'Wagner and Super-Wagner'

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words 'At the eternal Eastertide' being an inspiration. Dr. Lloyd's clear style is well illustrated by his contribution to the work, and will, with those of other writers, no doubt appeal to many who prefer a more direct method. There are other examples equally worthy of mention, and the whole book is full of interest. It was a happy idea to include the Chorale from Mendelssohn's 'Lobgesang,' for it exactly illustrates what is wanted in varied accompaniment. The book could not have been considered complete without examples from John Sebastian Bach, who, Mr. Bennett truly says in the preface, 'revealed his genius not least in his treatment of hymn-tunes.' It should be added that Mr. Bennett has contributed many admirable specimens of his own. The work is certain of wide recognition for its scope and variety.

Precept and Practice for Singing-Class Students. By J. A. Moonie.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Mr. Moonie is an Edinburgh professor of great experience. He has for many years prepared students in Training Colleges for their musical duties. He finds that many existing manuals and instruction-books on sight-singing are cumbersome and redundant, and unnecessarily slow in coming to the point. There is a good deal of truth in this statement, and certainly no one will accuse Mr. Moonie of roundabout methods. He adopts the movable doh system, and some of the exercises are in Tonic Sol-fa notation. The work is comprehensive in scope without being over-long. The instruction is sugared with some humour of the variety generally called 'pawky.'

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Clara Schumann. By Berthold Litzmann. Two volumes. Pp. xxxvi. + 456, and vii. + 458. Price 24s. (London: Macmillan.)

Lyric Diction. By Dora Duty Jones. Pp. xvi. + 342. Price 5s. (London: Harper & Brothers.)

Music on the Shakespearean Stage. By G. H. Cowling. Pp. vi. + 116. Price 4s. (Cambridge: at the University Press.)

Voice training for choirs and schools. By Cyril Bradley Rootham. Pp. xlv. + 110. Price 1s. 6d. (Cambridge: at the University Press.)

The Church Music Society's Choir Book. Second Edition. Pp. 71. Price 1s. (London: Henry Frowde.)

Correspondence.

'WAGNER AND SUPER-WAGNER.'

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—*Quo tendimus?* Whither are our critics leading us? We know, of course, that they must be right—it is their business to be—but a poor musician like myself must be excused for feeling bewildered with his teachers of to-day. A few months ago I held up to derision in your columns the lucubrations of a man who wrote nothing but a series of incongruous notes, and I was gravely rebuked by Mr. Clutsam, who called this 'the logical development of harmony.' The other day I heard a piece by a composer, the whole of whose works I know well, and whose mental decadence I have long deplored. This latest product of his wrecked intelligence distressed me beyond measure, but was held up to admiration by the critics of the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*, these gentlemen in the same breath praising Beethoven's Violin concerto and a primitive Symphony by Haydn, which were the other items on the programme. Now if Scriabine's 'Prometheus' is music, then it is idle to pretend that the other works are also music, for you cannot name a point in which the two styles are not absolutely contradictory. I do not say that the Cubists or Futurists are wrong—an artist's views on art are, of course, valueless—but if a man says he admires Buccioni or Severini, and also Raphael and Michael Angelo, I say . . . well, I would rather not say what I say.

And now on the top of this exasperation comes Mr. Ernest Newman, who is supposed to know all about art matters, occupying more than eight of your valuable pages with one of the strangest, un-Wellsian (if I may coin a word) forecasts of music in the future that ever was heard of. I call it un-Wellsian, because it seems so contrary to natural evolution or logical development (*pace* Mr. Clutsam) in art. I gather that he looks for 'a form of quasi-dramatic music in which we shall be rid of all, or most, of the mere scaffolding of narration or action that serves at present simply to give intellectual support to the music of opera.' I like that word 'simply,' it tells me so much. It tells me that the esteemed critic really believes that music can exist as such without intellectual support—that it is a state—a mood—an epileptic seizure—a trance. But these deplorable accessories of opera—the libretto and the singers—is not their existence due to evolution? To discard them would be something analogous to the procedure of the writers of 'Gems from the Classics' who discard the pudding and keep the plums, only to discover that the result is bathos. So have well-meaning literary persons endeavoured to eliminate the verbosity from Scott and Dickens with equally dire result. To come closer to Mr. Newman's idea, one beholds a composer making a tart that shall be all jam and have none of that nasty pastry about it. Believe a practical person: it would only be more difficult of digestion. I am glad to believe the idea chimerical.

