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The Orchestral Problem of the Future

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FEBRUARY 13, 1923.

ALBERT A. STANLEY, Esq., M.A.

IN THE CHAIR.

THE ORCHESTRAL PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE.

BY ADRIAN C. BOULT.

It is a great pleasure to come here to-night to talk to so learned a gathering about a problem which interests me much but with which nevertheless I feel that I am not very well qualified to deal. It is a difficult problem and it has to be examined from all kinds of angles. We get sometimes on rather dangerous ground, but we must try to face the difficulties, and I hope to learn a great deal from the discussion which will follow.

For the purpose of to-day's talk I think we should be wise to take firm hold of our title (which was suggested to me by our President) and to begin first of all with the past, then to face the present, and then talk about the future. I shall finish by becoming perhaps rather utopian in my desires; at the same time painting a picture which I feel ought to be not utopian, but a reality in this very rich and certainly most musical town. I am not going to complain about the rest of the country. Already I think the provinces are in a fairly satisfactory state orchestrally. It is more in regard to London that we have to wander into dreamland.

I propose to begin by just sketching roughly how the orchestra of to-day has developed. There are, of course, a great many people who know about the history of these things, so I shall only touch lightly on certain points which in a way form landmarks in the development of the orchestra. Very early orchestras were mostly used in the accompaniments to operas. We know that Monteverde in 1608 must have had a fair sized orchestra—an orchestra that we should think even to-day respectable for a theatre. Stradella and Scarlatti also used these orchestras. Right through to the end of the 18th century I think we will find that although a body of players we should nowadays call an orchestra was in general

practice, yet it is really a string orchestra with extra instruments used as obligati for special purposes. We know, for instance, that in a well-known score like Bach's B minor Mass, the basis of the whole thing is the strings. When a good noise is wanted to accompany the choir he puts in the trumpets and a certain amount of wood wind. For the solo movements he falls back on his harpsichord or organ with two or three instruments employed, not really as part of an orchestra in the modern sense of the word, but simply as obligati to provide a counterpart to the vocal line.

Then we come to Mozart. The same thing is really true there, although the wind band is more independent, and expands towards a definite form which it has not had before—that is eight wood wind instruments, two horns, two trumpets and drums. That is the normal orchestra in Mozart's time, and is where he and Haydn leave us. It is interesting to note what Sir Hubert Parry says in his history—that Mozart before writing his last three symphonies heard a certain orchestral effect for the first time in his life, and was enormously thrilled by it. An orchestra that we should call now a stunt orchestra existed at Mannheim. Among its accomplishments was the orchestral crescendo and diminuendo. This thrilled him much and was of course dragged into his next composition.

With Beethoven the horns often are increased to four; drums are more used and also extras like the piccolo. Still, if we look at Beethoven's symphonies, although the strings are not playing all the time yet they are still the foundation.

With Wagner the wind begins to take a position equal with the strings. You begin to feel that the wind and the strings are two halves of the orchestra, and that they are balanced one against the other. There are long passages in Parsifal where the wind carry on by themselves. Even in the comparatively tiny orchestra of 17 for which he wrote the Siegfried Idyll we have a long passage towards the middle where the wind have it all to themselves. There is most delightful colouring; the bass alternating between bassoon and horns in a perfectly normal way. Wagner regularly made use of more instruments than were generally used: the woodwind are trebled instead of doubled and he adds what are usually called Wagner Tubas which were in four-part writing and are interchangeable with the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th horns. The real reason why Wagner could make the wind band such an independent body was because of the invention of pistons. The addition of pistons to the brass instruments made them chromatic; so he was able to put his horns anywhere and make them play any kind of tune. Then too there were the

trumpets. And the trombones had by this time become much more flexible instruments and so were able to give to the wind band the freedom of the string orchestra.

And then we come to Strauss and Mahler and people of that kind. They simply—perhaps it is rather brutal to say so—they simply developed the orchestra in the direction of extravagance. They used extra instruments a good deal. But when all is said and done you find their work, with a little trouble, can be performed by quite a small orchestra. We know how Mr. Basil Cameron played the earlier symphonic poems of Strauss with an orchestra of 25 odd at Torquay. Of course it meant a lot of work on the part of Mr. Cameron, but the result was almost the same in a musical sense as if there had been the larger orchestra. I want to make that point because I do feel that when our English composers treat themselves to a Gargantuan orchestra (as for instance Mr. Holst in "*The Planets*"), there is a certain definite loss if performance is attempted with anything less than the full equipment. Now with the works of these composers of the late German period I feel it is almost a gain when instruments are removed—in fact I have heard it said that the more instruments you take from the score the better it sounds.

