Review

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AN Orchestral Society has been formed in Lewisham, to meet every Saturday evening, under the conductorship of Mr. Warwick Jordan, Mus. Bac. Many amateurs of well-known ability have joined, and it is intended to admit none who are not thoroughly efficient. The places of first oboe, first clarinet, and first bassoon are for the present filled by professionals, and the music to be practised will consist of symphonies, overtures, pianoforte and organ concertos, &c. The first two meetings have taken place, and Haydn's Fifth and Seventh Symphonies, Beethoven's Overture to "Prometheus," Mozart's Overtures "Cosi fan tutti," "Idomeneo," and "Director," have been played.

AN interesting incident in connection with the lamented death of Mr. George Cooper, who had been Organist to Christ's Hospital for some thirty-four years, occurred at Christ Church, Newgate-street, on the Sunday following his decease. The boys of Christ's Hospital, who attend service at that Church, sat in solemn silence at the close of the Morning Service while the organist of the Church, Mr. J. T. Cooper, performed on the grand organ Handel's appropriate Dead March in "Saul." The effect of the boys remaining reverently in their seats until the last notes of the solemn dirge died away was very impressive, and shewed esteem for their late talented organist.

A NOTICE in the *Athenæum* of the 11th ult. of the recent production of "Fidelio," at the Lyceum, contains two or three points so amusing that it is worth while to call the attention of our readers to them. In reference to Mdlle. Torriani, the writer says that "in the concerted pieces she was undertoned, and Miss Gaylord took the lead therein, with her rich and round soprano notes." This remark is simply ludicrous, when it is remembered that in the pieces referred to Beethoven has written the part of Marcellina above that of Leonora almost throughout—a fact of which the critic appears to be unaware. An even more droll observation is made with respect to the Prisoners' chorus. After saying that "except by German companies the chorus of Prisoners has never been sung well in tune in this country, and the oddly-dressed choir at the Lyceum was no exception," the writer adds, "It however gave the finales of the first and last acts accurately and forcibly." Inasmuch as the finale of the first act contains no chorus whatever, except the Prisoners' chorus, it is difficult for an ordinary mind to reconcile these statements, or to see how, if the chorus was sung out of tune, the finale to the first act could have been given "accurately." In the same article we meet with the remarkable statement that Beethoven "has not exclusively allotted to the orchestra the 'Thematischer Leitfaden' to individualise characters." In his anxiety to throw a stone at Wagner, the critic has here sadly got out of his depth with his German. "Leitfaden" is a "guiding thread" or "clue;" and what is meant by Beethoven's not allotting a "thematic clue" to his orchestra the writer in the *Athenæum* only knows. We are not quite clear, also, as to the sense of the following: "Nothing can be more marked and characteristic than the distinctive notation the composer employs to picture Marcellina, Jacquino, and Rocco, than that he uses when delineating Leonora, Florestan, and Don Pizarro." We should like to know what edition of the score the writer had before him in penning these lines; in all that we have ever seen the notation employed is the same for all the characters.

REVIEWS.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Sing to the Lord. Anthem. Composed by Henry Smart.

THIS very elaborate composition, occupying twenty-eight pages, was written for the recent Festival of the Church Choir Association at St. Paul's Cathedral; and few who were present on that occasion will forget the great effect which, in spite of a not altogether faultless performance, it produced. We have no hesitation in expressing our opinion that it is not merely one of Mr. Smart's very best

works (which is saying not a little), but one of the most important contributions to our Church music which has been produced for many years. It is in five movements. The opening chorus, "Sing to the Lord a new song," in B flat, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, has much of the genial vigour and majestic swing of Handel's Church music in it. After a broad introduction, a masterly fugue is introduced at the words "Let them give glory unto the Lord," which at length gives place to the return of the first subject, the massive chords at the close being very effective. As the entire Anthem is far too long for use in ordinary choirs and on general occasions, we would suggest the expediency of publishing this opening movement separately. It is quite complete in itself, and, being by no means difficult, would certainly be extremely popular. The second movement—a bass solo with semi-chorus of trebles and altos in four parts, "All creatures serve Thee" (E flat, common time)—is, to our mind, the gem of the whole. The exquisite flow of the melody and the charming effects of the occasional choral entries are alike noteworthy. The organ part in this movement is written on three staves throughout; and it is difficult to avoid the idea that Mr. Smart had an orchestra in his mind when he conceived this accompaniment. In reading the movement we seem to hear violins in the semiquaver figures marked for the choir, while the soft wind is plainly indicated in the chords for swell reeds, which are from time to time introduced. At the end of the movement the full chorus, in eight real parts, enters with grand effect on the words "There is none that can resist Thy voice." The orchestral feeling of which we have spoken also pervades the two following movements. The chorus, "The Lord maketh a way in the sea," has an accompaniment somewhat recalling (though without plagiarism) Mendelssohn's "The sea saw and fled," in the 114th Psalm. The whole of this number is most impressive; and the abrupt close on the diminished seventh of D $\sharp$, followed after a bar and a half's silence by the $\frac{4}{4}$ on E flat, introducing the quartet "Yet Thou art merciful" in B flat, is of peculiarly happy effect. After the bold and dramatic chorus just noticed, the contrast of the sustained harmonies of the solo voices, with a clarinet solo in the accompaniment, is charming; the quartet leads at once into the final chorus, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," which is less amply developed than some of the earlier movements, but contains a capital little fugue on the "Hallelujah," and concludes with a very spirited *coda*. It is long since we met with a piece of Church music which has given us so much pleasure as this Anthem. It is an honour alike to its composer and to the occasion for which it was written; and we most cordially recommend it to organists and choirmasters for performance at choral festivals. It will amply repay them for the trouble taken in getting it up.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F. Composed by Ebenezer Prout.

THIS Evening Service, was composed for the like the Anthem noticed above, Festival of the London Church Choir Association. Not the least among the benefits resulting from such festivals is the stimulus they give to composers of church music. This work, Mr. Prout's third setting of the same Canticles, will no doubt be found generally useful, not only on account of its intrinsic merit, but also because its length will not preclude it from frequent performance. Though not strictly original in detail, this service, like all Mr. Prout's compositions, is very cleverly wrought, and, what is of paramount importance, is always in true keeping with an intelligent reading of the words. The first chorus, which includes the first three verses of the Magnificat, is followed by a short quartet or verse part, which is soon merged into the chorus at the words "He hath shewed strength." Commencing at the words "He hath filled the hungry," a quartet of a most interesting character carries us through the remaining portion of the words. The "Gloria Patri" contains some close and spirited imitation *fugato*, and from the breadth and solidity of its style forms a fine conclusion to the Canticle.