Chopin's Preludes

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past years, should be made to some of our more prominent musicians, professional and amateur, to make common cause with them, and thus avert the impending crisis. Any idea that "vested interests" should be primarily considered will, I am sure, be scouted by all who take worthy views of the matter.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JAMES E. ASHLEY.
7, Romilly Road, Finsbury Park, N.,
April 22, 1880.

CHOPIN'S PRELUDES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—It is always painful to have to give up cherished beliefs, and to do so without resistance is hardly natural, if possible. The story of Chopin's Preludes having been composed at Majorca, in the old and nearly deserted Carthusian Monastery in the winter of 1838-39, has been supported by the high authority of Georges Sand's autobiographical statement, and so far in detail that one Prelude, that in B minor, is now for ever coupled by her, as to its inspiration and composition, with her absence from the monastery during a violent spate or storm-flood in the island. This occurrence has been referred to quite lately by Dr. F. Hueffer, in his admirable monograph on Chopin published in the *Fortnightly Review* (September, 1877); and must be well known to all those who have cared to inquire about the friendship that existed between the two great artists. There is a religious depth of feeling in several of those wonderful sketches that is in direct relation to the romantic circumstances in which Chopin was placed.

Fontana, the editor of Chopin's posthumous works, a fellow-student with him at Warsaw, and always an ardent disciple as well as his intimate friend, told me that he received from Majorca the MSS. of the Preludes as they were written, being intrusted with the revision of the proofs for immediate publication, a statement that coincides with Georges Sand's narration. Now, in Germany, in No. 2 (1880) of "Gartenlaube," Herr Stavenow, relying upon the high authority of Gutmann, a favourite pupil and very dear friend of Chopin's, comes forward with a statement, repeatedly he says asserted by his informant, that the Preludes were composed in Paris, and were sold by Chopin in August, 1838, to Camille Pleyel for 2,000 francs, Gutmann copying them out for the engraver, and the receipt of this money enabling Chopin to proceed to Majorca. I think both statements are partly true and may be reconciled. Chopin had very likely written in August, 1838, the more important Preludes, and sold them; but Pleyel requiring twenty-four (fourteen for the first book, and ten for the second), Chopin, then in Majorca, composed and sent some of the shorter and more solemn, as a kind of make-weight, consigning them to Fontana, who was in Paris at the time. Fontana was a man of high character, incapable, I think, of intentional falsehood.—Yours truly,

Kensington, April 8, 1880.

A. J. HIPKINS.

MR. H. WALL AND COPYRIGHT MUSIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Mr. H. Wall is still continuing his operations. A few weeks since, my wife played a pianoforte solo, entitled "Skating Polka," at an entertainment in connection with a Sunday School Institute in Lambeth. Last week she received, through the gentleman who presided on the occasion, a letter from a "Mr. H. Wilson," asking the name of the composer of the piece "so brilliantly performed." In her reply to this polite request, my wife gave her address, and thus furnished the information needed by Mr. J. C. Hyett, solicitor, 8, Colebrooke Row, Islington (late of 5, Hind Court, Fleet Street), who demands, on behalf of "Mr. H. Wall," payment of two pounds. Failing the receipt of this amount within two days, legal proceedings will be taken. I purpose resisting this claim, and beg to suggest to those who take part in entertainments for benevolent purposes, and afterwards receive "Mr. Wall's" communications, that they should not too readily accede to his demands. There may be differences of opinion as to the state of the law upon the subject, but public opinion will surely demand the amendment of certain Acts, if, by their obscurity, they countenance such proceedings as this. When "all rights are reserved" the

fact should be distinctly stated on the cover of the music. I learn that the manager of the entertainment has received a similar demand, for having "caused or permitted" the solo to be performed.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,
Forest Hill, April 19.

F. T. GAMMON.

SPEED OF HYMN-TUNES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—With your permission I should be glad to say a few words in your valuable paper touching the speed at which hymn-tunes are taken nowadays.

The subject appears to me of the utmost importance now that there are signs of the musical education of the people being taken in hand. The one thing that strikes us in England is the apparent total want of National Song. I include in this term "National Song" both sacred and secular, but confine my present remarks to the sacred.

If we go into any church in this country I do not think we shall find one where there is any real congregational singing. I am well aware of the fact that some musicians of standing have deprecated congregational singing, but I do not think that many would now agree with them. There is in some congregations a manifest attempt to follow the tune, but with no better success than a general hum; there is no singing in the true sense of the word.

What I want is to get the various opinions of organists and others interested in the question, so that if possible some understanding may be arrived at. The remedy I suggest, having experienced its good effect on the rare occasions on which I have been allowed my own way, is, the taking of the tunes at a slow pace.

I appeal to any musician who has ever heard the German chorale in its own land to support me in my suggestion. I cannot quote Bach, as he gives no tempo-marks to his chorals, but I would point to the metronome tempi to the chorals Mendelssohn introduces into his oratorios.

Apologising for the length of this letter, which I hope may call forth replies,—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

RICHARD J. HOPPER.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

* * Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will greatly oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

Notice is sent to all Subscribers whose payment (in advance) is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscription is not renewed. We again remind those who are disappointed in obtaining back numbers that, although the music pages are always stereotyped, only a sufficient quantity of the rest of the paper is printed to supply the current sale.

W. BAILEY.—In tuning pianofortes, as in many other things, a little knowledge is of little practical value. A tuner, to gain a living by his art, must be tolerably efficient, and such efficiency is never secured under two or three years of close application in a piano factory where the instruments are what is called "rough"—that is, have not yet been brought by repeated tuning to standing in tune. The pupil should be young enough, at least at first, not to have the hand fully grown, and skill in "fine" tuning as well as experience have to be gained after the workshop time is past. It should be evident, therefore, to any one who will reflect, that a few months' study, even if constant, will neither qualify the student to gain a competent income, nor do more than teach a tyro to make indifferent octaves and unisons where they happen to have been worse than it is usual to endure.

STRIVER.—Your earnest letter assures us that you will attain your object in time. You cannot do better than persevere in the course you have taken; but do not keep exclusively to exercises, or your musical feeling will remain dormant.

A SUBSCRIBER.—The piece of music you send us is altogether incorrect.

A CONSTANT READER.—I. St. Andrew's, Tavistock Place, W.C. 2. Apply to the Crystal Palace for a prospectus.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

ABERGAVENNY.—On Wednesday, the 21st ult., the Abergavenny Choral Society gave the second Concert of the season at the Town Hall before a large and appreciative audience. The principal vocalists, were Miss Bateman, R.A.M., Miss Augusta Morgan, and Mr. Wilson,