were preceded and followed by bleak silences, although there was an excellent three-manual organ available. That this was not to the liking of the majority was proved when Mr. Nicholson arrived and gave us some excellent Bach solos, practically the entire congregation remaining throughout such long works as the Prelude and Fugue in B minor, and the 'Wedge' Fugue. Moreover, as a matter of practical politics, this slighting of what is now an important, if supplementary, branch of church music is a mistake. No society working for the betterment of church music can make any appreciable progress unless it commands the sympathy of the organist. It will hardly do that by sniffing at the instrument and music in which he takes a very proper pride and pleasure.

The final lecture was given by the Rev. H. M. Bannister, Litt.D., on 'The art of expressing musical signs in writing in its earliest forms.' Dr. Bannister had already kindly given an informal chat on the subject in the Bodleian Library, where we were able to see his monumental work on the subject, the result of many years' work in the Vatican Library. He now dealt more fully with a very fascinating branch of musical history.

Simultaneously, a discussion took place at St. Stephen's House on 'The accompaniment of Anglican music.' Mr. Alan May opened the debate, and a most useful one it proved to be, numerous difficulties peculiar to villages and poor town parishes being considered.

The last evening discussion was spent in considering suggestions for next year's School, which it is hoped will take place at Cambridge.

That it will differ very considerably from its two predecessors is inevitable. The recent gathering was more than double the size of the first, with the result that in some respects the organization had to be more or less improvised. The committee recognise that given a School equally large or larger next year, it will be necessary to break up into small teaching centres. On this occasion the lecturers were often in the difficult position of addressing a gathering consisting in almost equal proportions of people requiring elementary and advanced instruction. Moreover the discussions would be more profitable if carried on by smaller groups. Many who wished to ask questions were intimidated by the size of the gathering, and those who did summon up courage, finding themselves on their feet in a large hall, were too apt to fall to a speechifying.

The shortcomings of the School, however, were mainly the result of its sudden growth from a semi-picnic party of forty to an earnest gathering of nearly a hundred. The committee may be trusted to adjust its machinery to this new state of affairs—indeed, it has already set about the business. This done, the 'Summer School of Church Music' should become a hardy annual of great value both on social and educational grounds.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF ACCOMPANIMENT TO LITURGICAL MUSIC.

BY MARTIN SHAW.

(An Address delivered to the members of the Summer School of Church Music in Wadham Hall, Oxford, on August 27.)

What I have to say to-day will deal principally with the organ accompaniment of Plain-song, particularly with reference to the Psalms; though I want also to talk about another most interesting, though little used, form of accompaniment, which will be found very useful in those churches where, during Lent, the organ is silent. I think we have got too much into the way of thinking that accompaniment is necessarily something played on the organ. I want to show later on that it is quite possible for the choir to act as an accompanying instrument, and that in doing so some very noble and beautiful effects are obtained.

I will take organ accompaniment first. As it is quite probable that some of us here to-day are not acquainted with even the notation of Plain-song, a few words on this point will perhaps be useful.

There are two clefs in use, the C:

and the F:

Occasionally what may be described as another clef will be found. I mean the B♭, which is simply a large ♭ thus:

When used as a clef (*i.e.*, at the beginning of a piece) the space filled by the sign is always B♭. It must be borne in mind that the C shown by the C clef can represent various C's on the pianoforte, and not merely middle C; though in practice it will stand for middle C for men, and:

for women and boys.

Similarly, the F clef does not necessarily mean :

For women and boys it would mean :

When confronted then for the first time by the tone-table, all the organist has to remember is that :

and that :

means :

The relation of the other notes is then easy to determine. Of course, in accompanying, most of the Tones will have to be transposed to suit the pitch of the voices. For instance, in the vijth Tone :

the dominant or reciting-note D is much too high for basses or altos. A common dominant (A or B $\flat$) will be found necessary.

I believe that Plain-song would be introduced into many more churches if it were not that it presents greater difficulties to the organist as regards accompaniment than what is called—for want of a better name—Anglican music.

The difference in the method of accompaniment is obvious. When we are accompanying the psalms to Anglican chants, the notes we have to play are in black and white before us. But if the psalms are sung to Plain-song we have to invent our own accompaniment, which will vary with each verse. This must be so in the nature of things, as few verses contain accents in exactly the same places. For instance, it would be wrong to use the same accompaniment for these two successive verses (Ps. 106, v. 30-31) :

30. Then stood up Phinees and *prayed* ; &c.

31. And that was counted unto him for *right-ousness* ; &c.

Let us take this to the 1st Tone :

30. Then stood up Phinees and *pray-ed* : &c.

31. And that was counted unto him for *right-ous-ness* :

In verse 30 the note to '*pray*' (G) is the strong one ; in verse 31 the note to '*right*' (A). The accompaniment will therefore have to be modified in each verse in some such way as the following :

30. Then stood up Phinees and *pray-ed* :

31. And that was . . . right-ous-ness.

Of course, if you really want to hear what I take to be the ideal treatment of the organ during the singing of Plain-song, I will tell you in three words—lock it up. Unless you have an exceptional congregation, however, this is hardly fair to your vicar, and the following Sunday will probably find you on the organ seat once more.

