The Unimportance of Incorrect Placing of the Voice

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'A CORELLI FORGERY'

SIR,—The work published at Antwerp in 1692 as Corelli's Opera Quarta, which Mr. F. T. Arnold showed in his paper at the Musical Association last April (summarized in last month's *Musical Times*) to have had nothing to do with Corelli, presents a very interesting bibliographical puzzle. The earliest editions known of Corelli's five works are, according to Eitner, as follows: Op. 1, Rome, 1683; Op. 2, Rome, 1685; Op. 3, Modena, 1689; Op. 4, Bologna, 1694; and Op. 5, Rome, 1700. Aertssens, the Antwerp publisher, reissued Op. 1 in 1688 and Op. 2 in 1689, and in 1692 published as Op. 4 'Suonate da Camera, a tre . . . Da Arcangelo Corelli . . . Prima Parte, Nuovamente Ristampata.' The work is in separate part-books, each of which contains an address to the 'Benigno Lettore,' signed 'A. Corelli' (*inter alia*), promising the publication of a second part of 'questa mia Opera Quarta.' Mr. Arnold has shown that this Antwerp publication has nothing to do with Corelli, whose genuine Op. 4 was first published two years later, nor is it the Sonate da Chiesa, Op. 3, first published in 1689. Mr. Arnold asks: 'Who wrote the Antwerp Sonatas?' Though unfortunately, at present, it is impossible to give exact proof, I think there can be no doubt that they are the composition of G. B. Vitali (1644-1692). Each sonata consists of a string of short dance-tunes, the names of some of which are curious and uncommon. 'Neando' and 'Borea' occur in some, as well as Gavottes, Sarabands, Minuets, Jigs, &c., and all these are found in Vitali's 'Balletti' Op. 3 (1667), Op. 4 (1668), Op. 11 (1684), Op. 12 (1685), and probably in others of his works, which I have not seen. The largest collection of Vitali's music is that in the Estensian Library at Modena, and this has been kindly examined for me by Prof. Fava, to whom I sent the themes of the spurious Corelli sonatas. Prof. Fava has looked at all Vitali's printed works, from Op. 1 to Op. 14 (the last he published in 1692), with the exception of Op. 2 and of Op. 10, but has not identified any of them with the Antwerp Corelli. Vitali's Op. 2 is in the Royal College of Music, and has been examined unsuccessfully; but Op. 10 seems to have completely disappeared, and even its name is unknown, though it must have been published about 1683 or 1684, probably at Modena. Whether this is the original of the Antwerp Sonatas, or whether they are an unpublished work of Vitali's, passed off after his death as the composition of Corelli, it is unfortunately impossible to decide. But a comparison of the spurious sonatas with the accessible works of Vitali cannot, I think, fail to convince a musician that they are the composition of the Modenese master. My own theory is that Aertssens employed someone in Italy to send him works which he pirated at Antwerp, and that the 1692 sonatas were thus palmed off on him as by Corelli. The mistake or fraud must evidently have been discovered, for an edition of the genuine Op. 4 is recorded by Goovaerts as having been published by Aertssens at Antwerp in 1695.—Yours, &c.,

W. BARCLAY SQUIRE.

14, Albert Place, W. 8.

'THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT PLACING OF THE VOICE': AN INVITATION

SIR,—We shall be very interested to know who Mr. A. Keay is, who, like a bolt from the blue arrives among us, after, as he states, 'an absence abroad of quite thirty years.' Does he expect to be taken seriously, on the strength (or the weakness) of the two letters he has written to the *Musical Times*? Take, for instance, the third paragraph in the September edition—what is it all about? And what is this 'classical method' of voice production which is 'capable of surmounting any difficulties of language, &c.'? Does the reading of paragraph five bring us any fresh knowledge? Paragraph six only bears out what we are showing the public. Paragraph seven—Oh! No, Mr. Keay! it's naughtiness of you. How can one be expected to make you understand? Mr. Keay states: 'Mr. Tree ignores control of breath . . .—come and listen to one of his lectures, and read his little book 'How to acquire ease, &c.' The letter says, 'probably Mr. Tree knows Mr. Landon Ronald,' of whom a friend has spoken so highly to Mr. Keay. The

writer has complete confidence in the knowledge and judgment of Mr. Ronald on vocal matters. He was invited by Mr. Ronald to join the Guildhall School of Music as a professor some year or so ago, but was unable to accept the compliment.

Mr. Tree much regrets that he cannot do as Mr. Keay suggests as to teaching 'a rejected candidate.' He is a busy man. Paragraph nine: Surely there should be little difficulty in training such a paragon—how dare any school reject such!

