

The Fathers of Great Musicians

Author(s): J. S. Bach

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urged him to bestow a little more time and care to make them look neater and better finished, Smith replied: 'I do not care if ze pipe looks like von teufel, I will make it schpeak like von angel.'

Father Smith held the organistship of St. Margaret's, Westminster, for the long period of thirty-three years, till his death. The date of his decease had not till now been discovered, nor the place of his burial. Search made in the burial registers of St. Margaret's specially for this article has resulted in the discovery of the following entry, under date February 20, 1707⁷:

Bernard Smith Esq^r. Organ-maker in Ordinary. S.S.C.

The description following his name refers to his official Court appointment as Organ-maker to Queen Anne, while the letters 'S.S.C.' give the location of his grave, at the south side of the church. As no stone marks the spot or any other memorial exists, it may be suggested that steps should be taken to place a brass in the church to commemorate so great an artist, one who also for so many years held the organistship of the House of Commons church.

Father Smith married a Miss Elizabeth Houghton, daughter of Humphry Houghton. The date of his union with that lady is unknown, but it was before November 12, 1686, as on that day he concluded a letter written to the Registrar of the Dean and Chapter of Durham in these amorous terms: 'My and my wife's hartely love and humble servis to you and yours, from your humble servand to commande, Ber. Smith.' In December, 1687, he was living at a house 'over again the Cock, in Suffolck Street, near Chering Crose.' In his will, dated November 4, 1699, he is described as 'Bernard Smith of the parish of St. Martin in the ffields in the county of Middlesex his Majesties Organmaker.' His testamentary depositions contain this bequest: '*Imprimus* I give and bequeath unto all my Brothers and Sisters and unto all and every of their children the sume of one shilling a piece in full of all their Rights and pretentions to my Estate'! The rest of his property he bequeathed to his wife, whom he appointed sole executrix. No mention is made in the will of any child, or children, nor of his business; the latter is said to have been carried on by his son-in-law, Christopher Schrider.

In concluding these biographical notes on the great organ artificer of the 17th century, these words of Burney may be quoted: 'The number of organs built and enriched with new stops by Father Smith is prodigious, and their fame equal to that of the pictures or single figures of Raphael.' Could higher praise be given?

The portrait of Father Smith which forms one of our special supplements is photographed from the original oil-painting in the Music School Collection, Oxford, and is reproduced by the kind and special permission of Mr. Arthur Hassall, M.A., Secretary to the Curators of the Schools.

F. G. E.

THE FATHERS OF GREAT MUSICIANS.

J. S. BACH.

Johann Ambrosius Bach, the father of John Sebastian Bach, was one of twin brothers who entered the world at Erfurt on February 22, 1645. Spitta says that the resemblance of the twins to each other, physically and mentally, was so striking that every one who knew them was astonished, and they became the object of much curiosity and interest. They both played the violin, and had the same way of interpreting music. So similar were they in appearance that when they were apart even their own wives, it is said, could not distinguish between them. After their father's death, and at the end of their apprenticeship, the two brothers travelled as town-musicians' assistants; but then their pathways in life became separated, and Ambrosius settled down in Erfurt when he was twenty-two years old. He then entered the Association of the Erfurt Raths-Musikanten as a viola-player, and Spitta points out, as bearing upon Sebastian's development, that the music he heard in his father's house must have been almost entirely violin-playing.

A year after his appointment, on April 8, 1668, Ambrosius, aged twenty-three, married Elisabeth Lämmerhirt; the issue of this marriage was six sons and two daughters. Soon after his marriage Ambrosius moved to Eisenach, where, in addition to the support of his own family, he undertook to provide for his helpless, idiot sister. The preacher of the funeral sermon on the death of this sister throws a pleasant light on the esteem in which her brothers were held, by saying that they were 'gifted with a good understanding, with art and skill which made them respected and listened to in the churches, schools, and in all the township, so that through them the Master's work is praised.'

