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Inaugural Address to the Twenty-First Session

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

TO THE

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION,

BY

SIR JOHN STAINER, M.A., MUS. DOC., OXON., D.C.L.,

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION.

BEFORE calling upon Mr. Edwards to read his paper, we have the pleasant task of congratulating ourselves. The Musical Association has existed for twenty years, and now enters on its twenty-first year. It might occur to many that twenty years is not a very long period in the history of a society; but, on the other hand, a vast number of similar associations do not attain to half our age, and it must be remembered too that we have no imposing buildings to catch the eye of the public, and we have no royal charter enabling us to flatter our vanity by adding letters after our names.

Wise societies, like thoughtful individuals, seize the opportunity of having reached a landmark in their existence for the purpose of reviewing the past and looking forward into the future: we will do so to-day.

Has the Musical Association done all that it should or could have done during the past twenty years? and is its basis sufficiently firm to ensure its permanence? As most of you know, the initial idea of this Association was started in Oxford, in the house of the late Dr. Corfe. During an interesting conversation with Dr. Corfe and Dr. Pole, I expressed a regret that musicians did not possess any organisation for encouraging and collecting information or papers on special subjects connected with our art. I was told I ought not to lose sight of such a scheme, and when I found myself settled in London I made the first attempt at establishing it by calling together a meeting, which was very influentially attended, there being present, amongst many other distinguished men, the late Mr. William Spottiswoode, F.R.S., Mr. A. J. Ellis, F.R.S., Professor Wheatstone, Professor Tyndall, Sir George Macfarren, Dr. Hullah, Mr. William Chappell, Dr. Stone, Sir John Goss, J. Henry Griesbach, and Thomas Helmore. Fortunately for us, the secretaryship was undertaken by Mr. Charles Salaman, whose

musical knowledge, social influence, and untiring perseverance rapidly placed the Association on a sure foundation, and to whom we owe a distinct debt of gratitude. Looking back over the papers which the Association has called into existence, I think they are for the most part interesting and valuable contributions to the literature of our art. When glancing through my volumes of "Proceedings" I was quite surprised to find the large number of learned articles we have received from the pens of distinguished men and women.

If it will not bore you I should like to remind you of some few of the leading papers, grouped under special heads:—

INSTRUMENTS.

Kettle Drums (Pontigny).
 Trumpets (Blaikley).
 Clavier Instruments (Hipkins).
 Compass of String Instruments (Stone).
 Growth of the Orchestra (Prout).
 Viola da Gamba (Payne).
 Egyptian Flutes (Southgate).

PHILOSOPHY AND ÆSTHETICS.

Musical Criticism (Salaman).
 Musical Æsthetics (Breakspeare).
 Underlying principles of Musical Structure (Banister).
 On some bearings of the Historical method on Music (Hubert Parry).
 The Emotional Effects of the Sister Arts (George A. Osborne).
 Musical Psychics (Gerard Cobb).
 Music as a Language (Banister).
 The Composer's Intention (Jacques).
 Musical Design (Prescott).
 Laws of Musical Expression (Curwen).
 From Rhythmic Pulsation to Classical Outline (Hiles).

ACOUSTICS AND SCIENCE.

Temperament (Bosanquet).
 Standards of Pitch (Stone).
 On our Perception of the Direction of a Sound (Lord Rayleigh).
 Philosophy of Harmony (Pole).
 On the Sensitiveness of the Ear to Pitch (Ellis).
 Absolute Pitch (Lord Rayleigh).
 Beats and Combination tones (Spottiswoode).
 Just Intonation (Ellis).
 On a Mode of Producing Continuous sounds from Resonators (Bosanquet).

NATIONAL MUSIC AND SCHOOLS OF MUSIC.

The English School of the Sixteenth Century (Mee).
 Irish Music (St. John Lacy).
 Ancient Musical Traditions of the Synagogue (Cohen).
 French Popular Songs of the Fifteenth Century
 (Brownlow).
 Music of Japan (Piggott).
 Indian Music (Day).
 Russian Ecclesiastical Music (Birkbeck).
 Ecclesiastical Music of Western Europe (Ouseley).
 Early Italian and Spanish Treatises on Counterpoint and
 Harmony (Ouseley).

PHYSIOLOGY OF MUSIC.

On the Mechanism of the Human Voice (Behnke).
 Medical Science in relation to the Voice (Lennox
 Browne).

PRACTICAL MUSIC AND ANALYSIS.

The Vocal Art (Santley).
 Musical Nomenclature (Hullah).
 Consecutive Fifths (Gladstone).
 Art of Fugue (Higgs).
 Fugal Structure (Prout).
 Rhythmical Construction of Bach's Fugues (Abdy-
 Williams).
 Sol-fa Syllables (McNaught).
 Music in Public Schools (Parker).
 Music in Elementary Schools (Marmaduke Browne).
 Mannerisms of Beethoven (Shedlock).
 Closes (Corder).
 Music in the Royal Navy (Havergal).
 Flats, Sharps, and Naturals (Niecks).

BIOGRAPHY, AND PERSONAL NOTICES.

On the Musical Inventions of the late Sir Charles
 Wheatstone (Professor Adams).
 Henry Purcell and his Family (Cummings).
 Berlioz (George Osborne).
 Sterndale Bennett, his Life and Works (O'Leary).
 Handel and Bach (Sir G. Macfarren).
 Life and Work of Sir G. Macfarren (Banister).
 Life and Character of Sir Frederick Ouseley.
 Wagner (Cart).
 Samuel Wesley (Higgs).

I have gathered the titles of these papers together whilst
 merely skimming over the surface (as it were) of our published
 "Proceedings." Surely we have no reason to be ashamed of

the work done by the Association. Book collectors are beginning to place a complete set of our books in the corner reserved for treasures, and no wonder.

So much as to the past. Now let us think about the future. We have lost many of our earliest and most distinguished supporters by the inevitable hand of death. We want to create a little more interest in our work amongst the rising generation of young musicians. I am afraid our younger brethren think the Musical Association a nest of old fogies. We must remove this impression by getting them here, at all events, to listen. We want our members to bring more friends as visitors, and so spread more widely the influence of the Association. Many abstain from joining us as members because, if they cannot attend regularly, they think they will not "get enough for their guinea." I venture to plead with these. May I beg them to consider not so much what *THEY* will "get for their guinea," as what a lot of good they will do to the art and science of music by their guinea. If no such body existed as this our Association, no learned society for interchange of thought amongst cultured musicians, it would be little short of a scandal. We are financially prosperous, we not only have no debts, we even have a respectable sum invested in the names of Trustees; so please understand that it is the moral support which we ask of our brother professionals, far more than their cash. Lastly, any short paper will be welcomed by the Committee, any account of a curious book, or picture, or composition; and we should like to hear a little more discussion after the papers are finished. Musicians are not usually credited with the qualities of coyness and shyness, and at our meetings we would gladly dispense with these troublesome virtues. On one occasion when I was in the chair, having tried my utmost to provoke a discussion, I made a funereal pause of considerable duration and ultimately closed the meeting. Imagine my surprise at finding, a few days afterwards, a letter in a musical newspaper in which the writer complained that he and others had much to say, but that they were unable to say it owing to the abrupt end of the meeting having suppressed discussion. I will promise to make a longer pause another time, even if it should give visitors the impression that they have accidentally come to a Quakers' meeting. I hope all those who are so good as to listen to my short address to-night will try to get more extended support for the Association, by securing more members, more visitors, more readers. I really think the Council are justified in appealing to their records of the past twenty years as a proof that good work has been done, and that we have a real claim for help and confidence in the future.