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The immediate provocation of this homily was not mentioned therein. It was the perusal of the advertisement pages of the *Referee*, affording a bird's-eye view of the extraordinary multiplicity of concerts, orchestral and otherwise, that take place in London on Sundays. No other city can show a parallel quantity, not even the Continental places where the chief concerts of the week take place on Sundays. On Sunday, November 30, 1913, there were given no less than five orchestral concerts (at the Albert Hall, Queen's Hall, Palladium, London Opera House, and Alhambra), and two miscellaneous concerts (at the Queen's Hall and Palladium). On December 7 the list was precisely similar. On December 14 there were again seven concerts, but only four were orchestral. We must not forget, moreover, the 'South Place Sunday Popular Concerts,' which, although so styled, are in reality chamber-music of the highest type by the best artists. The range of the orchestral concerts we have referred to is from Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner down to, say, Hérold's 'Zampa' and the like, with a distinct leaning towards the better end of it. The full realisation of the extent and nature of all this musical activity gave a decided fillip to our patriotic optimism.

The year's great deep thought! Our esteemed contemporary, *The Organist and Choirmaster*, says of 1914:

Certain things are bound to happen; many more things *may* happen; it is impossible to say this or that *may not* happen!

We can only add that certainly uncertain things *will* happen!

THE MUSIC OF THE ANCIENTS.

(RÉSUMÉ OF FOUR LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.)

BY KATHLEEN SCHLESINGER.

There is probably in the whole history of the Arts no such debatable proposition as the one arising out of the music of the Ancients. Did they practise harmony in our sense of the word? Or was this development, which forms the basis of our Western musical system, unknown to them even in its most elementary stages? Writers on music of all nations have been engaged in this controversy for the past three hundred years, more especially as it concerns classic Greece. Distinguished writers and classical scholars of our day, such as Gevaert, Riemann, Louis Laloy, Maurice Emmanuel, Macran, Munro, and, quite recently, Mr. J. Curtis,* have sought to unravel the mysteries of the Greek musical system. Even they are not agreed in deciphering and translating into modern equivalents or approximates the musical notation of the ancient Greeks. The precise nature of the Greek modes, Dorian, Phrygian, and Lydian; the values of the three principal genera of scales—diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic—have not yet been determined on a generally accepted basis.

What is at the root of the mystery that eludes all the culture and science of our age? There are a very few precious relics of Greek music in notation, the most ancient of which is attributed to the 3rd century B.C. A few learned treatises on music by philosophers and mathematicians, such as Aristoxenus, Aristotle, Aristides Quintillianus, Euclid, Ptolemy, &c.,

are extant; passages relating to music abound in the classics. A few musical instruments, chiefly pipes, have survived, and are preserved in our museums; the proportions of these, the diameters of the holes and their respective distances along the bore of the pipes, afford certain indications; the stringed instruments unfortunately remain mute.

Investigations are proceeding, but no definite conclusions have been reached, and no reasonable working hypothesis has yet been offered.

Though fully conscious of deficiencies in scholarly equipment, the writer has recently introduced, in a series of lectures at the British Museum, her conception of the character of Music among the Ancients. This conception has been gained after long years of archæological study and research, and through intuitive rather than logical and rational deductions, but the basic laws upon which it rests find confirmation in the philosophical and esoteric writings of the East; and music evolves from this basis naturally and in complete accordance with what is known of the early religions, rituals, and magic of the Ancient East, as also with such allusions to Music as we find scattered through the Old Testament.

In those early days music had not yet become an art.

Sound, it is well known, is merely the name given to certain vibrations which the ear is capable of registering. If those vibrations are irregular or non-rational the result is noise, but when the vibrations occur periodically, the result is recognised by the ear as pleasant, and we call the result 'a musical sound.' The important factor in the physical basis of music is ratio.

