Neglected Solo Instruments

Author(s): Roughton H. Whall

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constructed instruments—what impression would be conveyed to our senses if a given composition be rendered according to the indications of the best and worst of these metronomes? I apprehend that the rendering would gain or lose nothing by the slight difference of time in the two cases.

Again, if a normal metronome be prepared in Paris to give in that place absolutely correct indications, these would not be the same if the apparatus were used in any other latitude, the swing of a pendulum varying with its position on the globe. For theoretical accuracy, therefore, a correction would be necessary for varying degrees of latitude, although practically the instruments would be good enough.

Improvements might advantageously be made to secure greater regularity of beat as the spring uncoils and loses its tension, although even this is not necessary in an apparatus which only need be used intermittently for a few seconds at a time; but any advantage to be gained from the introduction of a normal metronome appears to me more imaginary than real.

I may add that the President of the Academy has asked the Mechanics and Physics Sections to investigate the question submitted by M. Saint-Saëns.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. E. GATEHOUSE.

22, Paternoster Row, July 20, 1886.

TRANSLATION.

The Normal Metronome. Note by M. Saint-Saëns.

"Music differs from the plastic arts in that the essential element of the latter is the division of space, whereas that of the former is the division of time.

"In fact, music is the art of combining sounds either successively (as in melody) or simultaneously (as in harmony). In either case, a sound being composed of a certain number of isochronous vibrations of given duration, all music is reduced to a relation between numbers. Melody and harmony are merely rhythmical combinations.

"We may regard sounds (1) from the point of view of the greater or less rapidity of the vibrations which compose them; (2) from their duration. In either case, the relation between the different sounds constitutes in itself alone the whole musical interest. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, no other point was considered. The pitch was arbitrary, and there were no directions as to the rate of execution, or what is termed in music the time of a piece.

"The progress of the art of singing, appealing to all the resources of the voice throughout the vocal scale, gradually made apparent the necessity of a definite starting point as to pitch, and each country adopted its own. As this art became still further developed, the want of a common standard of pitch was universally felt, and the Académie des Sciences solved the problem by introducing the normal diapason, which all nations are gradually adopting. On the other hand, the development of the combinations of rhythm showed the necessity for determining the time of pieces of music. This was done in vague terms, which every one interpreted according to his own ideas, and no other method was adopted until the appearance of the metronome. This instrument, invented at the end of the last century by Stœckel, and improved by Maelzel, is a pendulum provided with a 'movable bob' and a graduated scale, based upon the subdivisions of a minute. In the metronomes most frequently employed, the subdivisions range from $\frac{1}{10}$ to $\frac{1}{2048}$ of a minute.

"These instruments are universally employed. But to be of any practical utility they must be accurate, and unfortunately this is a quality that very few of them possess. The musical world is supplied with badly constructed and badly regulated metronomes, which mislead musicians instead of guiding them.

"The Académie, which has rendered so great a service to music by the introduction of the normal diapason, would complete its work by endowing it also with a normal metronome, regulated mathematically, and by obtaining a guarantee from the Government that metronomes before being delivered to the public should be tested and stamped, as are tuning-forks, weights, and measures."

THE NATURAL MUSICAL SCALES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to point out that the scheme of the major diatonic scale, to which I called attention in your last issue, affords also a solution of the "tonic minor" question; a solution which, it seems fair to expect, will reconcile the views of many theorists otherwise hopelessly antagonistic.

Alfred Day, the inventor of the generally accepted tonic minor, states explicitly that the *minor third from the tonic*, 6:5, is an arbitrary, and not a natural interval.

The Tonic Sol-fa school rejects the tonic minor theory entirely, affirming that the so-called tonic minor of C is really the relative minor of E flat. Other observers have noted the facts that the equal temperament minor third, instead of being too narrow to satisfy the ear, as theory suggests, is in reality too wide; and that the E F major third, instead of being too wide, is, at least in some cases, too narrow.