Stravinsky and Scriabin I think are not quite so open to this accusation as the people before them. In regard to Stravinsky, certainly he is extravagant, but I do feel one can class him with what I have said about English people as really using their instruments in an essential way.

Schönberg's scores are most interesting to look at, but we seldom have a chance of hearing them. He likes the pedal bass clarinet, which I am afraid I have not seen, which plays an octave lower than the ordinary bass clarinet. I suppose he knows he wants that kind of colour; and his scoring on paper shows every sign of certainty of touch. May I read the list of instruments in the orchestra of the *Gurrelieder*? It is interesting because I think we have arrived at what we may call the climax of extravagance in the use of orchestral instruments:—

Besides six vocal soloists, three four-part male choirs, one eight-part mixed choir; he asks for a very full string band, eight flutes (of different kinds), five oboes, seven clarinets, five bassoons, ten horns, seven trumpets, seven trombones and tuba, six timpani, one bass drum, cymbals, one tenor drum, one side drum, triangle, glockenspiel, xylophone, gong, rattle, and several large iron chains!

Well, I think if people want to write for all that, first of all they are very self-sacrificing, because I do not think they

will hear their own work performed very often. And secondly, they cannot expect to get it performed in that kind of strength because very few halls in the world can hold so great a mass of performers and give the work a chance of coming out. There was recently a performance at Amsterdam which made a very profound impression, but that is one of the few places where unlimited rehearsal is the rule, and it was generally agreed that the hall was too small.

Mr. Holst, of course, in "The Planets" uses six horns and four trumpets, and the wood-wind are quadrupled. Now here is an example to prove my point. I dare say many of you will remember Saturn and the great "Four-flute tune" near the beginning. In the absence of the bass flute the composer directs that the lowest part be played by a bassoon. I have heard it played by the finest bassoon player in London, Mr. James, and there is no doubt it lost from the alteration, thus showing it to be a justifiable extravagance to have the bass flute. Here then is a reasonable point of view. The composer knows that it loses in effect without the bass-flute, but he makes it possible, without extra trouble for the conductor, to have the part played by the bassoon because he realises that the bass flute is difficult to get.

We may mention in this riot of colour Mr. Holbrooke with his saxophones. There is no doubt that they have an effect. But I cannot say that I love the tone, it sounds so like a nursery. Nowadays, moreover, we associate the tone with a different kind of music, and that prejudices us, but is not Mr. Holbrooke's fault.

These increases go on in a vicious circle; and some of them are due to the fact that the composer simply does not care. Schönberg cannot have cared when he piled score upon score. We were told in Vienna that he even makes an income out of the sale of his scores to American and other visitors. Although the works are seldom performed, people like to have the scores lying about on their tables (I do myself) for they are masterpieces of music printing.

In some cases composers have been in a position to get what they demand. Wagner in later life could secure anything he wanted; and this no doubt tempted him to use a bigger orchestra and to get more extravagant. So the thing developed out of a tiny orchestra which was practically strings with a few extras into this enormous machine which balances and even over-balances the strings.

There is another point which I might mention before leaving the question of developing the orchestra from the composer's side. Once when I was rehearsing George Butterworth's

"Shropshire Lad"—wind and strings separately—I discovered that there was practically no moment when each half of the orchestra was not a complete and satisfactory thing to listen to. That is to say, people could have listened to the wind rehearsal and have been happy at it. That is not the case with so brilliant and recent an orchestrator as Tschaikovsky, though I think it would be equally true of Wagner. It is interesting to note that that particular work of Butterworth records extraordinary well, and I have noticed that in cases where the wind band is complete there is no trouble with the record but where the wind is dependent on the string bass there is always difficulty with the balance.

May we now go forward in a more rapid way with the establishment side of the question? We know in Elizabethan times that every well regulated family had a number of people, including, of course, the servants, who could take part in madrigals and very often the Consort of Viols was complete in the household. It is interesting to note that in rare cases in the present day that still holds good; and I recently heard of such a case. Many of you know Mr. R. Finnie MacEwen, of Marchmont, who has had much to do with music in Edinburgh, and is a governor of the Royal College of Music and a very old friend of Sir Charles Stanford. He has on his estate in Berwickshire a complete church choir, drawn from his own family and household, so he can have a rehearsal any evening he likes in his music room, and take the whole party to church on Sunday. As a result we can well imagine that the people of the village have a good time; and altogether I think such an arrangement represents a very satisfactory state of things.