Mr. Newman is really trying to imagine a simple form of art superseding a highly complex form. I well remember, just thirty-one years ago, when musical London was staggering under the assault of Wagner, hearing at a public dinner the future of music forecasted by several eminent men, the late Joseph Bennett and the present head of Novello's among them. The opinion most favoured was that in another twenty-five years a reaction would take place to a simple, solid style. The wish was doubtless father to the thought among these Handel-lovers; but I, as a modest young man should, imitated the behaviour of Brer Rabbit—'I lay low an' sed nuffin.' And the pen is now hardly dry in Mr. Newman's hand when out comes Strauss's new opera with more libretto and more accessories than ever. Speculations on the future are rather a futile business, as Mr. Chesterton has excellently shown in his 'Napoleon of Notting Hill'; but one thing one may prophesy with certainty about music: its evolution will always be in the direction of increased complexity. When the forecast I speak of was made it was thought that Brahms and Raff (!) had said the last word in abstract music. Then came along Dvorák, Tchaikovsky, and César Franck, and revealed new phases of our art: a still more recent new-comer, whom it is not for me to name (not being a critic), will presently make even Brahms a back number.

One must not reason from the particular to the general. Mr. Newman, I venture to think, is a little sweeping in his contempt for opera-books. Is he a librettist perchance, like so many of his kind? I fancy that there are libretti not devoid of merit from other pens than those of Richard Wagner and Hofmannsthal. Has Mr. Newman ever read 'Fervaa!' or 'L'étranger' by Vincent D'Indy, or that marvellous Greek trilogy 'Hippodamia' by Dr. Vrchlicky? I could even name at least three music-poems of the very highest merit from English pens, but this would be useless, as these are never likely to see the light. All these works are on different planes and have little kinship to those so trenchantly disposed of by Mr. Newman. Of course the poet and the musician always dream of a work which shall be all meat and no bones, just as the ordinary human being yearns for a Heaven where there shall be nothing but joy, forgetting that so long as we are human all our concepts are relative, so that we cannot have joy without sorrow, an umbrella without a stick, or an opera without padding. Yet Mr. Newman presents as his ideal a kind of symphonic-poem that shall be all interest. But why is the symphonic-poem—that excuse for all unskilful craftsmanship—to be our ideal? Not so long ago our critics scoffed at it, and the man who read psychology or theosophy into music was considered a crack-brained idiot. Now we are all for 'soul-states' and 'expression of personality' and 'inner-meanings' which have to be explained. When a man tells me seriously that 'there are thousands of pages in Bach that only yield up their full secret to us when we get some outside light upon the sequence

of poetic ideas in his mind at the time of writing—this is the case with many of the Choral Preludes, for example—when he tells me this, I say, I hardly know whether to be more sorry for Bach or for him. At any rate it makes me wonder whether my life's experience of music has all been thrown away and—if Mr. Newman will pardon the quotation—it makes me doubtful as to 'the importance of being Ernest.'—Yours faithfully,

F. CORDER.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—In the February number of the *Musical Times* (p. 85) I read the following sentence: 'In the "Christmas Oratorio" Bach sets the words of a chorale addressing the infant Jesus to the music of another chorale that was already associated in the minds of the congregation with the Passion, —thus in a flash bringing the death of the Saviour into the same mental picture as the birth.' I have read a similar statement elsewhere, and therefore venture to point out to Mr. Newman and his predecessors and successors that it rests on the erroneous assumption that the tune known to English audiences from the Passion music of Bach is essentially connected with the hymn 'O Thou with hate surrounded.' It is really the tune of the Communion hymn 'Herzlich tut mich verlangen,' but is used for a variety of hymns, such as 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden,' 'Befiehl du deine Wege,' 'Wie soll ich Dich empfangen,' and others. The result is that to the German mind it conveys no particular association, just because it is so frequently used and at the most varied occasions. Even in the 'St. Matthew' Passion Bach uses it for the chorale 'Whate'er may vex or grieve thee,' which has nothing to do with the Passion. It was only natural that he should have introduced it into the 'Christmas Oratorio' in connection with a hymn which his audience must have sung every Sunday during Advent ('Wie soll ich Dich empfangen') to the same tune. English audiences, which know the tune chiefly through the Passions, may be excused in finding a mystic allusion in the 'Christmas Oratorio,' but it may be safely asserted that Bach never intended to establish such a connection of ideas, and if he had he must have failed in his endeavour.

This remark is not meant to belittle the value of Mr. Newman's paper.—I am, Sir, yours truly, Z.

Mr. Newman, in reply, says:

I am aware that the melody of 'O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden,' like that of some other German chorales, is sung to more than one set of words. The only questions are, is it most generally associated with the Passion, and does it bear, in the 'Christmas Oratorio,' the interpretation that I and others have put upon it? I should say the fact that Bach uses it so many times in the 'Matthew Passion' is some evidence of its association with the death of Jesus both in Bach's mind and in that of his congregation. But be that as it may, 'Z' is wrong in his assumption that 'to the German mind it conveys no particular association,' and that it is only 'English audiences, which know the tune chiefly through the Passions,' that will find 'a mystic allusion in the "Christmas Oratorio."' Let me quote four German testimonies in refutation of this assumption.

