The Nietzschean Spirit in Music

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The climax comes with Ex. 5, fully harmonized and extended, when the King appears 'Glittering in golden coat . . . and gorgeous as the sun at midsummer'; then with a rush of quavers, the Falstaff theme (Ex. 1) is given *fortissimo*, and the King halts. A brief parley ensues, but Falstaff is inexorably swept aside by the King's brazen motto, and the last pitiful attempt at cajolery is rudely blasted by the furious fanfare (Ex. 16):

'How ill white hairs become a fool and jester—I banish thee on pain of death.'

Immediately the royal march is resumed, and dies away: the King has looked on his ancient friend for the last time.

In short phrases (Exx. 1 and 6) the decay of the merry-hearted one is shown. The broken man weakens until, with a weird, final attempt at humour (Ex. 3—violas), we enter upon the death scene—'He is so shaked that it is most lamentable to behold.' The incomparable description has been quoted already; the music is founded on the orchard theme (Ex. 20). With many changes of harmony, faltering and uncertain, it goes to the end as if 'he played with flowers and babbled of green fields.' True as ever to human life, Shakespeare makes him cry out even at this moment not only of God but of sack, and of women; so the terrible, nightmare version of the women's theme (Ex. 13a) darkens (or lightens, who shall say?) the last dim moments. Softly, as intelligence fades, we hear the complete theme of the gracious Prince Hal (Ex. 5), and then the nerveless final struggle and collapse; the brass holds *pianissimo* a full chord of C major, and Falstaff is dead.

In the distance we hear the veiled sound of a military drum; the King's stern theme is curtly thrown across the picture, the shrill drum roll again asserts itself momentarily, and with one *pizzicato* chord the work ends; the man of stern reality has triumphed.

In the time of their close friendship the Prince, thinking him dead, says, 'Poor Jack, farewell, I could have spared a better man,' and sadly we say so now. The Prince, arrived at his kingly dignity, fulfilled the prophecy of Warwick, 'he will cast off his followers, and their memory shall a pattern or a measure live.'

Their memory does live, and the marvellous 'pattern and measure' Sir John Falstaff with his companions might well have said, as we may well say now, 'We play fools with the time, and the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us.'

['Falstaff,' Symphonic-Study with two Interludes (Op. 68), will be performed at the Leeds Musical Festival on Thursday evening, October 2. It will be conducted by Sir Edward Elgar.]

The following is a list of successful candidates at the recent examination for Scholarships at the Trinity College of Music. All appointed for one year, with possible renewal. (Organ), Frank Hubert Belton, Donald Ivo Priestley; (singing) Gertrude E. Harrison; (violin), Dora Bianchi, Glyn John, Evelyn Mary Moore, Phyllis Novinskiy, Jessie Mary Parker, Walter H. Whittaker; (horn), Edric Greiffenhagen; (pianoforte), Frederica Birch, Leotina P. Barthelmeh; and in the Junior School, Doris Rose Drewery.

THE NIETZSCHEAN SPIRIT IN MUSIC.

BY GERALD CUMBERLAND.

Just as we can see signs of the rising sun long before it has appeared above the horizon, so can we clearly trace the coming of a new philosopher or poet in the work of the men of a previous generation. A great man, it would seem, begins to influence the world before he is born; tidings of him reach us mysteriously, and our need of him seems to have the power of actually bringing him into being. Great men are not born fortuitously; they always arrive at the precise moment when they are required. Moreover, their coming is prepared for; in one place or another some men and women are always made ready for the reception of their ideas. Charles Darwin did not blaze suddenly upon the world of science: the comet, swimming into existence from outer space, had been dimly seen many years before its arrival. In the music of Haydn are the ghostly features of the coming Beethoven, and upon the operas of Gluck we can detect the faint impress of Wagner's hand. Even Nietzsche, the most original of all recent philosophers, was not new; he had, so to speak, appeared in the world many times before, writing in faltering tones with the pen of Stendhal, aiming blows at the world with the puissant arm of Napoleon, and occasionally flouting Europe with the music of Berlioz. The personality of Nietzsche was but a gathering together, a focussing, of many scattered forces which, by some unknown principle of Nature, united themselves together in order to strike more heavily upon the closed doors of intellectual prejudice.

The truth is that all great men present in their genius certain common human qualities in a concentrated form. The essence of many thousands of rose-leaves is distilled into a pint of attar, and into a man of genius have been pressed the unconscious thoughts and aspirations of multitudes of his fellow-men. He merely voices what they feel; when they hear him speaking aloud their own thoughts, they hail him as a prophet and seer. But he is not different from them except in his greater power and courage. When Nietzsche began to be extensively read, a large section of Europe became conscious of something in themselves which they had never seen before; that is to say, the philosopher did not reveal anything new, but simply expressed what was and always has been embedded in human nature. In a word, the Nietzschean spirit is not new—it is old; but for many years it has either been lying dormant, or it never fully revealed itself until Nietzsche himself began to write.