The youngest son of Ambrosius was the great John Sebastian, who was born (at Eisenach) in all probability on March 21, 1685. Nine years later the wife of Ambrosius died, and seven months afterwards he married again, only, however, to enjoy this fresh period of domestic felicity for two months. As he died when his illustrious son was only ten years of age, he cannot have had much influence on the training of the greatest of all the Bachs. So far as is known he seems to have been a quiet, kindhearted man who had a more or less uneventful career.

HANDEL.

Bach's father was a musician; Handel's paternal relative was a doctor. Born at Halle, in September, 1622, Georg Handel (or Händel) began life by studying the rude surgery of the period under the tuition of Christoph Oettinger, the town barber. The latter died, and Georg Handel married the widow; he was under twenty-one, she twelve years his senior. By this stroke of matrimonial fortune the youthful bridegroom became entitled both to the freedom of the town and the distinction of being called 'Meister Gorge.' Six children were born to them, and so diligently did Meister Gorge work at his profession that, in 1652, he was



HANDEL'S FATHER.

appointed town surgeon of Giebichenstein, a suburb of Halle of some importance. Surgeon-in-ordinary, and valet-de-chambre to Prince Augustus of Saxony were additional appointments that came unto him, and therefore he may be regarded as having been a man of mark. His wife died in October, 1682, and six months afterwards he entered into the holy state of matrimony a second time when he, aged sixty, offered his hand to a lady thirty-two years of age, Dorothea, daughter of Pastor Taust of Giebichenstein. The first child of this marriage died in infancy: the second—born February 23, 1685—when his father had reached the age of sixty-two, is known to the world as George Frederick Handel.

The old surgeon smiled at the musical propensities of his little son, but as the music-making had become a passion, and he had decided upon educating the boy for the law, he determined that he 'would have no more of such jingling' and he gave orders accordingly. The effect of such prohibitions resulted in Master George's smuggling an old clavichord into an unoccupied garret of the house, and his practising upon this instrument

while the rest of the household slumbered and slept. How the father repented of his opposition to the boy's desires to follow the art of music is well known from the various biographies of Handel. Moreover, the old gentleman wisely fostered his son's ambition and guided his steps accordingly. Bach was ten and Handel twelve years old when they lost their respective fathers. Respected by all who knew him, Georg Handel, the surgeon, died in February, 1697, aged seventy-five, leaving behind him three children, twenty-eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

HAYDN.

From the professions of music and surgery to the trade of a wheelwright is a wide step in the social scale. The Haydns may be said to have been out-and-out wheelwrights, as no fewer than seven of one family followed that calling. Mathias Haydn, the father of the composer, is described as 'a German peasant of the best type, an honest, God-fearing, hardworking man, content with his own lot in life. He had learned to play the harp by ear, and enjoyed singing to its accompaniment,

sometimes alone, at other times in duets with his wife.' In 1728 he married Maria Koller, cook to Count Harrach, lord of the castle of Rohrau in Austria, the village in which Mathias Haydn plied his trade. Their family consisted of twelve children, of whom Franz Joseph, the composer of 'The Creation,' was the second—born March 31, 1732. A brother, named Michael, was also musical, and Haydn Senior took great pride in teaching his sons to sing correctly in the part they took in the family concert. The wheelwright rather prided himself upon his knowledge of music, and when his sons questioned his rendering of a voice-part or accompaniment, the paternal rebuke would come in the remark: 'You are a set of donkeys,' an asinine aspersion that brooked no contradiction. As Joseph left home when he was only six years of age the influence of his father on his development was very slight, but the old man lived to see his son well on the road to fame. Pohl refers to Haydn's parents as 'honest, industrious people, who instilled into their children a love for work, method, cleanliness, and above all, religion. In his old age Haydn gratefully acknowledged his obligations to their care.'

MOZART.

