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MAY 2, 1881.

W. H. CUMMINGS, Esq.,

IN THE CHAIR.

ON SOME OF THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF
STRUCTURE IN MUSICAL COMPOSITION.

By H. C. BANISTER, Esq.

My subject may seem, in title at least, technical and formal rather than æsthetic: having to do more with that which is outlined and made than with that which is inwrought and felt; with body and shape rather than with spirit and essence. So sorry, however, should I be for it to be thought that I approach the consideration of the beautiful art which we all love, in any of its richly varied aspects, with the spirit of a pedant, or as seeming to countenance the notion that music may be made or constructed merely, without being felt or inspired, that I must at the outset, as the truest introduction to the specialties of my subject, as well as to place myself right with the art and with my audience, say emphatically that, in proposing to myself to deal with some of the underlying principles of structure in musical composition, I wish to speak of structure as the *expression of definite thought*; as the *result* of that thought; as having to do with the *form* that the thought *assumes*, rather than with the *shape* or *mould* into which it is *cast*. Architecture has been termed "the poetry of mathematics": that would not be said of *building*, which is not the expression of a poetical thought at all. So with music, the poetry of sound—or rather, perhaps, poetical feeling expressing itself through *sound*: the very form that it assumes is the resultant expression of the thought.

I have to speak of *structure*: now structure implies *workmanship*, and that may seem a prosaic term. But the word occurs in a unique passage of our English New Testament, in which Christian men and women are declared to be the Divine "*workmanship*, created . . . unto good works";* and that word "*workmanship*" is the rendering of the word

* Ephesians ii. 10.

(ποίημα—*poiēma*) from which we obtain our word *poem*. So that we have the beautiful and impressive thought—lifting the word “workmanship” out of all low, prosaic use—that a truly good and gracious man is a *Divine poem*: the refined expression of the Divine ideal of what is good and true, and that with the purpose of its being seen in a true and beautiful life. This, then, is what a *poem* really is: the expression of the ideal of a mind in which ideality works; the outcome of an effort to make that ideal actual; and need I say that an ideal should be of the beautiful, of the good, of the true? I feel this so strongly that, I confess, were I to write an opera, it would be to me very distasteful to write the music for the villain of the piece, or to write a drinking song, or any such expression of the vile, the low, the sensual. For these things—villainy, appetite, sordidness—have no ideal side; and it seems to me treachery to art and its high mission to endeavour to invest them with a glamour of attractiveness. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one!”* As Plato says: “The greatest of ignorances, if you will have me tell it you, is this: when a man, judging truly of what is honourable and good, yet loves it not, but hates it, and loves and caresses with his soul what he perceives to be base and unjust—this diaphony (discord) of his pain and pleasure with the rational verdict of his intellect I call the last of ignorances, and the greatest, because it is in the multitude of the soul’s thoughts.” This same ignorance he afterwards calls “the out-of-tunest of all;” and again, “the movement of sound, so as to reach the soul for the education of it in virtue (we know not how), we call *Music*.” On which Mr. Ruskin remarks, “The Greeks only call ‘Music’ that kind of sound which induced right moral feeling (‘they knew not *how*,’ but they knew it did); and any other sound than that, however beautiful to the ear or scientific in composition, they did not call ‘Music’ (exercise under the muses), but ‘*amusia*’—the denial, or desolation for want, of the muses.”†

But now, taking this high ground, and assuming the æsthetic ideal and refining purpose of the divine art, we are to speak of “some of the underlying principles of structure,” bearing in mind, to quote Mr. Ruskin once more, that “no great composition was ever produced by composing, nor by arranging chapters and dividing volumes; but only with the same heavenly involuntariness in which a bird builds her nest. And among the other virtues of the great classic masters, this of enchanted design is of all the least visible to the present apothecary mind.”‡ By “apothecary mind” I suppose is meant the mind which can simply mix ingredients according to prescription: a process such as we should call conven-

* Job xiv. 4. † Ruskin’s *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 83, 1877. ‡ Ibid.

tional and grammatical movement writing. But "enchanted design"—that must ever be our starting-point; that is *the* underlying principle without which all structure will fail to produce the "thing of beauty" which shall be "a joy for ever."

Music is a language to express what words cannot, or can but inadequately, express. As a language, it has its grammar, which is not our concern to-day. But it has also its *logic*, and its *rhetoric*: by these it sets forth reasonably, truly, in order; and effectively, persuasively, winningly, the ideal of beauty springing from the musician's mind. For when we speak of "enchanted design" as the first requisite for a composer, it is implied not only that the enchantment is to animate the design, but that the design is to regulate the enchantment. In other words, the design, however enchanted, must be in some way defined; and, for its presentment with any hope of arresting and enchainning attention, enlisting sympathy, kindling sensibility, must submit to the demands of law and order. As was declared in a far more momentous matter, "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."* And when we speak of the *logic* and the *rhetoric* of music as regulating and guiding in the carrying-out of design, we are confessedly borrowing terms to express what are the "underlying principles" of those processes in musical structure which are *technically* described by such terms as movement writing, contrapuntal treatment, imitation, modulation, development, and the like.

