

Review

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An Illustrated History of Music. By Thomas Tapper, lecturer at New York University, and Percy Goetschius, instructor at the Institute of Musical Art, of the city of New York.

[John Murray.]

This compact work of 365 pages is by two New York professors of music, and has evidently been compiled for American consumption. On the whole it presents the essential facts in the history of music from the earliest ages to the present day, and it is written in an interesting fashion. It is, however, on Teutonic lines, and is permeated with a strong German flavour. English music and musicians are most inadequately treated, and it is sufficient to note that there is no mention of Bridge, Beecham, Buck, Holbrook, Parratt, Parry, Stainer, and Stewart.

The chapter on 'The Early Christian Church' is not up-to-date, and needs considerable revision. The only authors referred to are Schelle (1872) and Helmore (1880). It is news to learn that *Cantus firmus* was so called because the book containing the 'intonations' (*sic*) was bound by a chain to the altar of St. Peter's Church at Rome and 'was to remain an inviolable guide for the music of the Roman Church for all time.'

Hucbald (840-930) is given as the earliest authority on organum, whereas John Scotus Erigena had treated of the subject in 860. Garland is ignored, also Lionel Power. The section on the Troubadours would have been improved had the authors consulted the works of Gaston Paris and Pierre Aubry. It is scarcely accurate to say that Petrucci (1502) was the inventor of music-printing, considering that musical works with movable type were printed at Rome in 1476, and at Venice in 1480. Palestrina's birth as having taken place 'in 1514, according to the latest authorities,' may with greater probability be assigned to 1526, as pointed out by M. Brenet in his admirable monograph, published in 1908. And surely the 'altar of Simon and Judas' is intended for the chapel of SS. Simon and Jude. The date (1675) for Purcell's 'Dido and Æneas' should be 1689, and there is a wrong date for Handel's 'Messiah.' Few will agree with the estimate that Brahms's German Requiem is 'a masterpiece that ranks with Bach's Passions and Beethoven's Mass in D major.' And certainly Chopin was not the inventor of the Nocturne. Finally, it is doubtful if the fulsome eulogy on Richard Strauss will stand the test of time.

However, with all its limitations, this work,—which, it must be added, is lavishly illustrated,—will prove useful. Some of the portraits are very rough, and no sources are assigned for most of them.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. Set to music in the key of B flat. By W. G. Alcock.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

We have here a setting of the evening canticles notable for strength and dignity. While the polyphonic style imparts an ecclesiastical flavour, the work is modern in feeling with some bold harmonic effects. Excellent, too, is the sparing use of full closes, the subject-matter constantly overlapping in such a way that continuity is maintained. Particularly effective are the passages 'For he that is mighty,' and 'He hath showed strength,' both settings of the 'Gloria Patri,' and the broad phrase with which the 'Nunc dimittis' opens. But the whole service is one that will well repay study where there is a good choir. The organ part is important, without being aggressive. The chorus on page 10, by-the-way, would be effective sung if unaccompanied. The Service was composed for the 1914 Festival of the London Church Choir Association, in St. Paul's Cathedral, a fact which accounts for the broad lines on which it is planned.

John Askew, the Stanhope Violin Maker. By William Morley Egglestone, Stanhope, Durham.

[Published by the Author.]

The life-story of a violin-maker in the North of England has recently been issued by Mr. W. M. Egglestone. This well-got-up book with an attractive cover contains the various incidents in the career of the violin-maker, John Askew, who was born in 1834 at the Grey Bull Inn in the town of Stanhope, famed as the Rectory of Bishop Butler and also as giving the name to the Stanhope family, the Earls of

Chesterfield. Briefly, Askew served his apprenticeship to a shoemaker, and was an expert in his trade. His early hobby was angling in the river Wear. Afterwards he entered the Stanhope Saxhorn Band, and accompanied the members to the Crystal Palace in 1860, where they took a fifth prize. At this time young Askew joined the Volunteer Force, and won many prizes with his many bull's-eyes.

In the 'seventies of last century he turned his attention to violin-making, and his ups and downs during the fiddle-making period of his life are told in this book. In early work the best tool that he had was his razor. He bought French and English books, and his friend the school-master collaborated to work out and master the craft of violin-making, which was the dream of Askew's life. Ultimately he was so far successful that he gained a bronze medal and diploma at the International Inventions Exhibition in London in 1885, and at the Newcastle-on-Tyne Jubilee Exhibition in 1887 he took a first-prize for two of his oil-varnished violins.

Associated with the 1885 Exhibition the *Musical Times* is mentioned, and that is twenty-nine years ago. Mr. R. de Lacy, then military musical instrument maker at 84, Holland Road, Brixton, London, S.W., was formerly—in 1860—instructor to the Stanhope Saxhorn Band, and he kept in touch with the northern town after settling in London. De Lacy in 1885 undertook to see the violins placed in the Exhibition, and when Askew's violins were awarded a medal, De Lacy advised the Stanhope violin-maker not to lose sight of his honours, and on page 46 of the book we find: 'I trust you will not let this drop, but push on somehow and let the world know where you can be got at. I fancy if you were to advertise in the *Musical Times* it would do good.'

The book contains illustrations of the prize violins, medal, diploma, &c. An illustration is that of Miss G. I. Hildyard, a Yorkshire lady, who bought one of the medal violins, and whose family own Horsley Hall Estate in Weardale.

- (a.) *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*
(b.) *Ponder my words, O Lord.* (c.) *The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God.* (d.) *Te Deum Laudamus in D.* By George Halford.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Mr. Halford's three anthems are smoothly written and devotional in style. 'Ponder my words' is for a *cappella* singing, and is written in the Æolian mode—an effective essay in archaic style. The setting of 'Te Deum Laudamus' contains good vigorous music, and would be suitable for festival occasions. Orchestral parts may be had on loan from the publishers.

In the Garden. Poem by Robert Buchanan. Set to music for soprano and tenor soli, female chorus and orchestra. By William H. Spear. Op. 18.

[Cary & Co.]

Choral conductors with good female voices available should consider this work. It is highly imaginative music faithfully reflecting the spirit of the poem, with a picturesque orchestral accompaniment. The vocal parts are well written and graceful. Two good soloists are required.

Recitative, and its rendering. By R. J. Pitcher.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Although the performance of recitative is one of the severest tests of a singer, instruction books rarely treat the subject with any fulness. Possibly this is because the setting out of the approximate renderings of various types makes too great a demand upon space. This little book is helpful to singers and accompanists, because it includes numerous examples, in most cases printed both as written by the composer, and also as they should be rendered. These, with the author's practical remarks, make the work a useful guide on a most important branch of the singer's art.