Mozart and Bach had this in common in their birth, they were the children of violinists and professional musicians. Johann Georg Leopold Mozart (1719-1787), known as Leopold Mozart, the father of the composer, began his musical career as a chorister. He subsequently played the organ remarkably well, and one who knew him records: 'It was wonderful, to see his hands and feet going together, but exceedingly fine—yes, he was an extraordinary man. . . . How he used to jeer at the priests when they wanted him to turn monk!' He seems to have had a somewhat pessimistical turn of mind and a touch of sarcasm in his nature. 'Take it as an universal truth,' he writes, 'all men tell lies and add to the truth or take away from it, just as it suits their purpose. Especially must we believe nothing which, if known, would add to the reputation of the speaker or flatter his interlocutor, for that is sure to be false.' It is satisfactory to know that this distrust of mankind he failed to implant in the bosom of his genius son, and, as so often happens, his cynicism and pessimism were more on the surface than deep-rooted in his nature. Born and educated at Augsburg, he studied jurisprudence at Salzburg. He then entered the service of Count Thurn, Canon of Salzburg, and assiduously studied music. He became so proficient in playing upon the violin that the Archbishop Leopold took him into his service; he was afterwards appointed Court composer and leader of the orchestra, and subsequently Vice-Kapellmeister.

Leopold Mozart was a prolific composer, especially of church music, including twelve Lenten oratorios. His creative industry resulted in the output of 'a host of theatrical pieces, as well as pantomimes,' in addition to 'a long list of symphonies,' upwards of thirty serenades, much

chamber music, &c. Six of his violin sonatas he engraved with his own hand. Curious indeed were the 'Occasional pieces' that came from his pen, in their quaint instrumental effects and somewhat ponderous humour. These *jeux d'esprit* include a pastoral symphony in which shepherds' horns and two flutes obbligato are employed; a military piece (trumpets, drums and kettle-drums); a Turkish and a Chinese piece. In a pastoral, representing a country wedding, during the march and after each huzza there was a pistol shot, according to the custom at rural marriages, and Leopold Mozart directed that any one who could whistle well with his fingers was to whistle during the huzzas. These creations, however, were feeble as programme-music compared with his 'Sledge drive,' of which a pianoforte duet arrangement was printed. The following programme was printed by the composer for a performance in Augsburg, December 29, 1755:

MUSICAL SLEDGE DRIVE.

Introduced by a prelude, consisting of a pleasing *Andante* and a splendid *Allegro*.

Then follows:

A prelude, with trumpets and drums.

After this:

The Sledge Drive, with the sledge-bells and all the other instruments.

After the Sledge Drive:

The horses are heard rattling their harness.

And then:

The trumpets and drums alternate agreeably with the oboes, French horns and bassoons, the first representing the cavalcade, the second the march.

After this:

The trumpets and drums have another prelude, and

The Sledge Drive begins again, but stops suddenly, for all the party dismount, and enter the ball-room.

Then comes an *Adagio*, representing the ladies trembling with cold.

The ball is opened with a minuet and trio.

The company endeavour to warm themselves by country-dances.

Then follows the departure, and, finally:

During a flourish of trumpets and drums, the whole party mount their sledges and drive homewards.

In consequence of the performance of these occasional pieces in Augsburg, the composer received the following anonymous letter:

'*Monsieur et très cher ami!*

'May it please you to compose no more absurdities, such as Chinese and Turkish music, sledge drives, and peasant weddings, for they reflect more shame and contempt on you than honour, which is regretted by the individual who herewith warns you and remains,

'Your sincere Friend.

'*Datum in domo vere amicitia.*'

All Leopold Mozart's compositions are forgotten save one—his 'Violin School,' published in 1756, a carefully and admirably written treatise, eminently practical and intelligent. It is no wonder that the book 'passed through many editions in various languages,' and that for a long period it was the only Method for the violin.