Charles Lamb, released from irksome office duties, commiserated some of his old chums on their having their compulsory walk to the city daily. They retorted that he walked quite as much and as far as they. "Ah!" he said, "but then you have to *go to somewhere*: *I walk about*." This "walking about," purposeless, designless, is just that which is so obviously the undisciplined weakness of so many musical writers, young and old. Many a young student has brought me a page of manuscript, and when I have asked "What is this to be?" the answer has been, "Oh! I don't know: just a little thing I thought of." Now, of course, with a young writer all allowance must be made for lack of maturity and decision of purpose; and it would be far from my wish to check such a one, in putting to paper even a casual undeveloped thought, to crystallise; composers, young and old, must do that. But I do always counsel them to form a design—and, I may add, to design a form; to know what they are going to write: whether a prelude, a sonata-movement, or any other form of composition. And I caution them against frittering their energies on "Pensées fugitives," "Album-leaves," and the like, without

* 1 Corinthians xiv. 22.

any stern self-discipline in the constructive art: any proving the validity by testing the workableness—the susceptibility of development—of any musical thought which has flitted across, if not sprung from, their minds. And, therefore, if their powers are not sufficiently trained to warrant their taking a *long* flight, let them at least throw their ideas into some form which has in it the germ of development and structure, such, for example, as a Minuet with a first and second part, and some concise working; and then, say, a Sonatina movement, involving the presentation of at least two principal subjects, in contrast, or in conjunction, or both. And, above all, let them remember that smallness of dimensions, limited extent of development, must not be held to excuse looseness of structure. The form is the same, and, within its own compass, as perfect in a Sonatina as in a grand Sonata. I have been astonished to hear a musician speak of the small Sonatas of Beethoven as a disgrace for Beethoven to have written—so exquisite in sentiment, so perfect in form, are they. A philosopher does not disgrace himself by speaking to a child, if he speaks pure philosophy in accurate, though childlike, language. A musician does disgrace himself when he addresses the vulgar and frivolous in flimsy and vulgar musical language.

A musical subject then, as I have suggested, is a thought to be treated, elaborated, illustrated, enforced, sustained by any or all of the appliances which are at the command of a musician. There are undoubtedly simple thoughts which, like lyrics, call for no development; only presenting themselves in neat rhythm and expressive harmony: that is all their structure: drawing forth the exclamation,

*That strain again! It had a dying fall.**

There are other short compositions which, like a Sonnet, are examples of intense, concentrated, climax-tending power. But we have rather to speak of that structural art which so arranges, and shapes, and works musical ideas, as to nerve them with power and bring out their fulness in the various forms of extended movement. But, however defined these forms may be, believe me it is only bad structural art, not "enchanted design," which will make imaginative thought seem square, because shaped. The imaginative thought may be not square, indeed, but unshapen, crude: and the structural art takes the crude idea—may be—and shapes it, *not* by *squaring* it, but by *rounding* it. As a popular naturalist says of a certain sea-shore: "It is composed almost entirely of flints of every possible form and shape, but all of them more or less rolled, and their edges worn off by the action of the water—for Nature never turns her work out square, always

* *Fall* means *cadence*.

round—so that of the sea may be strictly said that which is said in the Latin grammar of a restless dabbler in bricks and mortar: ‘Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis’ (it destroys, it builds up, *it changes square things into round*)”*; with which agree the words of the eminent art-critic from whom I have before quoted: “Nature is all made up of roundnesses: not the roundness of perfect globes, but of variously curved surfaces. Boughs are rounded, leaves are rounded, clouds are rounded, cheeks are rounded, and curls are rounded: there is no more flatness in the natural world than there is vacancy. The world is round, and so is all that is in it, more or less, except human work, which is often very flat indeed.”† I am always reminded, by that sentence, of Sterndale Bennett’s beautiful Caprice in E major, with its curved, rounded passages. It is said that these were suggested to him by the unrolling and throwing off the folds of a piece of silk, or some such material; such an operation as may be witnessed on many a counter. Not a “poetical basis” of music this—a very prosaic basis, but a very poetical superstructure, reminding one of Mozart’s saying about an unpoetical libretto: “Give me the words, and I’ll put the poetry to them.” Yes, we must in our structure imitate the process of the sea and of nature—turn square things into round.

