

Gramophone Notes

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Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 62, No. 938 (Apr. 1, 1921), pp. 274-275

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/909412>

Accessed: 13-12-2015 02:15 UTC

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a violin or pianoforte at the hands of a player who is a technician and nothing else. On the other hand, the so-called 'mechanical' piano-player can be so manipulated that the keenest of listeners, placed out of view of the performer, would find it difficult to determine whether the effect was produced by the player's fingers or by the roll. Two of the best points made by Mr. Newman are in the matters of transcription and of composition specially for the piano-player. On the former question he has an unanswerable case. By means of music-type examples he shows that roll-cutters have made a fatal mistake in going to pianoforte arrangements of organ and orchestral works instead of to the original scores. As a result, distortions that were inevitable in a transcription for two hands have been carried on to the piano-player, where no such limitations exist. It seems incredible that there should be musicians so conservative as to defend the procedure; but a recent newspaper correspondence has recently proved that there are. Here is a typical case. Liszt, in arranging for pianoforte solo Bach's G minor Organ Fugue, was compelled to omit some important fragments of the contrapuntal texture, because even the nimblest pair of hands could not entirely take the place of the hands and feet of the organist. One would have thought that the obvious procedure for the roll-cutter would be to collate the organ version with Liszt's arrangement, and produce from them a third version which should give us all Bach's notes, amplified in such a way as to supply as much as possible of the 16-ft. and 4-ft. effect of organ registration. So far this has not been done, with unfortunate results, as Mr. Newman shows. The piano-player will never come into its own until we give up thinking of it in terms of finger technique. That is why it is to be hoped that composers will begin to write directly for it. Judging from the newspaper correspondence mentioned above, it seems to be hastily assumed that the result will be mere noise. But, as Mr. Newman says, the most important results would be that thousands of new sonorities would be available through the use of wide spacings impossible to the fingers. Think, too, of the widespread polyphonic texture that could be employed, giving us effects that have been impossible on any keyed instrument, even with four hands. Mr. Newman's book is so full of commonsense and all-round interest that it should be read by musicians other than pianolists.

The second volume of this series is 'The Complete Organist,' by Harvey Grace (*7s. 6d.*). I understand that the author has some official connection with the *Musical Times*, so perhaps a review in these columns would be out of place. It must suffice, therefore, to give bare details. About one half of the volume is drawn from a series of articles that appeared in the *Musical Times* a few years ago under the title of 'The Compleat Organist.' The new chapters deal with such subjects as 'Choirmen,' 'Accompaniment,' 'Recitals,' 'The Organist's Position,' &c. There is an exhaustive bibliography, and a brief preface by Prof. P. C. Buck.

From this book, written by an organist, we turn to one with a parson as author, 'Church Music,' by the Rev. A. S. Duncan-Jones (Robert Scott, *3s. 6d.*). Mr. Duncan-Jones very rightly puts the accent on the word 'Church.' After all, we demand of operatic music that it shall be unmistakably operatic—music with a sense of the theatre, we call it—so it is only reasonable that our church music should be as

ecclesiastical in style as the building in which it is sung and the text to which it is set. 'Church music,' says Mr. Duncan-Jones, 'should not be sought in the Encyclopædia as a sub-heading of the article on Music, but rather under the letter L, as a department of Liturgy, for that is its proper place.'

Having thus defined his attitude, Mr. Duncan-Jones maintains it consistently throughout a very readable book. On only one point do I feel disposed to part company with him. Speaking of the introduction of plainsong Communion services, he recommends that a start be made with the old Sarum Creed and the simplest Gloria in excelsis. This advice is dangerous. In plainsong, as in most other branches of music, appreciation of the extremely simple comes only after a fair amount of education. The uninitiated usually object to plainsong on the ground that it is crude, rough, and unmelodious. To begin by giving them a Creed and Gloria which consist of little more than inflections is to confirm them in their objections. Such tough fare *can* be appreciated in the most unlikely quarters, but only after the way has been prepared by some tuneful specimens, such as the Missa de Angelis or Missa Regia. Nor will an average choir or congregation be beaten by some fairly florid types. The best answer to people who say that plainsong is not melodious is surely to set them singing some of the tunefulness of which is beyond dispute. Bating this one point, Mr. Duncan-Jones' book is thoroughly practical and commonsense, and it has the further merit of being written in a free and easy style.

Gramophone Notes

BY 'DISCUS'

The success of such a series of records as the H.M.V. 'Beggars' Opera' lot is a foregone conclusion. Eighteen numbers are recorded—three 12-in. d.s., each containing six. The results are excellent throughout. True, we do not hear all the words, but as they are supplied in an eight-page brochure we are able to make ourselves acquainted with them, after which the text comes through well enough. The accompaniments to these capital old songs are a delight, scored as they are for a small orchestra that includes a harpsichord, viol da gamba, and viol d'amore. There is some excellent ensemble singing, including some rousing solo-and-chorus work in 'Fill every glass' and 'Let us take the road.' It might be thought that the records would appeal only to those who have been present at the opera. I thought so myself, and as I am one of the few who so far have been unable to get to the 'Lyric,' I put the discs on with no great anticipations. But the jolly old tunes took hold of me as they have taken hold of the audiences for hundreds of nights. It should be added that the brochure above mentioned is embellished with some very fetching drawings of characters and scenes from the opera, and is so tasteful an affair that it is worth possessing for its own sake.

Of recent vocal records lately issued by H.M.V. I have space to mention only three. Eva dell'Acqua's 'La Villanelle,' sung by Galli-Curci, with orchestral accompaniment, is a brilliant affair, in which all the honours do not go to the vocalist. The most effective passages are those in which the voice and flute are duettists. Galli-Curci is heard at her best, but let one bloom from our bouquets be thrown to the flautist—a real artist whose name might well have appeared on the label.

