

Nasal Resonance

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out. As to the principle involved, it must be remembered that composers have often been remiss in regard to putting their ideas on paper. They have frequently peppered their pages with accidentals when a change of key-signature would have left the music diatonic. Often an otherwise comparatively easy piece is made impracticable by a few difficult bars that yield little return for a great deal of trouble. Sometimes the laying out for the keyboard has been ungrateful. Mr. Button's skill in matters pertaining to the printed page is well known, and he has turned it to good account in this series. So far eight numbers have been published: Rachmaninov's C sharp minor Prelude, the 'Parsifal' Prelude, the 'Prize Song' from the 'Meistersingers,' Schumann's Romance in F sharp, Chopin's Funeral March, Wieniawski's Legend, Liszt's second Hungarian Rhapsody, and Raff's 'La Fileuse.' Space will not permit of a full description of Mr. Button's methods of smoothing the path of the amateur, but a word is due to the most remarkable of the series—Schumann's 'Romance.' Originally written in F sharp, on three staves, it appears here in G, on two staves, and (it seems incredible) not a note has been added or taken away! It looks, and is, quite easy to play, and of course sounds exactly the same as the original. This method of popularising good music is new, and, in some cases, debateable. But there can be no question of the practical success of the works so far Buttonised.

Among the most acceptable novelties of last season's Promenade Concerts were the 'Stella-Mary Dances' of Ernest Austin. These six charming little pieces have now been arranged for pianoforte duet (published in separate numbers) and pianoforte solo (in three sets). The duet version, which lies before me, is about as difficult as Moszkowski's 'Spanish Dances.' Here and there I miss some of the orchestral colouring which was such a feature of the original version, but the music is so tuneful that it bears the test of pianoforte transcription remarkably well. With their delightfully fresh harmony and rhythm, and their happy turn of melody, the dances should make many friends in their new form. Teachers who (wisely) play duets with their pupils will find them a boon.

The pieces by H. Baynton-Power are of the rather easy type suitable for teaching purposes. They are more notable than such pieces are wont to be, because the composer has an unusually happy knack of writing this kind of music. Easy as they are, they have plenty of genuine interest. The titles are 'Twilight Stories' (four pieces), 'Pastoral Legend,' 'Rose of the Desert,' 'Romantic Prelude,' and 'Echoes in the Valley.' The first are easy, the rest moderately difficult. Those of us whose pupillage was many years ago, look back with a sigh when we remember how little good recreative material there was for our young fingers beyond Clementi's Sonatinas. And they were not *very* stimulating! Children of to-day expect a great variety of jam to help down the powder. They will enjoy the Baynton-Power brand.

Frank Bridge's three pieces for the left-hand are dedicated to Douglas Fox, a brilliant young organist who lost his right arm in the war. There are, unfortunately, many other musicians maimed in such a way as to cut them off from the ordinary instrumental repertory. Those who are good players and fond of modern music will be grateful for these Improvisations. They are difficult, and cover so much of the keyboard that at first sight they look like ordinary two-handed music. But much may be done by the pedals, and we know how great a facility is obtained by handicapped players. The three pieces are entitled 'At Dawn,' 'A Vigil,' and 'A Revel.' Apart from their special object, they should prove valuable to players who wish to develop their left-hand.

G. H.

First Principles of Music. By F. J. Read, Mus.D. (Oxon.). [London: Edward Arnold.]

This excellent little manual by one of the professors at the Royal College of Music is packed with information, concisely arranged and clearly explained in accordance with the course adopted by the author in the classes at the R.C.M., and which the experience of many years has proved successful. The requirements of examinations in the rudiments of music have also been kept in view, and some suggestions are

made as to the method of working various questions. A useful feature is the inclusion of a number of specimen questions on the different sections of each chapter. The first part deals with notation, keys and scales, time, intervals, transposition, musical terms, signs and abbreviations, and ornaments. The second part, in addition to chapters on triads, cadences, ancient modes, scores, sound, &c., gives some useful information on the pianoforte and its predecessors, orchestral instruments (with illustrations), and musical form. Candidates for examinations will find this admirable little book invaluable.

G. G.

Letters to the Editor.

'FAIR PLAY FOR THE PROFESSIONAL.'

SIR,—Particulars of the following appointment of an organist may be of interest. In the May issue of the *Musical Times* appeared an advertisement for an organist and choirmaster 'who must be an efficient choir-trainer.' The advertisement added, 'Great opening as teacher for first-class man.'