But of course this is not all. We have not only to perfect, polish, and present in finished instead of crude form our thought, our thesis; but also to elucidate it by structural skill, effective setting, and consistent elaboration; to exhibit it as a good thought, a strong thought, a suggestive thought, a many-sided thought—for truth is many-sided, has many bearings, may be presented and viewed in many aspects. To change our metaphor of the flint rounded into a smooth pebble, it may be that the musical thought is rather a diamond with many facets, each scintillating with beauty. So far as the presentation of one idea is concerned, structural development consists in this: the ascertainment of the various forms which that one idea may reasonably and effectively take, and its presentment accordingly. I am inclined to claim for our art a pre-eminence—I had almost said a prerogative—in this versatile power of presenting the same idea in different aspects; not saying the same thing over again *ad nauseam*, but each time with a new interest. Herein, as I take it, lies the true power and philosophy of counterpoint, and the object of contrapuntal training and exercise: not in the *rules*—which may or may not, as variously enunciated, be reasonable and good—but in the habit of thought which it engenders and cultivates about the fertility, the wealth, of a germ idea, and in the poly-structural facility which it imparts. And, therefore, herein

* F. Buckland’s *Curiosities of Natural History*, Second Series, p. 156.

† Ruskin’s *Elements of Drawing*.

lie the true power and philosophy of contrapuntal *treatment*, especially as exemplified in its highest culminating form—the *fugal* form. And this is the *rationale* of that *rule*, familiar to all students of fugue-writing, that the same passage must not appear twice in the same form. Iteration and reiteration there may be in musical composition; but in fugue, as the closest logical form, and the very concentration of accumulated power, that reiteration, albeit that it is constant and continuous, must not be tautological but multiform. The fugue seems to me interesting, not only for its own sake, but as the illustration of the method in which our earnest-minded musical ancestors sought out (*ricercare*) and found out what underlying principles should govern them and justify them in a lengthened composition. And therefore the *rules* of fugue-writing are, generally speaking, expressions of “underlying principles” of structural composition which, with modifications, are applicable to musical writing of all kinds. The fugue is not a fossil: it is rather an example of the “survival of the fittest.” It is not wonderful that in the early strivings after artistic production the structural rather than the picturesque should occupy the minds of musicians. They addressed themselves mainly to the thorough working-out of one thought. But let it not be thought, though it has sometimes been said or implied, and is often assumed, that a fugue, because it is an embodiment of intellectual strength and skill, necessarily represses the emotional, or checks the fanciful. It was said of Dr. Chalmers that he possessed the affluent capacity of presenting the same truth over and over again in such varied forms that it hardly seemed to his hearers to be the same. Only on analysis, or review of the whole, was this discovered; and then the conviction would come—how *true* and how *rich* must be that which could be thus stated, restated, and illustrated, until it had thoroughly permeated the mind, without in any one of its presentations a suggestion of a flaw or a weakness! And yet assuredly there was no lack of tender persuasiveness nor of impassioned fire in that eminent man. The fugue-subject which can be so dealt with must be a true subject; and the fugue which so deals with it is a true fugue—it fulfils its mission. But I envy not the unsusceptible hearer who can listen to Bach’s fugues—which are sometimes spoken of as though they were forty-eight mosaics, as hard and as cold—and not feel any stir of emotion at hearing, for instance, that in E major, Vol. II., as though entering some “hallowed fane”; or that in A flat of the same volume, and not feel it to be as notes

That fall as soft as snow on the sea,
And melt in the heart as instantly.

I might cite many others.

Not every musical thought, however, calls for or will bear this close treatment. A much more free manner of presentation—not so much the convincing, the elaborating, the logical, as the alluring, the illustrating, the persuading—is that which befits certain genuine and beautiful ideas. Young writers, fresh, or rather, let me say, not very fresh, from a course of fugal study, often are tempted to show their fugal and contrapuntal skill by applying that method of treatment to subjects which will not bear it and do not call for it. A fugal treatment of an unfugal thought, how *ungainly* is it, and how pedantic!

But there are many ideas which can be better set forth in some other way than the logical. Their truth or beauty can be exhibited by contrast with other ideas, or their consistency with them; by the nicety with which they fit in with other thoughts, all, welded together, forming a consistent whole, which by its consistency declares its truth. Or, taking another view, a series of consequent, contrasted, or connected ideas may be so linked together as to form a movement, and to express a train of thought; and here comes in the consideration of the forms of movement of a freer, more varied, if not more arbitrary, character than the fugue. In a fugue—at least, on one subject—the writer presents himself to us in the character of a man of one idea: a term which we sometimes use to designate narrowness, an ill-furnished mind; but which may no less be taken to indicate that strength, intensity, fixedness of purpose which animate and sustain in order to the accomplishment of some noble, worthy work. In the freer movement, of more modern growth and development, he rather presents himself as of varied and wide culture—emotional, logical, rhetorical in turns; or—shall I say?—he is rather in the character of a dramatist or of a novelist who presents varied characters and emotions and incidents in succession, and in their mutual bearings and inter-relationships, so as to awaken interest, expectation, curiosity, sympathy, as the plan is unfolded. The type of movement which is familiar to us of this kind is that often called the *sonata* form, being that in which the first movement of a Sonata, Symphony, or such work, is usually, though not invariably, cast. I would prefer using the, to some extent, self-explanatory term—the movement of continuity or development. I have no intention of again going over the ground traversed by Mr. Stephens in his paper on “Form,” read before this Association nearly two years since. The outline of the form of movement in question is well known to us all. But I venture to make a remark or two as to what may be termed the underlying principle of that particular form, which, as we all know, is a growth, an extension. We have it in the long movements of Schumann, Mendelssohn, Beethoven; more concisely it appears in Haydn and Mozart; we

