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The Musical Times

AND SINGING-CLASS CIRCULAR.

APRIL 1, 1915.

CARILLONS.

BY W. W. STARMER.

During the past six months all lovers of bells and bell music have been wondering what has happened to the beautiful carillons of Belgium. Although it is extremely difficult to get accurate information respecting the details of the German orgy of destruction, there is no doubt that many carillons have been totally destroyed, notably those of Termonde, Louvain (St. Pierre), Dinant, Ypres, Dixmude, and Nieuport. Up to the present Bruges and Antwerp have survived, and although Malines has been damaged, it is not to any great extent.

MALINES CATHEDRAL AND CARILLON.

We know that Malines Cathedral has suffered much, but its glorious tower containing the famous carillon withstood the early bombardments wonderfully well, and sustained comparatively insignificant damage. Owing to its great stability the shells ricocheted, incidentally destroying the buildings in the immediate vicinity.

The last reliable report from one who had lived in Malines some time during the German occupation was that the parapet of the tower and the great clock face were partially destroyed, and that some shells had gone through the upper portion of the tower. This could happen without doing much harm, as there is a good deal of open stonework in the structure. What may be the fate of the bells at Malines, Antwerp, and Bruges after the German inquisitorial copper hunt, has yet to be told. Curiously enough, in 1792 the Malines carillon was saved from destruction by Haverals, the then carillonneur, who succeeded in persuading the revolutionary City Council to preserve the bells, although it had been decreed that they should be melted down to make cannon. Some years later, when the reaction came, the authorities reprimanded Haverals for playing so many Republican tunes on the magnificent carillon he had been instrumental in saving! He very soon changed his music to suit the circumstances, and retained his appointment until the year of his death, in 1841, completing over sixty years' service as City Carillonneur. May 1915 be as fortunate a year for the Malines carillon as 1792! Although the tower at Malines is part of the Cathedral, it with its bells belongs to the city, and is controlled by the municipal authorities.

M. Jef. Denyn, the present City Carillonneur, is now a refugee in England, he and his family being at Tunbridge Wells. Since he has been in this country he has given two recitals—at Bournville and at Loughborough. Many thousands listened to his enchanting music, and the funds in aid of the Belgian refugees benefited to the extent of

£100. At Bournville, Prof. Granville Bantock was present. He was greatly pleased with Denyn's wonderful performance, and hopes that some way can be found of developing this branch of musical art in England. Although there are five carillons with clavier in Great Britain, not one is of the proper size and compass to enable the player to give an adequate demonstration either of his own executive powers or of the artistic capabilities of the instrument.

ENGLAND A BELL-RINGING COUNTRY.

Handel has been credited with the statement that the bell is the English national instrument, and centuries ago England was called the 'ringing isle.' Most of us love the music of bells, but our change-ringing—clever as it is—possesses none of the artistic merits of carillon playing. The carillon raises the bell to a higher artistic plane, and in addition to good tone-quality demands the most accurate pitch. Many of our bells on which peals are rung—with great pleasure to the ringers—are poor in tone and inaccurate as regards tune. The reason of this is not far to seek. Change-ringing is directly responsible for the alteration of the shape of bells—the shortening of the body—so that the series of harmonic tones has been completely upset, much to the detriment of tone and tune. Our forefathers, instead of improving the method of bell-hanging and the proper adjustment of the balance of the bell, indiscriminately treated the bell itself and altered it in such a way as to impair its symmetry in order that greater ease in ringing might be attained. The difficulty of the balance of the bell for this purpose has now been entirely overcome, so that the true symmetrical shape can be used and great weights manipulated with ease. Change-ringing therefore at the present time can be practised with bells good as to their proportions, tone, and of perfect tune (as regards the fundamental tones) with greater facility than ever before.

CARILLONS DESCRIBED.

The special characteristic of the carillon is its chromatic scale and large compass—four octaves. With us for change-ringing the bells without exception sound the notes of the diatonic scale (major), with a compass of from five to twelve notes.

Another consideration of the greatest musical importance is the difference in the construction scale in making bells for carillon use and for change-ringing. The following table will show where these differences occur:

		For Carillons.				For Change-Ringing.	
		Cwts.	Qrs.			Cwts.	Qrs.
1.	...	1	2	...	G	...	6 0
2.	...	2	0	...	F	...	6 1
3.	...	2	2	...	E	...	6 2
4.	...	3	2	...	D	...	7 1
5.	...	5	0	...	C	...	8 0
6.	...	6	0	...	B	...	9 0
7.	...	8	2	...	A	...	11 0
8.	...	11	3	...	G	...	13 0
9.	...	16	0	...	F	...	17 0
10.	...	20	2	...	E	...	20 2
11.	...	28	0	...	D	...	28 0
12.	...	40	0	...	C	...	40 0

(Middle C)

The reason of the heavier weights in the smaller bells of the change-ringing scale is to prevent them being swamped by the larger ones, and, for the purpose, increased thickness is an absolute necessity. This upsets the harmonic tones more or less, and although the most important ones can be satisfactorily dealt with, at times no tuning can completely rectify the subordinates.