But what precisely *is* the Nietzschean spirit? Briefly, it is the spirit of the master as opposed to the spirit of the slave; it is the spirit of conquest, of self-confidence, of self-trust, of courage, of cruelty even, of selfishness. Now, these qualities (or defects, if so you choose to call them) have been present in many men of creative musical genius; indeed, no really great composer has

been entirely without them; but men like Richard Strauss, Berlioz, and Wagner have possessed them in a conspicuous degree, whilst other writers like Chopin, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Schumann, and Schubert showed little of that sublime spiritual arrogance which is in many cases so symptomatic of creative genius. It may be said of Mendelssohn that he did not conquer the world; rather did the world conquer him. Chopin seduced that part of the world which fell in love with him—Paris. Brahms had so much of the philosophic spirit that he never cared to fight, and the love of conquest meant nothing to him. Schumann and Schubert had the mild, gentle souls of children; their self-confidence was naive and charming; they had nothing of the brutality and ruthlessness of Berlioz, Strauss, and Wagner.

Berlioz was the first among composers to fight the world rather than to entice it. He was, of course, by no means the first to be misunderstood: Bach before him, and many another great mind, had worked on from one decade to another with only scant recognition. Bach, however, had a great spirit; his peace of mind was not lost, nor was his genius warped, by neglect. Calmly he went on with his work, writing music for generations that were to come after him. But Berlioz craved for fame and, being denied it, turned upon himself and rent his own genius, passing from one extravagance to another in a veritable paranoia of arrogance. Nothing breeds eccentricity so surely as failure. If we cannot make the world feel our genius, we will at least make it recognize our existence—that is the point of view of, and the policy adopted by, many young men suffering from a sense of neglect and wounded self-esteem. So felt Berlioz in and about the year 1830 and onwards, when one attempt after another to gain recognition ended in defeat. Most successful men have their vanity, but there is nothing so rank as the vanity of the artist who has failed. His belief in himself is increased by the scepticism of others. That is why the seed of Nietzscheism inherent in Berlioz developed almost to the point of insanity. He lost his communal instincts in worship of himself. His love of large orchestras and gigantic choruses (a love shared by Wagner and Richard Strauss) was but one indication of his passion for the colossal, and (it may be said) but one symptom of the disorder of his brain.

Wagner is another and a more striking case of that kind of egomania which appears to me to be the basis of Nietzsche's philosophy. Until the last few years of his life Wagner must have regarded himself as a failure. He had faith in himself that no adversity could shake, and the event has proved that this faith was amply justified. But his 'blond beast' attitude to his fellows was evinced more by his treatment of his friends and acquaintances than by his trust in his own genius. There is now a great mass of evidence available (no little of it penned by Wagner himself) that proves beyond a shadow of doubt that as regards money he had a particularly easy and accommodating conscience. He borrowed and

did not pay back; he got into debt and ran away from his debts; he accepted gifts of cash without any apparent (or, at all events, only a short-lived) gratitude. Whether or not he was justified in doing this is no concern of mine; but I venture to state that his work would have been injured if he had been sensitive about money matters, and that the world has gained in joy and artistic richness a thousand times more than it gained in annoyance or sorrow through Wagner's conduct. To that extent he may escape condemnation for his confusion of thought regarding what belonged to him and what belonged to others. But the point I wish to make is that he was an admirable example of the superman in cash transactions; in this he was, indeed, 'above morality.' But the Nietzschean spirit in him manifested itself in almost everything he did. He was a born conqueror of men. People who came into personal contact with him either worshipped or hated him, and he employed his disciples unmercifully. No man of his generation demanded such ungrudging devotion from his friends, and I believe that in the early years of their friendship most of them worked for *him* primarily and for art secondarily. He had the visions of the egomaniac, but in his case his dreams came true.

But Richard Strauss provides a much more striking example of the Nietzschean spirit in music than either Wagner or Berlioz. Here is a man who is apparently infatuated with the idea of worldly success; with cold and deliberate calculation he courts the favour of the world by the most elaborate and subtle trickery. He has the genius of self-advertisement. Every work he has written since 'Ein Heldenleben' has contained some colossal piece of artistic impertinence which has aroused the animosity of music-lovers all over the world, and which has secured hundreds of performances of music which otherwise would have been heard only infrequently. The 'Domestic' Symphony had a baby and a bath; 'Electra' had carnage and insanity; 'Salome' contained a lady suffering from psychological disease; 'Rosenkavalier' was decorated with two bedrooms; 'Ariadne' had an orchestra of solo instruments; and so on. There is genius in each of these works, but there is also an equal amount of charlatanism. Musical history contains no other figure who combines in an almost equal degree the virtue of sincerity and the vice of pretence. Now, only a man saturated through and through with a delusion of his supreme importance would willingly stultify his own genius as Strauss has done for many years. A man may have the utmost faith in his genius and remain sane; but when a composer believes his personality to be so overwhelmingly great that he can afford to maim and destroy the genius that is in him, he is on the borderland of artistic insanity. Strauss wishes to conquer the material world; he is out for money. Wagner loved money, but he had a greater regard for his own genius than he had for all the wealth of Christendom.

