The Y. M. C. A. Music Section

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steadily growing store of works of this kind. The tunes treated are Reinagle's 'St. Peter,' 'Darwell's 148th,' and a melody by Tallis, the last-named an austere beautiful theme that grows on one. 'St. Peter' is given the simplest treatment of the three. Dr. Darke is content to use the plan made familiar to us by Bach and others of the older German composers, and in our own day by Parry. The music is quiet, only moderately difficult, and of a character that fits it for use before as well as after a service. Darwell's rousing tune comes in for more extended and ambitious treatment, and is called a 'Chorale Fantasia.' It opens with three pages of alternating big chords, *recitativo*, manual passages, and pedal solos—a method to which the organ lends itself specially well, though perhaps some of us feel there is a lack of freshness about it to-day. This section is followed by an *Andante Tranquillo* in 12-8, with some graceful and flowing writing over a long tonic pedal which eventually moves and delivers the third line of the tune. Some excellent canonic imitation is seen in the next section (*più mosso*), which gradually works up to the final *largamente*, an imposing page and a half. The movement is difficult, and can make its full effect only on an organ of ample resource. It should be a popular recital number.

The prelude on the Tallis theme is less popular in style, but by far the most original and beautiful of the set. The spirit of the time has been admirably caught, and the result is an atmosphere of other-worldliness that is all too rarely met with. The harmony is chiefly diatonic, with discords freely used, and the treatment generally is more modern in style than is the case with the companion preludes. The registration is perhaps unnecessarily restless in the opening two pages. An effective alternative would be the restriction of the Great organ to the delivery of the melody in the tenor, everything else being played on the Swell, both hands coming on to the Great at line 4 of page 14. This beautiful prelude, though suitable for recital purposes, may most fittingly be used for a Voluntary on any solemn occasion. It makes a perfect piece for memorial services.

Part 8 of Ernest Austin's tone-poem, 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' is now published (J. H. Larway). Like its predecessors, it is an elaborate piece of programme music, highly picturesque, and well-written for the instrument, though the idiom is not that of conventional organ music. This part deals luridly with the Pilgrim's adventures in Vanity Fair.

Frank Bridge's contributions to the repertory of the organ are on the small side, but they are invariably original and effective. His set of Three Pieces (Winthrop Rogers) should be popular. They consist of an Allegretto grazioso, suggestive of a violin solo, an Allegro Commodo (a very quaint and ingenious little *Ostinato*), and a rousing Allegro Marziale. They are only moderately difficult. Apparently Mr. Bridge has been overhauling his manuscripts, for these pieces are dated 1905. The comparative simplicity of style will not be unwelcome to most players. Mr. Bridge shows here, as before, a feeling for the organ unexpected in one whose chief successes have been gained as a writer for strings.

CHORAL MUSIC

National songs, arranged for S.A.T.B., are among the most popular items at choral concerts. A good addition to the list is E. T. Sweeting's setting of 'The Deil's awa' wi' the Exciseman.' The composer has wisely done nothing to interrupt the irresistible 'go' of the well-known air, and the result is a part-song full of humour and point. The harmony is simple and the parts easy, but the setting provides a good test for pace and freedom.

Much the same qualities are called for in Reginald Somerville's 'Who rides for the King,' a part-song for T.T.B.B., the words by Harold Boulton. The headlong galloping energy is very effective.

Female voices of good technique will welcome 'The Rhine-maidens,' an arrangement by W. McNaught of music from 'Das Rheingold' and 'Götterdämmerung,' the English words by W. Rothery. The work is for s.s.c., and would serve well as a test-piece for advanced choirs.

Much slighter in texture, but calling for neat and spirited performance, is Harold Rhodes's 'The Voice of Spring,' a

two-part setting of a poem by Mrs. Hemans. As Mr. Rhodes writes for trebles only, the numerous female-voice choirs deficient in altos will find the song particularly useful. The music is very melodious and attractive, and the well-written and characteristic pianoforte part adds much to the effect. These four part-songs are published by Novello.

Letters to the Editor

THE Y.M.C.A. MUSIC SECTION

SIR,—At the moment when the Music Section of the Y.M.C.A. is not only undergoing reconstruction, but entering upon an entirely new phase of its activities, we crave leave to make use of your paper as medium for a short account of its work in the past. We venture to do this in view of your constant sympathy with its aims and the publicity you have always been ready to give to its appeals, and for which we desire to express our most grateful thanks.

