Review

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REVIEWS.

Messe du Sacré Cœur de Jésus; pour Chœur à 4 Voix et Orchestre. Par Ch. Gounod. Partition, Piano et Chant. [Paris: H. Lemoine.]

THE present work is M. Gounod's latest contribution to Church music. It was first performed in the Church of St. Eustache, Paris, at the Festival of St. Cecilia, on the 22nd of November last. While by no means of equal value throughout, it must as a whole be pronounced far superior to the earlier "*Messe Solennelle*," in G major (also a "*Cecilian*" Mass). There is in the former a theatrical, in places we might almost say a clap-trap, element, which is wanting in the present work—at least so far as can be judged from the pianoforte score. M. Gounod has sought in many parts to give an ecclesiastical tone to the music by the employment of quasi-antique harmonic progressions. Of fugue, strictly speaking, there is no example in the work, though several points of more or less free imitation are to be met with.

The Mass is in the key of C major, and, with the exception of the "*Benedictus*" and the "*Communion*" (the latter an orchestral number), is for full chorus throughout. Whether the composer has done wisely in limiting his resources by not availing himself more largely of solo voices may be questioned. In some of the longer movements, especially the "*Gloria*" and "*Credo*," the introduction of the quartet would undoubtedly have given more variety to the colouring, and been felt as a relief after the long continuance of choral music.

The "*Kyrie*" is by no means one of the best portions of the Mass. The opening subject—

is not to our mind particularly interesting; and, though skilfully treated, the whole number is wanting in inspiration. The "*Gloria*" is very much finer. The opening movement, it is true, we do not care for; here, as in his earlier Mass, M. Gounod, with the evident idea of representing angelic music, has given the whole of the first portion of the hymn *piano*. The voices have, till the end of the movement, nothing but repetitions of the dominant, G, in unisons and octaves, and are accompanied by this somewhat commonplace subject for the orchestra:—

but at the change of time to *Allegro C*, for the "*Laudamus te*," the music greatly improves. A bold subject is announced by the basses, and taken up in free imitation by the other parts. The "*Domine Fili*," also treated in imitation, is of great beauty, but too long for quotation. A remarkably fine progression will be found on page 18 of the score, of which we must quote merely the harmonies. It occurs at the words "*Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris*":—

Something very similar will be found at the beginning of the "*Sanctus*" of Schubert's Mass in A flat, lately published. Did Gounod get the idea from him, or is the coincidence accidental? The chromatic harmonies on the "*Miserere*" (pp. 18, 19) are extremely effective; but from the "*Quoniam*" to the end of the movement the music is less striking, an unusually long dominant pedal point, of twenty-two bars, being the chief feature worthy of note.

The "*Credo*," in G major, is to our mind the finest part of the Mass, being excellent throughout. After a broad introduction of five bars for orchestra, the chorus enters *fortissimo*, without accompaniment, with a subject which sounds like a harmonised plain chant:—

and the alternations of orchestra and voices are continued for some time. Among the many interesting points of this number must be especially mentioned the "*Crucifixus*," with its expressive figure of accompaniment, and the powerful setting of "*Et iterum venturus est*," with the bold modulation at the word "*Judicare*," the dominant seventh of A flat being followed immediately by the tonic of B flat major.

The "*Sanctus*" is one of the less interesting parts of the Mass; but the "*Benedictus*" is both new in form and charming in detail. Here alone through the work the solo quartet is introduced; and the novelty of the movement consists in the frequent interruption of the quartet by the chorus, not (as in Beethoven's Mass in C) echoing the soloists, but with the words "*Osanna in excelsis*" in broad chords.

The "*Agnus*" has some resemblance to the corresponding movement in Verdi's Requiem, both in its general character and in its unisonous opening. This, again, is one of the best numbers in the Mass, and if well performed would be certain to please. Of the concluding "*Communion*," which is given arranged for four hands, we prefer to reserve our opinion till we have an opportunity of hearing it with orchestra. It is not very effective as a duet, and we should have been hardly inclined to indorse the opinion expressed on its first performance that it was one of the finest parts of the work. Much, no doubt, depends upon the orchestration; and to this no clue is given in the vocal score.

Briefe von Moritz Hauptmann, Cantor und Musikdirektor an der Thomasschule zu Leipzig, an Ludwig Spohr und Andere. Herausgegeben von Dr. Ferdinand Hiller. (Letters of Moritz Hauptmann, Cantor and Director of Music at the Thomas School in Leipzig, to Ludwig Spohr and others. Edited by Dr. Ferdinand Hiller.) [Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel.]

THE publication in 1871 of two volumes of letters addressed by Moritz Hauptmann to his friend Franz Hauser

naturally excited considerable interest among musical readers; for seldom has the correspondence of any musician been published which contained so much that was really instructive. In Mendelssohn's charming letters, familiar to English readers through Lady Wallace's excellent translations, we find incidentally much valuable information; but Hauptmann's correspondence is for the most part more strictly musical, and he was a man of such clear views (though in certain respects somewhat old-fashioned), and of such excellent common sense, that, whatever the subject on which he discourses, he has always something to say which is worth hearing. The wish that was generally expressed on the appearance of the letters to Hauser, that a further selection of the correspondence might be published, has now been realised by the issue, under the superintendence of Dr. Ferdinand Hiller, of the present volume, which is quite as delightful reading as those which have preceded it. It is just one of those books that we can open at random at any page with the certainty of finding something interesting to arrest the attention. This very fact, however, makes it a difficult book to review, because there are so many plums in the pudding that one does not know which to pick out.