I put in an application for the post, and in time had my testimonials returned, with a statement that an appointment had been made. By the same post I received a letter from a near relative who had been on a visit to the town a few days previously, and who had had some conversation with an old friend officially connected with the church. The letter contained the following facts, for the accuracy of which I can vouch:

'The organist appointed is a music-seller, &c., in the town, and the choirmaster is a schoolmaster at one of the local Board Schools.'

The question naturally arises: If the position was to be filled by amateurs, why was it ever advertised in this manner in a leading musical journal, thus causing probably a goodly number of professionals to go to the trouble of making fruitless application? Then, again, the filling by amateurs of an appointment that has carried a salary of from £80 to £120 per annum for a considerable number of years, and has been held by men of recognised worth, is surely a retrograde step. I am also informed that the organist who held the appointment during the war, and was obliged to join the Forces, received a salary of £150—£160.

I made my application from a military hospital, from which as soon as recovered I expect to be demobilised. I have no appointment at present, and am therefore faced with the possibility of nothing to return to, with a wife and family dependent on me.

Quite possibly other candidates may have been similarly situated, and one cannot help a feeling of disgust at the thought of two men, both holding positions which presumably carry a living wage, thus doing a professional, who has had an expensive musical training, &c., out of his job.

Does not such a case reveal the necessity for a 'Board of Appeal' or something of like nature?

I regret having to write under a 'nom de plume,' but the reason is probably obvious. I enclose my card.—Yours, &c.,

'AN UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE.'

NASAL RESONANCE.

SIR,—Before the apple fell on Sir Isaac Newton's nose, the world *wagged* almost as well as it does to-day.

Quite apart from the quibblers, the law of gravity prevails. It has reconciled all the misconceptions and misunderstandings of the ages. We now see these matters in their proper perspective, and marvel at its extent—its illimitableness.

With regard to the nasal resonance supporters, the apple has not yet hit them on the nose. Acoustically they are quite innocent of the law of the perfect resonator—they are still quibbling. The truth of that law which discounts and embodies their little discovery has not dawned upon them.

Mr. Dawson Freer's very helpful and logical letter takes us back to the foundation of tone—the open throat—the normal tone (or, as I figuratively said in the November issue, the diapason quality). From this fact, the resonator for

every note and every vowel within the sphere of the vocal 'lips' begins, *i.e.*, the perfect note. (The system is being taught here in Glasgow on the co-ordinate movement principle, and is most successful in its results.) That phrase at the end of Mr. Freer's letter—*re* chest resonance—is a nasty knock for the nasal resonance clique. Mr. Hilton's belated echo from Africa—'like the flowers that bloom in the spring,'—has little to do with the case. 'Fair play 's a jewel,' and I do not think it just of anyone because he obviously does not understand, or is afflicted with mental strabismus, to regard one's statements as 'doubtful.'

I have quoted scientific facts, and, as Burns says, 'Facts are chieftains that winna' ding.' I shall not presume on your space to quote any youthful prodigy.

The experiment of filling the nasal cavities with milk was performed by the late A. B. Bach, of Edinburgh, who has related the result in one of his able books on the voice.—Yours, &c.,

DAVID HOUSTON.

14, Lyndhurst Gardens,
Glasgow, N.W.

June, 16, 1919.

[This correspondence must now cease.—ED., *M.T.*]

STRAVINSKY.

SIR,—It would be well if Stravinsky's literary disciples would emulate their master's 'persistent striving towards brevity, conciseness, and directness of expression,' and, overcoming their 'mania for completeness,' would endeavour to state what they have apprehended 'without need of laboured self-explanation and working out.'

The charge of *obscurum per obscurius* is old and well-known, but Mr. Leigh Henry's panegyric on Stravinsky in the *Musical Times* suggests a new variant of it, in that the author appears to have done his best to obscure an issue that was to most people perfectly plain before he began to expound it. To describe enharmonic modulations as

'sequential treatment of tonal colour-combinations on related or deliberately and acutely-contrasted harmonic planes, or polytonic treatment and chord-successions determined by tonal affinity'

may impress but certainly will not enlighten the average reader. It will more probably make him marvel at the writer's subsequent denunciation of:

'the often unbearably redundant artifice of symphonic form.'

The triple performance of Stravinsky's Three Pieces by the Philharmonic String Quartet seems to Mr. Leigh Henry 'to imply a certain obscurity, if not incomprehensibility in that composer's style.' But it might more reasonably be said to imply a shrewd foreknowledge on the part of the concert-givers that these three short and simple studies in onomatopoeia would prove a popular item in the programmes—which, in fact, they did, being encored and repeated on at least one occasion.