Much has been accomplished since the Editors of the musical Press, called together by Mr. Percy Scholes, inaugurated the Y.M.C.A. Musicians' Gift to provide additional musical facilities for the members of H.M. Forces in Y.M.C.A. Huts and centres at home and abroad. Over 202,000 pieces of music and books on music and over 2,500 instruments have been despatched to Y.M.C.A. centres in every theatre of war; complete music libraries have been equipped at Rouen, Havre, Boulogne, Salonica, &c.; gifts of music and instruments have been freely distributed to the camps at home and in France, North and South Russia, Salonica, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, India, Constantinople, &c., and the Internment camps in Germany and at The Hague.

Despite the coming of peace much is still being done abroad, notably in Germany, where Y.M.C.A. Headquarters at Cologne and many other centres of the Rhine Army have been musically equipped. All this has been made possible through the generosity of the public, who responded so whole-heartedly to the appeal for gifts of money, music, and instruments, and to whom the Music Section acknowledges its deep debt of gratitude. The subjoined balance-sheet shows to what use the money collected for the Musicians' Gift has been put, and it will be seen that there is still a small sum in hand to initiate future activities.

Mr. Percy Scholes has retired from the position of Secretary of the Music Section, though still connected with it in an advisory capacity. Major J. T. Bavin has been appointed his successor, and has undertaken to carry on the splendid work. Major Bavin comes to the task with close on thirty years' experience of educational musical work at Berkhamsted School, and four years' military service, in the course of which he occupied the responsible posts of Adjutant, second in Command, and Education Officer in his Brigade and Division, and was mentioned for good work in 1917.

Major Bavin is as full of keenness and enthusiasm as was Mr. Scholes when he inaugurated the Music Section, and realises that although so much has been done, much more still remains to accomplish. In its reconstruction for peacetime work the Y.M.C.A. Music Section sets out to provide for the training of disabled ex-service men who are musically gifted, for the advancement of musical education by means of lectures, recitals, and concerts, and the establishment of music-study circles, male-voice choirs, chamber music societies, orchestras, brass bands, &c. Its aim is in fact the furtherance, through the Y.M.C.A., of anything that will help to supplement and enhance existing local effort and bring music into the national life. With this end in view it once more confidently appeals to all musicians and music-lovers for support—firstly, by asking them to raise funds by means of concerts and organ recitals; secondly, by further gifts of music, and books on musical subjects and instruments; thirdly, by local aid in helping choirs, &c.

The Music Section has the advantage of the support of Dr. Percy C. Buck, Prof. H. Walford Davies, Mr. A. A. Fitzsimmons, Mr. Harvey Grace, Mr. J. T. Lightwood, Mr. Sydney H. Nicholson, Mr. Percy A. Scholes, Mrs. Z. F. Willis, Miss P. M. Walters, and the Rev. Basil Yeaxlee, on its committee.

Gifts of money, music books, and instruments, and offers of service should be sent to Major J. T. Bavin, at the Y.M.C.A. Music Section, Shakespeare Hut, Gower Street, London, W.C. 1.—Yours, &c.,

(Signed) J. D. McCLURE

(Chairman Y.M.C.A. Music Section Committee).

THE Y.M.C.A. MUSICIANS' APPEAL FUND.

Receipts and payments Account for period from 1st January, 1918, to 30th September, 1919.

To Subscriptions:				
.. Donations	£503	18	6	£ s. d.
.. Concert Receipts	3,472	8	8	
.. Sale of Goods				3,976 7 2
				337 12 3
				£4,313 19 5
By Y.M.C.A. General Fund				
.. Stationery, Printing, and Advertising	2,900	0	0	
.. Salaries... ..	419	6	5	
.. Concert taxes	£41	7	9	187 5 0
.. Meeting expenses				57 18 3
.. Purchase of Goods				40 19 3
.. Petty cash				11 5 1
.. General expenses				2 11 6
.. Cash at bank				694 13 11
				£4,313 19 5

Y.M.C.A. GENERAL FUND.

To Payments made by Music Section	£2,900	0	0
By Payments made by Headquarters Y.M.C.A. on behalf of Music Section... ..	2,616	16	9
.. Balance held by Council on behalf of Music Section	283	3	3
	£2,900	0	0

Prepared from the books and accounts of the Musicians' Appeal Fund by

(Signed) W. A. HENDERSON & CO.,

Chartered Accountants,

18th November, 1919.

29, Gracechurch Street, E.C. 3.

(Signed) J. T. LIGHTWOOD (Chairman), H. WALFORD DAVIES (Treasurer), PERCY A. SCHOLES (Secretary).

PROMENADE CONCERT PROGRAMMES

SIR,—I am writing to suggest that the *Musical Times* should open its columns to a really exhaustive interchange of ideas on the subject of Promenade Concert Programmes, present and future, and I should like to have the privilege of opening this discussion by saying one or two things about the now famous Wagner nights. Perhaps someone will then have something to say about the best way to run a Russian night, and so on.

