Sigfrid Karg-Elert (Concluded)

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But it is impossible to hazard conjectures as to what he will or will not retain and cherish after having made himself acquainted with all modern schools. That he ultimately will, in accordance with his own taste, discard a great number of works which are *per se* far from indifferent is certain; and it is as certain that from the remainder he will derive a permanent enrichment to his mind, and a joy for ever. These two points: the difficulties attendant upon a comprehensive study of ancient and modern music, and their compensations, are, I believe, clear to all of us. Of the many questions called forth by the tendencies and achievements of modern musicians, a few will form the subject of an ulterior article.

SIGFRID KARG-ELERT.

By A. EAGLEFIELD HULL.

(Concluded from page 91.)

In summarising Karg-Elert's art, we should accord him first place as a harmonist. His originality and invention in this direction are amply proven by the wonderfully beautiful and absolutely novel progressions of many passages, and especially the cadences in his songs and pieces. Scores of striking effects—such as the mediant pedal in the Finale to his Passacaglia in E flat minor for organ, the marvellous use of tonal harmony in the simple little 'Sonata Exotique' for pianoforte, the luxuriant harmonic texture of the 'Cello sonata, the piquant 'Aphorisms,' &c.,—at once occur to mind. Like all bold harmonic innovators, Reger and Strauss not excepted, he occasionally runs to excess and extravagance. In the last two pages of the second Pastel, Op. 92, his emotions seem to lead him almost up to the loss of coherence, but there are few places indeed like this where the discordant mesh is perhaps not quite satisfactorily unravelled.

As a melodist, he will certainly be disappointing to those conservative listeners who do not regard a part as melodious unless it is diatonic, for Karg-Elert is nothing if he is not modern. As a matter of fact he has a wonderful vein of melody: witness the 'long-breathed' solo in the organ Improvisation in E over a sustained soft pedal in the bass; or take any or the songs, the set of three entitled 'To my child,' or the six fervent ones, 'To my wife.' His love too of single melodious parts without accompaniment proves his undoubted melodic vein; the deeply expressive appeal of many of his recitative-like passages is quite wonderful.

In the directions of rhythm and form he is a bold innovator. Whilst his works up to Op. 50 ran on the lines adopted by Brahms, Schumann, and Grieg, with Op. 51 a drastic change commences in which the composer allows his own needs of expression to mould his forms. In the Pianoforte Sonata of this period and in the 'Aphorisms' we find successful experiments in new rhythms worked out in times which themselves are not ordinary,—11-8, 7-4, 5-8, 5-16, &c. In these works may be seen the first move towards a bolder style of utterance, the climax of which he has now reached

with his String quartet, Op. 101, in which each part is a satisfactory piece by itself. Surely a unique composition!

Of even greater moment is the distinct advance he has made in the mere technique of the instruments for which he writes. When once the organ had attracted his attention his imagination exercised itself over a wide field, and the publication of his organ works has come as a revelation to the organ-loving community. When the sum of forces in the present Renaissance of organ-playing comes to be added up, the part played by the compositions of Karg-Elert will be no mean one. His 'Phantasie und Fuge, D dur,' Op. 39b, his 'Passacaglia, Es moll,' his "66 Choral-Improvisationen," the '20 Präludien und Postludien,' the three 'Symphonic Chorales,' the 'Chaconne, Fugue-Trilogy and Choral,' the 'Trois Impressions,' Op. 72, and the 'Drei Pastelle,' Op. 92, are all compositions of the greatest value; and whilst the early 'Passacaglia' consists of a theme subjected to every variety of treatment, it is at the same time dramatic programme music. The later 'Chaconne,' which is obviously influenced by the 'Passacaglia,' gains greatly by its unbroken continuity, and the two long recitative-like passages add considerably to its charm. Some critics might think the ground-bass theme almost too short, but there is no denying the great beauty and originality of the composer's developments of the small phrase, nor the marvellous handling of his climaxes. The addition of the brass and drums for the Finale was, too, a happy thought, but as the cadence is practically the same as that at the end of the 'Chaconne,' one imagines that this gigantic composition, taking half-an-hour in performance, may possibly with advantage be given in two separate parts.

