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The Use of Accidentals in Music

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13th ult. *in memoriam* of the late Julius Rietz, the programme including the deceased musician's Symphony in E major (No. 3), three pieces for the pianoforte, and some of his vocal compositions.

The hundredth performance of Wagner's Opera "Lohengrin" was recorded lately at the Court Theatre of Dresden.

We are asked to correct a statement, contained in our last number, as to the participation of Herr Brahms in the completion of a posthumous opera by Hermann Götz, entitled "Francesca da Rimini," recently performed at Mannheim. The preparation of the work for stage representation has been entirely owing to the zeal and the skill of the Conductor, Herr Frank.

Herr Joachim Raff, the well-known German composer, has been formally initiated into his functions as Director of the newly founded Conservatorium of Music at Frankfort.

The library of the late General-Musikdirector, Dr. Julius Rietz, containing many art-treasures, autographs, &c., has been purchased in its entirety by the King of Saxony, to be incorporated with the State collections.

Four Masses (as yet unpublished) by Palestrina, as well as some autographs from the pen of Johann Sebastian Bach, have lately been discovered in a convent at Graz.

Anton Rubinstein's latest operatic work, "Nero," has been translated into the Russian language, its representation at St. Petersburg being, however, a doubtful question for the present, considering the utter disregard for musico-dramatic economy displayed on the part of its author. One of the difficulties to be met with by operatic *impresarios* is to find the *three tenors* to whom parts are assigned in M. Rubinstein's opera.

Madame Adelina Patti will give a series of operatic impersonations during the present month at the Scala in Milan. Madame Pauline Lucca will enter upon her engagement with the Theater an-der-Wien at the beginning of this month, where she will continue until May next.

The following celebrities will appear during this winter in concert-performances at the Austrian capital, namely, Joachim, Auer, Sauret (violin), Davidoff (violoncello), Brassin, and Arabella Goddard (piano).

It is stated that Vieuxtemps will again assume the functions of Professor at the Bruxelles Conservatoire, in the room of Wieniawsky, who has tendered his resignation.

At the Vienna Conservatorium no less than forty-two new pupils of the name of "Cohn" have, according to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, applied this year for admission, and in commemoration of the fact—the journal quoted wittily remarks—the directors have elected that the institution shall in future be known by the name of *Cohnservatorium*.

Emil Seiffert, the editor of the journal *Seiffert's Kunst-kritik*, published at New York, is just now conducting a series of Promenade Concerts at Brooklyn (U.S.).

Dr. F. L. Ritter, professor at Vassar College, New York, and author of a "History of Music in America," has in course of preparation a "History of Music in England," which will be divided into three books, the first and second carrying on the subject "from the introduction of Christianity into England to the death of Purcell, 1695," the third treating separately of "English Church Music, regarded from an historical and critical point of view."

The death is announced, on the 4th ult., of the famous dramatic author Eduard Devrient, which took place at Carlsruhe. Born at Berlin in 1801, he commenced his career as opera-singer and actor, and afterwards became, for a time, Director of the Berlin Hof-Theater. His principal work is his "History of German Dramatic Art." He was also the author of several opera-texts and adaptations for the lyrical stage.

At Colmar died, last month, Madame Margarethe Stockhausen, mother of Julius and Franz Stockhausen, of whom the former is the great baritone and professor at Berlin, the latter Director of the Conservatoire at Strassburg. During the years 1830-44 Madame Stockhausen was very popular with the English public as a concert singer, being associated with other celebrities of the period, such as Malibran, Caradori Allan, Clara Novello, Grisi, and Persiani.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE USE OF ACCIDENTALS IN MUSIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you allow me, through the medium of your valuable and widely circulated paper, to call the attention of all musicians, composers, publishers, &c. to the present very unsatisfactory state of the use of accidentals in music. One would naturally suppose that ere this some rule would have been adopted and adhered to; but in practice I find that every one uses accidentals as he thinks proper. I have found rules printed on the subject, but they are generally so indefinitely worded that they may be interpreted different ways, each interpretation being correct. For example, one rule says, "Accidentals only affect the notes which they immediately precede, and those of the same letter which follow them in the same bar." This is quite right; but some writers of music only notice the first half of the rule, and ignore the second, writing a bar A