Then of course the difference between the methods employed in sounding the bells has to be taken into account. In a carillon, the clapper strikes the bell (hung 'dead' or 'fixed') from a very short distance, consequently no great volume of tone is produced. In change-ringing the bell completes a circle for each blow of the clapper, which thus hits the bell with great force. The clappers of our bells are much lighter than those of Continental bells. On the Continent the automatic carillons play music in three, four, or more parts; with us, chimes play melody only.

Taking these things into consideration, it is difficult to make any true comparison between the use of English bells cast on a different scale and operated upon in an entirely different manner, and

Continental bells made for carillon use, automatic or otherwise.

In automatic carillons the bells are played by means of outside hammers, just the same as in our English chimes.

BRUGES AND MALINES.

The two most famous carillons in the world are those of Bruges and Malines. The former carillon is associated with the well-known poem of Longfellow, 'The Belfry of Bruges,' but the reputation of Malines is on a much sounder basis. The beautiful tower of Malines (320 ft. high) is undoubtedly the finest of its kind in the world. If it had been specially designed for the purpose of the carillon it could not be better than it is. (See illustration.) The bells at Malines are mostly excellent examples of the best master bell-founders, and are of fine tone. The disposition of the bells is very much more satisfactory for the clavier than those at Bruges, the action-work being direct and consequently much more under the control of the player. The bells are also much heavier than those of Bruges.

MALINES CARILLON. THE SCALE OF THE BELLS.

C = 520.

No.	Note.	Date.	Founder.	Reputed Weight. Kilos.	No.	Note.	Date.	Founder.	Reputed Weight. Kilos.
1	F#	1844	L. & S. van Aerschodt (Louvain)	8,884 (8½ tons)	28	B	1674	Pierre Hemony	...
2	G#	1696	Melchior de Haze (Antwerp)	6,000	29	C	"	"	...
3	A#	1861	Severin van Aerschodt	4,235	30	C#	"	"	...
4	B	1498	Symon Waghevens	3,000	31	D	"	"	...
5	C	1697	M. de Haze	2,000	32	D#	"	"	...
6	C#	1766	Andreas van den Gheyn	1,749	33	E	"	"	...
7	D	1777	"	1,555	34	F	"	"	...
8	D#	1873	A. L. J. van Aerschodt	1,201	35	F#	"	"	...
9	E	1735	Georges Dumery (Bruges)	...	36	G	"	"	...
10	F	1564	Adrien Steylaert	...	37	G#	"	"	...
11	F#	1515	Georges Waghevens	655	38	A	"	"	...
12	G	1674	Pierre Hemony	...	39	A#	1908	Michiels (Tournai)	...
13	G#	1480	Henri Waghevens	400	40	B	"	"	...
14	A	1674	Pierre Hemony	...	41	C	1674	Pierre Hemony	...
15	A#	1784	Andreas van den Gheyn	...	42	C#	"	"	...
16	B	"	"	...	43	D	"	"	...
17	C	1908	Michiels (Tournai)	...	44	D#	"	"	...
18	C#	1912	Felix van Aerschodt (the 'Denyn' bell)	275	45	E	"	"	...
19	D	1784	Andreas van den Gheyn	...	Total reputed weight of the forty-five bells,				
20	D#	1674	Pierre Hemony	...	34,098 kilos (about 33½ tons).				
21	E	"	"	...	For the last twenty-five years the instrument has been played by M. Jef. Denyn (Chevalier of the Order of Leopold), who has added to the fame of the carillon his own great reputation as a virtuoso. His executive skill places him far above any other players—he is a veritable carillon Liszt.				
22	F	"	"	...					
23	F#	"	"	...					
24	G	"	"	...					
25	G#	"	"	...					
26	A	"	"	...					
27	A#	"	"	...					

Back Row, Standing :
 (1) Noël Igodt, Ypres. (2) Louis Van de Walle, Malines. (3) Jean Huyghebaert, Malines. (4) M. Lamot, Malines. (5) P. Verheyden, Antwerp. (6) Robert Peeters, Malines. (7) F. Redoute, Mons.
 (8) W. W. Starmer, Tunbridge Wells. (9) John Taylor, Loughborough. (10) J. Van Hoof, Antwerp. (11) E. de Keyser, Malines.

