

Handel's Borrowings

Author(s): J. S. Shedlock

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 42, No. 701 (Jul. 1, 1901), pp. 450-452

Published by: Musical Times Publications Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3367660>

Accessed: 19-06-2016 22:25 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

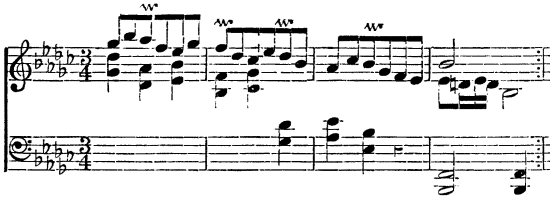
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

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*

bass only the youngest of composers, bent on achieving something audacious, would make fifths by step of a tone, save for some strong dramatic purpose (which excuses any mortal thing); but in instrumental music, where the inner parts are indefinite, one may often now find the kind of writing here quoted from a Mazurka of Paderewski's—



Grieg revels in this sort of thing, which Chopin also does not disdain. But I have seldom found anyone who could stomach Grieg's piece 'The Bell,' which is written entirely in consecutive fifths: one must draw the line somewhere. This brings us to the last class of fifths; those between tonic and dominant or tonic and subdominant triads. If these are made between the outside parts all you can say is that a certain hardness results. Instances in Beethoven's symphonies are familiar to all; in vocal writing (except solos) none but an ignoramus requires to make them. In ballads I find amateurs perpetually make a dominant half-close and then resume on the tonic, thus—



but when the obvious course of making the second chord a $\frac{3}{4}$ on F and resolving it by 6 on E is pointed out to them, they invariably hail it with rapture—and, of course, make the same mistake next time. It isn't lack of ear, but too long ears.

In conclusion, I would remind students and mature musicians that the laws of harmony differ widely in their application to different resources: the rules for vocal writing are not applicable to orchestral writing, and things which will sound well on voices or in the orchestra may sound detestable on the piano-forte. Play a Palestrina mass or a Byrd madrigal, or the Prelude to the third act of 'Parsifal' on the pianoforte, and be convinced. The laws against consecutive fifths, then, only apply to vocal music, and are only intended as a precaution against ugliness, not as a needless hindrance to the composer. Fourths or sevenths are sometimes much uglier, but no one regards these blunders with anything like the horror they do consecutive fifths. I fear it is because this matter is a kind of *pons asinorum* which few English musicians ever really get over.

F. CORDER.

HANDEL'S BORROWINGS.

IN the February issue of THE MUSICAL TIMES the list of composers compiled by Dr. Crotch from whom Handel copied or quoted was given in an article entitled 'Music in England in the Nineteenth Century.' These names, which occur in a foot-note to page 122 of Crotch's 'Substance of several courses of Lectures on Music' (1831), are as follows:—

Josquin de Près, Palestrina, Turini, Carissimi, Calvisius, Uria, Corelli, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, Sebastian Bach, Purcell, Locke, Caldara, Colonna, Clari, Cesti, Kerl, Habermann, Muffat, Kuhnau, Telemann, Graun, Mondeville, Porta, Pergolesi, Vinci, Astorga, Bononcini, Hasse.

At the end of the above list there is an '&c.' in which much meaning lies. In regard to this list the Editor asked these questions:—

- (1) Did Dr. Crotch himself discover these quotations or copyings?
- (2) Did he acquire his information from some other source?
- (3) Has any student ever verified the Professor's statement by furnishing chapter and verse from the works of every one of these 'twenty-nine, &c.' composers?

As to furnishing chapter and verse, as suggested in No. 3 of the above, the idea was mooted long ago by John Groombridge, organist of St. John's Church, Hackney, who died in 1827, and by Dr. H. J. Gauntlett, as will be seen from his article in *Notes and Queries*, February 5, 1859, to which we shall refer later. Again, in a discussion on a paper entitled 'Musical Coincidences and Reminiscences,' read before the members of the Musical Association by the late Mr. G. A. Osborne, the late Sir George Grove said: 'There is one remarkable case of plagiarism which I wish very much the Musical Association would investigate, and that is the whole series of plagiarisms and adaptations "and of repetitions of himself" by Handel.*'

Burney appears to have been first in the field in noticing Handel's borrowings; some of his charges, however, are extremely vague. For instance, he says in his 'History of Music' that Handel 'adopted' a base from a cantata of Cesti's (Vol. IV., p. 153), that 'passages' in Purcell's 'Song on St. Cecilia's Day' were used by Handel in 'L'Allegro ed il Penseroso' (Vol. III., p. 490); and once more, that 'divisions in Carissimi' were not disdained by Handel (Vol. IV., p. 145). Vague or even doubtful borrowings from Josquin de Près and Porta, the composer of 'Numitor,' are also noted by him. His remarks concerning Clari are, however, extremely curious. These are his words: 'Handel is supposed to have availed himself of Clari's subjects, and sometimes more, in the choruses of Theodora'

* Proceedings of the Musical Association, 1882-3, p. 112.

