Review

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THE Kyrle Choir, under the direction of Mr. F. A. W. Docker, gave a performance of "Elijah" on Wednesday, the 3rd ult., at St. Andrew's, Stockwell, the soloists being Miss Mary Bliss, Miss Robinson, Mr. Vivian Bennett, and Mr. C. Beaumont Barr. Dr. Turpin presided at the organ with his usual skill. Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" was given on the 16th ult., at St. Botolph's, Aldgate. The soloists were Miss Jessie Tillett, Mrs. G. Lloyd Edwardes, Mr. Ager Grover, and Mr. C. Beaumont Barr.

MENDELSSOHN'S "Athalie" filled the first part of the Clapton Choral Society's Concert on the 8th ult., Miss Gertrude Urling, Miss Ada Boys, and Miss Mary Chamberlain being the soloists. The second part was of a miscellaneous character, the conspicuous numbers being Miss Chamberlain's song "Oh, flower so fondly cherished" (Marras), and those numbers in which the orchestra and chorus co-operated. Mr. Jeffreys, the Conductor, kept his forces well in hand throughout.

MR. DANNREUTHER and Professor Niecks have been appointed examiners for the Liszt Scholarship, which will be competed for at the Royal Academy of Music on April 8 next. So rich a prize—seeing that it includes three years' free education at the Royal Academy of Music and a sum of £75 per annum to enable the holder to prosecute his or her studies abroad during two years—ought to attract a large number of competitors.

STERDALE BENNETT'S "The Woman of Samaria" was given on Sunday afternoon, the 21st ult., at St. John's, Waterloo Road, and attracted a very large congregation. The solos were admirably rendered by Master Willoughby, Miss M. Tunncliffe, Messrs. J. Gostick and Frederick Winton; and the Church choir, augmented to sixty voices, sang the choruses. Mr. S. S. Martyn conducted, Mr. Henry J. B. Dart presiding at the organ as usual.

It is worthy of note that the hymn "Sleep on, beloved," sung on the occasion of the funeral of Mr. Spurgeon, was written by Miss Sarah Doudney, who based it on the practice of the early Christians of singing "good-night" in preference to "farewell" on the death of their friends. The hymn, which is now a favourite at many memorial services, has, during the past few days, been erroneously attributed to several poets.

THE annual Meeting of the Governors of the Benevolent Fund of the late Sacred Harmonic Society was held on Tuesday evening, the 23rd ult., in the Library of the Society of Arts, John Street, Adelphi; Mr. E. M. Mannering, the President, in the chair. The report stated that the total expenditure for the year 1891 was £156 15s. 6d., of which sum £151 5s. was expended in relief by monthly pensions to some, and special donations to others.

THE sacred Cantata, entitled "The Epiphany," by Dr. H. J. Edwards, of Barnstaple, was rendered in the fine new Parish Church at Hornsey on January 29. The choir, which numbers over fifty voices, sang very creditably, and the organ accompaniments were supplied by Mr. H. J. Gresham. The soprano solos were excellently sung by Master Porter. Mr. H. J. Baker conducted.

ON the 2nd ult. Mendelssohn's "Lauda Sion" was given at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Tottenham, with Master Porter and Messrs. Grover, Parkin, and Bayley as soloists; Mr. Goebel, leader; and Mr. J. H. Judd, Organist. The choir gave a very satisfactory rendering of the work, under the direction of the Organist and Choir-master of the Church, Mr. C. W. Offord.

THE second of two Lectures on Richard Wagner's "The Art-work of the Future" will be given by Mr. W. Ashton Ellis, at Trinity College, Mandeville Place, on the 30th inst., at 8 p.m. The first Lecture was given on the 24th ult., too late for notice in our present issue. The Lectures are given on behalf of the Wagner Society.

THE Wandsworth Choral and Orchestral Society, started in January this year, bids fair to distinguish itself as a local musical institution. Nearly 150 members have already been enrolled, the number comprising a large section of the organists and choirtrainers of the district. Mr. G. A. Higgs is the Conductor.

REVIEWS.

Gio. Paolo Maggini: His Life and Work. Compiled and edited from material collected and contributed by William Ebsworth Hill, and his sons William, Arthur, and Alfred Hill, by Margaret L. Huggins.

[W. E. Hill and Sons; Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE series of interesting publications undertaken by Messrs. Hill with the view of throwing light upon the history of the violin and its makers, has reached its third number in the valuable monograph on Maggini now under consideration, which has been edited with such admirable tact and discretion by Mrs. Huggins. We use the term "valuable" advisedly, for the result of the researches initiated and directed by Messrs. Hill at Brescia and elsewhere has been to put before the public a considerable mass of authentic documentary evidence on several points which had hitherto remained in obscurity. To take a few of these, first we may begin by mentioning that the examination of the Brescian archives has placed beyond a doubt what previously rested on circumstantial evidence—the relationship of Maggini to Gaspara da Salò. Direct proof is now forthcoming in the shape of a legal document dated 1602, and signed by both parties, in which Maggini states himself to be the apprentice (*garzone*) of Signor Gasparo. Another question satisfactorily cleared up is the date of his death. It was supposed by some that he lived to be an old man, whereas a schedule presented by his son in the year 1632 alludes to him as already deceased. Thirdly, that Pietro Santo Maggini, also a maker of violins, and hitherto generally believed to have been his son, is conclusively proved by the registers of the church of S. Agatha not to have occupied this relationship.