The present volume contains letters from Hauptmann to Ludwig Spohr, Selmar Bagge, Ferdinand Böhme, Ferdinand Breunung, Eduard Hille, Ferdinand Hiller, Franz von Holstein, Otto Jahn, O. Kade, Louis Köhler, Carl Koszmaly, J. J. Maier, Gustav Rebling, Julius Rietz, Ernst Rudolf, Conrad Schleinitz, Caroline Seibt, Wilhelm Speyer, Arnold Wehner, and Johannes Wolff. The most important series is that addressed to Spohr, which occupies about a fourth of the whole volume, and includes the whole or part of thirty letters. Next come those to Otto Jahn and Louis Köhler. Among the most interesting are the letters to Jahn, written for the most part while the latter was engaged on his great biography of Mozart, and full of the most clear-sighted remarks on that great master. They are, however, mostly given at such length as to render a quotation which shall do them justice impossible within our limits; we therefore prefer, as specimens of the works, to translate a few of the "Extracts" given at the end of the book, which are, we presume, taken from letters not included in the present collection:—

"The worst thing in art is mediocrity; that which is bad is not half so mischievous, because it is seldom performed, for nobody will hear it; but that which is mediocre is good enough for many, and so we have plenty of it."

"The prospect of making money by composition is not very bright; a composer must be a favourite and in demand if he will earn as much as a humble piano teacher with low terms. I have often to repeat this when young people come to me, and wish to become composers. If they show talent I do not wish to dissuade them from their fondness for composition, but I must always advise them to prepare themselves with enduring industry and zeal for musical practice of some kind, for what will be practically useful. Just as one cannot easily choose poetry for his exclusive vocation, but must be clever at something else besides making verses, so is it also with composition. Who knows most composers only as composers? they are in their place always something else—piano teachers, virtuosi, members of orchestras, music-directors, conductors—composition is, as a rule, reserved for holidays, and need not on that account turn out any the worse. Even if the time of work be interrupted, the work itself can be connected, and have unity in the idea. The idea may even gain in concentration in such disconnected hours of leisure, while unrestricted leisure may lead to too lax breadth and want of conciseness. Neither too much nor too little leisure will be the best, just as in everything else neither too much nor too little is always the best, or rather the only good."

One more extract is all for which we can afford space; and it shall be of a different kind. The following is Hauptmann's opinion of the great violinist Joachim—an opinion in which all musicians will heartily concur:—

"Joachim is unique; with him it is not the technique, and not the tone, and nothing that one can speak about; but that all these points recede into the background, and are not noticed at all, and we hear simply the music—with

all its depths a modesty of performance such as we shall not meet with again, and yet also so effective that without obtrusion of any kind he is everywhere acknowledged."

We warmly recommend this most charming book to such of our readers as are sufficiently familiar with the German language to be able to enjoy it.

A Text-Book of Harmony; for the use of Schools and Students. By Charles Edward Horsley. [Sampson Low and Co.]

THE work now before us was completed only a short time before the death of its author, which took place last year in New York, so that it may of course be regarded as the latest development of his ideas upon the theory of the art of which he was so able a professor. In reviewing books on Harmony, we have often said that in the endeavour to be simple there is constantly a danger that facts will be pared down, or lightly passed over, to accord with the writer's "system"; and we are bound to say that Mr. Horsley's Treatise is no exception to the rule. Indeed, the manner in which the author is disposed rather to turn aside from, than to court, enquiry into questions involved in doubt is sufficiently shown by his observation upon the alleged invention of the diatonic scale by Guido d'Arezzo: "Somebody," he says, "must have invented the form of scale so long in use, and therefore the above author may as well have the credit of the boon he has conferred as any one else, in all probability less entitled to the distinction." This is scarcely a satisfactory method of disposing of the subject, perhaps; but it is convenient. Curiously enough, our author starts with the Triad of C, which he terms the "Normal Triad," and calls all the others in the scale "Transpositions." To a certain extent he seems to agree with the theory of Rameau, who certainly, although a most acute thinker, was one of the many law-givers who, as we have already hinted, found the utmost difficulty in reconciling existing facts with his system. Having fixed the Triad of C as the one upon which new thirds are to be added, Mr. Horsley first gives us a flat seventh upon this chord (which, of course, takes us into the key of F), and calls it the "Dominant seventh," telling us at the same time that this addition "forms no new chord," but that it is "another consonant interval of a minor third, which, added to the fifth of the root, forms, between the extremes, C to B $\flat$, the interval of a minor or flat seventh." He then adds the major and minor ninth upon this chord, and, true to his theory, even takes the "added sixth" on the same bass note, saying nothing whatever about its occurring upon the subdominant of the scale, and indeed preventing any student from thinking that it *can* do so by making F the root, and calling it the "first inversion of the major ninth, with the third of the root as its highest sound, and a major, instead of a flat seventh, as its harmony." Now it may give an appearance of simplicity to the subject to take one triad upon which to pile sevenths, ninths, and sixths; but when a student has been told that the original chord is upon the key-note, he can scarcely understand that when a seventh and ninth are added it becomes the dominant of the key a fourth above, and, when a sixth is added, the subdominant of the key a fifth above, although it is true that by the author's treatment of this latter chord he does not believe that the subdominant has necessarily anything to do with it. The augmented sixth (or, as Mr. Horsley terms it, the "Extreme sharp sixth"), still taken upon the harmony of C, he boldly says "has no root;" but he suggests A "as nearly approaching to what it should be." This assertion disarms criticism, for although we can discuss the truth of a given root, it puzzles us when a theorist proclaims that a chord has "no root" at all. As Mr. Horsley says in his Preface that this book is the result of "twenty years of study, during thirty years of teaching," it is of course entitled to respect; but as we have never yet met with any pupils who have studied on this system, we cannot say how far it has helped the author's disciples on their road. It is pleasurable now to turn to those portions of the work which do not involve disputable points of theory; for as we well know (by his published composi-