Five-Manual Organs

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every note and every vowel within the sphere of the vocal 'lips' begins, *i.e.*, the perfect note. (The system is being taught here in Glasgow on the co-ordinate movement principle, and is most successful in its results.) That phrase at the end of Mr. Freer's letter—*re* chest resonance—is a nasty knock for the nasal resonance clique. Mr. Hilton's belated echo from Africa—'like the flowers that bloom in the spring,'—has little to do with the case. 'Fair play 's a jewel,' and I do not think it just of anyone because he obviously does not understand, or is afflicted with mental strabismus, to regard one's statements as 'doubtful.'

I have quoted scientific facts, and, as Burns says, 'Facts are chieftains that winna' ding.' I shall not presume on your space to quote any youthful prodigy.

The experiment of filling the nasal cavities with milk was performed by the late A. B. Bach, of Edinburgh, who has related the result in one of his able books on the voice.—Yours, &c.,

DAVID HOUSTON.

14, Lyndhurst Gardens,
Glasgow, N.W.

June, 16, 1919.

[This correspondence must now cease.—ED., *M.T.*]

STRAVINSKY.

SIR,—It would be well if Stravinsky's literary disciples would emulate their master's 'persistent striving towards brevity, conciseness, and directness of expression,' and, overcoming their 'mania for completeness,' would endeavour to state what they have apprehended 'without need of laboured self-explanation and working out.'

The charge of *obscurum per obscurius* is old and well-known, but Mr. Leigh Henry's panegyric on Stravinsky in the *Musical Times* suggests a new variant of it, in that the author appears to have done his best to obscure an issue that was to most people perfectly plain before he began to expound it. To describe enharmonic modulations as

'sequential treatment of tonal colour-combinations on related or deliberately and acutely-contrasted harmonic planes, or polytonic treatment and chord-successions determined by tonal affinity'

may impress but certainly will not enlighten the average reader. It will more probably make him marvel at the writer's subsequent denunciation of:

'the often unbearably redundant artifice of symphonic form.'

The triple performance of Stravinsky's Three Pieces by the Philharmonic String Quartet seems to Mr. Leigh Henry 'to imply a certain obscurity, if not incomprehensibility in that composer's style.' But it might more reasonably be said to imply a shrewd foreknowledge on the part of the concert-givers that these three short and simple studies in onomatopoeia would prove a popular item in the programmes—which, in fact, they did, being encored and repeated on at least one occasion.

Mr. Leigh Henry tells us that Stravinsky 'marks a new direction in musical art.' He would have us see Stravinsky as a kind of musical Melchizedek—a unique phenomenon, without ancestry or relation to his forerunners. But there are blasphemous unbelievers who regard Stravinsky first and foremost as a past-master in the art of whipping-up an audience to a state of physical excitement by methods very closely resembling the Rossinian crescendo, and secondly as the legitimate successor of Richard Strauss in the onomatopoeic line. Such at any rate is the impression his music makes on the average hearer who listens 'objectively,' without searching for those 'metaphysical significances of philosophic intent' which are doubtless revealed only to the devout.

The music of 'Petrouchka' is marvellously apt and appropriate to the pantomime for which it was written, but, apart from a few small points of technical interest, has it any musical significance whatever? The evolution of Stravinsky, from the sentimentally Chopinesque pianoforte pieces of 1908, via the 'Firebird' (that pastiche so industriously compiled from reminiscences of Berlioz, Grieg, Rimsky Korsakoff, and the 'Casse Noisette' Suite) and the more original 'Petrouchka' to such soulless and consciously imbecile productions as 'Biroulki' and the songs for a cat, reveals the gradual elimination of every element that might

be recognized as emotional or moving, in any but a purely physical sense. One feels quite sorry for his cat. It is more usual to try such things on the dog—but then it is just in these little details that Stravinsky's startling originality is most apparent.

This, of course, is as it should be, for 'We have had enough of romantics. We have been starved of humour in music. We crave for what music hitherto has most lacked.'

However, there is little ground for anxiety. Three cheers for the comic song!—Yours, &c.,

MORTIMER CATTLEY.

8, Warbeck Road,
W. 12.

A DOUBLE PEDAL PASSAGE IN BACH.

SIR,—The peculiar disposition of the parts at the end of Bach's Organ Prelude in D (*alla breve*) must have attracted the notice of many organists. The right hand is fully occupied, and both feet are employed, but the left hand is practically idle. Why is this?

Bach does not seem to use the double pedal for the sake of increased tone. Had this been his object he would have added one or two parts for the left hand as well, and not have given it nothing to do. The left hand was freed from playing because it was required for other work. Was not Bach's design to effect a *gradual* reduction of tone, the left-hand part being transferred to the right foot so that the hand might be available to push in the stops one by one? As a rule, such a gradual reduction of tone was not obtainable in Bach's time, for modern devices of stop-control had not yet been invented. Bach had throughout a piece to content himself with the same stops that he began with, employing only such contrasts as could be secured by changes of manual. His organ music is therefore designed as a series of terraces, not of slopes. But on this occasion Bach, regarding the slope as indispensable, was obliged to make this special disposition to obtain it.

If this view commends itself, from the *ff* on the $\curvearrowright$ in the closing bars of the Prelude a gradual *decrecendo* would be made to *pp*, and the 16-ft. pedal tone as quickly as possible reduced and eliminated. The downward slope would be decorated by a number of tasteful bits of colour, which on other occasions the player's hands are too fully occupied to attend to, even if they were appropriate. For example, the first beat of the last bar but two would be accented by the momentary addition of a soft 32-ft.; and if the use of the Swell pedal, unknown in Bach's time, is desired, the right-foot part would naturally have to be transferred to the left hand.—Yours, &c.,

X.Y.Z.

FIVE-MANUAL ORGANS.

SIR,—Since my demobilisation I have been feasting on the *Musical Times* of several years, and in the issue for October, 1918, I see a list of organs with five manuals, in an article by E. Graham Dunstan. The organ in Radley College Chapel is described as by Telford, and the number of its stops is marked by a query. Twenty years ago I had the pleasure of seeing and playing on this organ, and in my note-book it is recorded as originally by Telford, enlarged and rebuilt by Walker, and twice ditto by Martin, of Oxford. It then contained 61 speaking-stops and 12 couplers, &c.

This information may be of interest to the writer of your article.—Yours, &c.,

E. BRUNDRIT MEADOWS.

Ifley House,
Thornton, Preston,
June 6, 1919.

ORGAN RECITAL PROGRAMMES.

SIR,—From the fine series of programmes of recitals to be given at St. Stephen's Walbrook, I find that out of fifty-nine pieces, thirty-eight are original organ music—nearly two-thirds. Not a bad percentage. But only thirteen of the fifty-nine are British pieces; less than a quarter!