From England—for I think really it was in England that this idea of home-made music was first initiated—from England the thing spread into other countries. In Germany and Austria, we know that each great family had its own orchestra. We know this by the appointment, for instance, of Haydn to be deputy conductor in the household of Prince Esterhazy, an appointment he held for several years. We know too that all the servants took part in the orchestra for which Haydn wrote symphonies. And we know that when Bach was Court Musician at Cöthen, the Margrave of Brandenburg, who was visiting Bach's master, gave him a commission for the six Brandenburg Concertos, specifying presumably the soloists of special excellence for whom prominent parts might be written.

Mr. Dent has recently told us how Donaueschingen has long been a centre of music; how the reigning princes there set

up a little theatre and enlisted an orchestra from their household and local amateurs, supplementing their efforts on occasions when they could get them by professionals. It is also true that professionals very often made tours, visiting for a few weeks each family orchestra in different parts of central Europe.

We may be certain that the large and prosperous municipalities like Hamburg were not going to be left behind by these other places, and that the Hamburg town orchestra must have been established long ago. And that was followed by the effort of enterprising individuals. We know, for instance, from Bülow's letters that he was appointed for a year, at St. Gallen, in Switzerland, where there was a little theatre run by an enterprising manager. He was not entirely free from the failings which I am afraid are too often associated with opera managers; and Bülow had trouble in getting his weekly money, and finally nearly went to law about it. Then again Bülow had a difficult orchestra to contend with for it included many amateurs who were not always quite willing to give their services whole-heartedly and were easily offended. And we know how the enterprising Neumann toured the "Ring" in early days, and managed to get through Germany for some time with a touring company without outside support.

So much for the past. I now want to work through the present and to glance at the condition of orchestral music in different towns and to see what conclusions can be drawn therefrom.

May I begin with Vienna and Munich which are much alike, although Munich is a smaller town? It so happens that I have recently been in touch with both. In each case there are two principal orchestras. There are others as well, but that does not alter the position—they are on a smaller and different scale. First of all there is the opera orchestra which in Vienna, of course, is also called the Philharmonic. It gives a symphony concert on Sunday mornings and plays opera every night. In Munich symphony concerts are given on nights when there is no opera. That is in both towns the best orchestra; and it is supported by the State with a handsome subsidy. The second orchestra in each place is generally accepted as the principal concert orchestra. Symphony concerts are given. Although these orchestras are not officially supported by the State yet I think in each case the municipalities of Munich and Vienna give a dole to the orchestra when it cries out. The position was always perfectly satisfactory till the War. But now the depreciation of the currency has

made things very difficult so that there is danger that the concert orchestra in each town may disappear altogether.

Leipzig is in rather a different position. There the Gewandhaus (which until recently was conducted by Nikisch) holds a series of concerts, 22 being given every year weekly all through the winter. But most of the orchestra is borrowed from the town. It is the opera orchestra. There is no opera on Thursday evening because then the orchestra is borrowed, and the Gewandhaus Directors actually pay the hiring fee for the services of these gentlemen on this evening.

The point I wish to make about Leipzig is that as a general rule, there is only one rehearsal before the public "general rehearsal" which is like a repetition concert the day before. It was often difficult to get in to the Thursday evening concert because the seats were subscribed for before the season began, many being handed down from father to son. In any case some of the more musical people in Leipzig were of opinion that the preliminary performance on Wednesday morning was the better. But I used to find that Nikisch was not over-scrupulous on Wednesday morning; he would then encourage extravagances in expression, in order to let the things drop into place and a really good performance result on Thursday; this also had the merit of saving himself and the orchestra from too much hard work at the private rehearsal. He might spend an hour and a half rehearsing a short modern work but would not touch the concerto or symphony. He would first meet the concerto soloist at the public rehearsal, and there would be no difficulty about mutual understanding because he was a marvellous accompanist. As to the symphony he exaggerated this a good deal at the public rehearsal in order to have everything right on Thursday.

In Paris, Lamoureux lost much money when he founded his orchestra, but I believe that now it is a paying proposition. They give concerts every week and there are public rehearsals. In Paris there is great difficulty about the deputy system. This also is a trouble in London, but I will speak about that later.