trace it back to still briefer presentation in the works of Bach, Handel, Domenico Scarlatti, Paradies, and others. There must be surely something in the form which commends it, for it to have been thus adopted, in the main, by successive generations. No one would think that this was simply a case of "follow my leader"—a mere servile conventionalism. However Beethoven and others may have extended and elaborated it, and however he and other great masters may have *diverged* and given examples of other modes of development, they cannot be said to have ever abandoned this time-honoured form as effete, cramping, worthless. Speaking generally, they have found it adequate to the presentation of their ideas when those ideas were to be presented in the shape of instrumental movements at all. This, broadly speaking, I think will not be disputed, notwithstanding indications of some tendencies in Beethoven's later works to break the bonds somewhat, if bonds they be. There must surely be, I will not say *vitality*, for that cannot be predicated of a *form*, but eminent *rationality*, adaptability, and, I will add, elasticity, about a form which has thus commended itself to such a series of eminently independent, unconventional, and daring minds; and I think the reasons of this eminence are not far to seek. Briefly set forth, the movement under consideration may be stated as comprehending first and second subjects, with, or course, connecting matter, which, with some additional matter and a codetta, constitute the *first part*, terminating in the dominant major, if the movement is in a major key, or in another key, if the movement is in a minor; then the *second part* proper, or development, sometimes, though I think not quite happily, termed the *free fantasia*, built upon the material presented in the first part, with perhaps some additional matter, episodic or otherwise; and then the return to the original subject and key, in which key also the second subject follows; and then, sometimes at least, a climax and a coda. With various exceptions and differences in detail, with which we are familiar, this is I apprehend the form in question. And surely both logic and order, as well as analogy, will amply justify this method of structure. Surely there is an "underlying principle" herein embodied. What can be more natural, and according to the fitness of things, than that the propositions of the argument—for I am here taking our musical movement to be an argument—should be clearly laid down, thesis and antithesis, in their simplicity, first of all; then, shown in their individual and mutual bearings, ramified; and then the original propositions restated as established? The analogy is not perfect, but is sufficiently close for the purpose. Or, to change the illustration, take a three-act drama. Is it not the business of the first act to bring forward the characters, and, so to speak, state the plot—the situation; then in the

second act to involve these characters, and so to bring about incident upon incident as that the plot shall thicken; and then of the third act to unravel all the entanglements, mete out justice—poetical justice, at least—to those concerned; and terminate all with the sense on the mind that “all’s well that ends well”? Similarly in a three-volume novel. I repeat that no analogy will be perfect between two different arts; but there is at least a sufficient analogy or parallel in the cases supposed to abundantly show the reasonableness of the form in question. At all events there is such a coherence of plan, such a progressive order about this structural form, that most assuredly it can never be permanently abandoned. No form will avail without life; but, just as the human form is adequate for all that man has to do here, and, still more, the “human face divine” never ceases to interest us, though in both these there is absolute uniformity, in conjunction with infinite and indefinable variety; all that is requisite being that it shall be, not a corpse, nor a waxwork figure, but a body and a countenance, animated by the breath of life, and by intelligence and heart; so the structural form of which we are speaking is not at fault if a work cast in that form be square and seem effete. Who can think for a moment that in Sterndale Bennett’s *G minor Symphony* the composer felt trammelled by the limitations of a prescribed structure, from which he would gladly have escaped? Or who does not feel that Mendelssohn’s “*Italian Symphony*” (I speak of the first movement in each case) is not as fresh, notwithstanding its orthodox form, as any similar movement by “Papa” Haydn himself? It may indeed be the case that this particular form may be too rigidly insisted on, almost as though departure from it necessarily entailed formlessness. This undoubtedly would be pedantry of the narrowest, most irritating kind, against which a spirit of rebellion might naturally set in. Not only are there other recognised and accepted structural forms, of which I shall speak immediately; but as the mind of a young writer expands, and independence of thought and feeling asserts itself—as assuredly it will and ought if the mind be anything worth, and not insensately servile—new forms, or at the very least expansions, modifications of, or diversions from these will be discovered, or at least tried, and should be welcomed by all lovers of progress, enlargement, and originality. Only let it be borne in mind that, on the one hand, a work is not to be regarded as without form simply because it is not in this or that more or less conventional shape; and, on the other hand, the departure from old or prescribed forms, if it is to win regard, must not be defiant nor lawless, but still under the inspiring influence of that “enchanted design” originally presupposed. Let each one conduct his argument or tell his story in his own way, but let there be an argument or a story;

let there be a start, a progress, a goal. That may fairly be demanded in a work of art destined for permanency.

