

The English Musical Pitch

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servatorium at Frankfurt, in consequence of a misunderstanding having arisen between him and the director of the institution, Herr Joachim Raff.

A commemorative tablet has been placed by the Viennese at the house wherein Lanner, the favourite composer of walses, was born in 1801.

Marcello Rossi, the eminent violinist, recently engaged upon a *concert-tournée* in Germany, in company with Madame Desirée Artot, has met with a brilliant success.

Halévy's "La Juive" has reached its hundredth, and Meyerbeer's "Les Huguenots," its two hundredth performance at the Berlin Opera.

At the Moscow Conservatoire a new Opera by Peter Tchaikoffsky, viz., "Eugen Onegin," was performed by the pupils of the institution in the presence of the composer and Anton Rubinstein. The last season of Italian opera at Moscow has, it is stated, resulted in a deficit of 270,000 roubles.

A new theatre is being constructed at Florence which is to be called Teatro Nazionale, and will exceed in dimensions that of La Scala in Milan.

MM. Mangeot frères, of Nancy, have presented one of their newly invented pianofortes à *claviers renversés*, which attracted so much curiosity during the late Paris Exhibition, to the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels. The Belgian Home Secretary, in acknowledging the gift, expresses the opinion "that the invention will occupy an important place in the history of the improvement of the instrument, and will modify completely the conditions of modern pianoforte-playing."

At the institution just mentioned, a new class is being opened for instruction in practical harmony and accompaniment; MM. Emile Mathieu and Gustave Sandré are mentioned as candidates for the professorship.

The death is announced, at Dessau, of Franz Diener, the gifted tenor singer, who had commenced his career as a member of the orchestra of the Kroll'sche Theater at Berlin, and who had subsequently achieved a great reputation as interpreter of leading parts in Wagner's operas.

At Paris died, at the age of twenty-nine, Victor Nant, musical professor at the Institution des Jeunes Aveugles, and an Organist of considerable attainments. He was blind from his birth.

C. Schunke, a celebrated virtuoso on the horn, and professor of that instrument at the Berlin "Hochschule," died at the age of seventy at the Prussian capital.

The composer and professor of the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, Nicolai de Zarembo, died at the Russian capital; most of the younger generation of Russian composers of note had been his pupils.

The death is also announced at Rome of Gottfried Semper, the eminent architect of the two Dresden opera-houses, viz., the one destroyed by fire some years ago, and the present handsome building. He was seventy-six years of age.

We subjoin, as usual, the programmes of concerts, recently given at some of the leading institutions abroad:—

Paris.—Conservatoire Concert of Pupils (April 27): Overture "Ruy Blas" (Mendelssohn); Fragments from "The Seasons" (Haydn); Andante and finale from Pianoforte Quartett (Schumann); Fragments from "Comte Ory" (Rossini); Overture "Freischütz" (Weber); Airs (Mozart). Concert at the Cirque d'Hiver (May 8): Symphony C minor (Beethoven); "Thème Slave Varié" (Leo Délibes); Fragments from "La Damnation de Faust" (Berlioz); First Act of "Lohengrin" (Wagner). Concert at the Cirque d'Hiver (May 15): Overture, "Le Roi d'Ys" (Ed. Lalo); Symphony in G minor (Mozart); Choruses from "Ulysse" (Gounod); First Act of "Lohengrin."

Berlin.—Concert of the Wagner Society (April 16): First Act from "Siegfried" (Wagner). Singakademie Concert (April 29): Music to Goethe's "Faust" (Prince Radziwill).

Leipzig.—Concert of the Walthersche Capelle (April 30): Overture, "Iphigenia" (Gluck); Symphony, "Eroica" (Beethoven); Introduction to "Die Rose vom Libanon" (Geissler); Symphonic Poem (Ole Olsen); Overture, "Oberon" (Weber). At St. Thomas's Church (May 10): Organ Fantasia (Frescobaldi); Adoramus Te (Papperitz); Prelude in B flat minor, from "Wohltemperirte Clavier" (Bach); Motett (Jadassohn).

Baden-Baden.—Historical Lecture and Concert by Dr. L. Nohl (May 9): Subject, "The Development of Instru-

mental Music." Performance: Adagio and Allegro from Military Symphony (Haydn); Andante and Minuet from "Jupiter" Symphony (Mozart); Scherzo and Finale from C minor Symphony (Beethoven); Fragment from "Faust" Symphony (Liszt); and Overture, "Tannhäuser" (Wagner).

Baltimore.—Concert of the Peabody Institute (April 19): Fantastic Symphony (Berlioz); Recitative and Air from "Theodora" (Handel); Serenade No. 3 (R. Volckmann); Song (Sullivan); Roman Carnival (Berlioz).