The Series of Perfect Fifths.

A♯	E♯	B♯	F	C	G	D
$\frac{128}{81}$	$\frac{32}{27}$	$\frac{16}{9}$	$\frac{4}{3}$	$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{9}{8}$

Affords a scale completely satisfying these objections, thus—

Natural Tonic Minor Scale.

C	D	E♯	F	G	A♯	B♯	C
1	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{32}{27}$	$\frac{4}{3}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{128}{81}$	$\frac{16}{9}$	2

This scale is entirely and indisputably natural. Its minor third, C to E flat, is narrower by a comma ($\frac{81}{80}$) than the modic minor third, A to C. Its major thirds are wider by a comma than the major thirds of the major scale. Its third, sixth, and seventh, all or either may be raised a chromatic semitone, $\frac{128}{125}$, without in any way violating the dictates of nature, as the raised and unraised notes are all derived from the same root.

On page 110 of "Musical Statics," Mr. Curwen says:—"The minor mode does not hold its own so well as the major. . . . It seems as though it could not stand alone. In every few measures it takes it needs the relative major to support its steps."

This and much more is justified and explained by the fact that the natural tonic minor scale has but *one* root or gauge-note, C; whilst the major scale has *two* roots or gauge-notes, C and E.

Annexed is a comparative view of minor scales, showing the relative dimensions of their intervals—

Natural Tonic Minor.

C T D S E♯ T F T G S A♯ T B♯ T C

Day's Minor.

C T " S " t " T " S " t " T "

Relative Minor.

C T " S " T " t " S " T " t "

Here $t = \frac{9}{8}$; $t = \frac{10}{9}$; $s = \frac{16}{15}$; $s = \frac{25}{24}$.

The raised sixths, sevenths, and thirds are identical in these scales.—Yours faithfully,

JOSEPH GOOLD.

NEGLECTED SOLO INSTRUMENTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—A note in your issue of this month refers to a subject in which I have for some time taken a great interest, and upon which I venture to ask you to let me add a few remarks. One point not touched upon by your correspondent is the position of amateurs. With regard to this question, I think I shall hardly be exaggerating if I say that there are thousands of amateurs of some taste and cultivation (I know a few in my own experience, which is by no means large) who scarcely know any of the orchestral wind instruments, except the flute, by their sound or even their name. By the performance of the many neglected masterpieces written for other wind instruments, all such persons would have a new and most interesting field revealed to

them, and composers would, doubtless, be thus encouraged to still further enrich the store of these pieces. It seems strange indeed that Conductors should be so blind to such an opportunity: we have actually had a Concerto for kettle-drums played within the last few years, by way of a startling novelty, as if there were not many fine instruments, with plenty of suitable music composed for them, waiting to be heard. Another branch of this subject, on which I should like to say a few words, is the revival of instruments which have been long thrown aside. The double-reed family is fairly represented—we have the oboe (soprano), cor anglaise (alto), bassoon (bass), and contra-fagotto (double-bass), all in more or less common use—though the cor anglaise, perhaps the most beautiful of all the family, might be brought forward more than it is at present. But of the single-reed family the *only* representative in ordinary use is the soprano—the clarinet—whereas the alto and bass clarinets are exceedingly fine and effective instruments, and are, unfortunately, scarcely ever heard: the basset-horn, so far as I am aware, is only used in *one* work which is ever performed—Mozart's Requiem—and the bass clarinet in Meyerbeer's and Wagner's operas. But all these, besides being available for orchestral use, are excellent as solo instruments; only, unfortunately, there is little written for them. The remedy for this lies in the hands of composers. I have myself used the bass clarinet as a solo instrument (having adapted a cello part to it) in a chamber Concert in a small provincial town, where it was much admired by the few musicians who were present. Mozart and Mendelssohn have both used the basset-horn in chamber music: the latter having written two magnificent Concert pieces (Op. 113 and 114) for clarinet, basset-horn, and piano. Is it too much to hope that we may hear these some day at the "Monday Pops."? I would also mention, as specimens of chamber music, two exquisite pieces for clarinet, viola, and piano; a trio by Mozart in E flat, and Schumann's "Märchen-Erzählungen." These latter, by the way, were played at a Saturday Popular Concert last season, with *violin* instead of clarinet, when Mr. Lazarus was, I believe, actually present, waiting to play in a Septet. If my remarks should attract the favourable attention of those in authority, and so eventually lead to a practical recognition of the claims of these neglected instruments and compositions, the object of my letter will be gained.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