With regard to the Amsterdam, Prague and American orchestras, the system in these places is the same, and it would be difficult to suggest any improvement. The orchestra is paid by the month and engaged by the year. That is a very important point. Their whole time is at the disposal of the organisation. As a general rule the rehearsals take place every morning for three or four hours. The afternoons are free and the musicians are allowed to give lessons in that time. But, of course, they have to cancel everything if the

Conductor calls a rehearsal for any particular afternoon. The concerts are usually at regular intervals. But if the orchestra takes part in extra concerts the Conductor decides how many there shall be and when they shall take place. If he thinks the orchestra is getting overworked he says, "No, there is not time." Although it may bring in money to have the orchestra hired it is in his power to say, "No, we cannot give more concerts." The subscription concerts must come first—and everything must give way to them.

That is the position in most American Orchestras. They rehearse every day and give concerts once or twice a week. The advantage of that is incalculable. To begin with, provided the Conductor is a respectable person, he does not overwork his orchestra, and he does not underwork them. Under this arrangement he never has to trouble about deputies except in cases of illness; and then probably he knows the people who will be available. The third horn can play first, and so on, and practically, there is no trouble or anxiety.

Contrast that with the position obtaining in London. An orchestral musician in London must, to make a living, attend several rehearsals in the morning each week. Then, perhaps he must spend three afternoons doing gramophone sessions, which are harder work than any concert—partly because of the intense heat and also on account of the strain; then he dashes back to London and plays at a symphony concert in the evening, or at some theatre. Compare that with the life of players in places like Prague, Amsterdam and America where the afternoons are free and only two or three evenings occupied. The money they receive is enough—one must discuss these mercenary matters—the money they receive is enough to make it unnecessary to give lessons; though, of course, if they like they are free to give lessons in the afternoon; and into the bargain they will receive a pension when their time is up with the orchestra.

Probably most of you know the conditions prevailing here. We have the Philharmonic which is chosen from all others. They are called together when needed for a particular concert, and they rehearse once or twice as the case may be. Very seldom is the Conductor lucky enough to get more than six hours' rehearsal.

The Queen's Hall Orchestra is the nearest approach to the continental method. They give the Promenades nightly in August, September, and October, Sunday concerts every week throughout the winter; and Saturday afternoon symphony concerts of which there are twelve, during the season. They rehearse four days a week during the Promenade season.

and even then many of them have other things to do on off rehearsal days. I know, for instance, that many members of the Queen's Hall Orchestra were playing in a rehearsal and concert at Oxford on a certain morning and afternoon, and a Promenade in the evening. They often have a gramophone session in the afternoon. But they do work together for a long period, and are much more like a continental orchestra. I think personally they are much better in their ensemble than any other orchestra ever heard in London—with rare exceptions.

Mr. William Boosey was recently kind enough to give me some interesting information about the Queen's Hall Orchestra. The Promenade Concerts do not make much money, but they always cover expenses; the Sunday concerts quite often do. The Symphony Concerts do not, but come very near it. I want to make this point clear in order to arrive at a conclusion. He told me that he finds more and more that good music is a paying thing—the Classical night, as well as the Wagner, and Saturday, which is always a popular evening—but naturally more people are free on Saturday. It is most satisfactory that the Friday Promenade is getting so popular, and I hope he may soon see his way to having a second night of the week entirely devoted to classical music. The greatness of classical music has already stood the test of time and the more it is encouraged at popular concerts the better.

Mr. Boosey also made the point that this very satisfactory post-war result was only due to the long years of spade work done in the past, when Mr. Newman managed, and, of course, when Sir Henry Wood first conducted for him in the early 1890's, and only because it has become an established institution, so that people, without even looking at the advertisements know that on any night in August, September and October, they will be certain of hearing something good if they go to the Queen's Hall. Mr. Boosey felt that this had much to do with the success—the steady way in which the Concerts had been carried on year after year and with very little interruption even during the war, not to mention the amazingly high artistic standard maintained by Sir Henry Wood.

The other so-called orchestras are scarcely orchestras at all. The members play regularly in a theatre, and when there is a symphony concert they send a deputy to the theatre. There may be two or more rehearsals for the symphony concert, but it often occurs that there is a gramophone session on the first of these two mornings, in which case the player will send a deputy to the rehearsal, and himself play at the concert

after only one rehearsal. A satisfactory artistic result can hardly be expected.