Mr. Leigh Henry tells us that Stravinsky 'marks a new direction in musical art.' He would have us see Stravinsky as a kind of musical Melchizedek—a unique phenomenon, without ancestry or relation to his forerunners. But there are blasphemous unbelievers who regard Stravinsky first and foremost as a past-master in the art of whipping-up an audience to a state of physical excitement by methods very closely resembling the Rossinian crescendo, and secondly as the legitimate successor of Richard Strauss in the onomatopoeic line. Such at any rate is the impression his music makes on the average hearer who listens 'objectively,' without searching for those 'metaphysical significances of philosophic intent' which are doubtless revealed only to the devout.

The music of 'Petrouchka' is marvellously apt and appropriate to the pantomime for which it was written, but, apart from a few small points of technical interest, has it any musical significance whatever? The evolution of Stravinsky, from the sentimentally Chopinesque pianoforte pieces of 1908, via the 'Firebird' (that pastiche so industriously compiled from reminiscences of Berlioz, Grieg, Rimsky Korsakoff, and the 'Casse Noisette' Suite) and the more original 'Petrouchka' to such soulless and consciously imbecile productions as 'Biroulki' and the songs for a cat, reveals the gradual elimination of every element that might

be recognized as emotional or moving, in any but a purely physical sense. One feels quite sorry for his cat. It is more usual to try such things on the dog—but then it is just in these little details that Stravinsky's startling originality is most apparent.

This, of course, is as it should be, for 'We have had enough of romantics. We have been starved of humour in music. We crave for what music hitherto has most lacked.'

However, there is little ground for anxiety. Three cheers for the comic song!—Yours, &c.,

MORTIMER CATTLEY.

8, Warbeck Road,
W. 12.

A DOUBLE PEDAL PASSAGE IN BACH.

SIR,—The peculiar disposition of the parts at the end of Bach's Organ Prelude in D (*alla breve*) must have attracted the notice of many organists. The right hand is fully occupied, and both feet are employed, but the left hand is practically idle. Why is this?

Bach does not seem to use the double pedal for the sake of increased tone. Had this been his object he would have added one or two parts for the left hand as well, and not have given it nothing to do. The left hand was freed from playing because it was required for other work. Was not Bach's design to effect a *gradual* reduction of tone, the left-hand part being transferred to the right foot so that the hand might be available to push in the stops one by one? As a rule, such a gradual reduction of tone was not obtainable in Bach's time, for modern devices of stop-control had not yet been invented. Bach had throughout a piece to content himself with the same stops that he began with, employing only such contrasts as could be secured by changes of manual. His organ music is therefore designed as a series of terraces, not of slopes. But on this occasion Bach, regarding the slope as indispensable, was obliged to make this special disposition to obtain it.

If this view commends itself, from the *ff* on the \curvearrowright in the closing bars of the Prelude a gradual *decrecendo* would be made to *pp*, and the 16-ft. pedal tone as quickly as possible reduced and eliminated. The downward slope would be decorated by a number of tasteful bits of colour, which on other occasions the player's hands are too fully occupied to attend to, even if they were appropriate. For example, the first beat of the last bar but two would be accented by the momentary addition of a soft 32-ft.; and if the use of the Swell pedal, unknown in Bach's time, is desired, the right-foot part would naturally have to be transferred to the left hand.—Yours, &c.,

X.Y.Z.

FIVE-MANUAL ORGANS.

SIR,—Since my demobilisation I have been feasting on the *Musical Times* of several years, and in the issue for October, 1918, I see a list of organs with five manuals, in an article by E. Graham Dunstan. The organ in Radley College Chapel is described as by Telford, and the number of its stops is marked by a query. Twenty years ago I had the pleasure of seeing and playing on this organ, and in my note-book it is recorded as originally by Telford, enlarged and rebuilt by Walker, and twice ditto by Martin, of Oxford. It then contained 61 speaking-stops and 12 couplers, &c.

This information may be of interest to the writer of your article.—Yours, &c.,

E. BRUNDRIT MEADOWS.

Ifley House,
Thornton, Preston,
June 6, 1919.

ORGAN RECITAL PROGRAMMES.

SIR,—From the fine series of programmes of recitals to be given at St. Stephen's Walbrook, I find that out of fifty-nine pieces, thirty-eight are original organ music—nearly two-thirds. Not a bad percentage. But only thirteen of the fifty-nine are British pieces; less than a quarter!