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MR. JAMES LOARING, F.C.O., has been giving Organ Recitals on Mondays and Thursdays at the Fisheries Exhibition. The programmes, which were of an interesting character, attracted large audiences.

MR. MACKENZIE'S Dramatic Cantata "Jason" will form the chief novelty at the forthcoming Wolverhampton Festival; it is also to be given in the composer's native city, Edinburgh, in February next.

REVIEWS.

The Life of George Frederick Handel. By W. S. Rockstro. [Macmillan and Co.]

MR. ROCKSTRO has succeeded in producing an eminently taking book; although extending to over 400 pages the reader's interest is never allowed to flag. The author has a very happy mode of conveying the contagion of his own enthusiasm for Handel and his works to those whose good fortune it is to peruse his life of the great musician. Other writers have supplied ample material for a biography of Handel, notably Chrysander and Schœlcher, and to their labours Mr. Rockstro owns himself indebted; but neither of their works fulfilled all that could be desired. Chrysander's splendid biography is incomplete, and Schœlcher's book lacks method and chronological arrangement. Profiting from the errors as well as the excellencies of his predecessors, Mr. Rockstro has in manner and method been highly successful, and it is not saying too much to affirm that at present his "Life" stands alone for completeness and accuracy. Not that Mr. Rockstro is always correct; indeed, he has made some serious misstatements, which shall be glanced at presently; and, notwithstanding the comprehensiveness of Mr. Rockstro's book, there is still much to be said and elucidated respecting Handel and his works. Mr. Rockstro warmly defends Handel from many of the charges of borrowing from other composers which have recklessly been promulgated. So far as our present information goes he is in the right, and we heartily sympathise with him in his endeavour to show the noble man and musician's character at its true worth.

Enough has been said to prove our warm admiration of Mr. Rockstro's book, and we can therefore now point out some of its defects. At p. 442 he devotes a whole page to arguments respecting the true date of Handel's birth, all thoroughly conclusive; but he does not seem to be aware of evidence absolutely incontrovertible printed and published by the Handel family in January, 1731—a document forwarded to Handel, the receipt of which was acknowledged by him in August of the same year. Both these interesting relics are in the possession of Mr. W. H. Cummings. Mr. Rockstro prints the letter of acknowledgment, and erroneously says it is in the possession of Handel's great-great-niece, Frau Prof. Senff. On p. 13, speaking of the six Sonatas for oboes and bass, he says: "Burney afterwards saw this volume in the Royal Collection, but we have sought for it in vain amongst the MSS. at Buckingham Palace." If the volume is not there, it ought to be; for Dr. Chrysander transcribed the Trios from this very copy, and published them for the German Handel Society in 1879.

Mr. Rockstro is also mistaken in speaking of the Duke of Chandos's chapel at Cannons as being "now the Parish Church of Whitchurch, Middlesex." The belief is a popular one, but none the less erroneous. The chapel attached to the Duke's residence was pulled down when the palace was destroyed; its painted windows went to Great Malvern Church, and its organ to Trinity Church, Gosport, having been purchased at auction for £117 12s.

The curious story of the Goupy caricature is dismissed by Mr. Rockstro in three lines. He speaks of Goupy as "the scene-painter"; but he was a man in good position, drawing-master to Prince Frederick of Wales, and evidently of an amiable disposition, if the story of him related by Pasquin may be credibly received. Miss Hawkins, in her "anecdotes," tells us how Goupy's susceptibilities were wounded by Handel, and we must admit that he received provocation. Moreover, it is doubtful whether Goupy was responsible for the publication of the prints known as

"The Charming Brute," which are distorted copies of his original drawing.

In Mr. Rockstro's analysis of "The Messiah" he twice refers—pp. 236-247—to the omission of two bars from one of the Ritornelli of "Every valley." He says, "the bars omitted by Arnold are the sixth and ninth, which in the original are filled with a twofold reiteration of the first group of quavers in the seventh and tenth bars respectively. In the Dublin MS. these two bars were once pasted over—certainly not by Handel, who, had he wished to eliminate them, would assuredly have done so by a couple of strokes of his bold lead-pencil." Now, unless our memory is very false, the autograph manuscript in Buckingham Palace has these very strokes of bold lead-pencil, and has also a long Cadenza at the end of the air. The pencil marks in the autograph are not reproduced in the lithograph facsimile published by the Sacred Harmonic Society, so that our assertion can only be tested by reference to the original. On p. 256, speaking of the series of short choruses commencing "Since by man," Mr. Rockstro says: "The organ part given by Arnold is an impertinent addition to the score. Handel has given, in each case, a single crochet at the beginning, to start the voices, that is all." This is not correct; in the second instance the starting note is a minim, not a crochet, and we are inclined to surmise that Arnold, who had frequently heard Handel perform in "The Messiah," simply indicated an organ part where Handel had been accustomed to play one. It must be remembered that the starting-notes referred to by Mr. Rockstro form part of the orchestral bass. Only a few pages later Mr. Rockstro gives us the anecdote respecting Joah Bates's additional accompaniments on the organ. Can any one affirm that Bates did not accompany these choruses?

