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A Sketch of the History of Music-Printing, from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century (Concluded)

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gladly give up the girl who slights me." But though Mozart took his disappointment like a man in public, he suffered like a man in private, and in a letter to his father we can see the tears. "To-day I can only weep," he exclaims. "I have far too sensitive a heart." "I really am unfit for anything; my heart is too full of tears. I hope you will soon write to me and comfort me." The composer's elastic nature, however, was not to be permanently cast down. He soon transferred his love to Aloysia's sister Constance, who, as we all know, ultimately became his wife.

Two matters not personal as to character may be mentioned before dismissing the Paris letters. One is Mozart's opinion of that now rampant vocal defect the *vibrato*. "Nothing," says the master, "can be more truly odious; besides, it is a style of singing quite contrary to nature. The human voice is naturally tremulous, but only so far as to be beautiful, and it is imitated not only on wind instruments but on stringed instruments, and even on the piano. But the moment the proper boundary is passed, it is no longer beautiful, because it becomes unnatural. It seems to me then just like an organ when the bellows are panting." There is some humour in my next and closing extract, which refers to the gimcrack watches it was the then custom for "persons of distinction" to bestow upon artists. "Speaking of watches," says Mozart, "I must tell you that I am bringing one with me—a genuine Parisian. You know what sort of a thing my jewelled watch was—how inferior all the so-called precious stones were, how clumsy and awkward its shape; but I would not have cared so much about that had I not been obliged to spend so much money in repairing and regulating it, and after all the watch would one day gain a couple of hours, and next day lose in the same proportion. The one the Elector gave me did just the same, and the works were even worse and more fragile. I exchanged these two watches and their chains for a Parisian one which is worth twenty louis d'or. So now at last I know what o'clock it is; with my five watches I never got so far as that before."

(To be continued.)

A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF MUSIC-PRINTING, FROM THE FIFTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY FRIEDRICH CHRYSANDER.

(Concluded from page 527.)

FIFTH PERIOD.—ENGRAVING ON PEWTER AND ZINC.

The imperfection of the earliest method of music-printing, xylography, called the invention of musical typography into existence. In close connection with the peculiar notation employed for the lute and organ (tablature) arose the practice of engraving music upon copper; and from the imperfection of this again sprang that improved process which has now been everywhere adopted, and acknowledged to be the best mode of printing music.

This method, which we have now to describe last of all, consists not in anything completely new, but only in carrying on to a further stage what the copper-engravers were already doing. Although at first they produced music in the same manner in which other copperplate engravings were executed, yet music contains so much that is purely mechanical, being repeated again and again, that mechanical means were soon resorted to in order to lessen the

amount of labour. The Italians, Verovio and his followers, did not do much in this way, but followed the lines of the manuscript music which they were copying. Their copper-engraving consequently never attained any extension and commercial importance comparable to that of their typography, and during the entire seventeenth and eighteenth centuries copied music was what Italy chiefly spread abroad.

The Dutch were directly opposed to the Italians in all this. They never copied, printed nothing worth mentioning with movable types, and engraved everything on copper; moreover they chose such forms of notes as were the most convenient for engraving; and the extraordinarily high cultivation of the art of picture-engraving soon exerted a beneficial influence on music-engraving. About 1700, when music-engraving on copper had reached a very high degree of prosperity, it is said that one important branch of industry, but at the same time an object of envy and attempted imitation to foreigners, was concerned with certain peculiar instruments for accelerating the engraving of music on copper, which the Dutch possessed and carefully kept secret. The French also naturally possessed similar mechanical helps; for Baussen, who engraved hundreds of thousands of notes for Ballard, of course chose those instruments that made the work the easiest for him. It may then be assumed that these instruments, and those of the Dutch also, were all distinguished from those of modern music-engravers by being brought down to the plate, not by a blow with the hammer, but by mere motion of the hand, or, in other words, that did not *strike*, but *bored*. About 1820 the engraver Töpfer was still living at Leipzig, who only in his later years changed from engraving music on copper to the engraving on pewter, which was introduced into Germany from France about the year 1800. His pupil, Fr. Weissenborn, an admirable engraver (father of Hermann Weissenborn, the engraver employed for the works of the German Handel Society), received from Töpfer the instruments for copper-engraving. They were not stamps or punches (*poissons*) but *borers*, and could be used with tolerable rapidity. We are justified in supposing these to be the old Dutch inventions, considering that they are suited to the nature of the material, for notes cannot be formed by blows in copper in the same way as in pewter and zinc.