I have hinted at the elasticity of this sonata form, as it is called; that is, its amenableness to exceptions, digressions, modifications, or expansions. Allow me to make a brief digression myself, to refer to an instance quoted by Mr. Stephens from one of Mozart's Sonatas in F, in the first movement of which, after the termination of the first part in C, the second part begins again in C with a new subject. (See "Proceedings" for 1879, p. 137.) Some other instances of the same kind were referred to; and in conversation Mr. Stephens has mentioned the instance to me as one which, if not unprecedented, should not be taken as a precedent. Perhaps not; but, after all, it simply presents itself to me thus: the closing in the dominant, prior to the free modulations and workings of the second part, is somewhat like a man journeying to some country retreat which he purposes to make his starting-point for a tour or excursion, for shooting, hunting, fishing, painting, geologising, or the like. But may he not, before he commences such vigorous work, just calmly survey the immediate locality to which he has journeyed? Just such a placid "look round" from—shall I say Dominant Lodge?—does Mozart have in the instance referred to before plunging into the somewhat agitated change of harmonies which immediately follows the quiet, reposeful little subject in C major.

To resume the main current of thought, however. There is another accepted structure of movements, the episodical form; either the simple form, without development or working, of which an example occurs in the middle movement of Beethoven's Sonata in G (Op. 79); or the extended form, which is termed a Rondo. There seems a special instinct of our nature appealed to in this form—the kind of grateful delight with which we revisit old scenes, or with which we meet with old and loved friends after separation. Peculiarly welcome and soothing is the sensation of each return to the subject in a Rondo, unless that return be very clumsily managed, or the subject itself be unattractive. There is less of tension of mind required in listening to this form of movement than in following the working of a movement of continuity, and therefore there seems special fitness in its being a frequent form for the final movement of a Sonata. Each return to the subject is a time of comparative repose; and the episodes, when not taking the form of developments, are, in their turn, like agreeable changes of scene. If, however, we take a *logical* analogy, the Rondo seems to be like an illustration of that kind of argument which, from various standpoints and by different processes, arrives always at the same conclusion. In the movement of continuity the composer takes an initial thought, and works it, and works from it. In the Rondo he works *to* it from a different

point; or if he works it or from it it is with the intention of returning to it in its original simplicity. The episodes in a work of fiction are hardly to be considered as analogous to those in a Rondo. If one of the characters in a novel relates a story, it is avowedly an interruption to the main current of the novel, though it may be ingeniously intended to throw a sidelight on the character of the narrator. But in a Rondo the movement is avowedly made up of subjects and *alternations*, which latter are not interruptions, but integral parts of the whole.

Whether in the fugal form or the sonata form, however, it is not unimportant to observe that not only are there the smaller divisions of subjects and phrases, but also there is the larger outline of the movement, with its threefold division. As in the first movement of a Sonata there is the first part proper, terminating at the double bar; then the second part, or working; and then the return to the original key and subject: so, in a Fugue, there is a structure *and* a structure—the *fugal* structure and the *movement* structure, which I regard as a recognition of the general logical principles which underlie and justify the accepted structure of a movement of continuity. There is, of course, the exposition, in which tonic and dominant alternate; and then, by means of counter-exposition, &c., modulation of the *movement* is effected, leading to a more or less decisive close, marking the end of the first part—first act, if you will—of the movement. This is followed usually, like the double-bar of a sonata movement, by fragmentary or sectional working, with close *stretti* and other devices passing through keys rather than dwelling in any one; so that the processes of comment on and illustration of the material of the first part—the proper work of this second part—and of modulatory onward progress of the movement, are simultaneously carried on; and this contrapuntal progression through the keys leads back to the original key and, as in the sonata movement, to the original subject, *not* in its original mode of presentation, but with some quite different contrapuntal surroundings. This matter has been briefly touched on by myself elsewhere,* and has been more fully and, I need not say, most ably treated by our friend Mr. Higgs in his admirable "Primer." These structural devices are most easily observable perhaps in fugues of some considerable length, such as those of Mendelssohn for the pianoforte, and the larger ones of Bach for the organ.

And this correspondence between the structure of so strict a movement as a fugue and the free style of a sonata movement leads me to recur to my previous remarks about certain of the rules that are usually considered as appertaining

* In my *Text-Book of Music*, chap. xxvi.

specially to fugue-writing being really expressions of abiding principles which should underlie and govern, or at least regulate, all musical composition with any pretensions to structure. Thus, for instance, the well-known rule, that no shorter notes should be introduced in the course of a fugue than in the exposition, is only one outcome of the demand for consistency of character, self-containedness, unity of purpose, which should surely mark any continuous composition; and the almost collateral demand that that character shall be announced at the outset. Sterndale Bennett, I believe, used almost to insist upon the first bar, if not even the first chord, being thus indicative of the character of the piece. But he used to declaim very much against the pernicious abuse of the term "characteristic," so often made the excuse for all sorts of *bizarrie*, whereas it should mean having a character, self-contained, and consistent. I remember casually showing him a MS. of my own, and saying, as I saw that he was reading down to a certain bar, "I think of altering that"; to which his immediate reply was, "Yes, it introduces a new character." Of course, in an episodic movement especially, contrast between the episodes is imperative; but it is a matter of nice judgment and feeling to obtain the happy union of contrast and unity.