The really amusing thing about Wagner's music in this country is that after hundreds of Wagner concerts the general public knows much less about Wagner than it does of any other first-class composer. The really disgraceful thing is that the high-priests of music, well aware of the ignorance of the public, are constantly taking liberties with Wagner that they would not dare to take with any other composer. The reason for the really amusing thing is that the tit-bits of Wagner that are constantly being dished-up represent about three per cent. of his output, whilst Beethoven can at least claim to have from thirty to forty per cent. of his compositions performed on his nights. It is idle to argue that whereas Beethoven was a concert-composer, Wagner was not. If that is the case, let's scrap the Wagner concerts, such as they are at present, altogether, for they are useless and often lead otherwise virtuous people to transgress. Witness the following: a friend of mine was giving a performance on the pianoforte of the second Act of 'Tristan.' At the close of the love duet, where the music which subsequently figures in the 'Liebestod' is first heard, one of the audience said in awed tones to two children: 'Now she's slowly dying!'

Here is an example of the really disgraceful thing: Turn up the analytical notes of an excerpt known as 'Wotan's Spear and the Sleeping Brynhilda,' where you will find things like this: 'The music now skips the Wanderer's invocation and Erda's reply,' &c., &c. Further on, 'We are soon at the change of tempo . . . where the heroine greets heaven and earth, but at her first words . . . there is a cut,' &c., &c. Imagine anyone treating a Brahms Symphony in this way. If the public really knew the third Act of 'Siegfried' it would not tolerate this brutal burlesque of one of Wagner's finest inspirations. If the public knew the second Act of 'Siegfried' it would not tolerate that brainless pot-pourri, 'Siegfried and the Forest Dragon,' in which the whole Act is bovrilized to about twenty minutes. If the public knew the second Act of 'Parsifal' it would howl with derision at the orchestral ending which someone has thought fit to tack on to Kundry's Narration. Now the obvious solution of all this is to give the public a chance of getting to know the essential music of Wagner by offering concert-performances of whole Acts at a time. There should be no difficulty about getting singers, as our rising operatic artists would be pleased to take part in performances—at a modest fee—that would be of the greatest value to them. Far more difficult would be the question of housing the singers, for if there is a *sine qua non* of a Wagner concert-performance it is that the singers must be out of sight. The orchestra does not matter, as it represents more or less the medium between the drama and the audience. But we cannot have the varied fauna of Northern Mythology (do I unconsciously borrow from my friend, Mr. Newman?) striking 'Thus spake Elijah' attitudes on the platform. They must love, hate, and fight in the organ loft.

Even if the question of getting singers did not prove feasible, a lot could be done to familiarise the public with Wagner's music by giving performances of the orchestral tissue only. 'Rheingold,' 'Walküre,' the first two Acts of 'Siegfried,' and parts of 'Parsifal' might sound a bit thin in this way. Not so the rest of the 'Ring' or 'Tristan' or 'Meistersinger.' I have heard innumerable performances of Acts on the pianoforte from the latter, and can vouch for the charm of this kind of thing. People would come from all over the country, and the Promenade at Queen's Hall would present the unusual sight of a vast crowd bent over vocal scores, devouring the music with its ears and the story with its eyes. It would not be the same crowd that has filled Queen's Hall on Monday nights for the last twenty-five years; but it would be as big—and much more intelligent. Above all, this sort of performance would breed an insatiable demand for frequent operatic performances of Wagner's later works, in which we are so disgracefully lacking at present. This alone would justify the venture. But would it be a venture? I know any number of people who consistently refuse to go and hear what they call Wagner pot-pourris, but who would go miles to hear the orchestral music accompanying, say, one Act of 'Götterdämmerung.' One thing remains to be said in this connection. The Queen's Hall Orchestra—as at present constituted—is too small to do justice to the music of Wagner's later operas. A recent performance of 'Waldweben' by the London Symphony Orchestra proved this conclusively—if, indeed, any proof was needed. This must certainly be remedied.

A word in conclusion: these suggestions will encounter most opposition from those who will urge lack of financial means and insufficient time for rehearsals. The former is hardly a serious objection, and as for the latter, let the performances themselves be in the nature of rehearsals without a boiled shirt in the landscape. Let Sir Henry Wood make his orchestra repeat over and over again in public difficult and badly-played passages. A really musical audience will be enchanted, and will benefit enormously by an occasional rough edge of this kind.

Mr. Editor, do not stop this discussion just when it is getting heated and instructive; or when some giant of withering invective kneels on the prostrate form of his 'young friend' and deftly deals the Johnson knock-out.—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT E. LORENZ.

14, Craven Hill, W.-2,
November, 1919.