This is the reason why I have made the distinction of the fourth and fifth periods to depend upon the material employed, and not upon the question whether the notes were put upon the plate by punches or by the free hand. Indeed, a distinction on the latter basis could not be carried out, because the free action of the hand is an essential condition in every mode of music-engraving. That the new method depended greatly in its execution on the employment of a new material will be evident from the following exposition.

England was the chief market for the musical press of the Dutch. The demand in England increased steadily from year to year, especially after the establishment of an Italian-English Opera in 1706. Music-publishers and engravers multiplied rapidly, and the more music was produced or at least performed at home, the less could importation from Holland suffice to meet the demand, and the stronger was the impulse to print everything at home. That a little later there were music-engravers on copper in London too, who formed their style on the best French models, is shown by the first book of "Suites de pièces pour le clavecin" by Handel, which was engraved by Cluer and published in 1720. But in

general the English copperplate engraving was as mediocre as printing with movable types in the same period in Germany. Yet even if it had been better, even if the English could have learned from the Dutch all their arts of quick production, the chief defect for England would not have been removed—that it demanded too much time. This was not much felt in the first two decades of the eighteenth century. But when the Royal Academy of Music for Operas was opened in London, in 1720, with works of the first living composers, executed by singers and instrumentalists of the first rank, and encouraged by general applause and crowded audiences, the demand for new music was so pressing that the existing mode of printing became intolerably insufficient.

The peculiar circumstances existing in the first few years of the London Opera Academy were a strong incentive to a zealous and ambitious man of business to discover new methods. Handel was prepared to negotiate the printing of his Operas through his friend, transcriber, and treasurer, Johann Christoph Schmidt (Smith). John Cluer received them to engrave and print, and was also engaged in the sale. Cluer was without doubt the best engraver then in London, and was selected by Handel for this reason. But there was another man who looked on their connection with especial displeasure, and whose chief aim was to get the English music trade into his own hands. This was John Walsh. He saw by the example of Cluer what advantages good engraving commanded, and worked indefatigably at improving the method. He was also all the more anxious now to extend the range of his publishing business, as the chief source, Handel, was almost entirely closed to him. His energy was undaunted, and was in a few years rewarded by success. The first mature fruit of his labours was a work which appeared in 1724:—

“MUSICA SACRA: or, Select Anthems in score. . . . Compos'd by Dr. William Croft. . . . Printed for and sold by John Walsh.” [1724. Folio.]

It is not dated, but the privilege was granted October 30, 1724. That in this publication some remarkable experiment in music-printing was tried we are told in the composer's preface, which commences in a remarkable style, quite unusual on such occasions, as follows: “This being the first essay of publishing Church-Musick in England, after the manner of printing wherein this performance is done, it may not be improper to take notice of some of the advantages that may accrue to the science in general from this method of publishing the same, as also the benefit and ease that Performers in this way may receive, in order to their improvement in Musick, by having it laid before them in a complete and correct score.” He continues to observe that there is no want of good old pieces of Church music, but that they are not at all generally circulated, “for want of the art of regularly placing and ranging the Notes, a nicety which the old way of printing would not admit of.” By “the old way” he means printing with movable types, and mentions the score of Purcell's *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*, printed in that way, as a warning instance of incorrectness. The circulation of manuscript copies was still common, but this produced almost a greater harvest of errors. “From this short view, therefore, of the mischiefs of erroneous Printing and injudicious Transcribing of Church-Musick, and the inconveniences arising from the manner of writing and printing it in separate Parts and not in Score; it must necessarily follow, that this new way of conveying the same to posterity, by printing it in a complete Score, will greatly tend

to the improvement and advantage of Musick in general; which art of printing, by the indefatigable Industry of our present Undertaker, is brought to much greater perfection in England, than in any other part of Europe; the manifold advantages whereof may best be known, and will be most effectually explained by the use and practice of it.” The worthy Dr. Croft proceeds in the same diffuse style to set forth these advantages, and hopes that practised singers will in future sing their parts direct from the score; he also wishes (and the publisher undoubtedly joins in the wish) that the works of earlier composers for the Church may come to be printed in this same “complete and correct manner,” supported by the subscriptions of the heads of the Church; but of the new method itself he says no more.

