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Bach's Motet "I Wrestle and Pray"

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Answer: The use of such chants for the Psalms, however satisfactory from a musical point of view, is misleading, since it suggests a correspondence in the words which for the most part does not exist, while it ignores the close correspondence which runs through every verse. Composers should write chants in conformity with the structure of the Psalms, as Havergal, Elvey, Barnby, and others have done.

3. The Psalm verse is not always divided into two parallel halves; many verses contain three or more members.

Answer: See under the fourth head above.

4. There is no liturgical precedent for half-verse chanting.

Yet (a) some Psalms (as 24th and 136th) were probably so sung by the Jews.

(b) That very ancient method of liturgical worship by Verse and Response is entirely a half-verse system; the *principle*, therefore, has a good precedent.

(c) The practice is not unknown in the Roman Church (see Mendelssohn's *Letter*, June 16, 1831).

(d) Christ Church, Oxford, York Minster, and many other churches have adopted the practice for some years, and it continues to spread, being founded on truth.

I remain, yours truly,

HENRY J. POOLE.

Stowell Rectory, Sherborne.

WORDS TO PIANOFORTE SCORES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I would wish to call your attention to what I consider to be a curious oversight on the part of the foreign and English music publishers. Most of the great firms issue the principal operas, oratorios, cantatas, &c., in two forms—as complete vocal score (with text) and for pianoforte solo (without anything else). Now, I contend that, while it is true that the great majority (I hope) of professional musicians and even a large number of amateurs are able, when playing the pianoforte, to take in six or more lines at a glance, and may thus enjoy to the full the advantages of the vocal scores, there exists, at the same time, a numerous class of music-lovers that have not the time, inclination, or the ability to perfect themselves in this special branch of musical execution. For the benefit of these I would suggest that the two forms of arrangement hitherto in vogue should be amalgamated, and the works in question be edited for pianoforte solo *plus* the text. This would, of course, while not interfering in any way with the further publication of the vocal scores, render entirely superfluous the arrangements for pianoforte solo now in use, as I do not think there are any players, however unintelligent or inferior, who would not prefer to know what they are playing about (if I may be pardoned the expression) when they have the chance of doing so under the same conditions as before—that is to say, with no greater tax on their capacity or energy. It goes without saying that the same method could be applied to the arrangements for four hands.—I am, Sir, faithfully yours,

HERMANN OELSNER.

Springfield, Honor Oak Park.

A VISIT TO THE GRAVE OF POTTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you, through your valued paper, let the recipients of Cipriani Potter's Scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music know that the grave, No. 20,357, at Kensal Green Cemetery, is allowed to remain neglected, with Mr. Potter's name, &c., nearly obliterated, when for a few shillings the letters could be filled in and made legible to all participants in the benefits of his scholarship. In memory of him who was once Principal of their Academy, a great master, and the late head of the musical profession, let me beg of your insertion of this from a poor and aged pupil, as, in justice to the Academy itself, that great master should not lie neglected and forgotten by us or the scholars receiving the benefit of his bounty.—Yours obediently,

ANTHONY POLLON.

28, Barnsdale Road, West London.

MR. CORDER *v.* CHARLES GOUNOD. *Re* BERLIOZ.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—As one of those who attended Mr. Corder's Royal Institution Lectures and who heard with feelings of surprise and pain (to use no harsher term) that gentleman's depreciatory remarks on the music of Hector Berlioz, I venture to ask for the insertion in your widely-read columns of some remarks by Charles Gounod on the subject, which it seems to me give a much more accurate *resumé* of the case than the letter of Mr. Corder which appears in your last issue. I quote Gounod's observations from the translation of his "Autobiographical Reminiscences," recently published by Mr. Heinemann. After a few remarks on the personal peculiarities of Berlioz, he says: "His 'Symphonie Fantastique' was a real event in the musical world, the importance of which may be gauged by the fanatical admiration and the violent opposition it aroused. Admitting that a work of such a nature may be open to much discussion, the fact that its composer possessed most remarkable inventive power and a powerful poetic sentiment (which re-appears in all his subsequent compositions) still remains evident.

"Berlioz has put into musical circulation, so to speak, a large number of orchestral effects and combinations which were unknown before his time and which have been adopted by very illustrious musicians indeed. He has revolutionised the art of instrumentation, and in that respect, at all events, may be said to have 'founded a school.'"

Now, Sir, whilst I fully admit that Mr. Corder's opinions are entitled to respectful consideration, I cannot help placing still higher those of the composer of "Faust," the "Redemption," and "Mors et Vita."—Truly yours,

A LOVER OF FRENCH MUSIC.

BACH'S MOTET "I WRESTLE AND PRAY."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Mr. F. G. Edwards, in his interesting article on "Bach's Music in England" in this month's *MUSICAL TIMES*, speaks of John Christian Bach's music as being "quite forgotten."

I have always understood that the fine Motet for double choir, "I wrestle and pray," though frequently attributed to the elder Bach, is really the work of his son.

I should like to be enlightened on the subject.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY KNIGHT.

St. Ives, Cornwall,
September 5, 1896.

[The Motet "I wrestle and pray" ("Ich lasse dich nicht") was always considered to be the composition of John Sebastian Bach, but never, so far as we are aware, of his son, John Christian Bach. The highest authorities now attribute it to John Christopher Bach (1642-1703), of Eisenach, a first cousin once removed of J. Sebastian Bach's. The similarity of the initials—"J. C."—tends to cause confusion in distinguishing these two members of the great Bach family.—Ed., *M.T.*]

THE LATE MR. HOLDICH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In your obituary notice of September there are two slight inaccuracies respecting George Maidwell Holdich. In the first instance, he did not construct the organ at Islington Parish Church, which was built by Byfield and Green in 1771; secondly, the stop he invented was called "diaocton" (not di-octon), a genuine octave coupler, each row of pipes having an extra octave on the soundboard. As the writer of the late Mr. Holdich's Jubilee article in a musical contemporary (1887) you will excuse me drawing attention to the above facts.

Yours truly,

September, 1896.

CAROLUS REX.