Vincent d'Indy's View of Harmony

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player-mechanism. The 'Pantalon' is equally impossible; so why ask for more notes to be cut when to be played at all they must be given *ff*?

In fact I refuse to regard my pianola as more than a substitute for fingers. I want to play my pianoforte, the pianola is merely the intermediary, and it must express *me* or I will have none of it. Monochrome renderings of polychrome orchestral works are so unsatisfactory that in cutting such rolls the ideal should always be the most pianistic rendering, a translation into the terms of the pianoforte, not the fullest rendering of the orchestral notes. Numberless works can be found containing quadruple shakes, impossible to play properly with even any amount of noise. We must not forget it is the pianoforte we are playing: the player is merely a substitute for our fingers, and must be improved in that direction only, or else we shall falsify our beautiful instrument, the grand pianoforte. Of course there are cases where one can add notes impossible from stretch of fingers, *e.g.*, bass octaves giving great depth. I frequently do this when cutting transcriptions from Bach's organ works; but even then one does not transcend the pianistic effect proper. It is these noisy orchestral renderings, plus the heavy spring and its turn-a-handle monotony of effect, that make the piano-player so often an intolerable nuisance to all—but the performer!—Yours, &c.,

32, Rosemont Road, FREDERICK H. EVANS.
Acton, W.3.

'EXTREMISTS *versus* THE REST'

SIR,—May I be allowed, as a regular reader of your paper, to express regret that the pages devoted to 'Correspondence' should, in the December number, have been reserved for the petty quarrels of two of our leading musical critics. This section of the paper is surely intended to be a medium through which readers may express their views on music, or seek information, and ought not to be used by a critic for the purpose of saying what he thinks of another critic. This battle of wits has now been going on for some time, in various papers, and I feel sure that the musical public in general is beginning to be tired of it, and will agree with me in suggesting that your valuable space could be put to better use.—Yours, &c.,

J. N. G. ESCOMBE.

[We sympathise with Mr. Escombe's complaint, and while welcoming free and frank discussion, we must ask contributors and correspondents to bear in mind that they are disputing themselves in a forum, not in a prize ring.—ED., *M.T.*]

'SYSTEM IN MUSICAL NOTATION'

SIR,—Dr. Ferris Tozer is not entirely correct in supposing that I had not read Mr. Elliot Button's book. Actually, I have read at least a good part of it (unless my memory is gravely at fault) in past numbers of the *Musical Times*; but I admit that this was not in the least in my mind when I wrote my letter. I did not, indeed, set out to write a criticism of Mr. Button's work, but merely to make a comment suggested by an article in the *Musical Times* which happened itself to be a review of the book. However, if, as Dr. Tozer suggests, I have chosen 'two of the most convincing examples in the book' for criticism, no harm has been done. To attack a man's book at its strongest points gives, surely, little cause for complaint. Criticism deliberately directed against the weakest points might perhaps be regarded as carping.

In case, however, it might seem from Dr. Tozer's letter—if read alone—that I had written in depreciation of Mr. Button's work, I should like to say that I have since found an opportunity for looking through it (in complete form) and find much in it is valuable that—especially in the more elementary parts, about which there can of course be little dispute. The more contentious parts, too, are interesting and stimulating; but between saying this and agreeing with all Mr. Button states—and especially accepting all his various 'conditions'—there is a great gulf fixed.

Dr. Tozer makes a mistake, if I may say so, in appealing to the authority of Sir Edward Elgar. I rather doubt if Sir Edward would support *everything* Mr. Button writes;

but apart altogether from this, the great charm of Mr. Button's book lies in the youthful exuberance with which he throws overboard all authority altogether. He appeals not to authority, but to reason, system, and logic. (The very title of his work proclaims this.) To fall back, then, after all, on authority is rather to knock the bottom out of his case. Moreover, it leaves it open to me to make the obvious retort that if Mr. Button has Sir Edward Elgar on his side, I, at any rate, have Bach, Beethoven, and the rest of them, on mine!—Yours, &c.,

A. R. CRIPPS.

10, Ambrose Place, Worthing.

December 11, 1920.

VINCENT D'INDY'S VIEW OF HARMONY

SIR,—Mr. Thelwall will find M. d'Indy's demonstration of his Lower Harmonic series in vol. i., pp. 98, 99, of the 'Cours de Composition.' It is similar to that in Riemann's 'Harmony Simplified.' M. d'Indy, in his chapter 'The History of Harmonic Theories,' credits Zarline with discovering (arithmetically) the true basis of the Minor Mode. Tartini and his resultant tones, and Arthur von Oettingen ('Harmoniesystem in Dualer Entwicklung') are the chief of the later supporters he marshals. His last paragraph on p. 142 points to a hope in a physical demonstration of the whole lower series:

'Our ideas, our knowledge, and our nature itself are eminently modifiable if not perfectible, and who can deny that a theory like ours has a great chance of being true when it assembles in its favour all the distinguished minds whose laborious research we have just retraced? May each of us now verify it, absorb it, and still add to it by his personal toil of reflection and application.'

I ought to say that M. d'Indy does not call his lower harmonics 'partials.' The sentence Mr. Thelwall quotes ('If one cannot hear them in nature, one is to realise them "by second nature,"' &c.) was not a translation from M. d'Indy, nor was it given as such, though I think it fairly enough renders his teaching.—Yours, &c.,

London, December, 1920.

RICHARD CAPELL.

SIR,—In the *Musical Times* for December I see a letter from Mr. Walter Thelwall, in which he says:

'I am somewhat sceptical as to these multiple tones. . . . I hope that this letter may have the effect of eliciting evidence upon the subject.'

Has Mr. Thelwall tried the effect of playing the lowest note on the organ pedals with only a 16-ft. stop out, then adding the note a 5th higher? The lower octave of the C is then plainly audible. Is this not a proof—even to the unscientific—that these lower partials do exist?—Yours, &c.,

The Look-out, Clevedon.

ENID PAYNE

December 1, 1920.

(Mrs. Walter Morris).

'LETTERS OF GREAT COMPOSERS'

SIR,—I crave an inch of your valuable space to reply to Mr. F. Sinclair-Terras and Mr. R. B. Kettlewell, whose letters concerning my article appeared in the November and December numbers of the *Musical Times*. Mr. Terras has apparently misread me. The edition of Mendelssohn's letters he mentions is the identical one I possess, and from which my quotations were taken. I merely expressed a wish that some of our enterprising publishers of to-day who issue reprints of the world's classics would include a selection from the correspondence of Mendelssohn.

In reply to Mr. R. B. Kettlewell's reference to my not having treated of Brahms' letters, I may say that, from considerations of space, I confined myself to four selected composers. In a future article I hope to deal with a further four composers, when I shall certainly include the Herzogenberg correspondence of Johannes Brahms.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM PEARSON.

323, Victoria Road,
Alston Park, Birmingham.

December 5, 1920.