Handel Myths

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no national style, though she has so many individual ones. There is quite as much difference between the respective styles of Mozart and Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schumann, as between the national music of any two nations under the sun. This personal distinctiveness, which is original, is a universal property of genius, whereas a national distinctiveness, which is imitative, has always been avoided by the greatest masters of the Art. Germany has her folk-songs and dance-tunes, but what traces of their influence can be found in Mozart's Masses, Beethoven's Symphonies, Mendelssohn's Oratorios, Schumann's piano-forte works? When Mozart writes a "Ländler Waltz," Beethoven introduces a scrap of Austrian melody, and Mendelssohn gives us an imitation of the "Volkslied," the exception only makes the rule more clearly apparent. France has had no materials for a national style. Italy has a national style without materials, for the simple reason that she has had one composer whom all her others have copied. Lastly, we come to the great Slavonic race, now pushing to the front in Art as in politics. And what do we see here? We certainly see a crowd of minor composers who are nothing if not national; but we also see the recognised musical leader of the race, Dvorák, great as is his love for the native strains of his people, nevertheless, as he enters Art's Holy of Holies, putting off from his feet the fantastically embroidered shoes of national mannerism, and devoting himself to his sacred subject with no other thought than that of doing honour to its innermost meaning. Let us do likewise, and genius, when it shall come, will do the rest.

H. ADAMS.

17, Birchington Road, Kilburn, N.W.

[While heartily endorsing the above remarks, I fail to perceive how they are called forth by my piece of banter, the point of which Mr. Adams seems completely to have missed. It is so humiliating to have to explain one's poor little joke that I prefer to remain misunderstood. But at least I must deny the charge of "dragging the most heavenly of Arts in the mire." My article had no concern whatever with High Art, but only with Low Art, that melancholy and widespread phase of English music which most musicians are content to ignore, but which is a great fact and one which I take upon myself to hold up to scorn and ridicule on every possible occasion.]

F. C.]

HANDEL MYTHS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Your article in THE MUSICAL TIMES of last month under the above heading, referring to the "Cannons" organ now in Trinity Church, Gosport, was most interesting to all who value such a relic of Handel, and I am sure the following authentic information will be read with pleasure by those of the profession who have always associated this organ with the tradition that as the Oratorio of "Esther" was composed at Cannons for the Duke of Chandos in 1720 (and this instrument was then in the Duke's private chapel), it was the organ on which it was composed or first performed.

The following extracts are taken from the Vestry Book of records of Trinity Church, Gosport, referring to the purchase of the organ in 1747.

Dr. the subscribers to the organ to Chas. Woodmason:—

	£	s.	d.
To cash, paid Mr. Ch. Cock for the organ as it stood at Cannons. <i>Vide</i> his letters	117	12	0
To Mr. Abm. Jordon for taking it down from ye chapel at Cannons, packing, and bringing it to London	16	8	0
To ditto for repairs	105	0	0
To ditto for addition of a swell	30	0	0
To ditto for repacking it for Gosport and other extras, as per Bill	5	0	0
To Mr. Chase for carriage	15	15	0

Various other sums for a Faculty and alterations incidental to the erection brought the sum to £344 15s. 6d.

Another extract gives the following:—

"A true and perfect note of all singular the Goods, Books, Ornaments, and Utensils belonging to the Inhabitants and Chapell of Gosport, in the County of Southampton, and Diocess of Winton."

"Item, an Organ purchas'd from the Duke of Chandos's Chapell, at Cannons, near London, by the subscriptions

of the Inhabitants, Cost and Charges £342 16s. 7d., open'd the 8th May, 1748."

Also the following as to the Election of an Organist:—

"Gosport, 13th July, 1747.—The conditions are (that if any dispute shall arise about appointing an Organist, or doing anything relating to the Organ) that every person that subscribed one guinea shall have a single Vote, and any person subscribing more shall have as many Votes as he or she subscribed guineas, and everything to be transacted by ye majority of the Votes of the subscribers.

"In execution of the agreement above prefix'd, the subscribers met in the Chapell in order to make a choice of an Organist, the Candidates were Mr. James Peuceable, Organist, of Southampton, and Mr. Moses Hawker, of Portsmouth, when, upon casting up the Poll, there appear'd for Mr. Peuceable 141 votes, and for Mr. Hawker 28, whereupon the former was declar'd duly Elected."

When the late Dr. Rimbault was on a visit to this town, in 1875, he saw the organ, and was allowed the use of the Vestry Book referred to. He was at that time writing an article for the "Leisure Hour," "By Paths of Music," and in it referred to this organ, stating a subscription was then being made to rebuild the swell; this was completed the following year at a cost of £200.

In 1859 I lent the printed document of 1748, referred to in your article, to Dr. E. J. Hopkins, of the Temple, for perusal, who was much pleased to find out the true whereabouts of the "Cannons" Organ, as up to this period, in his first edition of "The Organ, its History and Construction," he supposed it was in Spa Field Chapel. I believe this is the only Dr. and Cr. account now in existence, and was published at the time for the use of the subscribers.

The original entries in the Vestry Book I shall be pleased to show anyone who may be in this neighbourhood, but the letters of Mr. Ch. Cock I regret I have not been able to find, the vestry clerk, in whose custody the books, &c., are kept, not being willing to undertake a search amongst such a multiplicity of documents, dating from 1606. I hope, however, some day to find them.

The Great and Choir Organ is almost in the same state as when purchased, but unfortunately the beautifully carved case, which is of dark oak, has been disfigured (from what reason I have been unable to ascertain) with oak painting. This I propose to have carefully removed as soon as funds are available for a thorough restoration, which is much needed. I shall be glad if the musical public would kindly assist me in carrying out the work, and enable me to restore this most interesting organ and perpetuate the name of our greatest composer of oratorios, who was so intimately associated with it. Any subscriptions, to myself or the Rev. O. S. Walford, Vicar, for such a laudable object will be thankfully received, and I earnestly appeal to the musical community, as funds are not available in our poor parish for so large an undertaking, which will cost £400.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

JOHN HOWLETT,

Organist, Holy Trinity.

Gosport, January 13, 1885.

CATHEDRAL CHOIRS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I cordially endorse the remarks made by your correspondents bearing on the Cathedral question with relation to the Musical Services, and the remuneration of the minor officials. That the Cathedral Commissioners, from whom so much was expected, have ignored every suggestion made to them, whether by Precentors, Organists, or Lay Clerks, is true enough; indeed, the recommendations seem to be based upon some preconceived notions of their own, rather than upon evidence bearing on the facts. The Capitular side of the question, the very weakest point in the whole system, and one which stands most in need of reform, they have altogether evaded; indeed, the minor officials are completely disestablished, and the whole position conceded to the Capitular bodies. There is also this peculiarity in the recommendations, that they are void of any general guiding principle, the whims of this or that Dean and Chapter meeting us at every turn. For, indeed, the salary by Statute in no case is defined, but at Durham,