(Vol. III., p. 536). Burney also points to the subject of a Turini fugue which Handel borrowed (Vol. III., p. 521); this instance is also mentioned by Dr. Busby in his 'History of Music' (Vol. II., p. 272), and by Dr. Callcott in his 'Grammar of Music' (p. 303, second edition).

Burney, in his 'History of Music,' most probably first directed Crotch's attention to Handel's obligations to other composers. His (Crotch's) 'Substance of several courses of Lectures on Music' was published in 1831, and the list of names given above probably formed part of the lectures which he delivered in the University of Oxford and in London between the years 1800 and 1808.

In 1822 an interesting article, entitled 'Plagiarism,' was published in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* (Vol. IV.). Attention is drawn therein to Burney's remark with respect to some duets and trios of Clari—viz., that 'they had been dispersed in MS. long before 1720,' and, consequently, says the *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* writer, 'Handel had frequent opportunities of profiting from them, which we see he took advantage of pretty freely.' He adds: 'It is fortunate for him [Handel] that I have not these duets of Clari to compare with the choruses in *Theodora*, or I should very probably sentence him upon that charge alone.' We shall return later to this Clari question. In the same article mention is also made of a chorus, 'Pax hominibus,' from a Mass of Caldara, as being 'very similar' in its subject to "They loathed to drink" in Handel's "Israel."

Vincent Novello also touched upon the subject in the preface to his edition of Purcell's 'Sacred Music,' 1832. He gave a list of eighteen passages in the much discussed Urío Te Deum used by Handel, ten in the Dettingen Te Deum, six in 'Saul,' and one each in 'Israel' and 'L'Allegro,' having access at the time to the MS. of the Urío Te Deum, which afterwards came into his possession, and which is now in the library of the Paris Conservatoire; in this MS. a previous owner had made the list of eighteen passages just mentioned. Novello seems to have censured Handel mildly for his want of candour in concealing his obligations to others, thereby incurring the scorn of Dr. Chrysander, who will allow no wrong in the great composer.

The *Musical World* for March 20, 1849, contains an article by the late Sir George Macfarren on 'Handel and his Messiah.' Among other references to the plagiarisms of Handel, mention is therein made of those from Urío's Te Deum. Macfarren must have known the Novello preface, and probably he had conversed with Dr. Crotch on the subject.

In 1857 appeared Victor Schœlcher's 'Life of Handel,' in which Handel's plagiarisms are briefly dealt with. Under the heading

of 'Pretended Plagiarisms' (page 284), Mr. Schœlcher refers to Vincent Novello's remarks in the preface to Purcell's 'Sacred Music,' mentioned above, also to the statements of Macfarren in the *Musical World* article. Both writers meet with scant appreciation from Handel's biographer, their allegations being summarized in the following sentence: 'These pretended thefts are nothing but accidental resemblances, fugitive, and quite involuntary' (p. 285). It was while Schœlcher's 'Life of Handel' was in the press that the question of the authorship of the Erba Magnificat was first raised by a writer in the *Athenæum* of April 4, 1857. Schœlcher, as might be expected, strongly maintained that this Magnificat was a relic of Handel's Italian days, and of course that it was his own work (p. 423), while Crotch, from whom he indignantly cites a list of twenty-one composers (p. 285), he rejects *in toto*.* Dr. Chrysander, however, informs us (*Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, 1878, p. 531) that he succeeded in converting his friend Schœlcher to his own view that Handel had borrowed freely from Urío's Te Deum, by practical demonstration from the MS. copy of that composition, which Schœlcher himself acquired at an auction sale in London in 1863, and of which he, of course, knew nothing when engaged upon writing the 'Life of Handel.'

Dr. Gauntlett's article on Handel's Mode of Composing in *Notes and Queries*, to which we have referred, was suggested by a note of Mr. N. S. Heineken in the same journal (November 20, 1858), and it so far complied with the latter's request that the movements from which Handel had borrowed should be published, in that it stated where many of them were to be found. This is an important article, as will be seen from the following quotation:—'I conceive the works [from which Handel borrowed] ought to be issued in their integrity, and the most important to produce first would be (1) the Magnificat which forms so large a part of the second act of "Israel," (2) the Serenata of Stradella, which forms so much of the first, (3) the Te Deum of Urío, which is used up in "Saul" and the Dettingen Te Deum, and (4) the Muffat Sonatas.' It may be mentioned that Gauntlett possessed the copy of the Serenata of Stradella now in the library of the Royal College of Music. With regard to A. Gottlieb Muffat's 'Componimenti Musicali'—described by Gauntlett as 'sonatas'—there is a printed copy in the British Museum (E. 461) which contains a manuscript list of twelve passages used by Handel in 'Joshua,' 'Judas Maccabæus,' 'Samson,' and other works; and from this Gauntlett obtained his information concerning Handel's indebtedness to the composer.

* This list of twenty-one differs from the longer list of twenty-nine cited in the beginning of this article, in respect of the names of Leo, Luther, Morley, and Steffani.