Front Row, Seated :
 (1) A. Nauwelaerts, Lierre. (2) J. Van de Plas, Louvain. (3) Edward Steenackers, Bergerhout. (4) J. Van Beers, Schaerbeek. (5) Jef. Denyn, Malines. (6) G. Van Zuylen, Gouda.
 (7) A. Vermeulen, Courtrai. (8) A. Kolliers, St. Niklaas. (9) Ed. Denyn, Malines.
FAMOUS CARILLONNEURS.

METHOD OF PLAYING.

The carillon is played by means of a clavier arranged on the same principle as the manuals and pedals of an organ (see illustration). The keys are made of oak. They are round, being about $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. in diameter. There are two rows of keys, the upper representing the black notes of the ordinary keyboard, projecting $3\frac{1}{2}$ -in., the lower corresponding to the white notes, and projecting $6\frac{1}{4}$ -in. The pedals are from 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ octaves in compass.

The pedal board is a necessity, because the larger bells require much more force to bring out their tone. The clappers are consequently much heavier, and demand a considerable expenditure of energy to move them. The pedal clavier also greatly increases the resources of the instrument, and permits the music to be played in three or more parts.

The keys are struck with the closed hand, the little finger being protected with a leather covering to prevent injury when playing. As the leverage of the key has to move the weight of the clapper, which in large bells is very considerable, and as the amount of tone produced depends entirely upon the amount of force with which the key is struck, it will easily be understood that carillon-playing requires a great deal of strength as well as celerity and skill. Sometimes the hand is covered with a kind of glove made of leather or other material, but whatever is used is to afford protection to the fingers and hand. Great dexterity of hand is essential, as much of the playing for sustained chord effects is done with a kind of tremolando.

The connection between the key and the bell clapper is exactly the same in principle as the tracker action used in organs, iron levers, squares, and wires being used in the place of the wooden materials of organ-building. On the clappers of the smaller bells springs are fixed to bring them back into their original position quickly after striking. In the larger bells the clappers are too heavy for this arrangement. They have a simple appliance consisting of a chain, which is attached to the 'flight' of the clapper and passed over a pulley. A weight is fixed to the other end of the chain sufficiently heavy to bring the clapper within a very short distance of the sound-bow of the bell, so that the key has only to upset the balance between the weight and the clapper.

The mechanism connected with each key is fitted with an adjustable screw-plate by which the tension can be regulated to a very great nicety and the touch adapted to the requirements of the player.

The bulk of the playing is done on the smaller bells, with only occasional use of the larger ones. The reasons why this should be so are :

- (1.) The small bells are more easily manipulated ;
- (2.) The effect of chords is much more satisfactory than on the large bells, owing to the fact that in the latter the harmonic tones are very prominent and frequently interfere with each other when sounded together, in a disagreeable manner.

This is not the case with the smaller bells when used in a combination, as their harmonic tones are too high in the scale of sounds to inconvenience the ear. Chords, generally speaking, are most satisfactory when played arpeggiando. Chromatic and diatonic scale-passages can be rendered at almost any speed, and are most effective. When playing in three or more parts the greatest care is necessary as to the disposition of the different notes of the chords, the best effects being obtained by keeping a wide interval between the lowest note and the note next above it. The most intense crescendo and the most delicate diminuendo are possible.

During recent times the following players have performed with distinction on the Malines carillon, and are virtuosos of the highest order. Appended to the names are items of particular interest which displayed the special abilities of the players as well as the varied and artistic possibilities of the instrument :

M. Jef. Denyn (Carillonneur, Malines) :

Third Prelude	...	...	...	<i>Van den Gheyn.</i>
Third and Sixth Sonatas	...	...	...	<i>Nicolai.</i>
'Solvejgs song'	...	...	...	<i>Grieg.</i>
'Myn Moederspraak'	...	...	...	<i>Benoit.</i>

M. Jules Van de Plas (Carillonneur, Louvain) :

Prelude in D major (Book 1,				
No. 5)	..	...	...	... <i>Bach.</i>

M. Fern. Redoute (Carillonneur, Mons) :

'Les Pêcheurs de Perles'	...	...	...	... <i>Bizet.</i>
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M. A. Rolliers (Carillonneur, St. Niklaas) :

'Het Lied van de Smid'	...	...	...	... <i>Andelhof.</i>
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M. A. Nauwelaerts (Carillonneur, Bruges) :

'Le retour de la Fauvette'	...	...	...	... <i>De Broeck.</i>
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(See illustration, p. 203.)