Here are some general principles in accompanying Plain-song, particularly in reference to the psalms :

1. The accompaniment should be no louder than is necessary to sustain the pitch of the choir. That is to say, it is desirable never to use more than a soft Swell as a background, with an occasional Flute on the Great or Choir.

2. Use the pedals very sparingly. The accompaniment to Plain-song is an ever-changing panorama which they are apt to cloud. If your soft Bourdon is nimble it may be used, in verses which do not require much change of chord, as a concession to the British householder, who will certainly complain to the churchwardens if he doesn't hear a pedal note now and again.

3. Two chords only may be used, viz., the common chord and its first inversion. The chord of $\frac{4}{2}$ is only admissible as a suspension, and even then it is better to use a 4 to 3 or a 6 to 5 instead.

Example :

4. The accompaniment should be strictly diatonic, and notes foreign to the mode should be regarded as a license, and very sparingly used. It will be found helpful to reduce all the eight Tones to a common dominant or reciting note—A or B $\flat$ —and to write the scales out and keep them before you while playing. You will then, while accompanying a particular Mode, only use the notes in the scale of that Mode. Suppose we take A as the dominant* :

* It is hardly necessary to point out that in Plain-song the word 'dominant' is not used in the harmony book sense.

We have now at a glance the notes we may use in each Mode. In practice, however, a few licenses are allowed. For instance, it is permitted in the 1st Mode to flatten the B. The chord of the final, too, may be major instead of minor. (Compare the 'Tierce de Picardie' of the harmony books.) It is curious to observe that the modern major scale as we use it cannot be found once in the eight Modes; for although the actual notes do occur in the 6th Mode, the final, or what we should call in modern tonality the key-note, is not on the first, but on the fourth degree of the scale. This may be held to be a distinction without a difference; but in principle, at any rate, the modern major scale is avoided.

5. Use as few chords as possible. Thus a single chord will often serve for a whole phrase or more:

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us :

and in - cline our hearts to keep this law.

6. When you do change the chord, it should be as far as possible on an accented syllable, particularly in accompanying the psalms.

7. It is not necessary to accompany every note. A good effect is produced by letting the voices sing unimportant syllables without organ, reinforcing them with a chord on an accented syllable. Thus:

And the third day He rose a - gain,

ac - cord - ing to the Scrip - tures.

8. Passing-notes may be used freely, and also all the suspensions allowed in strict counterpoint. I think also it

might be allowed to proceed from a discord to a concord by skip in such cases as the following (1st Tone, 8th Ending):

(The above is an example of a healthy false relation which I call thoroughly sturdy and English.)

9. I seem to remember having read somewhere that in actual life it is a sign of ill-breeding to be rude unintentionally, and this very excellent guiding principle applies also to plainsong accompaniment. The use of consecutive fifths is a solecism when committed unawares, but sometimes most salutary when done purposely. Thus:

Boys AND MEN. 1st Tone, 4th ending.
I will declare hard sen - ten - ces of old.
ACCOMP.

Speaking generally, what church music wants most is less Art and more life; or, as it might be put, less Bach and more 'bite.'

10. Accompany in four or three parts; never more.

11. Do not move on the reciting-note. One chord is enough.

12. An excellent effect may be produced by treating the melody as a tenor part and playing it with the left hand on, say, the Gt. Claribel (or Ch. Clarinet if soft enough), while the right hand is playing on a soft Swell in some such manner as the following:

8th Tone, 1st ending.
C.F.
Ped.

13. When you get, as part of a melody, three descending notes of a scale (as is very common), do not accompany with consecutive 3rds or 6ths on a bass pedal note:

3rds. 6ths.

A more characteristic way of accompanying such a passage is:

and

14. It must be remembered that very few of the Endings of the Psalm Tones finish on the final of the Mode. Thus, if we take the 1st Tone, we find that of the nine endings only two finish on the final, viz., i. 5:

and i. 8:

In the 2nd Tone both endings have the last note on the final.

In the 3rd Tone, of the six endings none finish on the final.

In the 4th Tone, of the nine endings two only finish on the final (the 1st and 4th).

In the 5th Tone, of the three endings only the last finishes on the final, and with regard to this ending Mr. Burgess claims it for the 7th Tone.

The 6th Tone has only one ending, which is on the final.

The 7th Tone has seven endings, none of which are on the final, unless we count the ending v. 3 (alluded to above).

The 8th Tone has four endings, the first only being on the final. The Irregular or Peregrine Tone is in the 1st Mode, and ends on its final. Thus it will be seen that of forty-two endings only seven have the last note on the final.

