A Coincidence

Author(s): Henry Johnson

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 48, No. 770 (Apr. 1, 1907), p. 246

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/903548>

Accessed: 01-03-2015 03:19 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*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

representing Handel as an 'impostor,' which Mr. Bourne hurls at 'certain critics,' and of 'making mountains of molehills,' which he fires into space, are too impersonal to call for disavowal or reply. There is, however, one point of fact raised by him on which I ought perhaps to express an opinion.

Mr. Bourne affirms that it is by Handel's own, not by his borrowed, movements that he will be remembered—that his strong situations are his own, and the episodes that lead up to them in some cases the work of other men. This statement is, I consider, made too generally. In the 'Messiah,' by which Handel is predominantly remembered, research has not, so far as I know, detected any non-Handelian materials. But in his other masterpiece, 'Israel in Egypt,' some of the numbers most indissolubly bound up with his memory, including some of their strongest situations, depend on music assigned to other composers. The evidence collected in my book proves this, I think, quite conclusively. I heartily wish that it did not.

Yours truly,

SEDLEY TAYLOR.

A COINCIDENCE.

SIR,—The coincidence I am about to mention must be my apology for addressing you. Last evening I was reading an old number of the *Spectator* (1712) when I came across a letter or proposal of Mr. Renatus Harris, organ builder, for erecting an organ over the west door of St. Paul's Cathedral. To-day in the Camberwell Library I picked up by chance THE MUSICAL TIMES, and read your interesting article on the organ of St. Paul's Cathedral. I do not think I have ever read THE MUSICAL TIMES before, hence the coincidence.

Although I do not know a note of music, I love it, and I have more than once thought, when I have stood near the west door of St. Paul's and heard the organ from the nave, what a splendid position that would be for an organ. After reading Renatus Harris's letter, and your article, my sympathies are with him.

Yours, &c.,

HENRY JOHNSON.

March 7, 1907.

Obituary.

MR. OTTO GOLDSCHMIDT.

A familiar figure has been removed from the musical life of London by the death of Mr. OTTO GOLDSCHMIDT, which event, we are sorry to place on record, occurred at his residence, 1, Moreton Gardens, South Kensington, on February 24, in his seventy-eighth year.

Like Mendelssohn and Brahms, Otto Goldschmidt was born at Hamburg, in which city he drew his first breath on August 29, 1829. His earliest teachers of pianoforte and harmony were two Hamburg musicians, F. W. Grund and Jakob Schmitt, the latter the composer of an opera on the subject of 'Alfred the Great.' At the age of fourteen Goldschmidt became one of the earliest students at the Leipzig Conservatorium, in the same year (1843) that it was founded by Mendelssohn. One of his fellow-students was an Englishman named W. S. Rackstraw, afterwards better known as W. S. Rockstro. At the Conservatoire he studied under Mendelssohn (pianoforte and composition), Plaidy and Schumann; he also took some private pianoforte lessons from Madame Schumann.

After spending two years playing and teaching in his native city, Mr. Goldschmidt went, in 1848, to Paris in order to study under Chopin, but the Revolution placed a barrier to that project; however, he was present at the last Paris concert given by the pianist-composer, of whose wonderful playing he always retained most vivid recollections. From Paris he came to London and made his first appearance in England at a concert given by Jenny Lind on July 31, 1848 (not in 1849, as stated in Grove's 'Dictionary of Music and Musicians'), in aid of the Brompton Hospital for Consumption—a concert which realized the handsome sum of

£1,800 for that deserving charity. His solos on that occasion were Liszt's 'Reminiscences di Lucia' and two of Mendelssohn's 'Songs without words.' On March 27, 1849, he appeared at one of John Ella's Musical Union concerts. At Hamburg he gave an orchestral concert at which Jenny Lind sang. We read in the 'Mémorial of Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt' that 'They did much music together. He played and she sang; the memory of Mendelssohn was a common bond between them. He began to persuade her to sing again those songs of Mendelssohn which, for two years (since his death in 1847) she had found it impossible for her to touch.' Thus a bond of union was formed between singer and pianist which ripened into life-long affection.

It was in May, 1851, that Jenny Lind invited him to America, where she was in the height of a triumphant tour, in order to fill the post of accompanist to her, vacated by Benedict, who had returned to England. On February 5, 1852, at Boston, Otto Goldschmidt and Jenny Lind were married. They afterwards settled at Dresden, and during the next few years they sang and played at many concerts in Europe, including the British Isles. From 1858 they lived permanently in England. About that time Mr. Goldschmidt was organist of two churches in the neighbourhood of Wimbledon, where he resided, one of these being St. John's Church, Putney. A more permanent result of his interest in church music is furnished by 'The Chorale Book for England' (Preface dated November, 1862), a useful collection of hymn-tunes which he and Sterndale Bennett jointly edited.

In 1863 and 1866 Mr. Goldschmidt conducted the Lower Rhine Musical Festival; in 1863 he became a professor of the pianoforte at the Royal Academy of Music, and he was Vice-Principal of that institution from 1866 to 1868. Between 1864 and 1869 he had much to do with organizing the music at Rugby School, then under Dr. Temple's headmastership. The Royal order of Wasa Vasa of Sweden (Madame Goldschmidt's native country) was conferred upon him, also the rare honour of the great medal for Art and Literature, with 'Commander Ribbon of the Polar Star,' and he was a member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Music. In England he held several official appointments: Member of the Council of the Royal College of Music from the commencement; honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music; honorary member of the Royal College of Organists; member (and formerly Director) of the Philharmonic Society; vice-president of the Madrigal Society; vice-president of the Musical Association; member of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. His last appearance in public was at a court dinner of the company on July 10, 1906, when, in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Schumann's death, he played, at the age of seventy-seven, the composer's beautiful Andante Variations in B flat for two pianofortes, with remarkable verve and artistic insight, his colleague being Mrs. Cooper, wife of the Master of that year. As chairman of the Mendelssohn Scholarship Committee, Mr. Goldschmidt held a rightful place, as his illustrious wife laid the foundation of that much-coveted prize by a performance of 'Elijah' which she gave in Exeter Hall on December 15, 1848, a year after the composer's death.

He composed the oratorio of 'Ruth,' produced at the Hereford Musical Festival of 1867, and subsequently performed in London (Exeter Hall, November 17, 1869), and at Hamburg and Düsseldorf. His other works include 'Music,' a choral song for soprano solo and female voices (Leeds Festival, 1898); a Pianoforte trio; 'Zwölf grosse Etuden' for pianoforte; two duets for two pianofortes; songs, part-songs, &c.

One of the most important events of Mr. Goldschmidt's artistic life was his conductorship of the Bach Choir for nine years, 1876 to 1885. It was in 1875 that Mr. Arthur Duke Coleridge got together a number of amateurs with a view of performing Bach's B minor Mass, with the result that it was given complete for the first time in England, at St. James's Hall, on April 26, 1876, and under Mr. Goldschmidt's direction. Into the preparation of this colossal work he threw his whole heart and soul, not a little stimulated by the artistic fervour of his gifted wife, who herself sang in the chorus on that eventful occasion and at subsequent concerts of the Society. In spite of a certain reserve of manner, Mr. Goldschmidt