'The Importance of Correct Placing of the Voice': An Invitation

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'A CORELLI FORGERY'

SIR,—The work published at Antwerp in 1692 as Corelli's Opera Quarta, which Mr. F. T. Arnold showed in his paper at the Musical Association last April (summarized in last month's *Musical Times*) to have had nothing to do with Corelli, presents a very interesting bibliographical puzzle. The earliest editions known of Corelli's five works are, according to Eitner, as follows: Op. 1, Rome, 1683; Op. 2, Rome, 1685; Op. 3, Modena, 1689; Op. 4, Bologna, 1694; and Op. 5, Rome, 1700. Aertssens, the Antwerp publisher, reissued Op. 1 in 1688 and Op. 2 in 1689, and in 1692 published as Op. 4 'Suonate da Camera, a tre . . . Da Arcangelo Corelli . . . Prima Parte, Nuovamente Ristampata.' The work is in separate part-books, each of which contains an address to the 'Benigno Lettore,' signed 'A. Corelli' (*inter alia*), promising the publication of a second part of 'questa mia Opera Quarta.' Mr. Arnold has shown that this Antwerp publication has nothing to do with Corelli, whose genuine Op. 4 was first published two years later, nor is it the Sonate da Chiesa, Op. 3, first published in 1689. Mr. Arnold asks: 'Who wrote the Antwerp Sonatas?' Though unfortunately, at present, it is impossible to give exact proof, I think there can be no doubt that they are the composition of G. B. Vitali (1644-1692). Each sonata consists of a string of short dance-tunes, the names of some of which are curious and uncommon. 'Neando' and 'Borea' occur in some, as well as Gavottes, Sarabands, Minuets, Jigs, &c., and all these are found in Vitali's 'Balletti' Op. 3 (1667), Op. 4 (1668), Op. 11 (1684), Op. 12 (1685), and probably in others of his works, which I have not seen. The largest collection of Vitali's music is that in the Estensian Library at Modena, and this has been kindly examined for me by Prof. Fava, to whom I sent the themes of the spurious Corelli sonatas. Prof. Fava has looked at all Vitali's printed works, from Op. 1 to Op. 14 (the last he published in 1692), with the exception of Op. 2 and of Op. 10, but has not identified any of them with the Antwerp Corelli. Vitali's Op. 2 is in the Royal College of Music, and has been examined unsuccessfully; but Op. 10 seems to have completely disappeared, and even its name is unknown, though it must have been published about 1683 or 1684, probably at Modena. Whether this is the original of the Antwerp Sonatas, or whether they are an unpublished work of Vitali's, passed off after his death as the composition of Corelli, it is unfortunately impossible to decide. But a comparison of the spurious sonatas with the accessible works of Vitali cannot, I think, fail to convince a musician that they are the composition of the Modenese master. My own theory is that Aertssens employed someone in Italy to send him works which he pirated at Antwerp, and that the 1692 sonatas were thus palmed off on him as by Corelli. The mistake or fraud must evidently have been discovered, for an edition of the genuine Op. 4 is recorded by Goovaerts as having been published by Aertssens at Antwerp in 1695.—Yours, &c.,

W. BARCLAY SQUIRE.

14, Albert Place, W. 8.

'THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT PLACING OF THE VOICE': AN INVITATION

SIR,—We shall be very interested to know who Mr. A. Keay is, who, like a bolt from the blue arrives among us, after, as he states, 'an absence abroad of quite thirty years.' Does he expect to be taken seriously, on the strength (or the weakness) of the two letters he has written to the *Musical Times*? Take, for instance, the third paragraph in the September edition—what is it all about? And what is this 'classical method' of voice production which is 'capable of surmounting any difficulties of language, &c.'? Does the reading of paragraph five bring us any fresh knowledge? Paragraph six only bears out what we are showing the public. Paragraph seven—Oh! No, Mr. Keay! it's naughtiness of you. How can one be expected to make you understand? Mr. Keay states: 'Mr. Tree ignores control of breath . . .—come and listen to one of his lectures, and read his little book 'How to acquire ease, &c.' The letter says, 'probably Mr. Tree knows Mr. Landon Ronald,' of whom a friend has spoken so highly to Mr. Keay. The

writer has complete confidence in the knowledge and judgment of Mr. Ronald on vocal matters. He was invited by Mr. Ronald to join the Guildhall School of Music as a professor some year or so ago, but was unable to accept the compliment.

