The Staff v. Tonic Sol-fa Notation

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At Rio de Janeiro an opera entitled "Salvador Rosa," by Gomes, has recently achieved a brilliant triumph. At Madrid, the same composer's opera "Guarany" met with moderate success.

A Musical Exhibition is to be held at Milan from the 1st of May to the 30th of July next, in connection with the forthcoming National Industrial Exposition at that town. Possessors of rare instruments, &c., are invited to communicate with the President of the undertaking, Count Borromeo, via Manzoni 41, Milano.

At the Vittorio Emanuele Theatre of Turin a new opera entitled "Preziosa," by a young composer, Antonio Smareglia, was recently produced with some success. The music, a correspondent informs us, contains some truly popular elements, but the work does not appear to attract general attention. The young *maestro* is, however, said to be endowed with considerable talent.

At Florence, four musical *matinées* of chamber music will be held during this month, under the auspices of Signori Buonamici, Chiostrì, and Sbolci, and comprising interesting programmes, chiefly of a classical character.

We acknowledge the receipt of the first few numbers of a new music journal, entitled *Musik-Welt*, published at Berlin and edited by Herr Max Goldstein. Our young contemporary, to judge from the subject-matter so far produced, and the general excellence of its get-up, should, we imagine, soon find its way into public favour. The journal, *Die Tonkunst*, after the recent death of its founder and late editor, Albert Hahn, continues to appear, in an enlarged form, under the editorship of Herr Otto Wagemann. We have also received further numbers of the new periodicals, the *Musikalisches Centralblatt* and the *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau*.

The death is announced, at Berlin, of Carl Friedrich Weitzmann, a musician of some repute, and pupil of Spohr and Hauptmann.

At Paris died, at the age of seventy-three, Sylvain Saint-Etienne, the well-known librettist and musical critic.

We subjoin, as usual, the programmes of concerts* recently given at some of the leading institutions abroad:—

Paris.—Concert Populaire (October 31): Overture, "Leonore" (Beethoven); Symphony, "Roma" (Bizet); Berceuse (Reber); Violin Concerto (Rubinstein); Fragments from "Midsummer Night's Dream" (Mendelssohn). Châtelet Concert (October 31): Pastoral Symphony (Beethoven); Overture, "Béatrice" (E. Bernard); Introduction and Allegro from Pianoforte Concerto (B. Godard); Le Rouet d'Omphale (Saint-Saëns); Concerto in C minor for two pianofortes (Bach); Le Dernier Sommeil de la Vierge (Massenet); Overture, "Zanetta" (Auber). Concert Populaire (November 7): Symphony, D minor (Schumann); Sevillana (Massenet); Symphony, "The Queen" (Haydn); Concerto pathétique for violin (Balthazar-Florence); Prelude to "Lohengrin" (Wagner); Septet (Beethoven). Châtelet Concert (November 7): Symphonie fantastique (Berlioz); Overture, "Princesse Jaune" (Saint-Saëns); Orchestral Suite from "Castor et Pollux" (Rameau); Pianoforte Concerto in E flat (Beethoven); Danse Persane from "Le Feu" (E. Guiraud); "Patrie," ouverture dramatique (Bizet). Concert Populaire (November 14): Symphony, "In the Forest" (Raff); Largo for oboe (Handel); Sérénade Hongroise (Joncières); Pianoforte Concerto in A minor (Mozart); Danse macabre (Saint-Saëns); Overture, "L'Etoile du Nord" (Meyerbeer). Châtelet Concert (November 14): Symphonie fantastique (Berlioz); Airs de danse from "The Demon" (Rubinstein); Concert-piece for violin (Saint-Saëns); Siegfried-Idyl (Wagner); "Sylvia," orchestral suite (Déliès). Concert-Populaire (November 21): Symphony in D major (Brahms); Adagio and Minuet for clarinet (Weber); Pastoral Symphony (Beethoven); Violin Concerto (Mendelssohn); "Kermesse" (B. Godard). Châtelet Concert (November 21): Reformation Symphony (Mendelssohn); Fragments from "Benvenuto Cellini" (Berlioz); Prelude to "The Deluge" (Saint-Saëns); "Kermesse" (B. Godard).

Leipzig.—Euterpe Concert (November 2): Symphony, C major (Schubert); Serenade for stringed orchestra (Dvorák); Overture, "King Lear" (Berlioz), vocal soli. Gewandhaus Concert (November 4): In memory of Mendelssohn's death: 98th Psalm, Symphony A major; Overture "Melusine," "Ave Maria," Finale from "Loreley" (Mendelssohn). Gewandhaus Concert (November 11): Overture, "Anacreon" (Cherubini); Pianoforte Concerto, C minor (Saint-Saëns); Overture, "Leonore," No. 3 (Beethoven); Ballade (Chopin); Gavotte and Variations (Rameau); Symphony, B flat major (Beethoven).

