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The Gramophone as an Aid to Musical Appreciation

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## Letters to the Editor.

### THE 'MISSA DE ANGELIS.'

SIR,—Mr. Hughes's article in your September issue is very interesting reading; but in some of his statements he is surely in error. He says, *inter alia*, that the 'De Angelis' is given 'a place in the latest editions of the official books of Rome, after—but not among—the other Plainsong Masses of the "Ordinarium Missæ." I have half-a-dozen editions of the approved Vatican 'Ordinarium Missæ'—one obtained direct from Rome less than six months ago—and there is no indication in any of these of such an arrangement. None of my R.C. friends at Westminster Cathedral and elsewhere have heard of it; and I understand that the R.C. Bishop of Southwark has just ordered the 'De Angelis' Credo (Vatican, No. 3) to be sung in every church in his diocese on each Sunday throughout the year. No! What the Vatican authorities have done is to rearrange the 'Ordinarium Missæ.' The 'De Angelis' Mass, formerly No. 5, is now No. 8, and there are ten other Masses following it. The 'Missa Regia' is omitted altogether. Possibly Mr. Hughes has confused this Mass with the 'De Angelis.'

While writing on this subject, may I be permitted to offer some comments—the result of considerable study and experience—in connection with two other points suggested by Mr. Hughes's article?

(1.) It is often very difficult—indeed, practically impossible—to state with any degree of precision the date of a traditional Plainsong melody. The mode in which it is written is no indication whatsoever. Some of the most ancient melodies in the Gradual are in the 5th and 6th Modes—e.g., the Introit of the 'Missa de Profunctis,' the splendid Sanctus of Mass No. 17, &c. I imagine that the Solesmes Benedictines, in suggesting dates for the melodies of the 'Ordinarium Missæ,' after the examination of every available manuscript, have given proximate dates for the melodies in the form which they had assumed when they became, as it were, standardised. It is certain that many of the melodies, in less developed forms, are much older than the dates given. For example, it is generally believed that the Kyrie, 'Orbis Factor,' was either composed or developed from an older form of the melody by the Irish musician, S. Tutilo, in the 9th or 10th century; and it was further modified at a later date. The Solesmes Fathers give its date as (X), 14th-16th centuries; and this is, no doubt, a substantially accurate estimate of the age of the melody as an artistic element of the Church's music. Every melody in the 'Ordinarium Missæ' has been subjected to similar changes. Some time ago I tabulated the melodic variations in a 14th century MS. compared with the latest Vatican Ordinarium. In Credo No. 1 (the 'Old English Credo') there are at least forty variations; the Kyrie, 'Dominus Deus,' has been so much modified as to be hardly recognizable; and so on throughout. Perhaps the most permanent form of melody I have ever noticed is the 'Agnus Dei' of the Requiem (used also in Mass No. 18).

As regards the 'De Angelis' Kyrie, Mr. Hughes has shown that the melody is much older than the 15th-16th centuries. But its earlier form, as given by Mr. Hughes, is very crude when compared with the really beautiful and artistic melody now in the Gradual. I have myself formerly queried many of the dates suggested in the latest Gradual; but the more I have studied the subject the less I am inclined to doubt the conclusions of the patient and scholarly Solesmes investigators.

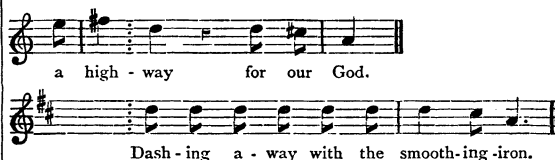
(2.) It must not hastily be assumed that a melody is a folk-song, or derived from one, on account of certain peculiarities of mode or outline. Any man who is looking out for melodic coincidences or similarities can find them on every hand. What is more likely than that the last part of the 'De Angelis' Kyrie was derived from 'Sumer is i-cumen in'?



or both from 'Three Blind Mice'?



Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonata (Op 81a), his 'Leonora' Overture No 1, Wagner's Overture to the 'Flying Dutchman,' and many other notable compositions, are of course derived from the first phrase of 'Three Blind Mice'; while one of the most common Recitative formulae is found in 'Dashing away with the Smoothing-iron':



Your thorough-going, fully-obsessed folk-songist will accept almost anything. One of them solemnly assured me some time ago that 'most of the melodies in the Ordinarium Missæ are of folk-song origin, the Kyries in particular being suffused with the folk-song idiom.'

