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Organ Construction

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only been recognised since the departure of the master. This is partly to be accounted for by the fact that works which live for ever rarely command a large immediate sale. There are exceptions to the contrary—witness Mendelssohn. Still the rule is comparative neglect for genius in its earthly day. Let us do our best to prevent this as far as living genius is concerned, and not let fear of ridicule or unconscious envy make us slow to acknowledge any form of merit. And, as far as the great departed are concerned, especially those of our own race and country, let us not be niggard of our praises, or cold in the offering of our homage. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever"; it is a heritage for all humanity, not for one race alone. But other countries are ready enough to do justice to their great masters in the world of music. Other nations yield national encouragement to this branch of art. We, under the influence of a kind of material Philistinism or hard Puritanism, arising partly from a reaction against the Frenchified art of Charles II., have gone on wondering, with Pope and Swift—

How great the difference can be
'Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee—

and, till lately, have thought it almost *unmanly* to cultivate the art which breathes most on earth of heaven. We may thank heaven that this childish prejudice is passing fast away; but still there is a seeming reluctance in our art-world to acknowledge the just claims of English composers.

We are proud, and well may we be, of Purcell—the great Purcell—and of Bishop, and of Arne; but, in spite of the vast popularity of the "Bohemian Girl," we scarcely know Balfe's best music—that of the "Castle of Aymon," or "Les Quatre Fils d'Aymon"; and we have even forgotten Loder's charming "Night-Dancers," and Barnett's "Mountain Sylph." I do not rate these with the greater names of which I spoke before, but they too are not to be despised; nor is Wallace, whose "Amber Witch" has surely never had its full meed.

But I refrain. We have genuine power in our midst at this time. Need I name Arthur Sullivan, and many another—Garrett, Barnby, &c.? If I am not greatly mistaken, Sullivan's essential bent is dramatic, and he could give us *chef-d'œuvres* worthy of being classed with the best creations of Mozart, Rossini, and Auber. But, for some unexplained reason, there is no patriotism, as to musical art, in the leaders of the world of rank and fashion, and so true power is wasted, comparatively, on farces. A National Opera-house worthy of the name is a great desideratum.

Pardon the length of this expostulation. I am not a one-sided patriot in music. I love the tender melancholy and holy fervour and genuine power of Germany's minstrels; the lively grace, the often exquisite charm and high dramatic fervour of those of France; and the passionate nightingale strains of Italy. But genius has no single fatherland. The country which has produced the greatest of word-poets, from Shakespeare to Tennyson, can surely bring forth minstrels of genius also, nay, has brought them forth, and the word of sympathy alone is needed to bid the living waters flow.—Your obedient servant,

Rhayader.

ARCHER GURNEY.

ORGAN CONSTRUCTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Speaking as a mechanic and not as a performer, it is impossible for me not to sympathise with Mr. Cooper's advocacy of the radiating and concave pedal-board. Nothing is gained by unnecessary mechanical difficulties, and the human mechanism should be provided with such appliances as facilitate the work it is called upon to do. The extended feet radiate naturally, whether crossed or not.

It is not to the point that experts can and do perform well on straight pedals. Herr Joachim could, no doubt, play very well standing on a slack wire, if he practised enough; but his time might be more usefully employed.

It is not to the point that the radiation and concavity are sometimes excessive, bringing the heels on to wrong pedals owing to the keys being too close. Abuse is no argument against use.

It is not to the point that the pedals should be straight because the manual keys are so. The mobility of the elbows enables the hands to be kept square to the front.

What are the advantages of straight pedals as contrasted with radiating and concave?

Mr. Cooper's wish to have the centre of the pedal-board under the centre of the manuals would with a manual to G and pedals to F bring the pedal centre D $\sharp$ under the manual centre E. This is very nearly the "D under C" advocated by Mr. Best. It would hardly do to change the relative positions of the manuals and pedals with every upward variation of the manuals, and Mr. Best's suggestion seems therefore to be the most perfect.

Mr. Seaton's arrangement of drawstops is hardly practicable. If but one kind of *crescendo* and *diminuendo* were invariably required it would do well enough; but one sometimes requires the double in a soft combination, or four- and two-feet stops with only light eight-feet, &c.; so that the best grouping is that in which the positions of the knobs are most easily remembered, and that not only by the regular organist, but also by any casual performer. The difficulties of the casual are great enough in any case, and there is the less reason for change because the stereotyped *crescendo* and *diminuendo* of the composition pedals are arranged without regard to the position of the knobs.