In June last Mr. Keay did not know who the writer was, and he now asks 'That Mr. Tree prove that he has a decided claim to be reckoned with seriously.' Evidently his identity is still unknown, so let it be stated that 'he is a young gentlemen what has been singing' to the British public for the past thirty years, and on the strength of that has, perhaps, some remote claim 'to be taken seriously.' Any knowledge he has gained by the short experience he is now giving to the public. No! Mr. Keay, we have been listening to 'camouflage' talk for too many years, hence the chaos of the 'physical' voice to-day, and the very small number who can sing, *with ease*, at the age of sixty years.

Now let us have Mr. Keay's knowledge of the matter, and allow the writer to assure him that we shall be honestly thankful for any good which may accrue. If Mr. Keay's voice is as he states, 'as fresh now as it was at the end of the 'eighties' ('in the most strict conformity to the classical method,' as he puts it), I can assure him that he will be conferring a tremendous benefit on the vocal world if, instead of writing about it, he will give a vocal lecture, or lectures, and personally illustrate, by a dozen or more songs, that 'ease' which he professes.

Mr. Tree will, engagements permitting, be a keenly interested and receptive listener, eager to grasp any fresh knowledge on vocal matters. The vocal world will certainly eagerly await the date of Mr. Keay's first vocal lecture.—Yours, &c.,

CHARLES TREE.

14, Courtfield Gardens,
Kensington, S.W. 5.THE UNIMPORTANCE OF INCORRECT
PLACING OF THE VOICE

SIR,—I make no apology for the above title. It does not matter a demisemiquaver to me whether the voice is placed under the left arm-pit or over the right shoulder-blade. My contention is that it is the placing of the *individual*, not the voice, that matters.

On the subject of voice-production I am an ignoramus. The nomenclature and functions of the tit-bits of the throat—so beloved of some teachers of singing—are almost unknown to me. The functions of the vocal cords may be to pull down the soft palate when it is misbehaving, or to trip-up the epiglottis when it has got an unfair hold on the neck of the thorax, causing the latter to indulge in the most incorrect form of nasal resonance. As I say, these *may* be the functions of the vocal cords. Possibly I am wrong. Most likely I am. But I am *not* wrong when I state that it is the placing of the *individual* that matters.

Have you never felt this during a concert? Of course you have. Taking it for granted, you may have a faint idea of what it means to a sensitive soul to have that feeling increased a thousand-fold in the early hours of the morning by a feline monster—I swear she is a contralto—who utterly disregards the correct placing of the voice, for she always places it directly under my bedroom window. That is why I know it is incorrect.

Quite apart from the voice, however, I have taken an intense dislike to the lady herself. I want *her* placed. I care not where she is placed, but placed she must be. It is my life or hers.

I cannot trust myself to decide on her destination for, naturally, I am prejudiced; so I appeal to Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Sir Hugh Allen to help me in my distress and place the lady in an appropriate temperature. I have every faith in their discretion.

Your correspondent, Mr. A. Keay, stipulates that his prospective pupil shall (1) be seriously and enthusiastically devoted to singing; (2) have perfect intonation; and (3) be over eighteen years of age.

My songster complies with the first condition only. If I should not have the good fortune to obtain the assistance of Sir Alexander and Sir Hugh, I challenge Mr. Keay and Mr. Tree to do their worst with my nocturnal contralto—but they must devote their attention to the placing of the *individual*, not the voice. As Mr. Keay did not propose asking the permission of his prospective pupil, I of course will follow his example. Neither of us could afford to risk a refusal.—Yours, &c.,

CODA.

Crown Office Row,
Temple, E.C. 4.

THE GRAMOPHONE—PRESENT AND FUTURE

SIR,—I fear your correspondent has attached an erroneous conclusion to my article on the above subject. Two sentences which he combines had absolutely no bearing on the article!

One is obliged to use guarded terms when alluding to a commercial secret, but my words were carefully chosen when I hinted that the wonderful results given by the new machine were dependent mainly upon the 'acoustic properties of the cabinet.' Here there was no suggestion that the cabinet merely housed an enormous horn, as your correspondent seems to imagine!

I agree with him, and admit that the machine with the large horn which he describes must be a great improvement on the average 'table' or 'cabinet' model; but the instrument in question is something more than that—as several independent critics have since generously admitted.

I understand that an entirely new principle of 'sound amplifying chambers' is substituted for the familiar open horn, and to this is due the wonderfully distinct, realistic, and faithful reproductions obtainable from ordinary gramophone records.—Yours, &c.,

ULRIC DAUBENY.

'THE GRAMOPHONE AS AN AID IN TEACHING ORCHESTRATION'

SIR,—May I add a few words to Mr. J. H. Blair's suggestive letter in your September issue, concerning the gramophone as an aid in teaching orchestration?