Turning now to the Provinces: Manchester has an old-established permanent orchestra, giving a large number of concerts. The members of the orchestra all have an established position, and established connections. I do not say that what they earn from the orchestra is sufficient, but they are able year after year to make up their income by regular connection with other things. The rehearsals take place regularly and there is no difficulty in regard to deputies, which is a very important point. More than half the orchestra goes to Llandudno every summer, so a member of the orchestra has little anxiety about the future. He knows that in the winter he will be employed at Manchester, and that in the summer he will be employed at Llandudno; moreover there is a pension fund in that orchestra. In view of these facts it is gratifying to note the satisfactory result which was announced a few weeks ago—that Mr. Hamilton Harty by dint of taking over the business management himself, has succeeded in making ends meet. There was a balance of £30 on the plus side, and that directly after a season in which there had been a loss which, I think, ran into four figures. Manchester, then, is one of the places we can look to for a lead in the future in the way of establishing and running an orchestra.

Birmingham is not so satisfactory. The orchestra has the City of Birmingham on its list of guarantors, but a good deal of money has been lost, and there have been difficulties in collecting the members for rehearsal.

The Scottish Orchestra also is not satisfactory. It has only a season of three months in the year, and then disperses, but while the season lasts it is a whole-time engagement and conditions are excellent.

Oxford is most interesting. The Oxford Orchestra was formed by Sir Hugh Allen fifteen years ago and now it plays as a regular thing. The orchestra, which is very rich in the string department, is composed of Oxford people. Most of these are amateurs. There is a small proportion of professionals, and for important concerts twelve or thirteen professionals come from London. It is very satisfactory that a place the size of Oxford should be able to give concerts with so little outside help.

Leicester has a Symphony Orchestra performing this season under the direction of Dr. Malcolm Sargent which includes amateurs and professionals from within a radius of twelve miles of Leicester. They have here a symphony orchestra which is

absolutely complete. It is not ideal ; but it is of enormous credit to a town of that size that it can have a complete orchestra which rehearses regularly once a week as well as on concert days.

Then there are the watering places like Bournemouth, Hastings and Harrogate. At Hastings there is a season of six months ; at Harrogate six months ; and at Bournemouth it is a whole time job. They spend the morning playing popular music. But that does not matter. It is a regular engagement and it is not necessary to hunt for extra jobs here and there to keep things going.

Smaller places like Scarborough and Eastbourne are more or less on the same basis.

Now for the conclusions to be drawn from this heterogeneous collection of facts.

The conclusion I have come to about the whole question is this : We must simply accept the fact that there are two kinds of orchestra. There is the orchestra of the symphony concert or philharmonic type, with unlimited rehearsal time, which can tackle any amount of new work, and is a thing which country or town can look to as always giving performances of the highest possible artistic value. There is that, and then there is the popular orchestra, the work of which is based on the familiar programme and on the regularity of its performances—on the fact, as mentioned by Mr. Boosey, that people do not need to look at the advertisements to know what is going on. In this category may be included the Promenade Concerts and Sunday Concerts at Queen's Hall.

On the other side, the philharmonic side, we have no example in this country ; we cannot include our own Royal Philharmonic Society because the performances are unequal very often. Recently they gave an important classical symphony without rehearsing at all because they had to spend all their available time rehearsing modern work. It is marvellous, and a wonderful testimony to the qualities of the English orchestral player, that the standard of performance of such ambitious programmes is as high as it is.

In this category I put the Amsterdam, Prague and American Orchestras because rehearsal there is unlimited, and because the subsidy in each case is enough to put anxiety out of the question. They can just do as much new work as they wish, and they can rub up their classical work, which is so intensely important. In such cases it is simply the Conductor or the Committee who is to blame if the Concerts are not what may be accepted as a model in every sense of the word.

I am taking a somewhat lofty standpoint over the perfect orchestra, because I am convinced that the time will come when we shall have one in London. It needs an endowment : £10,000 a year is spent by the municipality in Amsterdam, and the Directors of the Concertgebouw have sometimes to subscribe as well : it is only in these rare cases that we can achieve perfection ; but it is a perfection which a place like London ought to have.

Mr. Harold Bauer in a rather interesting discussion at the British Music Society the other day said, "What is the use of talking about orchestras being made to pay ? No orchestra could be possibly expected to pay if it is to do reasonable artistic work." That is the American point of view ; and I am afraid it is true. But I shall come back to that when we speak of Utopia.

In the provinces the prospect, as I have suggested, is, I think, very bright. I have referred to details ; but, of course, there is room for a good deal of development in certain directions. For instance, the orchestras in Yorkshire are quite flourishing concerns, but in no case is there a whole time arrangement. Well, I am sure that co-operation between Bradford, Leeds, and other towns could provide whole time employment for a fair sized and reasonably efficient orchestra ; sending them to places like Scarborough and Whitby for the summer ; so that members of the orchestra need have no anxiety as to what is going to happen after the season. Arrangements could be made with the authorities at these holiday resorts with a view to keeping things going in this way.

