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Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 58, No. 894 (Aug. 1, 1917), pp. 356-357

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/909365>

Accessed: 22-12-2015 10:05 UTC

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REBIKOV AND HIS MANTLE.

By M. MONTAGU-NATHAN.

Musical plagiarism has often been the subject of articles and the topic of discussions, and, as is well-known, Mr. Sedley Taylor has devoted a whole volume to the consideration of Handel's indebtedness to other composers.

It is not my intention in the present article to enter the field of research, but simply to give publicity to a case differing in certain respects from others which have been investigated. The difference consists apparently in this: Composers have from time to time been accused of borrowing a phrase or a musical idea from one or another of their precursors or contemporaries, but it is rarely, if ever, that we hear of a composer claiming that he has been wronged by a general failure to recognise him as the inventor of a chord or of a harmonic system. One would imagine that such a claimant would have as good a case as might the inventor of, say, a kind of automatic potato or wireworm-less cabbage, were it not for the lack of any defendant, owing to the circumstance that composers are not in the habit of labelling sections of their wares as though they formed parts of a machine.

But this is the claim, I am led to believe, of the Russian composer Rebikov, and my belief has been strengthened by the receipt of a registered packet from Yalta (in the Crimea)—an oasis in a desert of rather dull British letters. The packet contained a number of extracts from the Press, which invite the musical world to regard Rebikov as the precursor of certain modernists. From these translated passages I propose to quote (in verbal facsimile) some which have been underlined or otherwise marked by the sender in coloured chalk:

From a brief biographical note:

... beginning from his Opus 10 he has taken for device of his creation the motto 'Music is the language of feelings.' Our feelings have no conventional forms, tones, or cadences. He was the first in Europe to give us a musical work entirely written in whole-tone scales

(Op. 15), further in quartaccords (Op. 8), and parallel fifths, fourths, sevenths, ninths, and terz-decimaccords. For him the tones are not the aim, but only a means to interpret the tune of mood or the emotions.

From a notice of 'The Christmas Tree' in the Kiev *Musical World*, 1907:

... The outward forms of dramatism are as nothing—the inward, all. Such is Rebikov's new work. It is immaterial to him who suffers or rejoices—X, Y, or Z. Suffering and joy are important to him in themselves as movements of the universal heart of mankind. In this respect Rebikov stands alone and apart among Russian operatic composers.

From *Utro Rossii* ('The Russian Morning'), 1912:

Long before the French modernists, before Richard Strauss and Scriabin, Rebikow had sought for new forms of musical expression, new harmonies, new turns of melody ... His works raised a perfect storm among the votaries of art. But last year Rebikov's opponents, to their wonder and horror, saw that the freshest musical sprouts were stretching in the direction where Rebikov had long been working. Take the whole-toned French School, study the earlier works of Scriabin and, lastly, look at the newest Russian composers. Everywhere you will discover a link between Rebikov's and the very latest music. Rebikov's importance, therefore, consists in that he divined the direction of the current in which music was bound to flow and, nearly fifteen years before anyone else, entered that current.

From *Moskovsky Listok* ('The Moscow Leaf'), 1912:

Whole-toned scales have been used by Rimsky-Korsakov and Debussy, but Rebikov was the first to give us a musical work written entirely in these scales.

With the above cuttings, however, there arrived a document possessing a much greater interest. This, as may be seen, is a series of parallel passages quoted from the compositions of Rebikov, Debussy, and Scriabin, compiled no doubt by a zealous admirer and neighbour of the first-named composer. I append a faithful copy of the manuscript, and leave it to the readers of the *Musical Times* to judge whether Rebikov's champion is a fit and proper person to be entrusted with the task he has undertaken:

REBIKOFF: LES ACCORDS EN QUARTES.

Opus 8, No. 14, 1895. Opus 13, 1907. Opus 13.

Opus 21, 1900. Opus 40, 1907. REBIKOF, 1907. SCRIBIN, 1910. 'Prometeus.'