Spitta ('Life of Bach,' ii., 579) says: 'The premonition of Christ's death, immediately after His birth, has assumed a very striking form in Part I. by the adaptation of the melody of "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden" to the words of greeting, "How shall I fitly meet Thee?" which falls across the bright festal tone like a dim shadow.'

Schweitzer ('J. S. Bach, le musicien-poète,' p. 281) says: 'Bach has the Advent chorale "Wie soll ich Dich empfangen" sung to a melody of the Passion, implying that Jesus has come into the world to suffer.'

Arnold Schering ('Bach's Textbehandlung,' p. 19) says: 'Bach is very fond of these retrospects upon past catastrophes or forecasts of impending ones—here again he is the deep-feeling and far-seeing musician, raising himself high above the poet. It is extraordinarily moving when, in the "Christmas Oratorio," the melody of "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden" strikes into the scene of joy with the words of "Wie soll ich Dich empfangen"—as if the congregation were doubtfully asking, "Shall we rejoice over the birth of the Saviour or mourn His shameful end?"'

In Philip Wolfrum's recent book on Bach (vol. ii., pp. 14, 15) there is a discussion of Bach's symbolism, in which he remarks that 'if the hearer does not know the melody that appears in the orchestra independently of the voice part, as well as the text with which it is usually associated in the church, he often fails to see the situation clearly . . . ' Wolfrum gives one or two examples,—Bach's use, for example, of the melody of 'Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir' as a bass to the recitative 'Ach! dass mein Glaube noch so schwach.' When a hearer ignorant of the text listens to a thing of this kind, says Wolfrum, the sense of it escapes him. He adds: 'When, in the "Christmas Oratorio," Bach sets Gerhardt's hymn "Wie soll ich Dich empfangen" to the melody of "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," that breathes of the Passion, . . . he establishes profoundly thoughtful relationships, that are only apparent to people versed in the German hymns.'

These citations are enough, I think, to show that it is precisely the German mind that is most conscious of the symbolism at this point. They disprove 'Z's' assertions that 'to the German mind it conveys no particular association,' and that if Bach 'intended to establish such a connection of ideas' he 'must have failed in his endeavour.'

THE LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL ORGAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

DEAR SIR,—We note with special interest the article in your last issue by Dr. Alcock on the Liverpool and Hamburg organs, and the correspondence between the Rev. J. H. Burns and Messrs. Willis, owing to the fact that we are the representatives in this country of Messrs. Walcker & Co. Without wishing to enter into the controversy as to the relative sizes of the organs, beyond saying that the Hamburg organ is actually in existence and the Liverpool one will not be so for four years—so for that period at least Messrs. Walcker & Co. can claim to be the builders of the largest organ in the world—we would say this: Without hearing the Hamburg organ and investigating the wonderful and ingenious mechanical devices which are applied, it is impossible to arrive at a fair judgment on the instrument. The writer had the privilege of going completely through the Hamburg organ a short time ago in company with Mr. Walcker, and afterwards of playing the instrument for a considerable time, and he can testify without bias that such an organ has never yet been constructed. With reference to the difference in the wind pressure of the Hamburg and Liverpool organs, we are sure that Messrs. Willis will agree that heavy wind pressure is not absolutely necessary for a fine organ. For instance, the beautiful Hill organ in St. Stephen's, Walbrook, a low-pressure organ throughout, may be quoted as an example. One of the chief mechanical novelties in the Hamburg organ consists of 828 combination pistons which are placed above the rocking stop tablets in groups of four to each tablet. With this, four different sets of combinations can be made on any group of stops, and brought into operation by a combination piston conveniently arranged under the various manuals. This system allows of new combinations being constantly formed even while the organist is playing, and is much less complicated, both from the mechanic's and organist's point of view, than the systems in vogue in this country. We have a number of illustrations and particulars of the Hamburg organ here, which we shall be very delighted to show to anyone interested.—Yours faithfully,

MURDOCH, MURDOCH & CO.

461 & 463, Oxford Street, (FREDERIC BLAKE,
London, W., February 4, 1913. Manager.)

AN ORCHESTRAL WORK BY KARG-ELERT.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—It may be of interest to your readers to hear that an orchestral work by Sigfrid Karg-Elert (an instalment of an appreciative article on whom appears in your February number) received a first performance here (and, I believe, in this country) on February 10, by the Edinburgh Amateur Orchestral Society.