Mr. Tree much regrets that he cannot do as Mr. Keay suggests as to teaching 'a rejected candidate.' He is a busy man. Paragraph nine: Surely there should be little difficulty in training such a paragon—how dare any school reject such!

In June last Mr. Keay did not know who the writer was, and he now asks 'That Mr. Tree prove that he has a decided claim to be reckoned with seriously.' Evidently his identity is still unknown, so let it be stated that 'he is a young gentlemen what has been singing' to the British public for the past thirty years, and on the strength of that has, perhaps, some remote claim 'to be taken seriously.' Any knowledge he has gained by the short experience he is now giving to the public. No! Mr. Keay, we have been listening to 'camouflage' talk for too many years, hence the chaos of the 'physical' voice to-day, and the very small number who can sing, *with ease*, at the age of sixty years.

Now let us have Mr. Keay's knowledge of the matter, and allow the writer to assure him that we shall be honestly thankful for any good which may accrue. If Mr. Keay's voice is as he states, 'as fresh now as it was at the end of the 'eighties' ('in the most strict conformity to the classical method,' as he puts it), I can assure him that he will be conferring a tremendous benefit on the vocal world if, instead of writing about it, he will give a vocal lecture, or lectures, and personally illustrate, by a dozen or more songs, that 'ease' which he professes.

Mr. Tree will, engagements permitting, be a keenly interested and receptive listener, eager to grasp any fresh knowledge on vocal matters. The vocal world will certainly eagerly await the date of Mr. Keay's first vocal lecture.—Yours, &c.,

CHARLES TREE.

14, Courtfield Gardens,
Kensington, S.W. 5.THE UNIMPORTANCE OF INCORRECT
PLACING OF THE VOICE

SIR,—I make no apology for the above title. It does not matter a demisemiquaver to me whether the voice is placed under the left arm-pit or over the right shoulder-blade. My contention is that it is the placing of the *individual*, not the voice, that matters.

On the subject of voice-production I am an ignoramus. The nomenclature and functions of the tit-bits of the throat—so beloved of some teachers of singing—are almost unknown to me. The functions of the vocal cords may be to pull down the soft palate when it is misbehaving, or to trip-up the epiglottis when it has got an unfair hold on the neck of the thorax, causing the latter to indulge in the most incorrect form of nasal resonance. As I say, these *may* be the functions of the vocal cords. Possibly I am wrong. Most likely I am. But I am *not* wrong when I state that it is the placing of the *individual* that matters.

Have you never felt this during a concert? Of course you have. Taking it for granted, you may have a faint idea of what it means to a sensitive soul to have that feeling increased a thousand-fold in the early hours of the morning by a feline monster—I swear she is a contralto—who utterly disregards the correct placing of the voice, for she always places it directly under my bedroom window. That is why I know it is incorrect.

Quite apart from the voice, however, I have taken an intense dislike to the lady herself. I want *her* placed. I care not where she is placed, but placed she must be. It is my life or hers.

I cannot trust myself to decide on her destination for, naturally, I am prejudiced; so I appeal to Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Sir Hugh Allen to help me in my distress and place the lady in an appropriate temperature. I have every faith in their discretion.

Your correspondent, Mr. A. Keay, stipulates that his prospective pupil shall (1) be seriously and enthusiastically devoted to singing; (2) have perfect intonation; and (3) be over eighteen years of age.