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Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 60, No. 918 (Aug. 1, 1919), pp. 401-402

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3701878>

Accessed: 30-12-2015 22:18 UTC

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THE NEW DIRECTION IN SPANISH MUSIC.

BY LEIGH HENRY.

The recent successful production in London of a ballet by Manuel de Falla directs our attention to a composer whose work is of vital importance to all interested in contemporary musical development.

Historically, Spanish music has occupied no small place. The position held among classic masters by composers such as Cabezón, Santa María, Morales, and Vittoria is no mean one.

But the unpleasant impression left by that long period of stagnation when Spanish music, reflecting the national depression, came under the influence of an already vitiated Italian vogue—a period extending over the 18th century to the middle of the 19th—has detracted from the interest which the later development of Spanish music would otherwise indubitably have evoked, and which the product of that development well deserves.

Of this development and its genealogy but little is known or comprehended in England. The conception generally present among English musicians is that modern Spanish music is trivial, stereotyped, and very second-rate stuff. Yet Spanish music for several decades has evinced a steady growth of musical originality and expressive force, evolved side by side with a thoroughly modern development of technique.

As a result of this development Spain has come to possess not only a fine body of executive artists, such as Ricardo Viñes, Maria Cervantes, Arbós, the conductor of the Madrid Orchestra, and the types of the older generation, such as Teresa Carreño, Sarasate, and Pablo Casals, but also a group of young composers whose work is qualified to take place beside the most original products of musical art in other countries.

That a knowledge of their music is not widespread in this country is no fault of the music itself, but must be ascribed to the impression above alluded to, and also to our traditional musical conservatism and the love of the stereotyped which characterises the greater part of our artists, musical critics, and public. Notwithstanding the fact that serious efforts have been made to awaken interest—in the first critical studies I am aware of, written by Mrs. Franz Liebich and myself respectively in 1913 and 1914—a general apathy towards Spanish music still prevails.

Well in the forefront of this advance-guard of Spanish composers is Manuel de Falla, in whose ballet 'The Three-cornered Hat' (written to a scenario of Martínez Sierra) Spanish music attains the first adequate expression of that spirit of mingled fantasy, decorative grace, humour, and mental clarity which has been apparent in Spanish literature from the times of Cervantes and Calderón to the literary and dramatic writers—Benavente, Echegaray, Valera, and Farina Nuñez—of Spain to-day.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SPANISH SPIRIT IN ART.

The spirit referred to in connection with de Falla's latest work is no new thing in Spanish art. Its interest in the present instance lies not so much in its novelty as in the fact that with it Spanish music attains, not only a type of expression continually present in Spanish literature, but also a place in that mental movement which is evident in all cosmopolitan art to-day.

If one considers the racial elements which go to make up the Spanish nation, the existence of this spirit in Spanish art is not surprising. From the earliest historical times, the racial blends contributing successively to constitute what we now know as the Spaniard have rendered it inevitable. The inhabitants of that country 'beyond the pillars of Hercules' written of by Herodotus, were a branch of the Celtic or Gallic race from which later was derived the significant expression, 'Gallic wit.'

Later the country was occupied and organized by the Latin Romans, whose sense of satire and irony is clearly demonstrated in their literature.

After this followed the Gothic occupation, which probably laid the foundation of the ostentation and sentimentalism which later disfigured Spanish poetry in the 'Libres de Caballerías.'

But the greatest cultural influence in Spanish history was exerted by the Moorish or Arabic conquerors, who for centuries dominated almost the whole Spanish territory.

Throughout Arab literature a satiric spirit which is the extreme of comedy is powerfully manifest. Particularly is this the case with Arabic lyric poetry, the branch of verse most closely related to music. The writings of Hammud, Omayya, Abu-Halil-el-Asheri, Radhi, and Abu-l'Ala are permeated with it; and it is significant that the verse-forms of Arabic poetry originated in the rhymed prose of the 'hegas,' or mocking-songs.

Nor was the Moorish literary development confined to small cults or cliques. Throughout the period of European intellectual stagnation which commenced when Justinian closed the Byzantine Schools of Athens, down to the era of the Revival of Learning, the Moors were the protectors and developers of culture.

The Moorish schools of Cordova, Granada, Seville, and Toledo were amazingly numerous, and while in Christian Europe only a few of the ecclesiastics were literate, the Moors of these cities were generally proficient in reading, writing, and elementary mathematics.

With such interests it naturally follows that that liberty of expression so imperatively necessary to all creative development existed. Everywhere during the Moorish occupation a sane sense of proportion prevailed. Even the erotic verse of the period is distinguished by its sanely human and reflective quality; and this is striking when one compares it with the hyperbolic effusions in the romances, lays, and chansons of Christian Romance Europe. Chivalry existed in Moorish Spain, it is true, but it was the chivalry of a rational appre-

ciation of, and courtesy to, women, far removed from the artificial sentiment of the Romance nations. Women, regarded neither as saints nor slaves, were admitted to equal terms with men, and many, such as the Princess Welladet, daughter of Mahomet III., and Hafsa-er-Rekunijet—two famous poetesses—openly cast off the restrictions of the hareem.

