Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 30, No. 554 (Apr. 1, 1889), p. 234

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3360745>

Accessed: 10-11-2015 02:11 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

MR. W. H. HARPER gave his second annual Smoking Concert on the 7th ult., at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street. He was assisted by Messrs. J. Hodges, Lawrence Fryer, Arthur Thompson, J. Gilby, Marshall Jones, and A. Hubbard. Mr. T. E. Gatehouse was the violinist, Mr. W. H. Harper presided at the pianoforte, and recitations were given by Messrs. H. Lloyd and Dacres Smith.

MENDELSSOHN'S Motet "Hear my Prayer" was given after the evening service at St. Matthew's Church, Denmark Hill, on the first Sunday in Lent, being the first of a series of Oratorio performances by the choir. The whole service was well sung under the direction of Mr. J. Warriner, Mus. Bac., T.C.D., Organist of the Church.

A PERFORMANCE of Stainer's sacred Cantata "The Crucifixion" was given by the choir of St. James's Church, Knatchbull Road, Camberwell, on Ash Wednesday evening. The solo portions of the work were divided between Mr. J. S. Holliday, Mr. C. Riches, Mr. Preston, and Mr. W. Bull. Mr. R. Felix Blackbee presided at the organ.

A CONCERT was given at the Cavendish Rooms, on the 20th ult., when an Operetta, entitled "The Village Festival," written and composed by Mr. Tindall, was produced. The soprano and tenor airs were sung by Miss Johnstone and Mr. Tandy in a manner which greatly contributed to the success of the work.

A BALLAD Concert was given in the Lecture Hall, Leytonstone, on Tuesday evening, the 12th ult. Miss Jenny Osborn, Miss Amy Osborn, Miss Ada G. Wickham, Mr. Sadleur Brown, Mr. Walter Jones, Mr. Charles Victor, and Mr. Benjamin Rhodes were the vocalists, and Mr. J. C. Priggen was the pianist.

AFTER a break of some two months, the course of Lectures at the College of Organists was resumed on the 5th ult., when Mr. James Turpin, Mus. Bac., read an able paper on "False Relations," this paper being the second part of his treatment of the subject.

MR. W. A. BARRETT, 39, Angell Road, Brixton, London, asks us to make known that he will be glad to receive contributions of quaint traditional songs, words and music, which are popular in various places, for insertion in his forthcoming work on the subject.

BACH'S "St. Matthew" Passion will be sung at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, on Thursdays, April 4 and 11, at 8 p.m., and on Good Friday, at 7 p.m., with organ and pianoforte accompaniments.

MR. HENRY IRVING has accepted the dedication of a new Cantata, entitled "Shakespeare's Merrie Meeting," written by Robert Ganthony, and composed by Thomas Murby.

MR. RALPH NORRIS, Organist of St. Nicholas, Cole Abbey, concluded a series of Historical Recitals on the 11th ult., showing the growth and development of organ music.

REVIEWS.

The Evolution of the Beautiful in Sound. By Henry Wylde, Mus. Doc., Cantab. [Manchester: Heywood.]

IN the two sections of this ably written treatise the author has enabled us to trace the origin, history, and gradual evolution of the modern series of sounds, from the most ancient periods through the Greek, Ecclesiastical, and Mediæval periods up to the present time, in a manner though learned yet lucid. He shows how that the origin of the beautiful in sound, treated from a metaphysical point of view, is to be found in human nature itself, as an answer to the mental demand of every sense for the true and beautiful. The formulation of this answer into a scientific system, our author contends, must be in harmony with the fundamental laws of nature; hence, musical art to be true and beautiful must accord with mathematical order as well as æsthetic taste. This point is ingeniously defended, though it may not be possible to convince every one by the reasoning advanced. In tracing the progress of art historically he speaks of the Pentatonic system, and affirms that its origin is to be traced primarily to the rude attempts at instrumentation amongst the ancient nations that flourished prior to the Greek era, such as the Hindoos,

Assyrians, Egyptians, Chinese, and other peoples of antiquity. The five-stringed lyre, flute, lute, &c., gave rise to the attempt to formulate that system. Amphion, Orpheus, Terpander, and others elaborated the early stringed lyre, in some instances increasing the number of strings, but leaving no well-defined system of tones behind up to the Pythagorean era. In connection with this, elaborate descriptions and tabular illustrations are given of the Tetrachordal systems, both disjunct and conjunct.

The Pythagorean system is also fully described. Its failure to construct a scale which should unite the true and the beautiful, or mathematical principles with æsthetic taste, is asserted to be attributable to Pythagoras's leading idea of making the musical scale conform to the cosmic order of the heavenly bodies. Pythagoras announced the principle upon which a true musical scale between the notes of the octave should be constructed, but practically failed to exemplify his *theorem*, for reasons which are stated above. Aristoxenes, Eratosthenes, and finally Ptolemy formulated a series of sounds, but they likewise failed to indicate the true and beautiful. Euclid's *Canon*, on which so much is rested by the old theorists, was only a re-statement or exemplification of the Pythagorean system.

Besides these, all the Greek systems are elaborately described. These will be found to be only formulations of the old Tetrachordal systems rather than original methods. The Pythagoreans, although defining the basic idea of a true scale, yet failed to exemplify their principles; and after Pythagoras no further modification of his method was attempted until Ptolemy wrote his "Harmonicorum." Thus the customary reverence for classical authorities, whether as originators or founders of a true series of sounds, is stated to have arisen from conventional but erroneous ideas of what the Greeks affected either as discoverers or formulators. Dr. Wylde thinks that this reverence calls for a complete study of their various systems by way of correcting popular errors, and he proves that melodic progression was the only method that they could accept whilst harmonious combinations of different tones were impossible.

Again, it is shown that the early ecclesiastical scales were nothing more nor less than the Greek systems formulated afresh by Ptolemy. Up to the tenth century the combination of tones into harmony had been impossible for want of a due arrangement of the intervals or pitch of the several notes within the octave.

The invention of Descant first showed the feasibility of combining notes with rude harmony. Canonical institutions followed, and hence the history of music, up to the formation of a musical grammar, became a series of progressive styles, duly described, and culminating in the formation of the modern great scale, and the attempts at modification by the *mean tone* and equal tempered systems.

The specialties of this work, in dealing with the evolution of the beautiful in sound, are found in the thorough and searching analysis of the origin, progress, and ultimate development of musical science, tracing up tonal experiments from their primordial exercise in nature, through all the varieties of systems, ancient and mediæval, until their culmination in modern art. The proofs that are afforded of the indissoluble union between the "true" and the "beautiful," or, in other words, between arbitrary tonal laws and pure æsthetic taste are offered, and the book practically condenses the voluminous mass of theoretical matter contained in Helmholtz's Treatise, in Ellis's Commentaries, and many other costly and diffuse treatises on musical growth and history. Numerous and carefully prepared tabular illustrations of every position assumed are supplied in the text, which is further interspersed with highly suggestive reading matter, and opens up wide avenues for thought, hopes of progress, and elevating views for the illimitable possibilities of music and the future of musical art.

Benedicite, Omnia Opera. Set to music by C. E. Miller, J. W. Elliott, Alfred J. Eyre, and Albert Wood.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE favour with which the restoration of the *Benedicite* in the place of the *Te Deum* in the Morning Service has been received, has called forth a number of settings by various musicians. The latest additions are those by the