Leopold Mozart married (November 21, 1747) Anna Maria Pertlin. They were considered the handsomest couple in Salzburg. Of their seven children only two survived—Maria Anna (Nannerl) and the immortal Wolfgang. Both were wonderfully gifted children, and the father devoted his entire energies to their musical education. Early in the year 1762 he started on the first of those journeys undertaken to exhibit the precocious talents of his daughter and son. Nannerl was ten, Wolfgang six years of age. The most important of these prodigy tours occupied more than three years—June 1763 to November, 1766. England was included in the itinerary, and Leopold Mozart, his wife, Nannerl and Wolfgang were in London between April, 1764 and July, 1765. They at first lodged at the house of 'Mr. Couzins, Hair-cutter, in Cecil Court, St. Martin's Lane.' Thence, after they had replenished their wardrobe, Father Mozart



LEOPOLD MOZART.

(From the family picture in the Mozarteum at Salzburg.)

wrote: 'How do you suppose my wife and girl look in English hats, and the great Wolfgang in English clothes?'

In reference to the children's appearance at the Court of George the Third—for which they received an honorarium of twenty-four guineas—the father records: 'The favour shown to us by both royal personages is incredible; we should never imagine from their familiar manner that they were the King and Queen of England. We have met with extraordinary politeness at every Court, but this surpasses them all. A week ago we were walking in St. James's Park; the King and Queen drove past, and although we were differently dressed, they recognised us, and the King leant out of the window of the carriage smiling and nodding, especially towards Wolfgang.'

It must have been extremely gratifying to Leopold Mozart to receive the following appreciation of his son's genius from the lips of Papa Haydn. He said:

I declare to you before God as a man of honour, that your son is the greatest composer that I know, either personally or by reputation; he has taste, and beyond that the most consummate knowledge of the art of composition.

But this, interesting though it be, is leading us away from the father to his wonderful bairns. He nearly outlived his son, as he died at Salzburg on May 28, 1787, a little more than four years before Wolfgang drew his last breath. In the words of Pohl: 'Leopold Mozart bore the honourable distinction of having trained one of the greatest musicians the world ever saw.'

Consideration of the fathers of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and some other composers must be deferred till next month.

ENGLISH CHURCH EXHIBITION AT ST. ALBANS.

A VISITOR'S NOTES.

At the Town Hall of St. Albans, the Verulam of ancient days, an exhibition was held from June 27 to July 15 that was of supreme interest to the ecclesiologist and a source of attraction to the general visitor. The objects shown covered a wide range of subjects appertaining to the English Church, but the present writer's 'notes' must be restricted to making mention of some of the books that were on view and in referring to the music section of the Exhibition.

A fine specimen of a 'Quire Book' was of local interest, in that it contained compositions of Robert Fayrfax, organist of St. Albans Abbey in the last decade of the 15th century. This illuminated MS. (*circa* 1510) measures 26 by 18½ inches, and belongs to the Lambeth Palace Library. Its contents include a MS. Gloria in five parts, which formed the exercise written by Fayrfax for his degree of Mus. D. at Cambridge in 1504. Eton College lent a similar music book, containing a collection of motets and Magnificats by Lambe, Cornysch, Turges, Browne, Davy, Wilkinson, Fayrfax and other composers, for use in Eton College Chapel, *circa* 1500. Dr. Cummings enriched the Exhibition with some treasures from his valuable storehouse. A large folio volume, chiefly in the handwriting of Henry Purcell, containing anthems by Orlando Gibbons, Pelham Humphrys, Dr. Blow, and the great Purcell himself, was specially interesting, and so was a volume, magnificently bound for the Duke of Chandos, containing anthems by Handel in the handwriting of his copyist Smith. Among the autographs were the anthem 'The souls of the righteous,' composed by Dr. Boyce for the funeral of King George II. (1760), endorsed 'This is the property of William Boyce, of Hammersmith,' and Attwood's Coronation anthem for William IV. (1831). Here were also to be seen the autographs of Samuel Wesley's motet 'Deus majestatis' for double choir and instruments (1799), Crotch's 'The Lord is King' (1838), Goss's 'O praise the Lord' (1868), and an anthem by Arthur Sullivan, composed when he was a