It is generally known that all rich musical sounds are of a compound nature; following the Germans, we call these sounds *clangs*. They consist of a predominating, fundamental, or root note accompanied by a number of simple sounds of different pitch standing to one another in the relation of simple aliquot ratios, that is to say, they are all members of the natural harmonic series, and are due to sectional molecular vibration. These harmonic overtones or upper-partials constitute the physical basis of music. The fundamental or primary note is the one which leaves upon the ear the impression of definite pitch, while the harmonics which develop as a kind of arpeggio above it, are synthesised by the ear, and losing their individuality as notes of definite pitch, they produce the psychological effect known as *timbre* or tone-quality. So completely have these numerical values of the concomitant sounds lost their appeal to the ear, that even the most sensitive ear of the musician, unaided by resonators or other scientific devices, fails to detect more than the first five or six of the series, when notes are played or sung in succession. When listening to these harmonics developed from a bass note played and held down on the pianoforte, with the strings uncovered and the dampers raised, we find that they not only differ in pitch, but that they vary also in cyclic intensity and changing rhythms. In fact they form a natural tone-picture. Moreover these concomitant harmonics differ entirely from the fundamental in tone-quality—they are like ghosts of the independent harmonics that violinists, for instance, produce by well-known means; they not only sound once, like the fundamental in one continuous note which dies away gradually, but are repeated many times.

Many people are entirely unconscious of the ear's power of synthesis, which varies greatly in individuals, and is a comparatively recent acquisition in the history of man.

* *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Sept., 1913. 'Greek Music.'

The writer's conception of the music of the Ancients, in the early days when their primitive instruments had a range of three or four notes only, or even perhaps of seven, is that they heard, all unconscious of their significance, these natural harmonics as an accompaniment to the note they played or sang. That they heard these far more clearly and definitely than we do was due to the fact that their ears had not yet learned to synthesise the natural harmonics, transmuting quantity into quality. Thus, during the age of simplicity, the Ancients were content to sing or play one note and to listen to Nature's tone-picture, as the arpeggio chords on disintegrating led up by a single note to the next chord.

Have we any proof that what science now denominates simple sounds (such as harmonics) are not in themselves aggregates of sounds or vibrations, still finer, but too delicate to be perceived by our ears in their present state of development?

Let us posit that this conception of the music of the Ancients is the right one. What then?

We find ourselves at a time when the art of music was as yet unborn; nevertheless, here was music of great beauty and potency, demanding no skill on the part of the performer. The harmonic overtones, being the result of a natural law, were not determined by man's will, nor were they produced directly through his agency by visible or obvious mechanical means. All this world of beauty sprang into being when initiated by man, but he had no hand in painting the picture, he could not consciously control or modify the colours. By observation he learnt in time to combine voices and instruments in order to enlarge and vary the sounds he heard. These ghost-tones of ethereal beauty, with their rhythms and varying intensities, being beyond man's control, were invested with a certain mystery. Divine origin and power were attributed to them. These overtones may have produced an effect on the soul or spirit of man without first playing on the emotions and intellect as music does at the present day. This would explain Plato's views on the ideal music for his Utopia. Does not this conception explain why innumerable myths sprang up in all lands, ascribing the invention of music and musical instruments to one or other of the gods, and why music formed part of the earliest known rituals in the temples, as for instance, in ancient Chaldea—some 2,500 or more years before our era? This theory would explain the concerts of instruments grouped together by the Ancients without the necessity of crediting them with the knowledge of some form of harmony (since those instruments could not all have played in unison or even in octaves).

What we call timbre is then merely the cumulative result of a *clang* comprising a natural aggregate, characteristic for each voice or instrument, of harmonics within the natural order of the series, in varying intensities and rhythms. Various instruments, whether playing in unison or in polyphony, would at first be used merely for the purpose of varying Nature's music.

It will be seen that this conception of music, while providing for music of subtle beauty, does not attribute to man technical skill, artistic imagination, or the possession of any musical system of scales or modes; and yet it explains the birth of melody, and the gradual development or unfolding of harmony by the unconscious translation of latent harmonics from the realm of the subconscious into that of concrete sound.

