Review

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 44, No. 726 (Aug. 1, 1903), p. 540

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/903973>

Accessed: 29-01-2016 23:19 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Reviews.

French Music in the XIXth Century. By Arthur Hervey. [Grant Richards.]

In a few introductory remarks the author explains 'what my object in writing this volume has been.' He has dwelt on those composers who 'have contributed to the evolution of the art.' It is therefore not a history book crammed with names of composers and titles of their works, and with lists of dates of production; but, as he calls it, 'a bird's-eye view of the musical movement in France during the past century.' In writing of music in Germany or England a writer would naturally have much to say about instrumental and also sacred works, but, as Mr. Hervey remarks, 'music in France chiefly relates to music connected with the drama.' With few exceptions therefore he has little to say about chamber, symphonic, or sacred compositions. In the opening chapter, 'Méhul and the last of the Classics,' there are many interesting remarks on Gluck and Grétry, Gossec, and Méhul, Cherubini, Spontini and Lesueur, who for the most part have passed into oblivion, but who all contributed directly or indirectly to the evolution of the art.

Rossini's operas may be full of 'catchy tunes,' and 'overcharged with vocal ornamentation'; 'William Tell,' his last and greatest work, however, forms the 'starting-point of a new departure.' A whole chapter is devoted to Meyerbeer, 'over-praised during his lifetime,' but since 'considerably underrated.' This composer has been treated with severity: Schumann dismissed him with a cross, inferring that burial was all his 'Prophète' deserved; Mendelssohn was indignant at what he considered the triumph of a false art; and Wagner's attitude towards him was hostile. Mr. Hervey is fully aware of certain drawbacks in his operas, but looks upon him as 'one of the reformers of the lyric drama,' and much that he says is worthy of consideration. Another chapter, on 'Gounod and his influence,' shows that the author can distinguish between the strong and the weak points of a composer. Particular notice is naturally taken of Berlioz. The special qualities of his music are described as sincerity and enthusiasm, and as a factor in the evolution of the art he is, of course, of immense importance. In treating of modern French composers Mr. Hervey expresses special admiration for César Franck's 'Les Béatitudes,' and for M. Bruneau, whom he regards as 'one of the most gifted musicians of the age.'

This must not be regarded as a review of the whole book; certain chapters and certain names have been selected to show the general trend of the writing. Although brief it contains a great deal of thought, and therefore there is much to be learnt from it. We do not share all the writer's opinions, but find in it the very qualities which he so praises in Berlioz: sincerity and enthusiasm.

NEW HARVEST ANTHEMS.

O that men would praise the Lord. By John B. McEwen.

Hearken unto me, ye holy children. By W. H. Bell.

Father of Mercies, God of Love. By the Rev. E. Vine Hall.

Mr. McEwen writes instrumental music with the assurance of having something to say and the knowledge of how to express it appropriately. In his anthem 'O that men would praise the Lord' will be found qualities that will appeal to musicians and interest competent executants. We say competent because, although not excessively difficult, the anthem imperatively demands a well-trained choir to do it justice. It opens with a jubilant chorus in four parts, which leads to a soprano solo. This is succeeded by a passage for the basses in unison, who give out a bold theme, which is subsequently treated contrapuntally by the full choir and ultimately leads up to an imposing climax.

Mr. W. H. Bell has taken the text of his anthem from Ecclesiasticus, Chap. xxxix., and set it to melodious and

flowing music very suitable to the sentiment of the words. The composition begins with a baritone solo admirably laid out for the voice and, of some length. The remainder of the anthem is choral. The concluding chorus opens in solid harmony; but it gives place to a well-defined theme announced by the tenors, at first treated fugally, after which solid four-part writing recurs. In the concluding bars the vocal writing is expanded into seven parts with fine effect. The independence of the accompaniment will interest the organist.

No one writes for the church in a more devotional spirit, and with greater perception of what is grateful to modern ears and choristers, than the Rev. E. Vine Hall, and his anthem 'Father of Mercies, God of Love' is a notable example of his familiar style. The words are those of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' No. 388, and they are treated with a variety of resource that can scarcely fail to cause the work to become popular. It embraces short solos for soprano and bass, a melodious quartet, an effective chorus, and a dignified chorale, concluding with a five-fold Amen.

50 Studien über die Etüden von Fr. Chopin, Nos. 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 24, 26, 27, 28, 32, 36, und 48; und Neue Konzert-Bearbeitung von dem Rondo (Perpetuum mobile) aus der I. Sonate, Op. 24, von C. M. von Weber. Von Leopold Godowsky.

[Schlesinger (R. Lienau), Berlin.]

What was the aim of M. Godowsky in arranging Chopin's 'Études' in various ways, some for the left hand alone, others with additions, or two and three combined together? On that aim depends one's opinion. If the distinguished pianist puts them forward as improvements on the originals, then we condemn them. But if merely to show his own skill in the art of weaving together figures and melodies—some his own, some Chopin's—and, by performing these extraordinarily difficult arrangements, to show his truly marvellous technique, then they deserve all praise. They are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made, and for pianists who wish to study the highest stage of technical development, most useful and interesting. When M. Godowsky plays them with astounding bravura and apparently with the greatest ease, the difficulties are not realized. But let any pianist who has fairly mastered the 'Études' in their original form try to interpret them, and he will soon find out that it would require much time and an enormous stock of patience before he could even give a rough idea of their contents. They are perfectly fascinating, and the interest is not purely technical.

The Weber Rondo arrangement is certainly brilliant and effective, as all can testify who have heard it performed by M. Godowsky; yet it does not seem to be right to touch-up works in this way. The transcriber, however, is not the first who has thus transgressed by tampering with the text.

Four Characteristic Waltzes arranged for Violin and Pianoforte.

By S. Coleridge-Taylor (Op. 22).

Twelve Transcriptions for Two Violins and Pianoforte, in Two Books. By Alfred Moffat.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

'Four Characteristic Waltzes' by S. Coleridge-Taylor have been republished in separate numbers, as arranged by the composer for violin and pianoforte, and under the following new titles:—1. Valse Bohémienne; 2. Valse Rustique; 3. Valse de la Reine; 4. Valse Mauresque. There is considerable character and a great deal to charm in these interesting waltzes, which have already found much favour, and violinists will welcome them in this new form.

The 'Twelve Transcriptions for Two Violins and Pianoforte' by Alfred Moffat have also lately been republished in two books instead of one, and they should prove very suitable for home and school purposes. The contents are well selected from works by Gluck, Corelli, Leclair, Handel, Haydn, Siprutini, Schubert, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn. The violin parts present no difficulties, and, with one exception, are all within the compass of the first and third positions.