There is no great mechanical difficulty in arranging an organ to transpose. Töpfer shows such an instrument: the keys are fixed, but the backfalls are movable. The expense of the mechanism would not be great; but in a large organ an extra third of pipes downwards would absorb an amount of money and room quite out of proportion to the value of the result.

Has any one of the F.C.O. yet hit upon a method of bringing a large pedal organ under complete control, so as to provide an appropriate "Pedale" *instantaneously* for any combination on any manual, with, or without its coupler? I have, I think, succeeded in doing this without involving the constant worry of moving ventils or composition pedals, drawstops or couplers, with every change of manual. If nothing of the sort has yet been done, I will explain the contrivance with pleasure.

Yours faithfully,
Denbigh. THOMAS CASSON.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you allow an amateur to say a few words on three questions of organ building? First, radiating *versus* straight pedals. Those who advocate the use of the latter only assume that their opponents declare it to be impossible to play certain passages of legitimate organ music on straight pedals. This is simply begging the real question at issue, which is: On which set can organ music as a whole be more conveniently and better played? The answer to this question must decide the strife for all unbiassed people. Naturally, those used to one sort only will always find the other sort, whatever its advantages, awkward to use. In my humble opinion a beginner would learn to play on concave radiating pedals more readily than on straight flat ones. I maintain that thirds and greater intervals can be played more smoothly with one foot (this is in double-pedal passages particularly necessary) on radiating than straight pedals. Organ pedals must, I take it, always be a compromise, for were they very far apart there would be danger of putting down two at once, but it would be well-nigh impossible to stretch from one end of them to the other; whereas were they very close, while it would be easy to take intervals yet it would be extremely difficult to always play only one at a time. Secondly, the position of the drawstops. I would suggest that the most prominent and powerful stops should have their handles placed next the manual, so that the hand may most readily be able to get at them, while the softer ones that do not need so often to be pulled in or out suddenly in the middle of a piece might be placed behind them, but the whole at an oblique angle to the jamb. Thirdly, there should be due proportion between the parts of an organ. An organ I know has six stops on the great (including stopped bass), while the swell has twelve, including three reeds (one to C only), fifteenth and mixture; the pedal organ, however, consists only of an open diapason, sixteen feet. How much better

to have put a little more of this power into the great, in order to enable it to take its proper place, instead of being drowned by the swell. It seems to me that very moderate-sized organs ought to have at least one eight-foot stop on the pedals to prevent the necessity of almost always coupling to one of the manuals, and thus destroying the independence of tone. Though it often is not possible to increase the number of stops, yet adding couplers would not much increase the expense and would greatly add to the expression to be derived from the instrument. For example, what beautiful effects can be produced by coupling two eight-foot stops of opposite character, the one loco to the other super-octave; thus combining the fulness of the eight-foot tone with the four-foot pitch.

Hoping that you will, while the question is in people's minds, allow it to be fully discussed in the columns of your valuable journal,—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

CONCAVE-RADIATING.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you allow me to ask some of your readers if the following facts are the exception or the rule in most National Schools?

I must explain that, thanks to the Dean (Dr. Vaughan) and the energetic Succentor of Llandaff Cathedral, we have here a very high class Cathedral School, where the choristers (who are all sons of gentlemen) are educated, the only unusual feature being that the boys are allowed the ordinary public school holidays, during which time we have to draw on the National School for boys for the "holiday choir." Now I find that, although these boys have just been "passed" by the Government Inspector in vocal music, not one of them can tell what interval it is from Do to Re, or have any notion of time or tune; and on inquiry, I find that all the vocal music is taught *by ear*—that is, the master having taught a large number of the boys to sing a few ditties in two parts, by constantly playing the parts over on the harmonium to them, the Inspector duly "passes" them, and goes on to judge the needlework of the girls in the next room!

Is it possible that Government grants are made amounting to over £100,000 *per annum* to schools in England and Wales where the vocal music is thus taught?

