

Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 25, No. 501 (Nov. 1, 1884), p. 650

Published by: Musical Times Publications Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3356239>

Accessed: 05-04-2016 06:40 UTC

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the Academy. Certainly, much care seems to have been exercised in compiling the book, which is sufficiently explicit upon every point to prepare students for those Examinations in the Elements of Music recently instituted by the Academy. The "Definitions," at the commencement, will clear up many doubts upon the real meaning of several words which are too often but vaguely explained in Instruction-Books; and we may also mention, as an important feature in the work, the clearly written foot-notes, which will, we think, be read with interest even by musicians themselves. The chapters on scales, intervals, and time, are especially good; and we earnestly recommend young pupils to study the example on page 36, in which the same series of notes is grouped according to different time signatures. There is much misapprehension on this subject; and as this want of accurate knowledge lies at the root of half the false accent we constantly hear from amateur executants, pupils in their early studies should be taught to make up bars of their own, under the supervision of a master, and to confirm the truth of these exercises by carefully examining the grouping of the notes in published compositions. The preface to the work before us, written by Sir George Macfarren, the Principal of the Institution, at once stamps it as an Academy Text-book.

Twelve Vocal Duets. Book I. Composed by Ciro Pinsuti.

Nine Sacred Duets. Composed by Henry Smart.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE six duets by Pinsuti—"After the rain," "Out in the sunshine," "I love all things," "I sing because I love to sing," "Passing away," and "The voice of the waterfall"—contained in Book I. of this collection, need no eulogy from us, as they have long been acknowledged both by pupils and teachers, as amongst the most charming of the many vocal contributions from this melodious and refined writer. Their publication, however, in the cheap octavo form now before us is a real boon; for we know by experience how much they are taught in classes at schools; and to have these six little gems placed within our reach at little more than the former price of only one is a matter of much importance. Mr. Smart's beautiful sacred duets may now also have the chance of attaining the popularity they deserve by their issue in the same form. The calm and devotional feeling, artistic treatment, and pure vocal writing displayed throughout these compositions, should strongly recommend them to all who can appreciate real and unconventional religious music. No. 1, "There was joy in Heaven"; No. 3, "When brighter suns and milder skies"; No. 5, "The Sabbath bell"; and No. 9, "Evening," have been for many years our favourites; but not one of their companions is at all inferior to these, either in melodious beauty or deep sympathy with the text which they illustrate. All who know the compositions of Henry Smart must agree with us how very much a love for his music grows with familiarity; and to those, therefore, who are still unacquainted with some of the duets in this book, as well as to the many who may retain only a slight recollection of their merits, we strongly commend this volume as a valuable souvenir of the composer.

Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in D. By the Rev. E. V. Hall, M.A. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

It goes without saying that a precentor should be a practical musician, but as the rule is not always observed, we may congratulate Worcester Cathedral, where the office is at present held by the composer of this Service. The Rev. Mr. Hall has evidently mastered the technicalities of composition, and he writes with boldness and freedom. With the exception of a false accent at the outset there is no fault to which attention need be drawn, while the broad and expressive style of the music cannot fail to prove acceptable to hearers who are satisfied with comparative simplicity. The Service is within the means of ordinary amateur choirs, while it is equally worthy of attention from cathedral choirmasters.

Arrangements for the Organ. By George C. Martin. Nos. 4 and 5. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE increase in the number of genuine organ compositions will never entirely supersede the necessity for

arrangements. Musicians need only insist upon the pieces selected being suitable to the king of instruments, and upon the necessary skill and care with which the task of transcription is accomplished. In the last named respect the present arrangements are thoroughly satisfactory. Dr. Martin understands the instrument, and he manages to secure effect without any needless piling up of technical difficulties. It is open to question whether the Romanze and Scherzo from Schumann's Symphony in D minor are suitable for the organ, but no doubt can be entertained concerning the Adagio from Beethoven's first piano Sonata, Scarlatti's "Cat's" Fugue, or the air from Bach's Suite in D.

My soul doth magnify the Lord. Sacred Cantata for Soprano Solo and Chorus. By Townshend Driffeld.
[Liverpool: J. Smith and Son.]

It may be presumed that Mr. Driffeld calls his setting of the Magnificat a Cantata because it is not only too elaborate for church use, but too secular in style. The opening numbers are open to the charge of flippancy, but later on he infuses more dignity into the music, and even gives us some tolerable fugal writing. At the same time, it must be said that the musicianship generally is not of a high order, and any candidate presenting the Cantata as a University exercise would inevitably be plucked. The composer has decided feeling for melody, and should pursue his studies before again committing himself to paper.

Original Compositions for the Organ. No. 34, Sketch in C minor, by J. E. West; No. 35, Fugue in E minor, by J. E. West; No. 36, Minuet and Trio, by B. Luard Selby.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE issue of this useful publication advances apace, and the present numbers will be found acceptable by organists. Though not so designated, Mr. West's Sketch resembles a Minuet in form and rhythm. The manner is stately but the harmonies are chromatic, and, within its limits, the trifle has considerable individuality. The structure of the fugue is peculiar. After the exposition, in which we have a real answer, another subject is announced and duly answered, the first theme recurring in the pedals. The display of counterpoint is extremely modest, but the piece will prove effective as a voluntary. Mr. Selby's Minuet is a smoothly written and graceful piece, and if scarcely in what is known as the genuine organ style, is by no means too secular for church purposes.

Danse des Nymphes. Pour Piano. Par Folcardet.
- [Francis Brothers and Day.]

A SPIRITED and well written dance, effective, and easy to play. The subject in the subdominant offers a good contrast with the principal theme, and the harmonies throughout are well considered. Certainly the G sharp in the fourth bar of the last line should be A flat, but the composer in his notation errs in distinguished company.

FOREIGN NOTES.

AN interesting revival, that of Weber's Opera "Sylvana," is announced shortly to take place at the Hamburg Stadt-Theater, whose able director, Herr Pollini, while distinctly favouring at his establishment the modern Musik-Drama, is by no means averse to an occasional retrospective glance at the neglected works of the past. Weber's "Sylvana," completed at Darmstadt in 1810, was produced for the first time on any stage at Frankfurt, on which occasion Caroline Brandt (afterwards the composer's wife) represented the title part. The opera was performed on several other German stages, notably at Berlin (in 1812), for which occasion Weber had written two new airs, for tenor and soprano respectively. But the work did not remain long on the *répertoire*, and had been quite forgotten when, nine years afterwards, the same composer obtained such a signal triumph at the Prussian capital with his maturer work, "Der Freischütz." "Sylvana" has, however, been remounted as recently (speaking comparatively) as 1855 (at Dresden) and 1858 (at the Kroll'sche Theater of Berlin). For the purpose of the revival of the work, at Hamburg, the libretto has been remodelled by