The account of Maggini's life and work is appropriately prefaced by a brief historical sketch of Brescia. It was a town rich in historical associations. Pausanias mentions, curiously enough, that one of the kings of the Ligures—the first people known as inhabiting this "earthly paradise" (as an Italian writer calls it)—was famed for his skill in music. In the Middle Ages its history was chequered by intestine feud and foreign invasion, but it was always a home of the arts and sciences, and many famous Italians claimed it as their birthplace. As early as the middle of the fifteenth century it was celebrated for its musical instrument makers, a table of whom is given on page 27.

The particular branch of the Maggini family to which Gio. Paolo belonged came from Botticino, and they appear to have been people of some substance, for the father of the subject of this monograph, on settling in Brescia, followed no occupation. The facts of Gio. Paolo Maggini's life are sparse, but fairly clear. He was still an apprentice of Gasparo da Salò at the age of twenty-one. He married in 1615, and settled in a house now occupied by a saddler named Zanetti, where he plied his trade as a "Maestro di violini," assisted by a certain Jacobo de Lafranchini. Income tax returns of the years 1617 and 1626 give information as to the success which attended his efforts, and in 1632, as stated above, he was already dead.

The great services rendered by Maggini in the development of violin making are treated at considerable length in these pages. Neither Gasparo da Salò nor Maggini can be considered as the inventor of the violin, though no specimens of that instrument earlier than those of Gasparo's are known. But it is contended by the authors of this treatise, with a great show of probability, that he did more than anyone else of his time for the differentiation of the violin from the viol and for the creation of the model which in its essentials is that of to-day. Although he left no pupils and created no school, he gave rise to an extraordinary amount of copying, legitimate and the reverse. Both Andrea Guarneri and Antonio Stradivari, in the dimensions of their violas, closely followed Maggini's model; while in the case of violins, comparative tables of measurement furnish very strong evidence for the belief that the two greatest makers, Stradivari and Giuseppe Guarneri, were largely indebted to their Brescian forerunner. This opens up the "Long Strad" question, on which there is a difference of opinion. The Messrs. Hill are firm believers in

the reality of that type, as proved by expert measurement, and they have no hesitation in pronouncing their firm conviction, based on comparative tables of the dimensions of pre-1690 Stradivaris, of "Long Strads," and of Magginis (given in the Appendix of this volume), that Stradivari's "Long Strads" were inspired by Maggini. But his services to the art of violin construction do not end here. The Dumas-Maggini set afford tangible proof of the remarkable forethought exhibited by him in the construction of violas and violoncellos as well. His instincts were sounder than those of Amati and Stradivari as regards the placing of the sound-holes and outside proportions. In fine, his contributions to the development of violins, violas, and violoncellos are summarized as follows: 1. Initiated the model of the modern violin; 2. Among the first to use corner-blocks and linings as we know them; 3. Among the first to use the straight way of the grain for belly wood; 4. Initiated increased system and accuracy in thicknesses; 5. Initiated the modern viola; 6. Initiated the modern violoncello. It remains to be added that the volume is beautifully illustrated with three coloured plates, drawn by Mr. Alfred Slocombe, of the Dumas-Maggini violin; admirable cuts of his devices, photogravures of violin heads and of his house in Brescia, and a reproduction of a print representing Brescia in the seventeenth century. It is interesting to learn that sufficient material has been collected by Messrs. Hill for a further volume on the other makers of the Brescian school.

Unison Chants for the Psalter. Edited by the Rev. Canon Sir F. A. G. Ouseley and Edwin George Monk.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

AMONG the several vast improvements which have been made generally in the musical rendering of the English Church Service, within living memory, perhaps the most conspicuous is the change in the mode of delivering the Psalms. The wretched alternation of parson and clerk, or "duet service" as it used to be called, is virtually a thing of the past, and chanting, either Anglican or Gregorian, is employed wherever practicable. But there must ever be many places in which the musical resources do not admit of full harmony, and, even where they do, a good bold unison at times is very effective, if only by way of contrast, and this collection of over three hundred single chants cannot fail to be extensively serviceable. The collection was originally commenced under the joint-editorship of Sir Frederick Ouseley and Dr. Monk, but, owing to the decease of the former, the chief part of the work has been carried out by Dr. Monk who has laboured so long and zealously in the cause of ecclesiastical music. Two editions are before us, the larger with the harmonies in full for the use of the organist, and the smaller with the melodies only for the choir and congregation. The organ edition gives, in many cases, two or more variations in harmony to each chant, and suggests the different verses of the Psalms and Canticles in which they should be employed. In their interesting preface the editors state that they "still maintain their old convictions as to the superiority of Single Anglican Chants over all other forms." As to this, there may be difference of opinion; but there can be none as to the argument that correct unison is better than bad harmony. What choir-master who has to do with voluntary singers whose attendance is irregular has not had his soul vexed by the spectacle confronting him sometimes of, say, a dozen trebles, two altos, no tenor, and four basses? It is to such, chiefly, that we heartily commend this collection.