Our survey of the principles which underlie structure, and which are exemplified variously in the fugal, the sonata, and the episodic forms, would be very incomplete, however, did we leave out of consideration those movements or structures which come under neither of these heads, which seem to elude classification, and not to be amenable to any of the ordinary *rules* which are given to students for the construction of movements—I mean *fantasias*. I say not the *fantasia form*, not because a fantasia should be formless, but because there is no one form which is even conventionally accepted as *the* form for a fantasia. But it by no means follows that the *principles* which I have touched upon are disregarded in that which, as its very name implies, is a work in which, unrestricted, a composer gives free play to his fancy. We started with "enchanted design" as the first requisite in a coherent composition. There surely may be, and should be, *that* in a fantasia, though the composer does not by any more definite name announce what that design is. Then we spoke of the presentation of an idea under different aspects, and of its development. Assuredly *that* is quite compatible with the fantasia; though often there may be interruption, arrest, diversion, instead of complete and consummated development. Then of contrast, obviously, there may be abundance in a fantasia. The only question that might seem to arise would be about coherence or consecution; and there might seem danger of a fantasia turning out a mere piece of patchwork. Undoubtedly there is that danger, and, in the hands of an

inferior composer, that is precisely what a fantasia usually does turn out, a mere stringing together of odds and ends, without connection or consistency. I am not speaking of the things called fantasias founded on one or more popular melodies simply linked together, and perhaps varied; but of the fantasia proper, of which we have a few noble examples, which exemplify the *free play* of an *orderly mind*. This is requisite to the writing of a true fantasia—that it shall not be the evasion of regulation and principle which comes from the mind being undisciplined, and which shall not affect to be too strong to be bound with fetters. A fantasia such as the noble one in C minor by Mozart is no wilful defiance of principles; it is rather a *drama*, with very varying emotions portrayed, in more or less rapid succession, even as every earnest human life—not fitful, or wayward, nor merely commonplace or purposeless—has its aspirations, its emotions, affections, hopes, disappointments, in sometimes rapid succession and unexpected alternation; but, amidst all these, the life itself has an “enchanted design,” thwarted at times—diverted, but never destroyed. We do not see the purpose of all these vicissitudes until we review the life *as a whole*. And so must a fantasia be viewed. This surely, to a susceptible and receptive mind, is the impression thoroughly left at the noble conclusion, partly recapitulatory, of Mozart's Fantasia just alluded to: it is like the declaration that an earnest life-work has been accomplished; a triumphant summary and review. And this, in the hands of Mozart, was not merely a matter of passionate utterances, but of ordered structure, without a suspicion of erraticism.

Closely connected with this subject is that of Programme-music, as it is called, which seems to me to be simply an alliance for the time being of two arts going hand in hand; the musician saying to the poet—or rather, the poet of sound saying to the poet of words: “You have told your story in *your* way; I will now tell it in *my* way. Yours may be more definite than mine; but, maybe, I shall kindle sympathy, even where you have scarcely won it; at least we will show the sympathy of the two arts, or rather, that art is one, whatever its medium of expression.” But upon this subject I must forbear to enlarge, as well as upon the cognate one of what is, to my thinking, most strangely termed nowadays the poetical basis of music, and the validity of music without some alliance with a sister art to insure that poetical basis; as if, forsooth, music itself were not one of the languages of poetry, according to any definition, if there be any, of what poetry is. But as this is a vexed question—very needlessly, I think—and hardly a *structural* matter at all, and as moreover I am most unwilling to raise or suggest any discussion on a side-issue, I forbear; only just venturing to lay it down most fearlessly that

no structure or form stands in the way of a poetical basis, rightly understood; and that no so-called or alleged poetical basis, or requirement thereof, atones for or necessitates formlessness, chaos, or disregard of the "underlying principles of structure," sometimes, I believe, called the *unities*, such as I have endeavoured, though so imperfectly, to sketch, though these permit of boundless and elastic variation to meet all requirements.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN.—Ladies and gentlemen, the first duty I have to perform is a most pleasurable one, and one which will be in consonance with all your feelings; that is, to give our thanks to Mr. Banister for the paper he has just read. I feel myself that it is one of the most beautiful papers which has ever been read to this Association. I think it has been so clearly and logically drawn up that we cannot but derive very great pleasure and satisfaction from it. If you please, the first thing we will do will be to accord to Mr. Banister our unanimous vote of thanks for his splendid paper.