Let us now seek confirmation of this new and perhaps debatable theory in the Bible, where the relationship which music bore to life and religion is

at once apparent. Music occupies a very exalted position, and we find a potency ascribed to it that would be quite incomprehensible on any other basis.

The prophets of the Old Testament required music to call down upon them the Spirit of the Lord that they might prophesy. For instance, in II. Kings iii. 15, Elisha said:

But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.

And then Elisha gave forth words of wisdom. In the account of the anointing of Saul by Samuel, I. Sam. x., Samuel said to Saul (vv. 5, 6, 10):

. . . And it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy. And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

In the former case, we may conclude from the very bald statement of facts that the occurrence was not an unusual one, for it evoked no wonder or comment. No special qualification was required of the minstrel: 'Bring me a minstrel,' said Elisha; no qualification of the music, no excellence or beauty, no special chant composed for such occasions, 'when the minstrel played.'

Nevertheless the music had a potency beyond all human potencies. It was not the human factor, the high standard of the art, which placed the prophet in communication with the Divine Spirit, nor is there any hint of inspiration on the part of the minstrel. All that was required was the proper attitude of spirit on the part of the prophet: what the French express so well by *recueillement*.

On another occasion, when the Ark was brought back with great rejoicings and placed in the Temple newly built and dedicated by Solomon, we read in II. Chronicles v. that when the 120 trumpeters and singers *were at one to make one sound*, that the glory of the Lord in the form of a cloud filled the Temple.

Once again it was not the art of the musician or of the composition that constituted the potency, but the vast body of sound, *at one* or in unison, producing the harmonics of the series from one fundamental in immense volume. Imagine the high harmonics which constitute the timbre of the trumpet—from the sixteenth to the sixty-fourth, and probably higher still—reinforced by 120 trumpets, and borne aloft on the diapacon quality of the men's voices. There is in Plato's dialogue, 'Timæus' (p. 80), a passage which indicates that philosophers were beginning to speculate on the nature of the harmonics, and on the composition of musical sounds. He describes the interplay of the harmonics and of the fundamental, the struggle for supremacy, and the delight arising *from the single mixed expression of high and low*.

MUSIC AND MAGIC.

The connection between music and magic in Antiquity affords further corroboration of this new theory to those who can accept provisionally as Truth what was Truth to the Ancients.

The earliest meaning of the word 'magic' was 'wisdom,' a branch of occult philosophy embracing the knowledge of the hidden laws of nature and of the mysterious forces of life.

The 'Magus,' Philosopher or Initiate, could only attain to this wisdom by a supreme and sustained effort of the will by control of the senses, high thinking, meditation, devotion, love of the whole created universe, and the abnegation of self. The use of this knowledge for the control of those forces of nature and of life constituted practical magic. As long as the 'Magus' used his knowledge for beneficent purposes, for the alleviation of suffering, and for the guidance of humanity, he was a high-priest and white magician. As in every other branch of human knowledge, this wisdom brought with it great temptations, self-interest, high places, riches, honours, the favour of kings, which led to a debasement of the high wisdom, sometimes known as grey magic—while the deliberate use of high powers to work evil constituted black magic. Under the term *magician*, applied to one who practised materialised magic, were included astrologers, soothsayers, diviners.

In Chaldea, for instance, in the early days of Sumer and Akkad, we find a priest known as the Psalmist in charge of the Temple services, which were named after the instruments used: *Service for the flute*, *Service for the lyre*, &c. The ritual of practical magic, on the other hand, was administered by a priest in huts in the field, and was of a private nature.

Much interesting matter bearing on this point is to be found in translations of the cuneiform inscriptions. The scope of this article does not admit of quotation. The important factors in music, considered in its relation to magic, which are emphasised in all the ancient religions and philosophies of the East, are the *human voice*, *sound*, as a potency, and *numbers*. These three seem to constitute the key to magic.

The *Logos* or word as instrument of creation is found in almost all the ancient religions. Among the Chaldeans, Bel or Merodach was called the *Word of the Firmament*. In Egypt *Thoth*, who devised the alphabet, and gave mathematics and literature to man, created the universe by his omnipotent word.