It would seem, then, that the Nietzschean spirit in Strauss has become inverted. It no longer

strives for spiritual power, but for material. As a result he is the most prominent artistic figure in Europe. But in the year 1950 his music perhaps will be played only in Chicago and New York . . . and this terrible calamity must overtake all those who disregard the claims of the spirit and win a temporary success by twisting their genius to grotesque and gargoyle-like shapes.

EDWARD TAYLOR'S GRESHAM LECTURES.

By W. BARCLAY SQUIRE.

Edward Taylor, who from 1837 to 1863 was Professor of Music at Gresham College, was the son of John Taylor, the hymn-writer, of Norwich, and the great-grandson of John Taylor, the Hebraist dissenting minister. He was a brother of Philip Taylor, the civil engineer, and a cousin of Meadows Taylor, the Indian novelist, and of Edward Rigby, the physician. Born at Norwich in 1784, he began life as an ironmonger, and after acting as sheriff at Norwich in 1819, joined his brother Philip and his cousin John Martineau as a civil engineer in London. He possessed a fine bass voice, and from his boyhood had been prominent as a musical amateur, though he did not adopt music as a profession until 1826, when he immediately became a successful bass singer. He conducted the Norwich Festivals of 1827, 1839, and 1842, and was on terms of intimacy with Spohr, whose oratorios he translated and was largely instrumental in making popular in England. In 1837, on the death of R. J. S. Stevens, he was elected Gresham Professor of Music, a post he occupied until his death in 1863. His lectures (to quote Husk's article in Grove's Dictionary) 'were admirably adapted to the understanding of a general audience; they were historical and critical, excellently written, eloquently read, and illustrated by well-chosen extracts from the works described, efficiently performed.' They were repeated in various provincial towns, and a lecture on madrigals, delivered at Bristol in 1837, led to the foundation of the Bristol Madrigal Society. The manuscripts of a number of them (with the accompanying illustrations) are preserved in the library of the Royal College of Music, where it is to be feared that they have not been looked at for many years. A recent careful examination for the purpose of the new catalogue of the College's manuscripts shows that the description of them in Husk's 'Catalogue of the Sacred Harmonic Library' (with which they have passed into the possession of the Royal College) is not quite accurate. Hardly any of the sets described by Husk are complete, and it is evident that, in the course of his long career as a lecturer, Taylor re-wrote early lectures and incorporated them in later series. Those dealing with the earlier history of music are out-of-date in the matter of research, and the musical illustrations are constantly vitiated by the fatal habit of arranging and interpolating additions of Taylor's

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own, which was the accepted idea of 'editing' in the early Victorian era. But among the mass of valueless matter, the series of lectures dealing with English dramatic music at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries contains many interesting details drawn from the lecturer's personal recollection. In his inaugural lectures (delivered in 1838 and printed the same year) Taylor says: 'My own recollection embraces the commencement of the entire range of instrumental music now in use in our orchestras . . . I remember the birth of Haydn's oratorios and the introduction of Mozart's operas into this country. I have sung in succession with Billington, Dickens, Salmon, Stephens, and Malibran, as well as with Bartleman and Harrison. I have heard the unrivalled vocal excellence of Mara, and seen the extinction of an entire race of dramatic singers (one of whom [evidently referring to Braham] alone survives to delight the present generation with his powers), including Incledon, Kelly, Dignum, and Sedgwick, as well as Storace and Crouch.' The imperfect state in which the lectures have been preserved has unfortunately caused Taylor's reminiscences of some of these singers to be lost, but from what has survived it seemed worth extracting the portions now given to the readers of the *Musical Times*. They have been taken from various lectures, and some of the redundancies and repetitions in which Taylor largely indulged, have been excised, though care has been taken to note wherever passages have been omitted. It is thought that to future biographers they will be of some value, and though they may not contain many new facts of importance they will be read with interest as the personal recollections of a refined and cultivated, if not a great, musician. It only remains to be added that the extracts are arranged in alphabetical order of subjects, and not in the order in which the lectures from which they are taken were delivered.

THOMAS ATTWOOD.

In 'The Escapes' we have to take leave of Attwood as a composer for the stage. He had terminated his engagement at Drury Lane, and at Covent Garden he only occasionally consented to be employed. He had been appointed Organist of St. Paul's and Composer to the King. He was patronized by the Royal Family, and his time as a teacher of the piano-forte was fully occupied. But he would willingly have devoted some portion of his time (in imitation of his great master, Mozart) to dramatic music, if the intrigues of the Green Room had not given him a distaste to this branch of his profession. These, as he told me, determined him to abandon any permanent connection with the stage.

JONATHAN BATTISHILL.

The history of this accomplished musician reflects little credit on the discernment of his contemporaries. Of all that he produced a few fragments only survive—each so excellent in its kind as to establish his equal command of the varied forms and resources of his art. Battishill essayed many styles of composition and he excelled in all, yet he is generally known as the writer of a solitary anthem and a single glee, while as a dramatic composer he is unknown. Let me endeavour to rescue his name from the partial oblivion into which it has fallen and to claim for it the grateful recollection of his countrymen.

Battishill was born in London in the year 1738. At the age of nine years he was admitted into the choir of St. Paul's, of which his fine voice and quick musical apprehension soon rendered him a distinguished