Auburn (New York).—Organ Recitals of J. V. Flagler (April 14, 21, and 28): Prelude and Fugue, A minor and D minor, Fantasie and Fugue, G minor (Bach); Adagio from Sonata Op. 13, Larghetto from Symphony No. 2 (Beethoven); Funeral March from Sonata Op. 35 (Chopin), &c.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### "LEGER" OR "LEDGER" LINES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In making some slight researches into the origin and history of this musical term, I believe I have detected a curious etymological error existing in all our dictionaries and cyclopædias, of which I have consulted above fifty, both English and American. In all of these the derivation is referred to the French word *léger*, light, trifling, frivolous. Now this is hardly satisfactory. A ledger line has never been typographically either lighter in shade or thinner in substance than its accompanying stave lines, and the note written upon it can scarcely be considered of less importance than its fellows within the stave. Moreover, we should expect a similar use of the word in the supposed original French, whereas its equivalent is simply "lignes postiches." The English word ledger (Ang.-Sax. *leggan*, Dutch *leggen*) conveys the notion of position, something that is laid, and at present has three significations, one commercial and two architectural. There is also a nearly obsolete form "lieger," chiefly applied to an ambassador who continues to remain in one appointment. In commerce, a ledger is the chief account-book, which usually lies on the counting-house desk. In architecture, a ledger denotes, firstly, a large stone which lies over the whole of a tomb, and, secondly, the horizontal poles of a scaffold which are attached to the standards, and which lie parallel to each other and to the edifice in course of erection, and it is from the latter that I believe our musical term to have been adopted. A builder finding his scaffold of insufficient height, adds another "ledger," and a musician having reached the top G of his stave, and wishing to go still higher, adds a "ledger line," which simply implies one lying beyond the stave.

The word seems to have been first employed in a musical sense about 1700. It occurs neither in Morley nor in Christopher Simpson, neither is it in any of the editions of Playford's "Introduction" up to 1694, all of which state that any additional lines required may be added by the pen, but in the edition of 1703 they are spoken of as being commonly called "ledger lines." Now it was about this time that the violin was generally superseding the old treble viol, and the greater compass of the former instrument requiring increased stave accommodation, the additional lines employed bearing so striking an analogy to the familiar "ledgers" of a scaffold, it is probable that this word was generally adopted. Our current word "layer" (stratum), derived from the High instead of the Low German, bears precisely the same signification, and we might speak of "layer lines" with as much propriety as we now do of "ledger."

CHARLES J. EVANS.

British Museum.

### THE ENGLISH MUSICAL PITCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Would you kindly give me the vibrational number of English musical pitch, and say what is the difference, if any, between normal and concert pitch.

French pitch, which I understand to give 261 vibrations for middle C, is supposed to be lower than English. In Novello's Music Primer, "Scientific Basis," mention is made of the 32-foot pipe of the Albert Hall organ making

16 vibrations; this would give 256 for middle C, and of course lower than French pitch.—Yours truly,

J. C. G.

3, Parkside Place, Edinburgh, April 30, 1879.

[The vibration-number of the French diapason normal for A is given at 870 single or 435 double oscillations per second. In consequence of some determinations made by Mr. Alex. J. Ellis, with the help of Appunn's reed tonometer, and which led to the belief that it had in reality 439, the question has been once more examined. It appears that the original standard was very nearly, if not quite, correct. Helmholtz, as quoted by M. Rudolph Kœnig, made it 435·01, only differing by one unit in the second place of decimals from the official estimate. The English "concert pitch" on the other hand has no precise meaning. It exists only in the practice of different orchestras, and even there varies with the individual players and with the temperature. Messrs. Broadwood have obtained a good average, which they issue as the highest of three, the lowest being the French normal, and that intermediate approximating to the standard proposed by the Society of Arts. The highest of these gives about 542 vibrations for C, according to Mr. Ellis's table, which however requires to be corrected for the too high number (about four vibrations per second) at which he stated the French normal pitch. The pitch of 256 for middle C, or 512 for its octave, named by our correspondent, is theoretical. It has the advantage of rising by powers of 2, but I am not aware that it is in actual use, except by Tonic Solfaists; certainly not in the Albert Hall organ, which is very slightly above Messrs. Broadwood's concert pitch.—Ed. *Musical Times*.]

#### THE MONOTONE AND SPEAKING VOICE IN CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

Sir,—Relative to the above subject, will you kindly allow me space for a few remarks?

In your last issue, your correspondent, Mr. A. C. A. Drought, mentions three different ways in which the service should be performed: (1) Fully choral; (2) monotoned; (3) simply spoken. While agreeing as to the whole service being consistently rendered, and well able to appreciate and enjoy a well-performed choral service, I differ from Mr. Drought in the belief that the "incongruous mixture" of reading the prayers and singing the responses is either disagreeable or distracting.