With regard to the date of Handel's death, we incline to the 13th of April. The evidence of Dr. Burney and Dr. Warren are surely of more value than that of Mr. James Smyth, who took his last leave of Handel at 7 p.m. on Friday, and possibly called at 8 the next morning in Brook Street and was told by the servant that Handel was just dead, from which he inferred that he died on the 14th. On the other hand, Dr. Warren, who was with Handel at his death, stated it to have taken place before midnight on the Friday. Mr. Rockstro makes frequent reference to Handel's will. "This document," he says, "is preserved in the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury at Doctor's Commons"; but, as a matter of fact, it is at Somerset House, much the worse for wear, we are sorry to say. The first draft of the will, in splendid preservation, with all Handel's alterations and signatures, passed from Handel's executor, Amyand, to the late Mr. Snoxell, and is now in the collection of Mr. W. H. Cummings.

To Dr. Chrysander belongs the merit of having rescued the fair fame of Zachau, Handel's first master; and now that Mr. Rockstro has placed the facts concerning Zachau before English readers, we may hope that the charges of idleness and drinking will no more crop up. Mr. Rockstro has some judicious remarks on the subject of additional accompaniments, and sighs for performances of Handel's works as he heard them himself. Such a rendering is simply impossible. Granted that we had a tradition of the filling-up played by Handel—and, alas! this we have not—where are the harpsichord-players or the instruments necessary for the realisation of the idea? We know that a Broadwood pianoforte of even twenty years of age would be scouted by a modern pianist for a public performance. How, then, can we imagine that in listening to a harpsichord made 100 or 150 years ago we are getting an approximation of the tone Handel produced on his harpsichords?

Album for the Young. Fifty-five Pianoforte Pieces. Composed by Robert Schumann, Op. 68 and 118. Edited and Fingered by Agnes Zimmermann.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS charming collection of pianoforte pieces is here issued in its correct form, namely, in three parts, the first intended for "little players," the second for "more advanced players," and the third for "more matured players." Schumann's original design is thus preserved, although the last part was written some years later than the others, the "Kinderscenen"—in English editions taking the place of the

third part—having no real connection with the work. This is the first of a complete edition of Schumann's works for the pianoforte to be published by Messrs. Novello, and Miss Zimmermann tells us in her preface that the only pieces which Schumann has fingered in detail are Op. 3 and 7. These are left precisely as they appeared in the original edition. In all the other works he has only occasionally supplied any fingering; but in some instances his method appears so difficult that an easier system has been indicated by the editress, who, however, has invariably separated her own from that of Schumann. We are glad to find that Messrs. Novello have decided in their publications henceforth to adopt what is termed the "foreign fingering," the present being the first English edition of pianoforte music in which this appears. As Miss Zimmermann truly says, "It cannot be expected that the mode recognised by a majority of countries will be altered to that which is used in England alone"; and it is certainly better, therefore, that we should yield gracefully and at once in this important matter. It is almost unnecessary to enlarge upon the many beauties to be found in the volume before us, for most of the pieces are well known to pianists. For juvenile performers the group of little gems, including "The Poor Orphan," the "Hunting Song," and "The Merry Peasant," must always be acceptable; and in the two other parts the compositions are so excellent for practice, as well as so attractive from their melodious character, that we can scarcely imagine a more valuable book for young students, or one that will be more highly prized. The German terms and directions have been carefully translated by Miss Zimmermann, who has also rendered into better English than we have yet seen Schumann's "Musical Rules for Home-Life and Art-Life," which are appropriately placed at the commencement of the volume.

Zwei Clavierstücke. (a.) Walzer; (b.) Bourrée. Componirt von Carl Reinecke. Op. 175.

Schelmestücklein für Piano. Componirt von Fritz Spindler. Op. 340.