Surely no one can say it is unreasonable of me to expect that boys who have been "passed in vocal music" by a Government Inspector should, at any rate, know a little of the subject in which they have passed. In some cases that have lately come under my immediate notice I can testify that the boys' knowledge was actually *nil*: I only made this discovery by accident, and should be glad to know if this case is an exceptional one.—Yours, &c.,

C. L. WILLIAMS, Organist, Llandaff Cathedral.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have been told by the schoolmaster of our National Schools that he understands the Government grant is only given "to foster the love of music in the children, and not to teach them anything of practical musical value."

I cannot think that this is the best way to foster the love of music in children, who will and can learn to read from notes easily and quickly on almost any system.

CHURCH ORATORIO.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Kindly allow me small space for a short answer to Mr. Bengough's letter in your last issue. Little streams make big rivers, and true growth has small beginning. The Church Oratorio movement in our district began with one efficient choir, under the management, however, of one of those quiet earnest laymen who form the backbone of our Church, and the mainspring of its working. I was honoured by being taken into counsel. We set our purpose before us, gathered into association the cream of a few neighbouring choirs, and a few musical ladies, and held services with a choir of but fifty or sixty voices. We repeated the process on other centres; and now look forward to

join in a festival in York Minster in July, in a choir already reaching to nearly 800 singers: and we have the satisfaction of knowing that not only will the service be repeated at most of the centres whence the larger choirs came, but that it is proposed to give "St. John the Evangelist" at a Church Congress Service in Newcastle in the autumn. One "unknown country parson" as Mr. Bengough calls himself, may thus set a stream—small at beginning—a-flowing, which in time will surely meet other streams that among them will make up the big river. At any rate, let him try. Boldly take "St. John the Evangelist" in hand, gather round the nearest good choir that will help the work, beat up recruits, hold summer rehearsals of such parts of the contingent as can be got together, and at a harvest thanksgiving in the autumn give the work with "the shortened service."—Yours truly,

J. POWELL METCALFE.

ORGAN PEDALS ATTACHED TO PIANOFORTES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will some of your readers vouchsafe me a little information on the subject of organ pedals attached to a cottage piano? I have a cottage piano, to which I should like to apply organ pedals; and whilst I am, on the one hand, deterred from going to an organ builder for a set of pedals with organ action, I am also deterred from buying the cheap pedals advertised on account of the instability of the attachment action, which I believe consists merely of twine, subject to the influence of the weather, breakage, &c.

I shall therefore feel exceedingly obliged if some gentleman having experience in this matter will give me information on the subject, through the medium of your paper.—Yours faithfully,

PARISH CHURCH ORGANIST.

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 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.

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.

BAGSHOT.—Two Concerts were given by the members of the Choral Class on the 11th and 14th ult., under the direction of Mr. G. Paxton More, Organist and Choirmaster of the Parish Church. The programme consisted of solos, madrigals, and part-songs. Two pianoforte duets were well performed by Miss Hare and Miss A. James. "In going to my lonely bed" (Edwards), "Sweet and low" (Barnby), "The Young Musicians" (Kücken), and "Old Daddy Longlegs" (Macrone), were especially well rendered. The solo vocalists were Miss Sumpster, Miss J. Frimbley, Mr. Maskell, and Mr. Sumpster, all of whom gave much satisfaction to appreciative audiences.

BANFF.—The members of the Banff Musical Association gave their second and concluding Concert of the present session in the County Hall, on Friday evening, the 13th ult., to a large and fashionable audience. The principal work in the programme was Barnby's sacred Idyl, *Rebekah*, the libretto of which is written by Arthur Mathison. The work is perhaps, taken as a whole, one of the most meritorious of modern productions of a similar character, and in some of the parts its melody is strikingly beautiful, breathing throughout a tone of earnestness and spiritual reverence. The *dramatis personæ* are three in number—Rebekah, Isaac, and Eliezer—and the choruses are formed by maidens of the city, attendants, and others. Upon the rehearsal of the piece the members of the Association have spent a considerable time, and the result was a decisive success. The solo parts were taken as follows:—Rebekah, Miss Isa Dickson; Isaac, Mr. A. Simpson; Eliezer, Mr. W. Williamson; and perhaps the choice could not have been more fortunately made from amongst the members of the Association, for the whole of the solo music was excellently rendered. The piano and harmonium accompaniments were played by Mrs. Clement Gordon and Miss K. Martin respectively. The second part of the programme was devoted to miscellaneous pieces,