Dr. Croft's words refer strictly only to the engraving of music in contradistinction to type-printing, and it is only of Church music that he says this was the first (considerable) printed work of its kind. Nevertheless we should err greatly if we doubted that a new method was then really adopted through Walsh's “indefatigable industry.” Croft's Anthems were engraved not on the old substance, copper, but on *pewter*, a mixture of tin and lead. The use of a new substance is to be recognised in the engraving. It is indeed still effected by the free hand, or with only the instruments used by copperplate engravers, even the crotchets being made without punches; but the movement of the hand in these notes, and especially in the bows and cross-lines, is such as to force us to infer a softer metal. The style is not uniform throughout, doubtless because many engravers were employed; pages 79-94 are scarcely distinguishable from copper-engraving, but the following pages again differ from it considerably. Bows, such as occur, e.g., on page 128, can only be made by a single stroke on pewter, not on copper.

All that is asserted here is still further confirmed by the second volume of Croft's “Anthems,” which was published later. If I can now prove that pewter plates were then already in use, no doubt will remain as to the truth of the above. In the same year with Croft's “Anthems,” but several months before them, Cluer published a neat octavo edition of Handel's new Opera, “Julius Cæsar.” We learn details about it from the advertisements. Having announced his edition as the only genuine one in the *London Journal* of May 2, 1724, Cluer writes more definitely on June 6: “Corrected and Figur'd by Mr. Handel's own Hand; therefore beware of incorrect pirated Editions—done on large Pewter Plates.” The edition was not published till the 13th of July, and was thus announced two days previously: “The whole Opera of Julius Cæsar in Score. Compos'd by the celebrated George Frederick Handel of London, Gent., and Corrected and Figur'd by his own Hand; Price 15s.” (*London Journal*, July 11, 1724).

The meaning of the “large pewter plates,” as a glance at the edition shows, is that two royal octavo pages were engraved on one plate and printed from it. Consequently Croft's “Anthems” were not the first work engraved on pewter, as is asserted in an article in the *Printing Times* in 1876. Moreover this shows that Walsh cannot be regarded as the inventor of this important innovation. The praise which good Dr. Croft lavished on him, of having by indefatigable industry brought music-engraving in England to much greater perfection than that of any other country, would twenty years later have been well merited, but at the time must have been chiefly dictated by the pleasure he felt at seeing his Anthems printed with such unexpected rapidity and excellence.

Cluer had made this improvement before Walsh. All the details concerning it are shrouded in obscurity, because the matter was treated as merely an affair affecting the printers; and were it not for the incidental notice in the single advertisement of June 6, 1724, we should know nothing of it. Unless previous experiments had been made with similar plates, Walsh must have seized the same material as soon as ever he heard of Cluer's mode of engraving "Julius Cæsar." So much must now be regarded as certain: Cluer and Walsh were the two persons who put the new method into practice, and their rivalry during the years from 1720 to 1729, when Cluer died and his widow kept up the business only for a short time, occasioned the conversion of the old copper-engraving into pewter-engraving.*

Cluer may have been the first to use pewter, but he certainly did not discover its special value. A few months after "Julius Cæsar" he printed Handel's newest Opera "Tamerlane," on the title-page of which is written in imposing letters, "Engrav'd on Copper Plates." "Tamerlane" was published January 9, 1729 (see my "Life of Handel," vol. ii. p. 125). In "Lothario" also, the last of the Operas engraved by him, published in 1729, he kept to copper-engraving. Probably there was some difficulty in printing from the pewter plates, the ink may have stuck to them, or the plates may have cracked when used for printing a very large edition; and such misadventures would soon make the printers afraid of pewter. Walsh seems to have bought Cluer's business from his widow; at least impressions of Handel's Operas taken from Cluer's plates were published after 1730 under his name, and from this time he was at the head of the London music-publishing trade. Handel's works formed the centre of Walsh's business, as Lully's the centre of Ballard's. Now soon after 1730, punches, which were driven with a hammer into the plate, were first used in Walsh's office. At first they were used only for the heads of notes like , but soon for notes like also, for letter-press, names of instruments, indications of expression, &c.; only the larger titles were for a long time engraved by hand. The original editions of Handel's Operas of the years 1720-40 enable us to follow the whole process from the first experiments down to its ultimate perfection. And the entire history, from copper-engraving to pewter-engraving with punches, can be studied in one single collection, called "Apollo's Feast," consisting of airs selected by Walsh from the above-named Operas, and published in five volumes in the years from 1725 to 1740.

From this collateral branch of the history of music, hitherto but little studied, we are again informed of the great importance of the London Italian Opera in the years 1720 to 1728, when Handel presided over it. It not only stood at the head of European music as well by virtue of the music composed for it as of the performance; it also created a musical public in England, and thereby encouraged industrial inventions and advances which, without this impulse, might have been long delayed.

