THE Musical Times

ESTABLISHED IN 1844

Novello's Music Primers by John Stainer; J. Frederick

The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, Vol. 22, No. 465 (Nov. 1, 1881), p. 585

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3356342>

Accessed: 18/12/2014 19:56

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

THE London Church Choir Association will hold its Ninth Annual Festival in St. Paul's Cathedral on Thursday evening, the 3rd inst., when the Anthem composed for the Association by Mr. C. Villiers Stanford, and Dr. Stainer's Service in B flat, will be sung.

AT the installation of the new Dean of Westminster to-day, the music will consist of a Service by Dr. Garrett, Thorne's Communion Service in E flat, and Dr. Bridge's anthem, "The Lord hath chosen Zion."

THE office of Conductor of the Northampton Choral Society has been accepted by Mr. Brook Sampson, Mus. Bac., Oxon.

THE Owl Club, in the prospectus of its eighth season, announces a series of twelve private performances of glees and madrigals at Cannon Street Hotel.

REVIEWS.

Novello's Music Primers. Edited by Dr. Stainer.

Double Counterpoint and Canon. By J. Frederick Bridge, Mus. Doc., Oxon.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WE sincerely hope that all students desirous of availing themselves of the laws of Double Counterpoint, so ably laid down by Dr. Bridge in the Primer before us, will first become thoroughly acquainted with his previous work on simple Counterpoint, which also forms one of the valuable series of popular musical instruction-books issued by Messrs. Novello. The earnest study of the contrapuntal rules framed before the harmonic derivation of chords was known is assuredly one of the best preparations for that greater freedom which springs spontaneously from the advance of musical knowledge; and we are glad therefore to find our received modern authorities on the subject impressing upon pupils the positive necessity of working under those restrictions which have guided and controlled in their early studies all the great creative artists of the world. "An effort has been made," says Dr. Bridge in the preface to his book, "to avoid all useless and pedantic rules: but at the same time, for the student, rules are absolutely necessary until he has acquired the knowledge which will justify him in departing from the strict letter, while he is observing the spirit." Such an assurance as this from so accomplished a contrapuntist cannot but inspire confidence in his pupils, for they will feel that whatever may be the number of rules insisted upon, not one can be spared without detriment to the due elucidation of the subject. We are glad to find that our author confines his attention to Double Counterpoint in the octave, tenth and twelfth; for as he truly says, although occasionally instances of that in the ninth, eleventh, thirteenth and fourteenth may be met with, after the examples given these can be worked out by the student without guidance. In the preliminary rules we are told that, as the inversion of any interval within the octave can be discovered by referring to the number nine—"since each interval when added to its inversion will make up that number"—this method can be expanded to apply to inversion in other intervals, the principle being to add one to the number of the interval in which the inversion is to be made. This certainly appears a very simple and remarkably obvious system of finding what an interval will become by inversion, and yet we do not remember to have seen such rule given in any work on Double Counterpoint up to the present time. Before passing to Triple and Quadruple Counterpoint a chapter is devoted to "Added Thirds," respecting which some very excellent advice is given; and afterwards, so clearly and simply are the possible faults in writing counterpoint with three or four distinct subjects pointed out, that few pupils, with diligent study, would be likely to go astray. "Imitation," both strict and free, is fully explained; and the several chapters on the various forms of "Canon" may be said so thoroughly to exhaust the subject that the student, after carefully analysing the examples given in illustration of the explanations, may be fairly left to himself. The specimens of the "Polymorphous Canon" are particularly happy; and the final

chapter, headed "Hints to the Student," contains some valuable rules for the construction of this species of composition. It is impossible to speak too highly of the judicious manner in which the examples have been selected throughout the work. It is almost needless to say that very many have been taken from the works of John Sebastian Bach; but the various extracts from other composers, which in every case most aptly enforce some special point, are of the deepest interest, and may perhaps even have the effect of more strongly drawing the attention of the pupil to the compositions from which they are quoted. One especially we may mention from Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 28 (popularly known as the "Sonata Pastorale"), which is too often passed over by mere "finger pianists" without any thought of the passage being a really fine example of Double Counterpoint. Amongst the canons in the "Appendix," one written by Mendelssohn, in fulfilment of a jocular promise to Sir George Smart to compose a viola duet for their mutual performance, is here printed for the first time. It is an "infinite canon"; and in his letter to Sir George Smart the composer says: "You see in this manner it goes to eternity, and perhaps you would like to have the duet somewhat shorter." We cannot close Dr. Bridge's excellent book without awarding him the highest praise for the energy he has thrown into his task. It is easy enough to write a work on Double Counterpoint which shall be little more than a reproduction of the works which have preceded it; but our author, like a true artist, has dared in many places to hazard his own opinions, and to abide by the result. That the Primer will have an extensive sale we have no doubt, for solid musical study is now becoming rather the rule than the exception; and even those who believe that the various forms of Counterpoint should only be mastered as a means to an end, when they see to what a noble end it leads, can scarcely under-rate the vital importance of the means.

Summer Nights (Les Nuits d'Été). Six Songs by Théophile Gautier. Set to Music, with accompaniment for small Orchestra or Pianoforte, by Hector Berlioz (Op. 7). English version by Francis Hueffer.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE compositions of Hector Berlioz are now—thanks to the energy and perseverance of a few zealous pioneers in the cause—so rapidly growing in public estimation that we shall not rest content until all his works are before us; and when time shall have gauged their relative value, assuredly the charming group of songs now under notice must take high rank. Though not to be judged by any standard save that of excellence—for, like all this composer's writings, they follow no conventional model—the delicacy and melodiousness of the vocal phrases, and the excessive beauty of the instrumental figures which are woven in with the voice part must strongly commend them not only to singers, but to listeners. No. 1, "Villanelle," is an exquisitely simple but impassioned love song, with an obstinate quaver accompaniment in chords almost throughout, the unexpected changes of key giving much eloquence to the text. No. 2, "The spectre of the rose," has an elaborate accompaniment, the voice, in sympathetic broken phrases, relating the little poem upon which the song is founded with excellent effect. No. 3, "On the lagunes," is a pathetic lament in F minor, the conclusion of the song, on the dominant harmony, dying off on the word "Ah!" being a point of much interest. No. 4, "Absence," is a brief composition, but it is probable that in performance it may prove the most popular of the set; and Nos. 5 and 6, "The tomb: Moonlight," and "The unknown land," will well repay earnest study both with the vocalist and pianist. In the first the dragging three-crotchet accompaniment at the commencement well intensifies the feeling of the words; and in the second the tuneful character of the vocal part, although attended throughout by some complicated instrumental figures, is never weakened. We sincerely hope that the publication of this set of songs will prove that Berlioz could write purely vocal music when he felt so disposed. A good word must be said for the English version by Mr. Hueffer. It is no easy matter to translate Gautier's poetry, and to preserve sufficient sympathy with Berlioz' music, but this task has been well accomplished, and deserves recognition.