Hermes was identified with the *Logos*. All are familiar with the beginning of the Gospel of St. John. The word *Logos* may mean embodied idea, plan, word of command, reason, sound, ratio or proportion. The last two, *sound* and *ratio*, are those connected with magic and music. Pythagoras declared that numbers formed the most potent factor in the creation of the manifested universe, and this idea runs through all the esoteric writings of the East. An incantation culled from a collection of metrical proverbs and old popular Accadian songs, which was intended to influence the growth of the crops, shows that a belief in the potency of numbers was current amongst the people. 'The corn which stands upright shall come to the end of its prosperous growth. *The number* [to produce that] we know it.'

Lenormant, in his 'History of Chaldean Magic,' states that still more powerful than the incantations were conjurations wrought by the power of numbers, and that in this way the supreme secret *Hea* taught to his son Silik-mulu-Khi, when consulted by him in his distress, was always called 'the number.'

To return to the Bible, we find there a verse which refers to this secret knowledge of numbers, in Ecclesiastes vii. 25 :

I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom and the *reason* of things.

This verse (in the Vulgate (*ut quaererem sapientiam et rationem*) is thus given by St. Augustine in his treatise 'De Musica,' iv., cap. iv. :

I have turned in all directions in order to understand, and beholding, to recognise and to seek out wisdom and the *science of numbers*.

What is the mysterious and potent force of numbers? We have seen that timbre or tone-quality is a matter of ratio, as indeed is all sound ; vowels and consonants are also numbers or ratios in selection.

Substances also have their numbers, and have resonance ; chemical formulæ are a proof of this, while indicating the composition of the substance. So many molecules of this element, so many of that, and of a third and fourth, combine to form a compound. The molecule is composed of atoms innumerable, and the atom of ions, positive and negative, in varying combinations. All substances are thus a matter of ratio.

If, therefore, you possessed this occult wisdom, this knowledge of the hidden forces of Nature and of Life, and of the relations of numbers or harmony, you would know first of all the proportions or numbers of all created objects and substances, bodies, and living beings ; the number, in fact, which is the factor of cohesion. Upset the proportion, and the substance disintegrates, a lesson we learn from chemistry. It is number or ratio which is the sole agent of differentiation. It is harmony—Music.

Finally, let us recall the incidents of the fall of the walls of Jericho : The seven priests bearing seven trumpets compassed the city seven times on the seventh day—and the priests blew a long blast with the rams' horns, then the people shouted with a great shout, and the walls of the city fell.

Here the exoteric teaching would appear to emphasise the number seven ; but it was the shout in unison, with the note of the rams' horns as a fundamental, accompanied by the great body of harmonics, that furnished the secret ratio which destroyed the cohesion of the walls.

Church and Organ Music.

THE COMPLEAT ORGANIST.

BY HARVEY GRACE.

(Continued from January number, p. 30.)

IV.—OF CHOIRBOYS (*continued*).

A correspondent asks for advice on teaching boys to read from the staff. As a rule, the reading of choirboys is a matter of ear, sharpness, luck, and imitative faculty. The choirmaster with poorish material and few practices almost invariably leaves it to these agencies, and on the whole boys have a surprising knack of learning new music by these haphazard methods. There is not much inducement for the busy organist systematically to teach his boys to read. He might cheerfully undertake it for a few months if the results were likely to be more than fleeting. But he knows too well that the following year will see him with a large proportion of new boys, and so the regular reading-lesson goes to the wall. Where the time can be spared, it will however be well spent. The teaching of the staff *ab initio* depends so much upon the careful grading of the lessons, that it is quite impossible to deal with it in a single paper. Those who wish to set about it will find the subject exhaustively dealt with in Dr. McNaught's 'The school sight-singing reader,' published in two sixpenny parts, or one shilling complete (Novello). Armed with this, a blackboard, and due pains, one may safely embark on a project that will certainly repay the trouble in cases where a great deal of difficult music has to be got through.