

Lever v. Balance Swell

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but both tone and intonation are very much dependent upon the skill of the player.

The tone is round and full, but could not be called rich in quality; and to the best of my recollection the fundamentals were strong and the partials few and weak. Still, in an orchestra of forty players it blended well and was remarkably effective. At subsequent performances of 'St. Paul' given by the Vocal Association the serpent part has been played by the bass tuba. However, if I am privileged to conduct the work again after the war, I shall use my best endeavours to find a player so that the serpent can be used.

Mr. W. N. PULLEIN, of Calne, Wilts, writes:

Seeing your account in the *Musical Times* of a 'serpent' picked up in Devonshire, it may interest you to know that I have in my possession an excellent specimen of one that was played in Chippenham Parish Church a hundred or more years ago.

The Rev. RICHARD SPURRELL, Hartshill Vicarage, Atherstone) also writes to us on this topic. We regret we cannot find space for his letter. He expresses the hope that our article will lead to the careful preservation of all existing Serpents.

LEVER v. BALANCE SWELL.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—I was glad to read the interesting and sensible letter in your last issue from Mr. George Sampson on the above subject, every word of which I agree with and know by experience to be true. In addition, I have never found a satisfactory balance pedal: one that is sensitive to the slightest touch of the foot, and will also produce a perfect *forzando*; but all this can be done with the so-called old pump-handle, and I know many organists who have had, and are having, the balance pedal action removed.

Personally, I should like two lever swell pedals, one at each side of the pedal board, so that the left foot can, and more conveniently, use it when the right foot is occupied in the upper regions of the pedal board—for one does not, or should not—always growl away on the lower octave. I shall certainly have two 'pump handles,' one each side for each leg as required, for my Newquay organ when enlarged, and strongly suggest it for all organs.

Newquay.

H. C. TONKING.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—May I point out a little error in dynamics in Mr. Sampson's letter in your November issue? He states that whereas 'the balance pedal requires a double action of the muscles (pressure and release), the lever pedal of its own accord releases the tone.'

The lever pedal no more releases of its own accord than does the balanced one; the essence of the difference between the actions used in operating the two types is simply that the *centre* of movement varies.

In using the balanced pedal there is *transference* of pressure from toe to heel, or *vice versa*; the lever pedal necessitates *application* or *release* of pressure by the entire foot, together with a movement of the whole leg not necessary in operating the balanced model. The supreme drawback of the lever system is that the pedal, as usually placed, can only be operated by one foot—an insuperable obstacle to its fullest usefulness.—Yours faithfully,

Londonderry.

W. R. ANDERSON.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—Lever pedals, whether placed at the side or in the centre, are never under control. The shutters can close only as quickly as the weight on the action allows. The force required to open the shutters is often absurdly excessive. The shutters cannot be left open at any desired point. With ratchets and notches, they can be left open at certain points, but *crescendos* and *diminuendos* are then only possible by steps—steps, of course, just *under* or *beyond* what is required, and in any case too slow and always jerky. With balanced pedals the desired results are perfectly easy, as also sudden *forzandos*. Organs in this country and in New Zealand (and doubtless elsewhere) are now to be found with balanced pedals properly made and placed.

I have had extended experience of one, two, three, and four balanced pedals. Few things make some people more miserable than having to play an instrument provided with lever pedals.

Do let us remember that the organ is a complex machine, and that the more the machinery is disguised the more nearly will it stand on the same plane as other musical instruments of less complex mechanism. Lever and lever-ratchet swell pedals will always bar the way, for there is nothing which can be done with them that cannot be done with infinitely greater ease by means of balanced pedals when well-made and comfortably placed, which latter also make possible not a few effects quite impossible with lever or lever-ratchet pedals.

KENNETH C. BURNS.

Obituary.

We regret to record the following deaths:

THOMAS FRANCIS BUMPUS, on November 11, at Albion Road, Stoke Newington. He was born on August 6, 1861. Like his twin brother, John Skelton Bumpus, who died on April 10, 1913, he devoted his time to the study of ecclesiastical matter. He wrote 'A history of English Cathedral music' and an account of the Cathedrals of England and Wales (three vols.), of Northern Germany (one vol.), of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark (one vol.), of Belgium (one vol.), of the Cathedrals and Churches of Northern Italy (one vol.), and of London Churches, Ancient and Modern (two vols.). The interest of these painstaking researches into Cathedral history is not wholly architectural, but also musical. They are almost indispensable works of reference. All the books named are published by T. Werner Laurie.

Second-Lieutenant GODFREY DERMAN GARDNER, Suffolk Regiment. He studied at the Guildhall School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, where he obtained the gold medal and became a F.R.C.O. He was a member of the Royal Philharmonic Society, and was also organist of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, E.C. He enlisted in September, 1914, in the Queen's Westminster Rifles, and four months afterwards obtained his commission in the Suffolk Regiment. He was killed while leading his men into action on September 13 this year. His colonel, who has since been killed, said: 'He knew no man in the battalion more fit to meet his death.'

Second Lieutenant A. B. WILKINSON, Royal Sussex Regiment, who has died from wounds received on November 14, was the youngest son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson, Grantham House, Windsor. He was formerly a chorister at the Eton College Chapel, and went to the Royal College of Music, and thence took the Sir John Goss Scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music (1906). Before the war he was organist of Hastings Parish Church and a master at University School, Hastings.

ARTHUR H. MESSITER, Mus. Doc., an organist and choirmaster well-known and respected in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the States. He was born in Somersetshire in 1834. He became organist of Trinity Parish Church, New York, in 1866, and retained the post until 1897.

In our last issue we recorded the death of Sir Joseph Beecham. We now add to our notice that he was a very good musician, and intensely anxious to enable others to enjoy music. On one occasion he said to a friend: 'My income is so and so; my family can live on so much. On what can I spend the remainder better or more profitably than in giving the same pleasure to thousands that I derive from glorious music?' Anonymously in 1909 he stated that he was willing to devote £300,000 to furthering the cause of national opera. So while for a generation or so discussions had taken place as to how opera could be promoted in this country, he stepped in and to a large extent solved the problem—at least temporarily. No doubt it was always a question of expenditure; but this does not lessen the credit due to Sir Joseph for the generosity of his achievement. He has set a ball rolling that not even the War has stayed, and it may be hoped that in the near future national opera will be firmly established.