ROUGHTON H. WHALL, A.C.O.

152, Oakley Street, Chelsea, July 11, 1886.

"ADELAIDE AS A MUSICAL CITY."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—By this mail I forward the *S. A. Register* of May 29, 1886, in which appears a letter from me contradicting a statement made by your Adelaide correspondent in his "Adelaide as a Musical City," published in *THE MUSICAL TIMES* of March 1, 1886. As your valuable journal is held in such high estimation even in this distant part of the world, I must request the favour of your giving publicity to my refutation of your correspondent's want of accuracy. I have waited a week for any reply to my letter to the *Register*, but none has appeared; the reason is obvious.—I am, Sir, &c.,

"S. A. REGISTER" MUSICAL CRITIC.

Adelaide, June 5, 1886.

"SIR,—In the March issue of *THE MUSICAL TIMES* (London) a correspondent favours the readers of that journal with his views upon 'Adelaide as a Musical City.' His concluding paragraph begins, 'We have only one drawback, our newspaper critics are deficient in knowledge,' and after mentioning three instances where errors have been made—one of which, by the way, is palpably a printer's error—he writes, 'If this does not suffice to show their weakness, the *S. A. Register's* notice of one of the Quartet Concerts may.' Then follows what purports to be a quotation from the *Register* notice of the performance of Schubert's 'Trout' Quintet, marked by quotation points. I am informed by the Secretary of the A.S.Q.C. and another competent authority that this work has been performed in Adelaide only on three occasions, at each of which I have been present as your representative; and I

flatly deny that the quotation is correct either literally or as giving, even in the most general manner, the sense of the criticism which appeared in your columns. Even under favourable circumstances the critic's 'lot is not a happy one,' and he certainly cannot afford to be adversely misquoted.—I am, Sir, &c., YOUR MUSICAL CRITIC."

AN UNKNOWN IRISH TUNE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—The late Carl Engel, sometime previous to his death, recommended in your columns that organists and others, in country districts especially, should bring forward any characteristic national air or tune which might be considered to have escaped public notice, or rather that of musicians generally. The appended melody, which I now transcribe from memory, I have never seen in any printed collection of Irish or other tunes, nor in any MS. except my own. I heard it from time to time in Limerick and Tipperary, played for such a dance as Miss McLeod's reel is used for; but since my residence in this county (Kerry) I have not heard it even once. Mr. Rockstro, in his *History of Music*, says: "Many of the finest English, French, Scottish, Irish, and other national melodies are written in the ancient ecclesiastical scales." It may be interesting, therefore, to those conversant with the Gregorian modes, to discuss the question as to which of them belong the quaint periods of this melodious old air, which I believe to be thus far unknown.—I am, Sir, yours very truly,

W. CHARLES HETREED, Cathedral Organist.

July 5, 1886.

THE MARSEILLAISE HYMN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you please inform me through your Correspondence column, of the full particulars relative to the authorship of the melody to the "Marseillaise Hymn."

Was the melody *specially* composed for it, or was it in existence before the "Marseillaise"?—Yours truly,

THIRVALD LAURSEN.

45, Fairlawn Street, Moss Side, Manchester.

[On the much-debated question referred to above our correspondents may have something to say. We invite communications.—ED. M. T.]

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.

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