as B. Another rule says, "Accidentals affect all notes of the same name throughout that bar only in which they appear." Notice that this rule does not say that accidentals affect all *subsequent* notes of the same name, but *all* notes in that bar; therefore a bar written as C would

be performed as D. Again, with regard to the influence of an accidental *beyond* the bar in which it appears. A Mus. Doc. who has departed from this life wrote this rule: "But if one bar ends, and the next begins, with the same note, the accidental which alters the first note is understood to affect the second." That is, the passage E would be performed as F; but if in the second bar a

second note B comes, as in G, will the second B be flat or natural? Firstly, by the rule just quoted, it is argued that the second B is natural, and to make it flat it must

be printed as H. Secondly, it is argued that since the *first* note in the second bar is flat, therefore the next B is flat also, without printing a flat before it. Here we see how differences begin to arise. In the passage H, would it be any more trouble to print the flat before the *first* note, thus setting the point about the second note at rest? Again, a living Mus. Doc. writes this rule: "If the last note of one bar and the first note of the next bar are the same, then the accidental influences the next bar also." That is, the passage K will be performed as L.

But suppose another bar is added to K, as M, will the

sixth and ninth notes be flat or natural? Firstly, by the rule just quoted, it is argued that the influence of the flat only extends to the fifth note; therefore the sixth and ninth are natural. Secondly, it is argued that since the fifth note is flat, being the last in the bar, therefore the sixth and ninth are flat. The same argument might be

used if another bar were added. So we see that neither of the above rules is definite, but that they give rise to various modes of using accidentals. One will write a passage as N; another will write it as O, and another as

P. Passages are frequently seen where an accidental B flat may occur in a certain bar; then the note is not seen again for three, five, or ten bars; but when it does occur again a *natural* is placed in front of it, thus leaving one to infer that if the natural had not been placed there the note would have been performed as B flat, from the influence of the flat which occurred three, five, or ten bars previously.

Again, writers of music do not divide themselves into classes, one using this rule and another that; I think it will be almost impossible to find a composer who does not use at least two different methods of employing his accidentals. Every person in the musical profession may find for himself numerous illustrations of what I have referred to above, in both vocal and instrumental music. But, for the sake of example, let any one examine St. Peter, pp. 48, 126; St. Paul, pp. 24, 35, 50; Mozart's Twelfth Mass, pp. 21, 29, 30 (Novello's Octavo Editions). Now this very unsatisfactory state of things proceeds entirely from the want of a *simple* and *definite* rule about accidentals. Such a rule I wish to suggest, viz. "Accidentals affect the notes which they immediately precede, and all other notes of the same name which follow, in the same bar, and in the same staff in which they appear. Accidentals in no case exercise any influence beyond the bar in which they appear." This rule would make the whole subject very simple, and would entirely do away with two different ways of writing the same passage. I can only further urge every one who reads this to study the matter carefully; and for the sake of *simplicity* and *unanimity* to adopt the rule I have suggested.—I am, sir, yours obediently, A. R. SWAINE.

Parish Church, Bradford, October 22, 1877.