Your correspondent expresses surprise that the gramophone has not, up to the present, been used by teachers. I think, however, that many teachers nowadays are fully alive to the value of this instrument in teaching orchestration, though, perhaps, its use is not as general as could be desired. I have been constantly using a H.M.V. machine for the past two-and-a-half years for my theoretical courses, and have found it of the utmost benefit not only to orchestration pupils, but in other directions as well. If your correspondent is not aware of the existence of the fine harpsichord records of Mrs. Woodhouse, and the recently-issued records of early English madrigals (Weelkes, Wilbye, Byrd, &c.), I would draw his attention to these. They are invaluable for illustrations in studying history; not many average students have ever heard the works of Bach, Purcell, Scarlatti, &c., played on the instruments for which they were written. Nor is the performance of our own fine choral music of the madrigal period of frequent occurrence in many provincial and country towns.

I should like to add my testimony to the worth of the 'orchestral instruments' records to which you refer in your foot-note to Mr. Blair's letter. The reproductions are altogether admirable, and when used in conjunction with carefully selected records of orchestral works, are just the thing teachers have been longing for for a long time.

Finally, the gramophone is a real boon to the busy musician as an aid to learning new scores. A work like Scriabin's 'Poem of Ecstasy' is learnt much more expeditiously with the score in front of one and the gramophone giving an actual rendering, than it would be without.—Yours, &c.,

A. F. MILNER.

3, Roseworth Crescent,
Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
September 6, 1921.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

SIR,—In view of your recent articles on gramophone music, I venture to suggest two matters, in which your influence might be usefully exerted.

(1) It is becoming generally realised that the gramophone is a musical and educational instrument of value; to satisfy the new public thus being formed, a large selection of orchestral and chamber music is now issued. Unfortunately, these records to a very great extent only present 'potted' versions of the works concerned. To give two or three instances out of many hundreds, I have a single-sided record of the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' Overture, which includes the exposition only, and that incomplete. Even the double-sided record by the London String Quartet of the first movement of Mozart's G minor Quintet omits the second subject in the recapitulation, so destroying the balance of the movement. The Æolian Vocalion Company has recently recorded the Elgar String Quartet, which fares far worse, as only one side of a 12-in. record is given to each of the three movements.

Sooner or later the makers are bound to give us an instrument capable of taking a much larger record—16-in. or even 20-in.; but meanwhile it is certain that those who wish for this class of music would infinitely prefer to change the records, if necessary, more than once, in the course of a movement, rather than listen to such inartistic mutilations.

(2) You referred in your article last month to the comparative rarity of the records of good songs. This is the more remarkable, as such songs are most frequently of the right length, and vocal records are on the whole the most satisfactory as reproductions.

The catalogues are crammed with operatic extracts and ballads, and it needs time and patience to find in them even a few examples of folk-song, of the great classical song-writers, or such modern composers as Debussy, Ravel, Parry, or Stanford.

The Æolian Company has recently issued three albums of Russian songs: it is time that the same was done, for example, with a series of English songs sung by John Coates, or of modern song literature sung by, say, Anne Thurstfield. There are many other leading singers who might be invited to reproduce selections (not as sometimes happens only the weakest items) from their répertoires.—Yours, &c.,

The Mount House,
Brasted, Kent.

N. SCHUSTER.

September 14, 1921.

A RARE INSTRUMENT

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. Walter Haskell, will find an account of the nail violin in Grove's Dictionary, second edition. It is also described, with a woodcut, in Victor Mahillon's remarkable 'Catalogue Descriptif et Analytique du Musée Instrumental du Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles,' 1893. The Brussels example has sympathetic strings, and a compass of four octaves with the chromatic intervals. It belonged to Fétis. In Chouquet's catalogue of the Museum of the National Conservatoire of Paris (1884), three examples occur under the name 'Violon de fer.' One has three octaves, and one has sympathetic strings. Chouquet says little about the instrument but that it 'passe pour avoir été inventé vers le milieu du 18 siècle par Johann Wilde.' Grove and Mahillon give fuller accounts, but both refer to Carl Engel of the Kensington Museum as their authority. As to the value in money, I doubt if it is large.—Yours, &c.,

C. F. ABDBY WILLIAMS.

A WARNING TO LONDON ORGANISTS

SIR,—Will you kindly permit me, through your columns, to warn my fellow organists in the Metropolitan area against a music thief who may be visiting a number of churches? Last week a quantity of music, which would cost £4 or £5 to replace, was stolen from St. George's, Bloomsbury, and I have since traced a small quantity of it to a second-hand music shop in Charing Cross Road.—Yours, &c.,

F. G. DENT.

9, Woodfield Avenue,
Ealing, W. 5.

August 29, 1921.