'Thea,' p. 40. Op. 34. RÉBIKOW, 1904. 'Prometeus.' SCRIABIN, 1910. Opus 18, No. 2. RÉBIKOFF, 1900. "Peleas," p. 18. DEBUSSY, 1902.

Opus 16, No. 1. RÉBIKOFF, 1900. 'Peleas,' p. 9. DEBUSSY, 1902.

Upon the above anonymous document I do not propose myself to comment. I may be permitted, however, to point out that this is not the first time that Debussy has been voted a mere imitator, for, according to Madame d'Alheim, it was triumphantly remarked (on the occasion of one of the earliest recitals of Moussorgsky's works in Paris) by one of the French composer's most determined depreciators, that it could clearly be seen that Debussy's reputation as a pioneer had been falsely come by. And

apparently Debussy's advocates themselves are not the most trustworthy of people. Did not Kandinsky state* that 'Debussy [B. 1862] has had a great influence on Russian music, notably on Moussorgsky' [1839-1881]. No one, so far as I am aware, has ever treated Rebikov as badly as that!

*'The Art of Spiritual Harmony.' By Wassily Kandinsky. Translated with an Introduction by M. T. H. Sadler. (Constable & Co., Ltd., London, 1914.)

PERFORMING RIGHTS DISPUTE: AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT.

In our May issue (page 205) we commented on the unfortunate dispute that had arisen between the proprietors of certain metropolitan concert halls and the officials of the Performing Right Society. It was evident from the correspondence we published that there was no desire on the part of the concert-hall proprietors to evade just payment for permission to perform pieces controlled by the Society. We are glad now to record that the various interests concerned have been reconciled by a fair compromise. Instead of demanding a compounding fee for the halls the Society will in future charge on the following scale:

	s.	d.
For not more than two songs or vocal numbers ...	5	0
For each additional song or vocal number ...	2	6
For each instrumental work or number:		
Not exceeding in duration 5 minutes ...	2	6
" " 10 " " ...	5	0
" " 15 " " ...	7	6
Exceeding in duration 15 minutes ...	10	0

We are not quite sure that the longest works should be handicapped by higher charges; in fact there is something to be said (from the point of view of the audience) for the whole scale of charges being reversed. But one advantage may accrue. Composers may try to clip their own wings.

OBITER
DICTUM.

'There are no deep musical overtones in his [M. Brieux's] work, as there are in Ibsen's.' (Desmond MacCarthy in the *New Statesman*.) Our italics.

Church and Organ Music.

LISZT AND THE ORGAN.

BY HARVEY GRACE.

Liszt the piano virtuoso, the compounder of brilliant orchestral medleys, the apostle of 'the music of the future,' is a familiar figure; Liszt the organ enthusiast is not so well known. His partiality for the instrument is shown by frequent references in his correspondence, by his transcriptions for it, and, most of all, by a handful of compositions the best of which are of great interest and effect.

Liszt's fondness for the organ can hardly be explained on musical grounds. In his day both the instrument and its music (especially in Germany) were of a character little calculated to appeal to a brilliant pianist and advanced composer. It seems pretty certain that he was attracted partly by its religious associations. All his life he was interested in church music, and in his latter years declared it to be the only thing worth living for. We know from his letters that he set great store by his compositions for the Church, and it is one of fate's ironies that the most popular of his works to-day are the most garish and secular. How many of us can hum a phrase of his five Masses, twelve sacred choruses, five psalms, two oratorios, and numerous smaller settings and arrangements for church use? Nor is this neglect undeserved, if we may believe the critics who tell us that these works show to a fatal degree their composer's weakness in thematic invention, besides too often employing an idiom suggestive of the wrong side of the church door.

Probably Liszt's admiration for Bach helped to kindle his interest in the organ. It is worth noting on what grounds he was a Bachite. Writing from Rome, in 1863, he says: 'However, notwithstanding all my admiration for Handel, my preference for Bach still holds good, and when I have edified myself sufficiently with Handel's common chords, I long for the precious dissonances of the "Passion" and other