The vote of thanks having been carried unanimously —

The CHAIRMAN said,—Our next business is to invite discussion on this paper. It has spread over such a very large field that there should be no difficulty in providing subjects for a large number of those who are present this evening. I will not occupy your time myself, as we have so many here who are able to speak on various branches of what Mr. Banister has touched upon; gentlemen who have read papers here before, and those who are provided with theories of their own, will be too pleased, I am sure, to have an opportunity of airing them now. I hope, however, you will not go away with the impression that it will be necessary for all to become such purists as Mr. Banister proposed, or that we shall not be free to set drinking songs, or the part of a villain; for if we do we shall never have another "Rigoletto," "Macbeth," or "Don Giovanni."

Dr. BRIDGE.—I have very little to say except to thank Mr. Banister for one observation he made with regard to a certain subject in which I have taken some little interest, that is with regard to the study of counterpoint. His deprecation of the statements which have been made, that the study of counterpoint checks the imagination, is, I think, very valuable, and I was very glad to hear it. Very often people have said to me, "So-and-so never taught us counterpoint, and does not appear to attach much importance to it." But it has been a very great pleasure to me sometimes to have pupils sent, even after they have been studying for a considerable time, to be instructed

in counterpoint; and I have never had one who really studied it properly who has not in the long run appreciated its many advantages, and admitted that without a course of such study his knowledge would have been incomplete. I am aware that is only a very tiny part of this subject, but, as Mr. Cummings said, there is something for all of us to say. I can only say, with regard to the paper, that I have listened to it with immense pleasure. I know from my own experience, which, as a student, is tolerably recent, that there was no subject on which I had so much difficulty in getting satisfactory information as upon that of form and structure in music. I may say, as a matter of fact, that I hardly knew anything about it even at the time when I thought I could write fugues. I really have learnt a great deal more about form since I have had an opportunity of attending these meetings, and hearing the admirable papers by Mr. Stephens and Mr. Banister, than I knew before; and if the Association does nothing else but provide these papers for its members, and for their friends and pupils, it will render an inestimable service to musical art.

MR. G. A. OSBORNE.—I do not think that Mr. Banister, when he was speaking about those drinking songs, had at all in his mind those admirable songs to which you have alluded, Mr. Chairman; because those songs, and other compositions of that sort, have both the form and structure which constitute a composition such as we should expect from the eminent men who composed them. I have the misfortune, in one respect, to be one of those popular composers who give to the public drawing-room compositions. I certainly have no wish to find fault with those who have taken them up so cordially, and who have enabled me to live so comfortably and happily as I have done; but all I can tell you is that, although I am well known from these little musical effusions—which are thrown out to-day and are forgotten to-morrow, when they have served their purpose—yet I look back with the greatest possible satisfaction to the days when I took lessons from Fétis and Reicha in composition; and, as I have composed trios and sestets and overtures, I could not have done it without having had the study I had in Paris. I have read Mr. Banister's charming book with the greatest possible satisfaction, and there is scarcely a book on counterpoint at the present day that I have not read. At Novello's there are brought out works of the greatest possible usefulness—books by Mr. Higgs, Dr. Bridge, and Dr. Stainer. Look at all those magnificent works coming out day by day—I assure you I have gone over all those works, and read them now in the decline of my life as I read such works when I was a student. If I have any advice to give to a rising artist I would say, If you want to discipline your mind, and if you want to have form, the first thing you should do is to make yourself truly conversant with the

works of the great masters. There was some little truth probably in what Cramer once said to a pupil; he said, "Mind that you learn well how to construct a fugue, and when you have done it, then do not compose one." I do not at all agree with him, still I am giving you the advice of a very eminent man. I will not detain you further; but I really entirely agree with what the Chairman has said; I have scarcely ever heard a paper on music which has given me so much pleasure as the one we have just listened to.

Major CRAWFORD.—Speaking from the point of view of an amateur, I look upon a knowledge of form and, to a certain extent, a knowledge of counterpoint as being as indispensable to a person who studies music as an amateur, whether executant or otherwise, as it is for the professor. Almost all young ladies, and a good many young gentlemen, study music, but in a number of cases they have not the slightest notion of the form in the works which they play—consequently they do not reproduce the spirit of those works. They have, perhaps, a work before them which is an embodiment of all the form and all the science which Mr. Banister has spoken of, and they give us on the piano the notes but not the form. Therefore, I think every amateur, as well as every professional musician, ought to study the principles of form, even where there is no intention to carry them out in composition, otherwise he cannot rightly understand the music which he intends to interpret.

Mr. BARRY.—There is one thing I should like to ask of Mr. Banister. Towards the close of the paper he remarked that works which rested on a poetical basis often degenerated into formlessness. Now, I have had a great many works of this class to analyse, but I have never come across a work which is utterly formless; and I should be much obliged if anybody could put me in the way of finding such a work. They are frequently spoken of, but I have never met with them, and should like to see one.