John Walsh, who had the music business from his father, became, through the unlooked-for musical

advance of England, the greatest music-publisher of the eighteenth century, and died rich in 1766. His activity deserves a fuller description than is possible here. But perhaps some one may be encouraged by this notice to attempt it, and to draw up a list of his publications, which there are means of arranging according to the numbers which Walsh attached to almost all, in their proper order, and generally with the dates supplied from the advertisements. English musical publications after 1710 were only exceptionally provided with a date—a bad custom which had its origin in piracy, and was, like much else, imported from Holland.

I can here give full compensation for having been obliged to knock on the head the idea that musical copper-plate engraving was an English invention (*supra*, p. 524), by the certain fact that the introduction of pewter, and the alteration produced thereby in the mode of engraving through the combination of punches and free handiwork took place in England under the circumstances above detailed. This method spread gradually to other countries and caused the earlier processes to be discarded. It is the basis of all modern music-engraving. Its importance is therefore far greater than that of copper-engraving, although an invention of the eighteenth century may appear less interesting from an antiquarian point of view than one of the sixteenth. Its importance lies in its independence: the process is not dependent on picture-engraving or on book-printing, but is formed solely according to the laws of musical notation. On this ground it is a thing perfect in itself, and consequently stands at the head of all the modes of printing music.

Very curiously, the plates of several works belonging to Walsh's establishment are still preserved perfect, and now form the most important rarity that has come down to our times from the ancient history of music-printing.* They belong to the following five great works of Handel: 1. the first "Coronation Anthem" (known in Handel's time by the name "God save the King"), twenty-five plates; 2. "Acis and Galatea," eighty-nine plates; 3. "Dettingen Te Deum," ninety-eight plates; 4. "Judas Maccabæus," 208 plates; 5. "Messiah," 188 plates; with thirty-five additional plates called Appendix. I quote the works in the order in which they may probably have been engraved. The plates of the Anthem and those of "Acis and Galatea" show us in part the new method still in its earliest stage. These plates have been for a considerable time in the possession of Messrs. Novello, and are in so good a condition that it was possible to print a new edition from them, which is still to be had in the trade.

Thus the modern style of music-engraving arose in England at a time when in Italy the printing of music had almost utterly ceased, and when, both there and in the other musical countries, the largest works, especially scores, were scarcely spread abroad except by manuscript copies, so that the state of things in the fourteenth century, before the invention of printing, appeared to be coming back.

* While noting here Cluer and Walsh as the two innovators, I do not forget Richard Meares, who also worked contemporaneously with them, as an able engraver. In the preface to the class "Printed Music" in the Catalogue of the Caxton Exhibition, p. 249, it is said, "Richard Meares and John Walsh produced stamped plates in London about the year 1720," i.e. plates of pewter. Now it is very probable that Meares also took an active part in this innovation, but I have hitherto found no proof of it, and only know that in the year 1720 he was still working as an eminent engraver on copper: for Handel had his Opera "Radamisto" engraved by him then "on copper plates." If he really employed pewter at so early a date, I hope that the facts concerning it will be soon made public.

* The copper-plates of Marpurg's "Lehrbuch der Fuge" are not the oldest extant, as I supposed (p. 527), for I see from the Catalogue of the Caxton Exhibition, p. 249, that the plates of Corelli's Sonatas, which were engraved in London as early as 1710, are still in existence, and these may probably be confidently pronounced the oldest extant. The work of Marpurg was called on p. 527, "Kunst der Fuge:" its correct title is "Lehrbuch der Fuge." There is a third error on that page, which I take this opportunity of correcting. On p. 527, line 45, occur the words, "It [i.e. Bach's 'Kunst der Fuge'] was published again by Marpurg." "Again" must be cancelled, as Marpurg's edition of that work was not the second but the first, and his task was to write a commendatory preface to a work during the preparation of which Bach had died without being able to complete the publication himself.