Cologne.—Gürzenich Concert (October 26): Oratorio, "St. Paul" (Mendelssohn). Gürzenich Concert (November 9): Overture, "Coriolanus" (Beethoven); Violin Concerto (Saint-Saëns); Cavatina from "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" (Rossini); Symphony, G minor (Mozart).

Wiesbaden.—Concert of the Cur-Orchester (November 5): Concerto, G minor, for two solo violins and violoncellos and stringed orchestra (Handel); Symphony No. 2 (Volkmann); Overture, "Midsummer Night's Dream" (Mendelssohn). Concert of the same (November 12):

Overture, "Waldmeister's Brautfahrt" (Gernsheim); "Zur Herbstzeit," Symphony No. 10, MS. (Raff); Entr'acte and Ballet from "Ali Baba" (Cherubini); Overture, "Leonore," No. 2 (Beethoven).

Baden-Baden.—Concert of the Cur-Orchester (November 19): Overture, "Leonore," No. 3 (Beethoven); "Passacaglia" for organ (Bach); Variations on "God save the King," (Haydn); Symphony, "Jupiter" (Mozart), vocal soli.

Turin.—First Concerto Popolare (November 21): Symphony (Beethoven); Cavatina (Raff); "Leonora" (Bandini); Prelude, "Il Figlio di Tiziano" (Mancinelli); Overture, "Oberon" (Weber).

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE STAFF *v.* TONIC SOL-FA NOTATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In my reply to Mr. Manson I was not thinking of any particular application of the Tonic Sol-fa Notation, but of the Notation *per se*—a medium of conveying ideas by symbols. I quite agree with him that in singing the Tonic Sol-faist has a great advantage in knowing whereabouts in a key he is at every note he sings; and this advantage is still further increased when the singer from the Staff Notation has only his single "part" before him. In the example given by Mr. Manson, notwithstanding the formidable array of sharps, the key of B is more palpable than when the Tonic Sol-fa is employed; but to make the example more just, either the chromatic signs should be used in the latter, or the key-signature inserted in the former where the change occurs. I believe the superiority of the Tonic Sol-fa method (granting, for the moment, that there is any) consists in the more thorough teaching its pupils receive. The average chorus-singer would probably be puzzled to say what key he was going to when attempting the example given by Mr. Manson; on the other hand, the average Tonic Sol-faist, after the first bar or two, might easily forget what key he was singing in. The matter is well put, by the late Mr. John Curwen in "The Teacher's Manual" (the most valuable legacy ever left to teachers, whatever their subject may be): "The established Notation, as a system of signs, denotes absolute pitch as its principal thing, but it also connotes, by help of its signatures, key-relationship. Our Tonic Sol-fa Notation denotes key-relationship, and connotes, by help of its signature, absolute pitch." At first, doubtless, key-relationship—*i.e.*, the relation of tones to the key-tone—is the most important matter for the student, and for that the Tonic Sol-fa is most valuable; that acquired, the Staff Notation becomes superior, in my judgment, because the indication of key is always present, however rapid the modulation.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

STEPHEN S. STRATTON.

Edgbaston, November 21, 1880.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I have read with great interest the letters in THE MUSICAL TIMES on the subject, "The Staff *v.* Tonic Sol-fa Notation"; but I must say I do not agree with Mr. Manson's opinions on that subject. To give an example: for showing that the Sol-faist has the advantage over the Staff Notationist in reading music, where there are extreme modulations he writes a piece of music in the key of C major for two bars only; then, without any modulation whatever, he starts off again in the key of B major.

Again, in his Sol-fa translation of it he changes the key. Why does he not do so in the Staff Notation edition by making F, C, G, D, and A F#, C#, G#, D#, and A# at the beginning of the third bar? or, if he wish to keep the accidentals in the Staff Notation, why does he not continue the Sol-fa in the same manner, so as to put the Staff Notationist on a level starting-point with the Sol-faist?

Since, as I have above stated, there is no legitimate modulation, I do not think that the music illustrates his views at all.

With regard to accidentals, I should think that they puzzle the Sol-faist more than the Staff Notationist, and that a piece of music like "Quando corpus morietur," from Rossini's "Stabat Mater," could be read more easily by the Staff Notationist than by the Sol-faist.

* Contributions intended for this column should indicate clearly the place and date of performance, as otherwise they cannot be inserted.