In the 'Choral-Improvisationen' one cannot but marvel at the composer's power of assimilating the form and styles of almost every known organ master up to his own day whilst at the same time expressing his own feelings in a modern way. Schütz, Scheidt, Froberger, Buxtehude, Bach, Mendelssohn, Reger, and even Guilman are all laid under contribution as models for forms in which to pour his modern feelings; and, just as some passages in his later compositions look much like Reger's works, but feel very different, so in his organ treatments of the Choral he breathes a new life into the old forms in quite a marvellous way. Limitations of space prevent the discussion of his influence on organ registering, but it is undeniable that the dissemination of his works, overflowing as they are with novel suggestions, is already producing almost a revolution in this respect. Of course it goes without saying that Bach has been his chief inspiration, and this in other branches beside his organ music. Witness the Sonata and Partita for violin solo without accompaniment; also the three Sonatinas, Op. 67, the 'Reisebilder' (eight Country Scenes), Op. 7, the two books of 'Poetic Bagatelles,' Op. 77, the 'Aphorisms,' Op. 51, all of which form teaching material delightful alike to master and pupil. More

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pleasing little pieces than the 'Morgensonne,' 'Bächlein,' 'In Bachscher Manier,' and the 'Unser lieben Frau,' it is difficult to imagine. In these simple little pianoforte pieces, as in his more difficult ones, his inventive powers are ever working alongside of his musical fancy, and, in consequence, these works abound with novel digital devices and tone-colour effects.

In the field of free arrangements he has claimed a region all his own. A large number of the clavier works of Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, and Schumann have been adapted to the larger medium of the organ with marvellous insight into the potentialities of organ-playing. He has one mannerism, however, that of preceding an accented note by an ingenious rapid run, a device invented by Wagner and developed by Sinding in order to gain greater rhythmic vitality; but, however, by no means so well-fitted to the more even and powerful tones of the organ. His very latest achievements in the translation of works from one medium to another are his masterly arrangements for the pianoforte of Elgar's two Symphonies.

Modern as are all his present compositions, Karg-Elert is now preparing to go still further and looks forward to producing homophonic works with harmonic streams of a much freer and more independent tonality in place of melodic lines. Typical of his manly and strenuous nature is his view of the great possibilities still lying in the future of the tonal art. 'As a music creator,' he writes, 'I consider myself merely a swimmer, not one who has a "footing." I am fully conscious of the fact that I am only in the midst, or rather at the threshold of a prospect which is still very indistinct, but which becomes clearer and clearer to me with each Opus. Each newly contemplated work appears to me to be on the direct road, but on its completion I cannot help regarding it merely as a fore-study, and I am continually brought face to face with the ardent desire to delete all previous works and re-commence with a new Opus 1.'

To a nature such as this, showing such great capacity for expansion, everything seems possible, and from such a composer who has not yet reached middle age, we may confidently expect great things in the near future.

The following list gives as complete an account as possible of the composer's works up to the present time:

- Op. 1. Symphony, Fa dur.
- Op. 3. Sonata für Pianoforte und Oboe.
- Op. 5. Symphonische Trio.
- Op. 6. Lieder.
- Op. 7. Reisebilder, Eine Suite für Klavier solo.
- Op. 8. Concerto Pathetic, D moll, für Pianoforte und Orchestra.
- Op. 11. Acht Lieder verschiedener Dichter.
- Op. 12. Sechs Lieder im Volkston.
- Op. 14. Drei Sonatinen für Harmonium.
- Op. 25a. Passacaglia, Es moll, für Kunst-Harmonium.
- Op. 25b. Passacaglia, Es moll, für Orgel.
- Op. 26. Kompositionen für Kunstharmonium.
- Op. 26b. Duos für Harmonium und Pianoforte.
- Op. 27. Aquarellen, 5 charakteristische Stücke für Harmonium solo.
- Op. 29. Silhouetten, 7 leichtere Duos für Harmonium und Pianoforte.
- Op. 31. Scenes pittoresques, 12 Charakter-studien für Harmonium solo.
- Op. 31b. Duos für Harmonium und Pianoforte.
- Op. 33. Monologe Fünf Stücke für Harmonium solo.
- Op. 34. Improvisation für Harmonium.
- Op. 34b. Improvisation für Orgel.
- Op. 35. Poesien, 5 Duos für Harmonium und Pianoforte.
- Op. 36. Erste Sonata, H moll, für Harmonium solo.
- Op. 36b. Interludium für Orgel.
- Op. 37. Partita 1, D dur, für Harmonium solo.
- Op. 37b. Dieselbe Partita, für Kunstharmonium.
- Op. 38. Schwabenheimat, Ein Zyklus für Pianoforte solo.
- Op. 38b. Duo für Harmonium und Pianoforte. (No. 8 of Op. 38.)
- Op. 39. Phantasie und Fuge, D dur, für Harmonium und Pianoforte.
- Op. 39b. Phantasie und Fuge, D dur, für Orgel solo.
- Op. 40. Gedichte, 'An mein Kind.'
- Op. 42. Madrigale für Harmonium (Kunstharmonium *ad lib.*).
- Op. 46. Canzone für Orgel.
- Op. 48. Sanctus für Orgel und Violine.
- Op. 48b. Pastorale für Orgel und Violine.
- Op. 50. Erste Pianoforte Sonata, Fis moll, für Pianoforte solo.
- Op. 51. Aphorismen, Ein Zyklus von 17 Skizzen für Pianoforte solo.
- Op. 54. Sechs Gedichte, 'An mein Weib.'
- Op. 56. Zehn Epigramme von Lessing.
- Op. 62. Heft I. Vier Gedichte von Melanie Barth.
- Op. 62. Heft II. Drei Nixenlieder für Alt.
- Op. 63. Impressionen und Gedichte. 3 Hefte.
- Op. 65. Festlicher Choral für Orgel, Trumpeten, Posaunen und Pauken.
- Op. 66. Drei Leider mit Instrumental Begleitung.
- Op. 67. Drei Sonatinen für Pianoforte.
- Op. 70. Orchestrale Studien für Harmonium.
- Op. 71. Sonata Nr. 1, A dur, für Pianoforte und Violoncello.
- Op. 72. 'Trois Impressions' for Organ.
- Op. 73. Chaconne, Fugue Trilogy and Chorale for Organ.
- Op. 74. First Sonatina in A minor.
- Op. 75. Impressions exotiques (Visionen und Naturstim-mungen) für Pianoforte.
- Also Op. 75, No. 1. 'Funeral' for Organ.
- No. 2. Choral-Improvisation on 'In dulci jubilo.'
- Op. 76. Intarsien, 15 kleine Charakterstücke für Harmonium.
- Op. 77. Poetische Bagatellen für Pianoforte.
- Op. 78. Zwanzig Praeludien und Postludien für Orgel.
- Op. 79. Sinfonische Variationen und Fuge (Harmonium).
- Op. 80. Second Pianoforte Sonata.
- Op. 81. Kirchliche Chorkompositionen (mit Begleitung).
- Op. 82. Das Christliche Kirchenjahr (ohne Begleitung).
- Op. 83. Second Harmonium Partita.
- Op. 84. Drei sinfonische Legenden für Violine und Orgel.
- Op. 85. Drei sinfonische Kanzonen für Orgel.
- Op. 87. Drei sinfonische Chorale für Orgel.
- Op. 88. Erste Sonata für Violine allein.
- Op. 89. Partite 1, D dur, für Violine allein.
- Op. 90. Zehn leichte Charakterstudien für zwei Violinen.
- Op. 91. Die Kunst des Registrierens für Harmonium.
- Op. 92. Drei Pastelle für Orgel.
- Op. 93. Gradus ad Parnassum für Harmonium.
- Op. 94. Die hohe Schule des Ligatospieles für Harmonium.
- Op. 95. Zwei Psalme (mit Begleitung).
- Op. 96. Zwielficht Impressionen für Pianoforte.
- Op. 97. Pianoforte Sonata, No. 3.
- Op. 98. Neugeartete Klavierstücke.
- Op. 99. Sinfonische Dialog für zwei Klaviere.
- Op. 100. Sonate für Violine.
- Op. 101. Streichquartett.