About 1750 this style of engraving spread from England to France, and then fell in the former as fast as it rose in the latter. The engraving itself was always tasteful in France, because an excellent school of musical copper-engravers had long been established there; but the impression from pewter plates was far behind the English of 1740. This may be verified very clearly by comparing one of Handel's London scores with one of Gluck's Paris ones. Italy took no part in the movement. But from France the new mode of engraving spread to Germany, first to the Rhine (Bonn and Cologne) and thence to Leipzig. I have already observed that the perfection of music-printing followed in the track of the great composers. This has been the course of events throughout all ages till our times. Leipzig has had the precedence for about the last seventy years. It is impossible here to mention in detail the musical events as well as the technical improvements which have enabled that commercial town to gain such a position. I will only allude to the fact that the Leipzig style and method has in the last twenty-five years spread to France, England, and even Italy. This is intimately connected with the enormous editions of music printed at cheap prices which are peculiar to our age, and are executed by transferring to stone the proofs taken from the pewter, which makes any number of lithographic impressions possible, and preserves the plates long intact. This musical lithography is now the rival and the true pendant to the impression from musical types. Which of the two is the more valuable, or in particular circumstances the more appropriate, often depends on incidental contingencies, so that no general principle can be advanced. Much that is now engraved and then printed from lithographic stone would in my opinion look better if printed from type. Only this can be assumed to be universally allowed, that impressions taken direct from the engraved plates, when compared with those produced by either of the other methods, look superior and grander. On this account the former method is adopted in all standard editions of the classical composers, as, *e.g.*, in the complete editions of the works of Handel, Bach, Beethoven, &c. In the preparation of the plate much is done by mechanical appliances, but the rest by engraving, a form of artistic workmanship the proper sequel to which is the impression from the plate, which reproduces all the delicate details of the work.

This mode of printing is interfered with only in large editions by the defects of the metal, which often suffers cracks and loses the sharpness of the lines even in an edition of a hundred. For this reason the use of *zinc* instead of pewter is a decided advance; and it is matter of surprise that this method has not sooner come into general use. I first introduced zinc in the year 1865 for the engraving of Handel's works. The man whom I engaged for this work had already operated for some time on zinc in engraving some small obscure pieces, mainly from want of means to purchase the more expensive pewter plates. The Oratorio, "The Triumph of Time and Truth," vol. xx. of the German Handel Society's edition of Handel's works, is the first large work printed from zinc plates. Since then I have had thirty-eight more volumes executed from the same material, and have become every year more convinced of its superiority. The punches are not more worn away in twelve years than they would be with pewter; the plates allow a very large number of clear, perfectly clean copies to be struck off without injury, and the greater hardness of the metal makes it possible to employ letters with finer lines than can be used with pewter plates. I have been

thereby enabled to introduce in the edition of Handel the beautiful English letter-types, called "old style" (which can scarcely be used with pewter), although in the last few years others have begun to imitate them. Thus in zinc we have a material which allows us to work with punches to the full extent required, and at the same time is equal to copper in durability as well as in the facility of taking impressions. It therefore commends itself to careful attention and trial on the part of all who have to do with this branch of industry. It is needless to speculate on the degree in which it is likely in the immediate future to supplant pewter. But if it had been possible about the year 1720 to obtain pure zinc for music-engraving, I believe we should never have heard anything of pewter plates.

BORROWED PLUMES.

WHAT a fruitful theme! Truly, were a history written giving a faithful account of all the occasions in which individuals have strutted their little hour in borrowed plumes the reading thereof would prove marvellously entertaining and instructive. There have been times when plumes have been borrowed for good, or at least for harmless purposes, and when no wrong or evil has ensued, but more frequently the assumption has been productive of mischief and injustice. Musical annals present us with abundant examples, and, although not of so much importance in their consequences as in some other affairs of life—as, for instance, when large inheritances have been at stake—yet we cannot but regard them with reprehension. Kings and princes, from Henry VIII. to a recent period, have frequently condescended to wear plumes, as composers, which should rightly have belonged to their music-masters. What a matter of regret it is that so much of imposition has so persistently hung about the history of our National Anthem! Carey, in the first place, probably borrowed plumes from the wings of Dr. Bull; and later on Clark, by his ill-advised attempts to manufacture evidence to bolster up his theories (for he held two distinct opinions on the subject at different times), has only added to the confusion, and increased the difficulty of restoring the plumes to the composer entitled to wear them.

We read with amusement in "Pepys's Diary" how he engaged a professor of music to teach him, and when the former had completed the composition of a piece of music, Pepys complacently dismissed him, not needing his services any further; whereupon Pepys adopts the musical manuscript, fondly regarding it as the product of his own brain. Musical history tells us also of many individuals who from vanity or false pride have frequently discarded the names proper to their birth and country, and by plumes borrowed from Italy endeavoured to impose upon the credulity and imagination of the British public, always too ready to accept anything musical if only it come from abroad. These practices have been common almost time out of mind—certainly from the days of bluff King Hal down to our own; and unfortunately there is not much hope at present of any improvement, unless indeed we pin our faith on the old adage that "when things are at their worst they'll mend." How bad matters are now can be judged by perusing the following cutting from a public journal: "Colonel Stracey, a gentleman well known in operatic circles, happened to be travelling in Denmark, when by the merest chance he came upon the Behrens-Trebelli opera party. The colonel is a distinguished amateur,