All through the ages ecclesiastical and secular melodies have run along, so to speak, in two adjacent streams, acting and reacting on each other. Often this mutual intercourse has been helpful to both; but whenever the secular stream has seriously encroached on the other the result has been disastrous. Witness, for example, the state of music in the Roman Church in the middle of the 16th century. It is said that some members of the Council of Trent, 1545-63, even went so far as to suggest the exclusion of all music from the Church Services.

By all means let us encourage Mr. Hughes and other scholars to continue their interesting historical investigations; but we must avoid being side-tracked by minor issues.—Yours, &c.,

RALPH DUNSTAN.

30, West Side,  
Wandsworth Common, S.W.-18.

### THE GRAMOPHONE AS AN AID TO MUSICAL APPRECIATION.

SIR,—I have been much interested in the two letters on the above subject which appeared in the September and October issues of the *Musical Times*. A gramophone record lasts no longer than four minutes, and cuts have to be made in the music in order to present an overture or a movement from a quartet in that space of time. Your September correspondent suggests that the invention of the double turntable would solve the difficulty. The double turntable would, I presume, imply a double arm and sound-box, so that the needle on the first sound-box could be changed while the second sound-box was playing the second record. But such an instrument would be of little use for playing the best double-sided records that are now being produced. These records have, say, the first movement of a quartet on one side, and the second movement on the other. Clearly the second movement, or the second part of any double-sided record, could not follow immediately on the first; the record must be turned. The point has some importance, because it is possible to obtain now—and this is due mainly to the enterprise of the 'Columbia' firm—an excellent series of double-sided records of chamber-music. Thus there are published, each on two records, both double-sided, Elgar's Violin Concerto, Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' and 'Spring' Sonatas, and Quartets by Beethoven, Mozart, Ravel, and Schumann. There are also published two movements each (one double-sided record) of a Brahms Quintet, Violin Sonatas by César Franck and Grieg, and Quartets by Brahms, Debussy, Tchaikovsky, Glazounov, Dvorák, and others. The series is being continued, and will have grown considerably by the time the double-turntable invention could appear on the market. And when it did appear, it would have no advantage over our present instruments in the playing of these records. Until, therefore, an entirely

new gramophone is evolved, the more satisfactory solution would be, I believe, in the development of the 'double-sided record' policy. It is obvious that in such records as I have mentioned considerable cuts must be made in order to bring a movement from one of these works into the compass of one side of a record. But if exactly double the space were given the works could be recorded practically *in extenso*. This would mean issuing, for example, a Beethoven Quartet on four double-sided records instead of two. The question is really not so much one of mechanical contrivance as of financial consideration on the part of the gramophone companies. People who would be willing to buy two records of mutilated chamber-music could not always be expected to buy four instead for the sake of having the works in a more satisfactory form. And yet one cannot help feeling that if those who love music were to demand these records in large numbers, the gramophone companies would meet the demand. All the quartet records mentioned above are by the London String Quartet, and even in their imperfect form are a source of infinite pleasure. It would be a great pity if the possibilities foreshadowed by these records—of having the best chamber-music continually at one's command—were not to be developed and realised to the full. If the schools of the country were to unite to support the development of such records, and to use them in the musical education of their scholars, the movement might have far-reaching results.

I may be pardoned a reference to the school from which I write. Here at Ampleforth we have a School Musical Society for the VI., V., and IV. Forms which meets weekly to listen to serious music. Gramophone records are mainly used; but the members also read papers, and play or sing to illustrate them. We have found it possible to obtain a large variety of records of the best music by composers such as Palestrina, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Wagner, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazounov, Dvorák, Debussy, Franck, Ravel, Elgar, Grainger, Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, &c.

Many others among your readers will also no doubt have discovered the value and importance of good gramophone records for educational purposes, and it would be interesting to hear their experiences. At this time, when an English musical renaissance is in progress, it seems to me that no effort can be too great to cultivate a sound, critical taste in the youth of the nation. As a step towards the fulfilment of this ideal, it might be possible, if the necessary co-operation were forthcoming, to approach the gramophone companies with a view to the development of the double-sided record.—Yours, &c.,

J. BERNARD MCELLIGOTT  
(O.S.B.).

Ampleforth College,  
Malton, Yorks.