In 1871 Dr. Chrysander published the *Urio Te Deum*, though without preface or notes, and Professor Prout's well-known article 'Urio's Te Deum and Handel's use thereof' appeared in the *Monthly Musical Record* in November of the same year. The learned Professor also wrote, in the same journal, an article on 'Handel's obligations to Stradella,' in December, 1871, and in May and June, 1894, one on Graun and Handel.

In 1878 Dr. Chrysander commenced a series of articles on Francesco Antonio Urio in the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, in which he thoroughly examined the question of Handel's plagiarisms from Urio's *Te Deum*. The first appeared August 14, 1878, and the series continued week by week, with occasional intervals, and concluded February 19, 1879. Many instances of Handel's borrowings are cited, and we are told, 'If one or other of the names that Crotch reckons up fails somewhat in weight, I can furnish names of other masters of the greatest importance in this connection. Besides Dionigi Erba whom we first discovered, I give here three names of the first rank: Reinhard Keiser, Alessandro Stradella, and Giovanni Maria Clari' (August 28, 1878). Dr. Chrysander is nothing if not polemical, and most of the time he is attacking one critic or another, his enemies being divided into two classes; those who admit and deplore Handel's plagiarisms, for whom he has some consideration—such as 'der umsichtige V. Novello,' 'der selige George Smart,' &c., and (2) Those who deny them, for whom he has no mercy. Crotch he treats with great respect. He considers that Handel glorified any composer from whom he borrowed, and points triumphantly to the honour which had been paid to the Erba Magnificat and the *Urio Te Deum*—the latter he had himself published—solely on account of the use Handel had made of them!

The late Mr. W. S. Rockstro, in his life of Handel, published in 1883, also made several allusions to charges of plagiarism. He considers that the evidence in favour of Handel being the author of the Magnificat (Erba), the *Te Deum* (Urio), and the *Serenata* (Stradella), is at any rate as strong as that assigning them to the earlier masters; but his general verdict towards the charge of plagiarism may be summed up as 'not proven' against Handel, with a marked bias in his favour.

In 1888 Dr. Chrysander commenced to issue his *Supplemente*, &c. First appeared the Erba Magnificat, which Chrysander, in his preface, insists is not the work of Handel, and in which he specifies eight passages which the latter used in 'Israel.' In the same year came the '*Serenata a 3 con Stromenti*' composed by A. Stradella. In this work seven passages are pointed out which Handel used, six in the 'Israel' and one used both in 'The Messiah' and in the Occasional Oratorio. In 1892 the Five Duets of Clari were published, each of

which, according to the editor, supplied one passage in 'Theodora.'

The *Componimenti Musicali* of Gottlieb Muffat were published in 1896. Dr. Chrysander mentions eighteen passages in them, which, he says, recur in thirty places in Handel, some being used more than once.

The foregoing appeared as '*Supplemente enthaltend Quellen zu Handel's Werken*,' in connection with the great Chrysander edition of Handel. The *Urio Te Deum* was advertised to make one of them, but, although actually printed, has not yet been published. It was advertised to form No. 2 of the series, and should, therefore, have appeared in 1888, between the Erba and the Stradella.

Mr. Joseph Bennett discussed Handel's borrowings from Muffat in THE MUSICAL TIMES for March, 1895, and finally we come to the article in THE MUSICAL TIMES for February last.

Taking the questions of 'F. G. E.' in order, it seems that the answer to the first will be in the affirmative. Dr. Crotch published over a hundred arrangements and adaptations of Handel's compositions; he must, therefore, have been familiar with his subject. In the foot-notes to his organ and pianoforte adaptations of the choruses, marches, &c., from 'Israel,' 'Samson,' 'Solomon,' the *Dettingen Te Deum*, 'Jephtha,' 'Belshazzar,' 'Judas Maccabæus,' and 'Saul,' he points to passages in these works taken from Kerl, Martin Luther, Carissimi, Porta, Cesti, Calvisius, Croft, Steffani, Urio, Graun, Habermann, and Bononcini. Some notes in his copy of the '*Triumph of Time and Truth*,' now in the British Museum, give references to Alessandro Scarlatti, Graun, Corelli, Lotti, and Kuhnau; while in his '*Substance of Lectures*' he mentions instances of borrowing from Josquin de Près, Carissimi, A. Scarlatti, and Purcell. He also wrote in his copy of Randall's score of the *Utrecht Te Deum* that the opening allegro 'is taken from Kuhnau's *Organ Sonatas*, Leipzig, 1696' (see letter in MUSICAL TIMES, April, 1889, p. 236). It seems clear, then, that the Doctor knew whereof he spoke.

As to the second question, it is probable, as we have said, that Crotch had taken a hint from Burney as to Handel's plagiarisms, and it is certain that he had seen one or more of the three known manuscripts of Urio, two of which contain lists of movements borrowed by Handel, made in the eighteenth century; but the portentous list we have quoted he must have compiled for the most part himself.

[J. S. S.]

(To be continued.)

WE venture to call the special attention of our readers to an article (on p. 463) by our special correspondent in America, Mr. H. E. Krehbiel, entitled '*A Wonderful Achievement*.' It is not only exceedingly interesting from an historical point of view, but full of suggestiveness as to what may be done by enthusiasm fired by true devotion to the cause of music.