The Antiphon, which was formerly sung before and after each psalm, always finished on the final. But in churches where Antiphons are not used—that is to say, in most churches—a few bars leading to the final are necessary, e.g.:

1st Tone, 4th ending.

15. In the rendering of the Psalms I think the following procedure is best for choir and organist.

Give out the intonation on the organ (the mediation as well, if you like). The two chanters (baritones), facing the altar and in the middle of the chancel, sing as far as the colon of the first verse unaccompanied. The choir and the congregation sing the second half accompanied on a Gt. soft 8-ft. or 4-ft. Flute coupled to a soft Swell. The chanters then sing the 2nd verse to a soft Swell manual accompaniment. The 3rd verse is sung full, the 4th by the chanters, and so on alternately, the Amen at the end of the Gloria being sung full. Do not allow the singing to be slower than the time of ordinary reading.

The singers should make a distinct silent pause at the colon of each verse (the ancient rule was, about long enough to imagine 'Ave Maria' being said). During this pause the organ should sustain the last chord *pp*. (Complete silence always has rather a disconcerting effect.) There should be no pause between the verses.

I will conclude this part of my remarks by a further illustration of principles 5, 6, and 7 (using as few chords as possible, changing chords on accented syllables, and not accompanying every note). Let us take the Office Hymn for Advent, *Conditor alme siderum*, No. 1 in the English Hymnal, No. 43 in Hymns A. & M. (1904 ed.):

Créator of the stars of night,
Thy people's éverlasting light,
Jésu, Redéemer, sáve us ál,
And héar Thy sérvants when they cáll.

In both the books referred to this tune is harmonized in the manner of a chorale, with a chord to each note. I think that a more fitting way is to follow the principle of changing the chord as far as possible only when the rhythm of the words demands it, so:

Mode iv.

I come now to the treatment of the *choir* (the singers, I mean) as an accompanying instrument. Let us suppose that in Lent the organ is not being used. (The congregation will be very annoyed, but may just stand it as part of the Lenten penance of going without things they like.)

This is how I would render a simple hymn-tune such as the Old 100th. Choir and congregation sing the first verse in unison. For the 2nd verse the congregation will sing the tune as before, in unison, while the choir will accompany them in harmony as set by J. Dowland (1563-1626) in the English Hymnal, No. 365.

Choir and congregation sing the 3rd verse in unison, the 4th will be sung like the 2nd to Dowland's setting, and the last verse will be sung by all in unison.

There are many fine tunes that can be sung in this way, and it adds that touch of variety which is absolutely essential if a hymn is at all lengthy.

To conclude, let me quote the words of our President's address, that Church music is really a sub-section of the article 'Liturgy' in the Encyclopædia, rather than a sub-section of the article 'Music.'

[Mr. Martin Shaw was unable, through illness, to deliver this address. It was read by his brother, Mr. Geoffrey Shaw.]

ROYAL CHORAL SOCIETY.

The prospectus announces seven concerts: 'Elijah' November 6, 'Creation' and Elgar's 'Carillon' December 4, 'Messiah' January 1, Verdi's 'Requiem' February 5, 'The Dream of Gerontius' March 4, 'Israel in Egypt' April 1. All these dates are Saturdays, and all the concerts commence at 3 p.m. This policy of Saturday afternoon concerts is adopted because of its pronounced success last season. It is obvious that there are great numbers of suburban lovers of choral music who are willing to devote their half-holiday to concerts, and who shrink from all that is involved in travel late at night.

Besides the above subscription concerts an extra concert will be given in December, the programme for which will consist of Carols and Yuletide music, and the usual Good Friday afternoon performance of 'Messiah' will be given.

In these times no one will be likely to complain that no new works are to be brought forward.

THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

Twelve concerts are announced to be given at Queen's Hall during the season October, 1915, to May, 1916. Mr. Thomas Beecham will conduct at six, M. Savonov at two, M. Emil Mlynarski at one, and Mr. Henri Verbruggen at two (it is a long, long way from Sydney, where we all thought he was a fixture). First-rate artists are named as solo performers. No German music later than Brahms figures in the programme. British composers will be represented by Parry's Symphonic Variations; a poem, 'Pan,' by C. B. Rootham; part-songs by Ethel Smyth; the 'Cockaigne' Overture, 'Carillon,' A flat Symphony by Elgar; a Symphonic-poem, 'Grey Galloway,' by J. McEwen; the Rhapsody 'In a summer garden,' by Delius, and Preludes to Parts 1 and 2 of 'Omar Khayyám' by Bantock. Russian music is well in evidence. Four of Beethoven's Symphonies (Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8) and the C minor Symphony by Brahms will be given. Great interest will doubtless be excited by the performance of Berlioz's Dramatic Choral Symphony, 'Romeo and Juliet,' which, with the co-operation of the Manchester Hallé Choir, is to be performed on March 20, 1916. At the opening concert on October 25, Madame Réjane will be the reciter in the Cammaerts-Elgar 'Carillon.'