In Scotland, too, instead of having for three months an orchestra which then disperses (many of the members of the Scottish Orchestra come from London), the orchestra might be kept together for six months and divide itself during the summer between the Scottish watering-places.

Manchester with Llandudno is ideal in that respect.

Bournemouth, Hastings and Harrogate I have said are models. I do not say that they are perfect in the philharmonic sense, but they are perfect in the popular sense. They have very little time for rehearsals ; but if they have to play out of doors in the morning they can surreptitiously rehearse things which they intend to do later at Symphony Concerts. In this connection I may recall what Sir August Manns did in the old Crystal Palace days. Every day for a week he played a work which he variously called Rondo in F, Symphonic Sketch, etc., etc., by Richard Strauss. Finally on the Saturday afternoon, he announced the first performance in London of

Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*. That is one way of solving the rehearsal problem!

It has often been said that we ought to use smaller orchestras for concerts. This is being done to a certain extent by Mr. Anthony Bernard. With his London Chamber Orchestra he is able to give a complete and delightful programme with an orchestra of eighteen or twenty. And people like Mr. Arthur Bliss are writing works for a smaller orchestra. The trouble is that they are all different. There is no standardisation. Each work is made up of different elements. We want to standardise the theatre and the small orchestra before we can get anything out of it; and that is a difficult thing to do, because the compositions and arrangements are already made and they would want re-making.

In the early days of the war I was able to give a series of so-called popular concerts with an orchestra of twenty-nine: eight wood-wind, two horns, two trumpets, one percussion and sixteen strings, and we did anything up to middle Beethoven, and of course modern works for small orchestra. We had no trombones as I felt more strings would be needed to balance them. The chief problem was to find a bright finish to each programme, as in most works of this kind trombones are indispensable. I used to fall back on Haydn Rondos and Mozart Finales, and it was surprising how excited and happy the audience got over these things. They seemed to enjoy them as much as if they had had a far lighter conclusion to the concert. At any rate the audience which began with 200 (in a Hall which held 4,000!) finished 1,000 strong at the end of ten concerts. And if the hall had been full it would have paid for an orchestra twice the size. That was in Liverpool in the early days of the war, and I was unable to carry on the effort; but I think what we had begun had in it the makings of an economic proposition on the popular side.

I have heard it said that architects might help us; that they might arrange to build halls where we could have a larger proportion of wind, and a smaller proportion of strings. But this is a rather ridiculous line to take because people are not prepared to pull down concert halls and re-build them just to save the fees of a few string players, apart altogether from the fact that there are a great many orchestras and orchestral players in the country and we cannot suddenly take measures to wash out about half of them; it would not be allowed; and it is ridiculous to suppose it could happen.

UTOPIA.

As to Utopia I do not say I think it will come soon, but I think it might; and I think it should. In this connection

I want to quote half a dozen figures from the Civil Service Accounts, taken from the Blue Book, 1909, that is well before the War—I think the figures are higher now; but the 1909 figures give us a better basis to go on than anything that may have happened since the war. In 1909 the expenditure on The British Museum was £169,000; The National Gallery, £16,000; National Portrait Gallery, £5,000; Wallace Collection, £6,000; things called Scientific Investigation, details of which I have not been able to obtain, £53,000; National Gallery of Scotland, £5,000. Into the bargain we must not forget that, so I believe, accommodation at Burlington House is given rent free to various Societies that make use of it; for instance, the Royal Society, the Royal Astronomical Society, and the Society of Antiquaries, etc. It is Crown property, and there is no rent or taxation paid by any of these institutions. We know on the other hand what happens in regard to music and the drama; they are taxed up to the hilt. You cannot hear a concert or a play without paying not only the cost of admission which is reasonable, but a tax which is unreasonable. I want to ask whether it is more important that people should see fine pictures than that they should hear fine music, or see fine plays. I cannot think that it is. We have recently seen a report of a Board of Education Committee. Practically no musicians signed the report and yet the Committee recommended music as an essential part of Secondary School Education. If they are right; if this is so, then why on earth is Commercial Music treated in so scurvy a way? I am told that a Cattle Show pays no entertainment tax unless a band is provided.