Mr. HIGGS.—Mr. Banister's remarks have opened up an extremely interesting subject, and his reference to Mr. Ruskin brought to my mind more than one quotation from his exceedingly charming work on the "History of Modern Painters." Some years ago, when the access to books at the British Museum was not quite so rapid as it is at the present time, whilst I was waiting for some books, I chanced to take up a volume of Ruskin's "History of Modern Painters," and I was much struck and interested with something which seems to compare with what we have been told this afternoon. Ruskin, speaking of painting the Alps, says, "Snow is modified by the under forms of the hills in some sort as dress is by the anatomy of the human frame, and as no dress can be well laid on without considering the body underneath, so no Alps can be drawn unless its under form is conceived first and its snow laid on

afterwards." This seems to me somewhat pertinent to the matter of "the underlying principles of musical structure," especially to the matter of counterpoint. I believe the spirit of counterpoint—I do not mean the mere dry rules of counterpoint, but the spirit—will be found just as applicable to modern music when we regard it in that way as it ever was. The very same afternoon it was a singular chance that led me to take up a volume of the *Quarterly Review*, and skim an article on Apsley House and some of the paintings which the Duke of Wellington had acquired. The Duke of Wellington, it was narrated there, was very fond of telling an anecdote of a certain picture by Raphael which had been restored by an eminent French picture-restorer, who, in the act of restoring, removed successive layers from the back of the picture that the painter had painted. The first contained the figures drawn in skeleton, then in a second stage an outline of muscle environed the dry bones, and finally, at a third set-to, the folds and draperies had been superadded, so unsparing of labour was this great master of his art. I fancy we have here an epitome of what has taken place in the history of music as regards its successive stages. In counterpoint we have the skeleton, and in the successive developments of modern harmony we have the muscles and the clothing. I am glad to enjoy an opportunity of personally thanking Mr. Banister for the interesting and valuable paper he has read, and, I may add, for the exceeding kindness with which he has given us this paper.

The CHAIRMAN.—If there are no more remarks to be offered, it is my duty to bring the discussion to a close, once again thanking our friend for the splendid paper he has given us. It has struck me it will be of the greatest use when we come to read it. These papers, I know, get disseminated, not only amongst members of the Society, but they are very largely asked for in other circles; and this is one which I am sure is calculated to do a great deal of good. If it will induce the rising generation of musicians, whether they are to be executants, listeners, or composers, to study something of the underlying principles of form, it will do a great deal of good. It is a most important thing, but it is one which has been very much neglected, as Dr. Bridge told us just now, when he said there was really no work on the subject to which a student could refer a few years ago. We never have had this matter put before us in such a clear way until quite recently. It is the more important perhaps in these days, because this is an age of freedom, when everybody is so free that he does not want to be bound at all. This is an age of freedom in which we try to kick over the traces of every law and principle. It is so in music and in other arts: there is a very great effort to be grotesque or original—to be unlike everybody else. A little anecdote has just occurred to me, which I heard at the Arts'

Club. To the Exhibition held in America some two years ago, in Philadelphia, a painting was sent by an Englishman. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I do not know which, it was hung upside down in the room. A gentleman saw it as he walked along, and suddenly fixed on that picture, and said, "I should like to buy that picture." He went to the secretary, who was sitting in the room, and ascertained the price, and a little wafer was affixed to the painting to show that it was bought. The gentleman who told me the anecdote was over there on behalf of English artists, and walking round the room he saw that this picture was hung upside down, and called attention to it, when it was turned the other way. By and by the gentleman who had bought the picture came back, bringing some of his friends to see his purchase. When he looked at it he said, "You have changed the picture." "Oh, no," said the secretary, "it is the same picture." The gentleman said it was nothing of the kind. The secretary assured him it was the same, only it had been hung upside down. However, the purchaser said he did not like it, and would not have it; it was not the picture that he bought. The picture was returned to England, and the story told in the drawing-room of an eccentric lady, she said, "I should like to see that picture;" and when she saw it she bought it, simply because it had been hung upside down. There is a certain section of people who like things because they are *bizarre*, and do not apparently conform to any rules.

Mr. CHARLES STEPHENS.—It was only an inversion of the subject.

Mr. BANISTER.—First of all, I have to thank the Chairman for the very kind way in which he has spoken, and I have to thank you for the very flattering expressions you have given with regard to my paper. I really have nothing to say; I almost thought it was the same with regard to my paper, that you had nothing to say; and there might have been two explanations of that: either that the paper was so unsuggestive, or a much more flattering one—that it had been exhaustive. I only wish to correct one entire misapprehension on the part of Mr. Barry. What I was saying was not that there are works on a poetical basis which are formless, but rather that I protested against an idea which is sometimes enunciated, and is very prevalent, that to take a poetical basis, as it is termed, necessitates formlessness. I said it is not so. If you take such works as the beautiful "Paradise and the Peri" of Bennett, we see examples in which this poetical basis does not lead to formlessness. I only spoke of a dictum which is often uttered. Perhaps I did not express myself quite clearly. I have only, in conclusion, to say that I have very much enjoyed the preparation of the paper, and I thank you very much for your reception of it.