La Rose d'Espagne. Valse Espagnole, pour le Piano. Par E. Paladilhe.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

HERR REINECKE'S two pieces, which head our list, are light in character, but instinct throughout with that artistic feeling so apparent in all he writes. The Waltz has a flowing subject, graceful, and lying well under the hand; but the Bourrée has a remarkable theme, the unusual skip of the seventh, so prominent through the movement, investing it with a piquancy which cannot fail to arrest the attention of the listener. The second subject too, with the murmuring accompaniment, affords an excellent contrast, and is an agreeable relief before the recurrence of the principal motive. Both these compositions are inscribed to "Fräulein Agnes Zimmermann." Herr Spindler's name is sufficiently well known as a writer of "drawing-room music" to ensure a welcome for any addition to his already large store of compositions of this character; and certainly the piece before us will take rank amongst the best of these. It is melodious, popular in character, and contains no passages to perplex even an ordinary amateur. "La Rose d'Espagne" is a piece thoroughly national in feeling. The Waltz, in A minor, is tuneful enough to catch the ears even of those who cannot appreciate the many other merits of the composition, and the changes of key give much life to a piece which from its nature might otherwise prove monotonous. This is one of the best of the many sketches we have yet seen from this composer.

The Morning and Evening Service, with the Communion Office, in G. By Gerard F. Cobb.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE composer of this setting of the sacred offices is one from whom we should naturally look not only for musicianly but scholarly work, and it may be said at once that Mr. Cobb's service is worthy of attention by all who are interested in the history of the English Prayer Book. The first point for notice is the inclusion of the word "Holy" in the clause concerning the Church in the Nicene Creed, the omission of which in our prayer book version Mr.

Cobb believes to be due, in the first instance, to a mere printer's error. He also calls attention to the redundant section in the "Gloria in excelsis," which does not appear in Tallis's Service, nor in any of the early versions of the hymn. The composer sets forth the evidence in his favour on these and other points in an interesting preface which is well worth perusal by church musicians. A careful examination of the Service reveals other matters in which the ecclesiastical learning of the author has impressed itself on the music; such for instance as the stress placed on the word "one" in the clause "Being of one substance," and the correct division of the sentence, "The Lord, and giver of life." Enough has now been said to indicate the importance of Mr. Cobb's contribution to liturgical music, and it only remains to consider it in an abstract musical sense. In general the style is simple, homophonic and tuneful. There are no elaborate contrapuntal episodes, and though the harmonic progressions, like the melodic phrases, are essentially modern, they are never complex or difficult to sing in just intonation by an ordinarily well-trained choir. The idea of unity is imparted to the morning canticles by an oft-recurring figure which the composer has occasionally some difficulty in fitting to the words, as in the verse "Day by day," where the accent occurs on the last syllable of the word "magnify." In the Jubilate the "Old Hundredth" tune is introduced, first antiphonally with the melody afore-mentioned, and then as a *canto fermo*. The association of the tune with the canticle justifies this method of treatment. The Benedictus is set in free unisonal chant form, and most of the Communion Office is also in unison. The evening canticles are the most elaborate portion of the Service, the voices being frequently divided into six parts. We cordially recommend Mr. Cobb's thoughtful and effective Service to the notice of precentors and choirmasters.

Original Tunes to Popular Hymns, for use in Church and Home. Composed by Joseph Barnby. Vol. II.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE spread of well-defined Anglican principles in church matters during the past quarter of a century has not only given an enormous impetus to hymnology, but has led to conspicuous reforms in the musical department of congregational worship. Earnest musicians began to take advantage of the reaction against the florid barbarisms of the eighteenth century, and by example rather than precept proved the applicability of modern art to the hymn tune without any sacrifice of that simplicity which is the chief essential in metrical sacred song. Among those to whom the thanks of churchmen are especially due for their labours in this field, Mr. Joseph Barnby occupies a foremost place. There is always danger of excess in reforming zeal, and it would be easy to point to instances of popular hymn tunes in which the composers have sacrificed devotional feeling to mere secular prettiness. Such an accusation cannot be brought against Mr. Barnby. While thoroughly modern in spirit, his lyrics never err on the side of secularity. The best of them are fresh in melody yet never trivial; expressive to the utmost of the words to which they are set, but chastened by religious sentiment and the requirements of congregational singing. In the first volume of his "Original Tunes" Mr. Barnby adopted certain changes from the ordinary method of notation, discarding the use of double bars between the lines, and making the crotchet instead of the minim the unit of time measurement. The arguments in favour of these reforms must be irresistible, except to those ultra-conservative minds to whom the old is synonymous with the good. It was notorious that the double bar favoured the introduction of a pause at the end of every line, irrespective of metre or sense. For example, in the refrain of Hymn No. 15 of the present collection we should have had under the old system "Yet, Father, in the multitude—(pause)—of Thy compassions, hear," and similar absurdities in almost every example. In his preface the composer tells us that some of the tunes were written for the "Hymnary," "Church Hymns," the "Church Psalter," "Carols new and old," and the "Methodist Sunday-School Hymn Book." As the book purports to be a collected edition of his contributions to hymnology, it was only right to include every composition of importance since the issue of his first volume, nearly fourteen years ago, irrespective