I am not a person who thinks that State control is an unmixed blessing. Of course we all know the difficulties in France with regard to the Opera—the intrigues that go on; and the terrible way in which the energies of people are dissipated in fighting each other instead of getting on with the work in hand. That is the danger of State control—the wire-pulling that is involved. But surely State control to that extent is unnecessary. I do not know whether the State could be persuaded to adopt the practice of Amsterdam, and to give a subsidy without asking questions, though as a matter of fact in Amsterdam the subsidy is from the town. The organisation is looked after by a body of Directors who leave the musical arrangements to the Conductor. That, of course, is a dangerous thing to do, for musicians are notoriously unbusinesslike people; a Conductor, therefore, needs to be carefully watched in that direction. But I am

sure that some system could be achieved whereby a grant of some kind could be made to enable a National Orchestra, existing as a whole-time concern, to play not only in London, but through the provinces; perhaps for six or eight weeks of the season it might tour the provinces to set a standard so to speak for the rest of the year. One or two concerts in a town like Manchester or Liverpool would have no ill effects. I feel very strongly that an institution, for instance, like the Leeds Festival, which lasts for the best part of a week once every three years, makes people say, "Oh well, I've been to the Festival, and I do not want to hear any more music for another three years." That is literally the case. They spend much money on the Festival and the local regular music suffers. I do not think that a visit for one or two performances a year would have anything like that effect. It would perform work that would be out of the reach of the local orchestra; it would give works requiring a larger orchestra; or works of special difficulty. In London it could give symphony concerts weekly—I am convinced the audience would be found. It might play in the suburbs on other nights; I am a great believer in de-centralisation. I am certain that the scheme could be worked, and that it would not be expensive after the first few years. Moreover, once established it would become part of our national life just like the British Museum and the National Gallery. I do not believe it would cost anything like these institutions. If the State were generous it could build another Concert Hall on the Burlington House plan; but it is not necessary to go so far as that. The orchestra should be a whole time affair, so that if a man gets an engagement with it he need have no worry about making ends meet; so that he can say to himself, "If I keep up my standard, I have here regular work, so that I need not bother about giving lessons; I have here a whole time occupation, and at the end I shall get a pension." Or, if they are well enough paid, it might not be necessary to give a pension. There are places in the provinces where things are moving rapidly; since the war everything is developing quickly. But poor old London wants looking after; and it is just here, I think, that the State should step in. It seems to me we should keep on ventilating the whole idea of what we want; and we should not be happy till we get it.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is difficult to discuss a subject which covers so wide a field, and which has been so adequately treated by Mr. Boulton, but it is part of a chairman's duty to say something. An interesting point he has brought forward is the place occupied by the string-bass instruments in the modern orchestra as compared with their place in the past. If you listen to a record of a symphony, frequently you will find that the string-bass is weak. I must say, however, that I have not discovered this weakness in the British orchestras I have heard. (It may be that the players have better instruments than their colleagues on the other side of the Atlantic, or they may be better placed).

Several years ago, while on a visit to Chicago, I listened to an interesting experiment. By means of a keyboard, connecting with and controlling an ingenious mechanism, piano-strings and bars of metal of various sizes could be so actuated by electricity as to give with absolute purity the various qualities of tone represented by the instruments of the modern orchestra from the double-basses to the piccolo, the amount of tone depending on the strength of the electric current. As all the niceties of phrasing and bowing were non-existent it has no real musical value.

No orchestra in the United States is supported wholly or in part by a municipality. In most instances the Board of Directors of the organisation maintaining the orchestra are leading business men, who devote much valuable time to its interests and have the privilege of collecting from guarantors, and of themselves contributing to the inevitable deficit. Two instances of the manner in which these business men solve the problem of meeting this deficit may be of interest.

In one city they erected a fine business block in a prominent street. This building contains a beautiful concert hall—thoroughly equipped for its purpose—while the rest of the building is given over to offices. The rentals of the hall and offices cover the large annual deficit, so, to all intents and purposes, the orchestra is self-sustaining.

In another city the Board of Directors built a very wonderful hall, the rental of which covers only a small fraction of the upkeep of the orchestra. The result is that a large deficit has to be made up largely by voluntary subscriptions. The first year people were very generous in their response: the next year they displayed less ardour, and, at the present time the problem is becoming increasingly difficult of solution.

Like great educational institutions, first-class symphony orchestras can never be self-supporting, and the query obtrudes

itself—"Why should not a municipality support such enterprises as it does public parks, museums, libraries, and art galleries?"