MALINES CHIMES.

The automatic carillon of the Malines chimes is important, as music is played no less than eight times during the hour : a short flourish at each half-quarter, a short piece at the quarter before and after each hour, a longer piece at the half-hour, and at the hour a piece of still greater length. The hour is struck as in England, but the hour to come is announced after the half-hour on a smaller bell than that used for the hour strike.

The music for the purpose needs very careful arrangement, and too many notes must not be used at the same time, for the effect suffers in direct proportion to the multiplicity of the parts.

The music as set on the chime-barrel frequently necessitates the playing of 60,000 to 70,000 notes every twenty-four hours. The tunes are changed twice a year.

The chime barrel was completed in 1734, is 5-ft. 3-in. in diameter, and contains 16,200 small holes into which the studs are fixed. There are 90 chime-hammers connected with the bells, which are operated by the chime barrel.

A good specimen of the automatic music played is the Finale from 'Le Triomphe de Groeninghe' (Mestdagh).

MALINES.—HALF QUARTERS.

MALINES.—QUARTER.

Local song of the town of Ypres.

MALINES.—HALF-HOUR.

Finale de la cantate flamande, 'Le Triomphe de Groeninghe,' by Ch. Mestdagh.

CÉSAR FRANCK AND THE SONATA.

BY H. C. COLLES.

The frequenters of London concert-rooms have lately been listening to the music of César Franck with more than ordinary attention. Our Belgian guests are particularly anxious to perform it, and to remind us that Franck was not a Frenchman, but a Belgian, born at Liège; our own conductors, Sir Henry Wood and Mr. Thomas Beecham, have given us the Symphony, and others of his works have appeared in recent programmes. All this brings in no new factor to our knowledge of Franck; his instrumental music has been performed in the past with quite sufficient frequency to give everyone a very fair knowledge of him. The Violin sonata has been played perhaps too often, the String quartet not quite often enough, but no one can say that any one of his later and more characteristic works for instruments has been neglected in this country. At the same time our acceptance of Franck has been rather passive; he has been praised by the precious; the keepers of 'the classical tradition' have opened their door by one chink to admit him into the circle of the elect, while at the same time the assailants of 'the classical tradition' and of all tradition have not despised him. English musical journalists emulate the pæans of such accomplished French critics as M. D'Indy and M. Rolland, who find Franck to be the saviour of music, the restorer of the symphony, and who attribute to his beneficent influence nearly every species of musical development since 1870. M. D'Indy and the disciples of the Schola Cantorum like to talk of Bach, Beethoven, and Franck, just as another coterie in Germany and England likes to talk of 'The three B's,' and its excuse for doing so (quite apart from their lack of alliterative excuse) is much less apparent to the ordinary person. For in spite of all the enthusiasm, real and affected, Franck's music has not gripped the heart-strings of a people (at any rate of this people) in a decisive way. It has remained the property of

musicians, and been taken on trust by the public which cares most about it when it gets the added interest of interpretation by a great artist. The public (by which is meant the consensus of ordinarily intelligent listeners who do not base their taste upon any established code of artistic principles) loves the Violin sonata as much on Ysaÿe's account as on Franck's; it delights in the Prelude, Chorale and Fugue when it is performed by a pianist of outstanding gifts like Harold Bauer, and is much less moved by the Quartet, the Quintet, and the Symphony: from which it appears that there is something lacking to Franck's genius which leaves him peculiarly in need of an imaginative interpreter. There is some lack of directness in his musical speech.

Now directness of speech, literary or musical, comes from two things: first, the knowledge on the part of the speaker of his own meaning; secondly, his power to clothe the meaning in exactly that form of language which will give it precision to his hearers. It was in the second, I think, that Franck failed. He was tremendously exercised over problems of musical form, but he did not always see the form clearly in relation to his own thought. If he had he would have occupied himself less with the sonata type of form, with which he was not in full sympathy. It may be difficult to accept this statement as true in face of the extraordinary beauty of the Violin sonata. Franck in that work has certainly overcome in a remarkable degree what for him were the disadvantages of sonata form. But form is not an enemy to be wrestled with and brought into subjection, although the text-books and their opponents often lead the student to believe that it is. The fact that Franck succeeded in writing one sonata in which we are scarcely aware of any opposition between the principle of the form and his own natural style does not prove the complete harmony of the two, or make his manipulation of the form anything

THE TOWER OF MALINES.

THE CLAVIER OF THE MALINES CARILLON.