Caruso pours out his voice lavishly as ever in 'A Granada'—in fact he pours out so much of it that in a small room one instinctively looks round for shelter. This stirring record owes a good deal to the excellent orchestral part, in which some stout work is done by the castanets.

That fine baritone, Titto Ruffo, is heard to advantage in 'Nemico della patria?' ('Andrea Chénier'). New H.M.V. instrumental records are a varied lot. The popular *Adagietto* from 'L'Arlesienne' is played with delightful effect by Kreisler and string quartet (10-in.). Cortôt is brilliant in Chopin's 'Tarantelle' without quite making us forget that the piece shows the composer a long way below his best (10-in.). A pleasant old fiddle work in Tartini's Sonata in G minor is excellently played by Madame Renée Chemet, with Miss Marguerite Delcourt at the pianoforte. On a 10-in., d.s., are recorded two Hebridean Folk-songs, arranged for violin and pianoforte by Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser, and beautifully played by Miss Marjorie Hayward. 'The Island Sheiling Song' is a lovely melody.

The Columbia record (12-in., d.s.) of Gervase Elwes singing Farrar's 'Brittany,' and the capital old song of Hook, 'Listen to the voice of Love,' excellent in itself, will be doubly prized as 'the sound of a voice that is still.'

From the same firm comes a fine record of the 'Toreador Song' from 'Carmen,' sung by Riccardo Stracciari, and a Columbia 10-in., d.s., gives us the London String Quartet, in the first two movements of Mozart's Quartet in D minor. The second movement is the more successful of the two, owing to some of the soft passages in the first being *too* soft. The playing throughout is notable for delicacy and finish.

Some capital string records come from the Æolian-Vocalion Co. Sammons plays brilliantly in a couple of pieces by Kreisler, 'Tambourin Chinois' and 'Caprice Viennois' (12-in., d.s.). The same player joins Frank St. Leger in the first movement of Grieg's C minor Sonata for violin and pianoforte, a fine bit of playing, with the instruments well-balanced.

Save when treated as a purely melodic instrument, the violoncello offers a problem which composers frequently fail to solve. Here for example is a record of the slow movement of Rachmaninoff's Sonata in E flat for violoncello and pianoforte, played by Felix Salmond and Frank St. Leger. The violoncello part as a whole lies rather low, and the pianoforte part consists largely of bigish chords rather high on the keyboard. The result is that the violoncello part comes badly off, and the expressive movement suffers from this displacement of the centre of interest.

Mr. Frederick Ranalow's singing of a couple of Somerset Folk-songs, 'Bingo' and 'Admiral Benbow,' arranged by Cecil Sharp, is recorded on a 10-in., d.s. Æ.-V. 'Bingo' is particularly jolly.

E. B. & T. E. G.—I have not heard the records you mention, but will look out for them. If they lead me to modify my opinion as to the reproduction of brass tone, so much the better.

UPTON.—(1) For obvious reasons I cannot use this column for the recommending of any particular 'make' of gramophone. (2) I believe there are very few records of choral music of the type you mention. I will make inquiries.

The MS. score of J. L. Hatton's opera 'The Queen of the Thames,' has been presented to the Liverpool Public Library by Mr. G. L. Hatton, the composer's grandson. J. L. Hatton was a native of Liverpool.

Church and Organ Music.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

The following letter has been sent to the members:

The Royal College of Organists,
Kensington Gore, S.W.7.

DEAR SIR (or MADAM)—Owing to the increased cost of musical periodicals the Council find it financially impossible to supply the Members with a *weekly* musical paper as heretofore. After much consideration they have decided to substitute the *Musical Times* for the *Musical News and Herald*. The Council hope the Members will not be inconvenienced by this new arrangement, which will come into operation on April 1 and continue until further notice.—Yours obediently,

H. A. HARDING,
Hon. Secretary.

March, 1921.

SIR WALTER PARRATT

At the meeting of the R.C.O. Council on March 12, the following resolution was proposed by Sir Frederick Bridge, seconded by Dr. W. G. Alcock, and carried unanimously:

That the hon. secretary be requested to convey the hearty congratulations of the Council to Sir Walter Parratt on the honour recently conferred upon him by His Majesty The King, and to express their pleasure that he is still able to render such valuable service to the art he has so long adorned.

RHYTHM IN HYMN-TUNES

By C. F. ABDY WILLIAMS

Old customs die hard. Naturally, for man is instinctively conservative. We have lately discovered flourishing in country districts an interesting survival of the idea that in hymn-tunes the printed notation is sacred and inviolable: that it is to be adhered to with metronomic precision at all costs; that if the choir and congregation find it difficult to cope (for example) with Long Measure tunes, so much the worse for choir and congregation. The tune is all right, for it is printed so. Each musical phrase ends with a minim; no pause or rest is printed; therefore, with breathless haste, we must proceed to the next phrase. Only at the end of a verse may we pause and recover something of our breath; but the pace having been once set, it is sometimes a little difficult to check it even here.

So the choir is trained to sing the Long Measure tune without a break, getting its breath as best it can, and the congregation, whose æsthetic sense rebels, pants after choir and organ, like a dog chained to a gig behind a fast-trotting horse; but, more fortunate than the dog, it can retire from the contest when it will.

Musical rhythm certainly consists, as some define it, in an orderly array of equal time-divisions. On the whole this definition is as good as any other. But there is a thing called human nature which is always upsetting our theoretical calculations; and human nature, while it accepts a well-regulated arrangement of time-divisions, rejects, both on physical and æsthetic grounds, an unbroken succession of thirty-two equal notes. In the first place, such a succession has no breathing places; in the second, the mind has no resting places. This