Review

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 46, No. 748 (Jun. 1, 1905), p. 401

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/903453>

Accessed: 10-01-2016 18:02 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

gloomier periods of Irish history. The harpers began to die out, and the developments of music taking place in other countries had little or no influence in Ireland. The 19th century brought forward John Field the pianist; then came Balfe and Wallace and others to show that Irish musical genius was by no means extinct. To-day we have Sir Charles Villiers Stanford in the front rank of living musicians, and there are many other Irishmen who have achieved fame in the art.

Although Mr. Flood's history is somewhat discursive in its literary style, and inclined to be over enthusiastic, it is a useful compilation of facts and dates.

Sonata (No. 3 in B dur), Op. 12, für Orgel. Componirt von Percy C. Buck.

[Breitkopf & Härtel.]

Dr. Buck has planned his third organ sonata thus: *Fantasia*, *Marcia Funèbre*, and *Toccata*. The first of these movements opens with a broad and well-defined theme, one that recalls in its stately tread the last movement of Mendelssohn's sonata in the same key. To this succeeds an agitated section in the tonic minor (B flat) of restless tonality: indeed, it would serve admirably for a sight-reading test. A repetition of the opening portion concludes the *Fantasia*. By-the-way, in bar three from the end of this movement, should not the uppermost note (C) be a dotted minim, instead of a dotted crotchet? The *Funeral March* is constructed on three Hebrew melodies—'Matnath Yad,' 'Attah Adonai,' and 'El Nora'—thematic material of an unusual but distinctly melodious nature, which the composer has deftly and impressively treated. In the last movement the contrasting elements of dignified phrases and toccataish semiquaver energy are well displayed. The work, which in its interpretation will make some demands on technical skill, is one that reflects credit upon its composer.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

An Elizabethan Virginal Book. By E. W. Naylor, Mus. D. Pp. xv. and 220; 6s. net. (Dent.)—*Schubert.* By Edmondstone Duncan. With illustrations and portraits. Pp. ix. and 281; 3s. 6d. net. (Dent.)—*Joseph Joachim.* By J. A. Fuller Maitland. Pp. ix. and 63; 2s. 6d. net. (John Lane.)—*Richard Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck.* Translated, Prefaced, &c., by William Ashton Ellis. Pp. xii. and 386; 16s. net. (H. Grevel & Co.)—*The Study of Music as a means of Education.* By Edgar Mills. Pp. vii. and 73; 1s. net. (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.)—*Brahms.* By Herbert Antcliffe. Pp. 56; 1s. net. (Bell.)

THE HIGHER ASPECTS OF MUSICAL FORM.

At the meeting of the Musical Association held on May 9 (Dr. Charles Maclean in the chair), Mr. F. Gilbert Webb read a paper on 'The Higher Aspects of Musical Form.'

The lecturer said that it was with the diffidence born of knowledge that he ventured to take up the thorny subject of form in music, but his justification was a desire to contribute in some degree to a clearer apprehension than seemed at present to exist concerning the principles which gave form and design force and influence. Music has ever reflected the spirit of its time, and at the present period nothing was sacred to the analyst and searcher after truth, and the result was that our conceptions of material substances and our beliefs had been shaken to their foundations. Small wonder, therefore, that in the midst of this physical and mental *Götterdämmerung*, composers should question the truth of laws and rules hitherto accepted unhesitatingly.

Formalism might be described as form run to seed, and was as inevitable as the decay of a beautiful flower; but, while lamenting that degeneration, it should not be forgotten that the flower would have had little beauty but for the presence of symmetrical form. The germ of form was the desire for

symmetry. It was observable in the rude pattern markings of the savage. Such markings might be described as form in an inert state. Active life came to it with the spirit of expression, and the moment design became the medium of thought, it acquired artistic vitality, and its subsequent ramifications were the natural product of environment; but formalism was the killing of that spirit, the retrogression to the inert state.

That in which the masterpiece differed from what might be termed estimable music was that, whereas every note of the former had been dictated, perhaps unconsciously, by an overwhelming desire to express a dominating idea, a considerable portion of the latter has been filled in by obedience to precedent and to theoretical laws.

There were two aspects of form which to-day were somewhat overlooked, *i.e.*, the different action of form in mental conception and in assimilating the ideas of others. The composer worked from a central idea, a germ thought which he expanded; the listener had to be conducted to that germ-thought by a series of introductions. The composer stood within the edifice he had erected, but the listener was outside, and unless the builder had been clear in his designing his object would be hard to understand. In no art was the consideration of the laws by which understanding was accomplished so imperative as in music, yet modern music showed that few composers studied to make their music easily comprehended.

It should be recognised that design in music was as many-sided as form in the inanimate world, and that nature always suited her form to her requirements. Far more compositions had failed by being written in obedience to rules inapplicable to the subject-matter than by formlessness, but the composer's difficulties and responsibilities were greatly increased by his emancipation from fixed laws. He was faced by eternal principles of balance, symmetry, appropriateness, and other attributes which made for rationality and sanity, without which he could never achieve true greatness. He might select any subject for musical illustration, but unless the appropriate treatment made for the production of a work that conformed to the laws by which the mind of the listener received and assimilated impressions, he would only produce a monstrosity.

Mr. Webb's thoughtful and well-expressed paper was followed by a discussion in which Sir Frederick Bridge, Dr. Yorke Trotter, Mr. T. L. Southgate, and the chairman took part.

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

The concert on May 11 opened with the Welsh Rhapsody by Mr. Edward German, its first performance in London. The success which the work gained when produced at the Cardiff Musical Festival last year was fully endorsed by the Philharmonic audience at the Queen's Hall, who cheered the composer again and again. Mr. German has selected five Welsh melodies for his thematic material. These really tuneful strains he has welded together and treated in a most masterly and interesting manner, with the result that there is not a dull moment from beginning to end. And is not this saying much when a modern composition is under consideration? The orchestration is as clear as the day: everything 'comes off,' and the manner in which the composer has climaxed his fantasia with 'Men of Harlech' is overwhelming in its effectiveness. We venture to predict frequent performances of this delightful work: it will brighten many a programme.

The enjoyment of the concert was further enhanced by the charming playing of M. Raoul Pugno, a pianist who has a lovely touch and who is an artist to the tips of his fingers—would that this could be said of all pianists! In César Franck's beautiful Symphonic Variations for pianoforte and orchestra and the 'Africa' fantasia by Saint-Saëns, M. Pugno further distinguished himself in those rare qualities which so eminently characterize his interpretations. Miss Lydia Nerval was the vocalist, and the concert concluded with Tchaikovsky's Pathetic symphony, a work that was first introduced into England, under Sir Alexander Mackenzie's conductorship, by the Philharmonic Society in 1894. Dr. Cowen ably conducted a concert that formed a most pleasant music-making.