THE "STICKER ACTION" IN PIANOFORTES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I have had considerable experience with all sorts of pianofortes, English and foreign, having been a dealer for many years. I cannot agree with the letter from Messrs. Challen and Son in the September number, that the tape action is the most useful for foreign and country use. I think their own remarks prove the contrary; they admit that damp affects all actions in the centres and bushing. Now we get five centres at least in the tape action to one in the sticker; in the tape all leather parts of course, and keys also, are equally liable to swell, the loss of touch and blocking becomes quite as bad, and much more difficult to regulate by ordinary tuners. The fact is pianoforte makers are not the best judges of how any particular action will wear, because they seldom see their instruments after they once leave the factory, and little know the trouble we have with some of them afterwards or their state in a few years. That is the time to test a piano, after it has had some years' wear. I have done this with all sorts of pianos by very many different makers, and I find the best kind of action to be depended upon is the old sticker action with "round nose" levers; the touch is not so perfect as the slanting lever at first, but it is more lasting, safer to trust to without fear of blocking, easier to regulate when wrong than the tape action, and cheaper at any time to renovate. There is another great objection to the crank action: as soon as it becomes loose and worn it is noisy everywhere, and you cannot stop it without a general repair. I maintain that the more centres you have in any action the more likely is it to be affected by damp or extreme heat, the more liable to get stiff, and on the

other hand the more noisy from shrinking and the friction of so many small parts.

At present I know of nothing better than the sticker actions when well made, of good stuff, and properly regulated, unless it be the short actions of Erard, or Collard and Collard; these are first-rate, but, as we know, can only be used for expensive instruments—in the making of such these two great manufacturers have never been surpassed.

—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

ALFRED LEMARE.

44, High Street, Guildford, October 2, 1877.

[Our correspondent is surely in error in stating that pianoforte makers never see their instruments again after they leave their hands new. On the contrary, as they are often called upon to repair them, they have ample opportunities of finding how they have worn. Again, some makers let out their instruments on hire, and this is another source of valuable experience. It is a mistake to think that the crank action does not stand damp as well as the sticker action; the pianos that were sent on the recent Arctic Expedition in the *Alert* and *Discovery* were crank-action instruments of Broadwood's. They came back with strings completely rusted, yet we know, on dependable authority, that the actions were in good playing order; indeed, it is doubtful whether a sticker action would have stood so severe a trial with an equally satisfactory result. In closing this correspondence, with Mr. Lemare's letter, we must state our conviction that the sticker action, good as it has been, must ultimately yield to the more perfect crank action, which Messrs. Challen and Son have rightly credited the late Mr. Wornum with having invented.—*Ed. MUSICAL TIMES.*]

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

. Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will greatly oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

Notice is sent to all Subscribers whose payment (in advance) is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscription is not renewed. We again remind those who are disappointed in obtaining back numbers that, although the music pages are always stereotyped, only a sufficient quantity of the rest of the paper is printed to supply the current sale.

D. P. W.—(1) Zellner's treatise on the Harmonium is published by Schreiber (late Spina), of Vienna, and has not been translated into English. (2) We do not at this moment recollect an example of the combination you mention in a harmonium solo; but you will find a specimen in the first movement of E. Prout's Duet in A for Piano and Harmonium, where it occurs in an unaccompanied passage for the latter instrument. (3) The figure 5 in harmonium arrangements is used to indicate the *voix céleste*.

MUS. BAC.—The Licentiate wears a black hood lined with violet and trimmed with white fur; the gown is of black stuff or silk. The hood worn by Honorary Licentiates, and by such others as under the new regulations shall have taken Honours, is of violet lined with white silk. For further particulars our correspondent should apply to the Registrar of Trinity College, London, W.

T. T.—Cherubini's work on Counterpoint would be a suitable book, but if you find that too difficult we should recommend you to await the appearance of Dr. Bridge's "Counterpoint" (Novello's Music Primers), which will be published shortly.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH.—The vicar (Rev. J. Denton, M.A.) and choir of the Parish Church have presented Kebble's "Christian Year," illustrated by Overbeck, together with an inkstand, to Mr. Whiteley, on his leaving for Kenilworth, in kind remembrance of his able services as Organist and Choirmaster during the last four years.

BELFAST.—The Choral Association gave its first grand Concert of the season in the Ulster Hall, on the 12th ult., before a large and thoroughly appreciative audience. The artists included Madame Sinico-Campobello, Mdle. Emma Howson, Madame Elena Franchi,