The Moorish spirit of scrutiny and satire, with its consequent tendency towards freedom and subtlety of expression, has remained a consistent feature of Spanish literature. The Moorish territorial empire ceased to exist with the fall of Granada (1491), but the spirit of Moorish culture remained dominant.

Moorish culture, adopted by Alfonso the Wise and transmitted through the college founded by Bishop Raymond at Toledo, became the basis of Spanish civilization, and served to raise Spain to a dominant place among the nations of Europe.

But the position of Champion of Christendom, won by Spain in her struggle against Islam, laid the foundation of a tyrannical dogmatic system. This, resulting in intellectual repression, reacted on the national spirit, introduced an element of sentimentality and pathos not inherent in the Spanish character, and led to the political degradation which culminated in the disastrous reverses of the reign of Phillip II.

Dejected, and deprived of her wealth and power, Spain sank into a lethargy of centuries, broken only by periods such as the reigns of the weak, though artistic, Phillip IV., Ferdinand IV., and Charles III., and maintained until the War of Independence.

Then at last the racial spirit awoke, and, expressing itself at first in deeds, has ever since been striving to shake itself free from degradation and to attain spiritual development.

But even in the most depressing periods of Spanish history there has been continual evidence of the peristent vitality of Spanish wit, satire, and acute mentality. In literature it is only necessary to point to Cervantes, with his irony and deep human comprehension; to Calderon, with his lucidity, precision, and clarity of writing; to Spinoza, with his cool, analytical scepticism; and in painting to the clear sense of form of Velasquez, the grotesque irony of Goya.

(To be continued.)

We hear of yet two more musical journals down for first appearances on September 1. The *Chesterian* will be a development of the very readable little circular of the same name which has for some time been issued by Messrs. Chester. In its new form it will appear eight times in the year. M. Jean-Aubry has been appointed editor. Judging from the list of writers, the *Chesterian* will be a journal of exceptional interest. The other new arrival will be the *Scottish Musical Magazine*, a monthly journal devoted chiefly to the interests of Scottish music, and music in Scotland. Messrs. Paterson, of Edinburgh, are the publishers, and the editing is in the hands of Mr. William Saunders. We wish both journals all success. The more the merrier—at least, we hope so.

Occasional Notes.

Twenty-seven novelties will be produced at the forthcoming season of Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall, thirteen being by British and two by American composers. The

British works are by Edgar Bainton, Arnold Bax, Lord Berners, the late Lieut. George Butterworth, Howard Carr, Eric Coates, H. Balfour Gardiner, Eugène Goossens, junr., J. R. Heath, D. Howell, Roger Quilter, Cecil J. Sharp, and Martin Shaw. The two Americans represented are Henry Hadley and David Stanley Smith, and the foreigners are Albeniz, Alfredo Casella, Debussy, F. d'Erlanger, Stan Golestan, Granados, Francesco Malipiero, Balilla Pratella, Florent Schmitt, Tcherépnin, and Widor.

ERRATUM. In a report, in the June *Musical Times*, of Mr. Ernest Harcourt's 'Messiah' concert at Norwich, we stated that the proceeds handed to charity were £14. We now learn that the amount was £84 10s. 6d., and gladly make the correction, with apology for the mistake. Mr. Harcourt's last three concerts have realised £156 for charity—a fine total.

At a recent meeting of the Music Publishers' Association, Mr. Augustus Littleton was elected Chairman.

We read in a London paper that, on the occasion of Marshal Foch attending Westminster Cathedral on Sunday, July 20, 'the setting of the music of the High Mass was by W. M. Boyd, an English composer of the 16th century.' We congratulate Dr. Terry on his unearthing yet another native polyphonic worthy. At the same time we hope that enthusiasm for the discovery will not result in neglect of a fine Mass by another 16th century composer, William Byrd.

MORE Beresford's novel 'God's Counterpoint,' 'NOVEL' shows that the choice of key is a far more MUSIC. important matter than even musicians imagine:

Philip's own prelude to the proposed sonata of his relations with this representative of her sex, was pitched in too high a key, and, after the first passage, the thing went dismally flat. The fault was not his after the initial mistake of choosing a key like F major fairly bristling with sharps; but Miss Lang established his error by an attempt to drag him at once into the comfortable leisure of E flat.

Apropos 'Feste's' comments on ancient libretti, in the July *Musical Times*, a correspondent writes:

All collections of gems from operatic translations appear to miss the following—one of the best—from 'Lucrezia Borgia':

There is a prior selection
To whom I owe affection.

'A prior selection' is offered as an equivalent for 'un più caro oggetto.'

The two following items of musical news are taken from leading London papers of July 7 and July 9 respectively:

Sir Henry J. Wood has accepted the musical direction of the Birmingham Fes-strict Council to borrow £8,450 for a recreation ground at Alexandra Park.

During the service Mr. Gervase Elwes sang 'If with all your hearts,' from Handel's 'Elijah.'