FOREIGN NOTES.

THE birth centenary of Rossini was to be celebrated on the 29th ult. at the Paris Opéra by the performance of "Guillaume Tell." The work has been most carefully remounted and rehearsed with an excellent cast, even the minor parts being represented by first-rate artists. Rossini's *chef d'œuvre* was first produced at the Institution in question on August 3, 1829, the principal artists taking part in the memorable representation being Adolphe Nourrit (*Arnold*), Dabadie (*Tell*), Madame Damoreau-Cinti (*Mathilde*), and Mdlle. Mori (*Hedwig*). The Tyrolienne, danced on that occasion by M. Paul, Mesdames Taglioni and Montessu, was likewise to be restored in this commemorative performance.

The revival of M. Lalo's opera "Le Roi d'Ys" was announced to take place at the Paris Opéra Comique on the 22nd ult., the work having been in preparation at that Institution for some time past.

The Paris Eden Theatre has been purchased by a syndicate, and after having been entirely rebuilt is to be opened as a new Théâtre Lyrique, when it is hoped some of the glories of its predecessor of that name may be revived. M. Detroyat, a well-known Paris journalist, is at the head of the undertaking.

Another successful pantomimic piece, "La Statue du Commandeur," by MM. Eudel and Mangin, was brought out on January 31, at the Paris Théâtre d'Application. The music is from the pen of M. David, the piece being a witty travesty of Molière's "Don Juan." It was excellently interpreted by M. Clerget, M. Chameroy, and Mesdames Ferial and Litini.

M. Reyer's opera "Salammbô," first produced some time since at the Brussels Théâtre de la Monnaie, is in course of active preparation at the Paris Grand Opéra, the composer having made some important alterations in the score of the work. There are also being mounted at the institution in question the ballet "Sylvia," with the graceful music of the late Léo Delibes, as well as a new ballet, "Maladetta," by MM. Gailhard and Paul Vidal.

A highly successful Concert was given, on the 13th ult., by the Belgian Musical Artists' Society, at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, the programme consisting entirely of compositions by Mdlle. Augusta Holmès. The Conductor was M. Barwolf, and the gifted lady composer, who was present, received a perfect ovation on the part of an enthusiastic audience.

Auber's "La Muette de Portici," which has recently been most successfully revived in several Italian towns, has just been received with remarkable enthusiasm also at the National Hungarian Theatre of Budapest, with Madame Markus as the *Fenella*, and the tenor Runcio as *Masaniello*. The opera was first produced at the Paris Opéra in 1828, and has therefore stood the test of time well, so far.

Wagner's "Die Meistersinger" is to be brought out at the Paris Grand Opéra next season, with M. Lasalle as *Hans Sachs*, M. Van Dyck as *Walther*, Madame Cara as *Eva*, and M. Renaud as *Beckmesser*.

Liszt's "Prometheus" was announced to be performed on the 22nd ult., by the Berlin Philharmonie Choir, under the direction of Herr Siegfried Ochs. The interesting work was last produced here in 1864, under Von Bülow's direction.

The Heckmann Quartet has found a new leader in Herr Carl Halir, the eminent Weimar violinist.

In the course of this year's Bayreuth Festival performances, from July 21 to August 21 inclusive, there will be eight representations of "Parsifal," and four each of "Tannhäuser," "Tristan und Isolde," and "Die Meistersinger." Among the artists of the Berlin Opera, Mesdames Sucher, Staudigl, and Herzog have been again engaged by Frau Cosima Wagner.

An excellent performance of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde" is reported from Weimar, where the difficult and exacting work was recently produced for the first time by members of the *personnel* of the Hof-Theater only. Madame Naumann-Gungl and Herr Teller sang the titular parts, and Herr Richard Strauss conducted.

Frau Ingeborg von Bronsart's opera, "Hiarne," has met with an enthusiastic reception on its first performance last month at the Royal Opera at Hanover.

The performances in connection with this year's Music-Festival of the Lower Rhine, at Cologne, are to include the following works—viz., on the first day: Weber's "Euryanthe" Overture, Mendelssohn's 114th Psalm, Brahms's "Triumphlied," excerpts from the "Götterdämmerung," Schumann's D minor Symphony, and Beethoven's Ninth; on the second day: Cherubini's "Anacreon" Overture, Verdi's Requiem, and Berlioz's "Roméo et Juliette" Symphony. On the third day there will be, as usual, a miscellaneous programme. Dr. Wüllner will be the Conductor.

Albert Niemann, the veteran Wagner-tenor, appeared once more, at a Berlin Wagner Concert last month, in the part of *Siegfried*, in "Die Walküre," with Frau Sucher as the *Sieglinde*. Niemann's interpretation of *Siegfried* has