Mr. HERBERT ANTCLIFFE: As I know something of orchestral music in the Provinces I would like to say a few words. Mr. Boult mentioned the wealthy cities of Leeds and Bradford. Well, there is something existing unofficially, not only in Leeds and Bradford, but in South Yorkshire, which may be said almost to be working toward the ideal he has set forth, namely, the whole-time orchestra. Of course, at present there is no arrangement made on a whole-time basis, for there exists only the system of separate engagements. But in South Yorkshire nearly every orchestra is made up, and so far as one section is concerned, entirely made up, of individuals engaged also in other orchestras; unless for some special reason they bring people from London. I myself have spent many years in the most unmusical town of Sheffield, where we have a number of large choirs which scarcely know what an orchestra is! But as I went round that district I found that some players were playing in Sheffield, in Leeds, in Bradford, sometimes in Hull, and in all the small places; that they were continually engaged somewhere or other to do something. One feels that it is on such ground, on some such plan we shall have to proceed. We must make it easy for absolutely permanent orchestras to visit these scattered places throughout the country. Some members of the orchestra with which I am acquainted are amateurs. But I have heard string playing under Sir Henry Wood by players who were rather looked down upon in a way as being amateurs, which was equal to almost anything by professionals. Therefore we cannot ignore amateurs or scratch orchestras, which, in certain districts, are nearly the same thing.

In regard to another point that has been raised, namely, in regard to the Musical Festival, I must controvert Mr. Boult most strongly. The Festival provides an opportunity of hearing works which cannot be provided in any other way. Unless a much bigger revolution is to be brought about than even Mr. Boult seems to contemplate, we cannot get the assistance of certain special orchestras except at Festival times. Mr. Boult says that the people of the town where the Festival is held say when it is over—"Well, I've been to the Festival and I don't want to hear any more music for three years." That is simply not so. I know very well indeed the parts of the country to which I have referred, and I can vouch from personal experience that nearly everybody who goes to the Musical Festival gets so enthusiastic that they

want more music. People go to the Festival at Leeds, for instance ; they hear there a certain work, and they say, " We must do that work with our own Society. Or they say, " We must hear that work again." The amateur orchestra, or the man trying to run the amateur orchestra, says, " This, or that is lovely, and we must work at it." Speaking, then, from inside working knowledge—for I have been secretary, and also assistant conductor of a large amateur orchestra, I know something of organising these orchestras—speaking then from inside working knowledge, I can say that the Festival in nearly every case gives a new impetus to the musical life of the country wherever it is held. The Festival introduces to the people of the place music that would not be heard otherwise but which, because of the Festival, they will have an opportunity of hearing again afterwards in the normal life of the district. I agree with Mr. Boulton in regard to his aspiration. But it has seemed to me that what he has said about the Festivals should be put right.

MR. BOULT: Though I have chapter and verse for what I have said, I am glad to hear that the last speaker has had experience in the other direction. I do not want to make any sweeping statement and declare that all these Festivals are wrong ; but in places they do have the effect I have indicated. However, I hope the majority are with you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask a question about the Orchestral Association. Is it a type of Labour Union ?

MR. BOULT: I am not in touch with Members of the Council but I may say that the Association lays down what fees shall be paid the players at any particular kind of concert or theatrical performance. They have different scales for opera, ballet and ordinary theatre work and everything of that kind. The Society has its advantages and disadvantages. I am not one of those who consider the Orchestral Association to be a pernicious institution ; but I do think that it sometimes makes mistakes. There is no doubt, however, that in certain ways they have protected the players in a manner that can only be described as good.

THE CHAIRMAN: In this connection I may refer to a very pernicious case of the interference of the Musical Union which came to my notice recently.

A pianist-composer of international fame was to produce a new concerto at a certain symphony concert in New York. When they were about to begin rehearsing the work, the representative of the Union—who, as usual, was the poorest player in the orchestra—rose and said, looking at his watch, " We have now only twenty minutes left." " But it will

take all of that to rehearse the first movement," said the composer. He was then told, "twenty minutes is all we can give," so most of the work was given without rehearsal, with the inevitable result.

At the Metropolitan Opera, in the same city, the Union ordained that a sufficient number of "cuts" *must* be made to bring every performance within a specified limit. One Conductor, at the conclusion of a certain performance told the Autocrat of the Orchestra, "I made all the prescribed "cuts," but made longer intermissions and took slower *tempi* so I've kept you twenty minutes over time."

The proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to Mr. Boult.