#### MUSIC IN CAPE TOWN.

SIR,—In your issue of September 1, a letter appears over the signature of M. von Someren Godfery in which the writer, after referring in appreciative terms to the excellent work of the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra, remarks: 'This is a country where six years ago symphonies had not been heard, and where no orchestra existed within many thousands of miles.'

One can only assume that your contributor is a new-comer, and that he did not take the trouble to inquire what conditions prevailed prior to his arrival in the country.

Symphonies by Haydn and Mozart had been performed in Cape Town before I joined the orchestra of the Cape Town Musical Society in 1895, the Society in question having been the centre of local musical effort since 1864. During a period of nearly twenty years whilst I remained a member of the orchestra, two or three symphonies were performed each year, and in addition to those by the composers named, works by Beethoven (three or four of the Nine), Mendelssohn, Dvorák, Tchaikovsky, and Cliffe were played. One does not claim that these attained anything approaching the standard since established by the Municipal Orchestra, but it is interesting to note that the leader of the latter and several of its players were formerly members of the old Cape Town Musical Society.

Some ten or twelve years ago a second orchestra was formed in Cape Town, with equally lofty aims, which also included symphonies in its programmes and, as in the case of the Musical Society, numbered about fifty performers. At that time we could also boast of several less ambitious but no less active suburban orchestras.

By a curious coincidence, in your same issue, Miss Racster—who was well known in Cape Town as a musical critic both before and after the evolution of the Municipal Orchestra—gives some interesting reminiscences, and refers incidentally to the ambitious choral Festivals which were a feature of the musical life of Cape Town some ten years ago, and with which we have, unfortunately, nothing to correspond to-day. Those of your readers who had not read, or had forgotten, the favourable references to those Festivals which appeared in the *Musical Times* of that period, must have experienced difficulty in understanding how such exacting works as Berlioz's 'Faust' and others mentioned by Miss Racster could have been rendered adequately in a country where, according to Mr. Godfery, there was no orchestra within thousands of miles. The hope that the foregoing may solve the mystery must be my apology for encroaching upon your valuable space.—Yours, &c.,

Green Point, Cape Town,  
October 20, 1919.

W. HERRING.

#### THE ALTO VOICE.

SIR.—I have read your Magazine for some considerable period, and have not only derived much valuable knowledge, interest, and pleasure from doing so, but have been impressed with your readiness to give space to letters from your readers; also the fairness with which you have often expressed your views on matters raised by them.

I cannot recall, however, any article or letter referring to what I venture to suggest is an important subject, namely, the alto (or counter-tenor) voice. This rare, but very necessary voice seems to be treated with some degree of indifference; inasmuch as, although all types of voices are represented on our concert platforms, the alto singer appears to be limited to a church choir, a quartet, or has to go to the other extreme and become a female impersonator on the music-hall stage. I should like to ask if there is any legitimate reason for the alto singer being barred from, say, the ordinary ballad concert, since the alto voice can be just as capable of rendering certain kinds of songs with as much beauty and expression as other voices?

Rare things and accomplishments are usually sought after (and I am given to understand that a pure alto voice is a rarity), so I think one might ask with reason why the alto voice is never heard excepting in the cases I have mentioned.

I am anxious to get information on this subject, and should be grateful if you could spare space for these few remarks.—Yours, &c.,

ROLAND PLUMTREE.

35, Church Street,  
Kensington, W.-8,  
November 1, 1919.

#### MUSIC TEACHERS AND UNIVERSITY DEGREES.

SIR,—Would it be possible for me, through the medium of your valuable paper, to draw the attention of the public to the position given to music-teachers under the new scale of salaries?

I do not know if it is the case everywhere, but in the Gloucester High School for Girls a music-teaching diploma is placed on the non-degree scale. Is it likely that music-teaching in schools will become a popular profession when the Board of Education refuses to recognise any qualification but a University degree? That is to say, those who hold the A.R.C.M. and L.R.A.M. diplomas, together with training at a recognised centre, are placed on the non-degree scale below any (Welsh) B.A. Practically all the work for Mus. Bac. is useless for Secondary School teaching.

I think it is time that this state of affairs should be brought to notice.—Yours, &c.,

MADELINE M. BURTON  
(A.R.C.M.).

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Muswell Hill, London, N.-10.