In the church where I have been for some time a member of the choir and assistant organist, we have what some may be pleased to call a "piebald" service. The clergyman reads his part, but the congregation and choirs sing all the responses and versicles of Morning and Evening Prayer, Litany, and Communion Service; every Amen is sung; the Creeds are always intoned with organ accompaniment (*ad lib.*); and yet I have often been struck by the hearty manner in which the congregation take part in the service.

The difficulties in having a "fully choral" service are twofold:—

(1) It very often happens that the clergyman has no musical talent; and I consider the way in which I have often heard the priest's part sung by unmusical incumbents a great infliction on any congregation. This difficulty is often extended by the smallness of the parish or the poorness of the district, and the consequent inability on the part of the clergyman to obtain a curate, who, perchance, might be equally unmusical.

(2) Some members of a congregation, who perhaps like the singing, and themselves join in it, are very much opposed to a "singing parson;" they seem to cling to the notion that it is the clergyman's place to read, and for them to sing. Now, a clergyman may not be in a position, nor is it always desirable, to disregard entirely the feelings—foibles though they may be—of his flock.

Now, on the principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread," I would rather keep what music we have—for it is worth keeping—than sweep it away because we can have no more. And such a service, far from being disagreeable and distracting, may be conducted "decently and in order," and to the "praise and glory of God."

I remain, Sir, faithfully yours,

J. FREDERIC HAMLYN.

St. James's, Ashton-under-Lyne, May 7, 1879.

#### GAS-ENGINES FOR ORGANS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

Sir,—In "THE MUSICAL TIMES" of May 1, 1879, "Correspondent" asks, "Are gas-engines being used for filling wind chests of organs, and if so, where can one be seen so applied in or near London?"

In reply, there is an engine (Hugon's patent) at Denmark Hill, Camberwell; another in the Vassall Road, Brixton; another at the Savoy Chapel, in the Strand; and there is a gas-engine of a much more simple construction, which would work an organ-bellows equally well as the three above-named engines, at the Patent Office Museum, South Kensington.

The organ bellows in York Minster is worked by a gas-engine (Hugon's patent)—these engines are a very good substitute where hydraulic pressure cannot be obtained, and are much cheaper in the working.

Probably any of the London engines above alluded to might be seen on a proper introduction.

Yours respectfully,

May 12, 1879.

S. N. BARBER.

#### A PLEA FOR THE FLUTE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

Sir,—I read with interest the letter of your correspondent, the writer of "A Plea for the Flute," in your number for May, and I in a great measure concur in what he says. But I demur to his advocacy of an instrument tuned on the principle of the equal temperament, and I would ask you to allow me space to urge the desirability of aiming at a higher standard. In point of tone I am with Mr. Poole in what he says in favour of the flute. If in this respect the flute may compare not unfavourably even with the violin, does it not seem a lamentable retrogression that the efforts, in a great measure successful, which were made by Siccama to render the flute capable of as true intonation as the violin, should be ignored?

I am, Sir, faithfully yours,

Alvington, Torquay, May 13, 1879.

A. J. CORRIE.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*\*\* Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.*

*Our correspondents will greatly oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.*

*Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.*

*We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.*

*Notice is sent to all Subscribers whose payment (in advance) is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscription is not renewed. We again remind those who are disappointed in obtaining back numbers that, although the music pages are always stereotyped, only a sufficient quantity of the rest of the paper is printed to supply the current sale.*

*J. A. M.—The Maestro di Capella of St. Peter's, Rome, is Signor Mustafa, the Chief Organist being Signor Meluzzi.*

*The rate correspondent who writes to us first under the signature of "AMATEUR SUBSCRIBER," and afterwards under that of "SUFFOLK," seems to forget that in peremptorily commanding us to answer his question, he assumes as a right what is merely granted as a matter of courtesy. To prove, however, that we have no desire to imitate the tone of his last letter, we beg to refer him to the paragraph at the head of our Notices to Correspondents intimating that the name and address of the writer must accompany all communications. As he has never thought proper to comply with this condition, we beg again to decline replying to his query, and gently suggest that some slight apology for his omission would have been more likely to produce the result he desires than the terrible threat that if we again pass over his application he will "transfer his patronage elsewhere."*

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

*We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.*

**ABERNANT.**—A Concert was held at Bethesda Independent Chapel on Monday evening, the 5th ult., by the scholars of the Sunday School and the choir of the chapel, under the conductorship of Mr. H. Thomas. The chair was taken by Mr. William Watkins. The first part of the concert was miscellaneous, and the second part was devoted to a performance of the Cantata *Samuel*, by H. Davies, A. C., Ruabon. The vocalists were Miss Harries, Miss Jenkins, Mrs. Phelps, Mr. William Thomas, and Mr. Henry Thomas. The performance of *Samuel* gave great satisfaction. Miss Phelps and Mr. A. M. James, R.A.M., presided at the harmoniums. Credit is due to Mr. H. Thomas for instructing the choir so well.