

St. Michael's, Cornhill, Festival

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The Dancing Lesson and *Buy my Strawberries*, both by Herbert Oliver (12-in. d.s.); John Buckley *O Falmouth is a fine Town*, by Landon Ronald, and *A Ballad of Gretna Green*, by May H. Brahe (10-in. d.s.); Malcolm McEachern (one of the best 'recording' voices of to-day), *The Nomad*, by Bernard Hamblin, and *Casey the Fiddler*, by Haydn Wood (10-in. d.s.). All these come from the Æolian Vocalian Co.

Records of a similar type from the H.M.V. are a 10-in. d.s. of Leila Megane singing—in Welsh—*Heaven*, by Osborne Roberts, and *My little Welsh Home* (two lachrymose ditties; the two sides of a record should surely be contrasted), and John McCormack singing (far too nasally) Alston Waters's *Somewhere* (10-in.).

Roland Hayes's beautiful voice is heard to advantage in *Steal away*, arranged by Lawrence Brown. On the other side of a 10-in. is *Go down, Moses*, arranged by H. T. Burleigh. Here the emotion seems to be a trifle forced. Both these old negro songs suffer from over-sophistication, in harmonization as well as in performance (Æ.-Voc.).

Once again I have to admit that for clearness and all-round enjoyableness some fox-trots issued by the Æolian-Vocalian Company are the pick of the basket. Especially good is *The Dancing Fool*, played by the Bar Harbour Society Orchestra. The alternation of dry slickness and burbling sentiment is very amusing. There are some good effects of colour and cross-rhythm in *Truly*, played by Selvin's Dance Orchestra. That there are stages even on the fox-trot Parnassus is shown by the fact that *A Baby in Love* is merely ordinary, and *Are you Playing Fair* not much better. The composition of such things seems to be a preserve of the Chosen Race, judging from the names of the concoctors of the above—Ted Snyder, Vincent Rose, Siegrist Cohen, and a pair who compose in double-harness—Goodman and Benatsky.

The Æolian Vocalian Company has sent particulars of a batch of records for use during Christmas. I have been unable to hear them, as they are not completed at the time of writing. They will be issued on December 1. Among them are carols and Christmas hymns, sung by the Æolian Male Quartet and soloists, with orchestra; a *pot-pourri* of plantation songs played by the Band of the 1st Life Guards, a variety of fox-trots, and a 10-in. d.s. giving a couple of tangos, played by the Vocalian Dance Orchestra.

Church and Organ Music

ST. MICHAEL'S, CORNHILL, FESTIVAL

Thousands of people who enjoy music (or who are capable of learning to enjoy it) are at present deprived of the opportunity for doing so by the fact that the music is in one place and they in another. Londoners nowadays live in the suburbs, and it is in Central London that their music awaits them—necessarily, therefore, often in vain. A hard-working city clerk who likes a little music has now to choose between wasting two hours in London—between the close of his business and the opening of the concert—or, instead, rushing hastily home and back, which he is very little likely to do. In two ways attempts are being made to overcome this difficulty: (a) 'decentralisation' of music, *i.e.*, the setting up of concert schemes in the suburbs, and (b) lunch hour and early-evening activities in the business centres. Both are necessary if the suburban worker and his wife are to be fairly fed.

In the provision of lunch hour and early-evening music in the centre of London nobody is more usefully energetic than the Rector of St. Michael's, Cornhill, the Rev. J. H. Ellison, and his organist, Dr. Harold Darke. Weekly organ recitals are given, and there are regular practices of a body called 'The St. Michael's Singers: a Choral Society for City Workers.' Once a year the strong current of musical enthusiasm overflows its usual banks and spreads out into a whole week's Festival such as that which ended on November 16.

The general scheme of this consisted in daily organ recitals at one o'clock and daily concerts of sacred music at six o'clock. The organists were Drs. Harold Darke, H. G. Ley, W. G. Alcock, and W. H. Harris. The solo vocalists were Miss Dorothy Silk, Miss Vivienne Chatterton, Miss Constance E. Taylor, Miss Margaret Champneys, Mr. John Adams, Mr. George Tinney, and Mr. Charles G. Young. There was a string orchestra led by Mr. Kenneth G. Skeaping. Mr. G. Thalben Ball and Mr. E. Norman Greenwood accompanied at organ and pianoforte respectively, Mr. Albert Fransella played the flute in a Bach Suite, and Dr. Darke conducted throughout. The St. Michael's Singers, of course, took a large part in the programmes. The Bach Cantatas *Bide with us*, *How brightly shines yon star of morn*, and *O Fire Everlasting*, Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens* and *Beyond these voices*, Brahms's *Song of Destiny*, Darke's *England, awake*, Holst's *This have I done*, Byrd's *Motet, Have Mercy*, and a great many smaller things were sung. A good deal of English music, old and modern, was included in the organ programmes, and there was an evening performance of English Church and Organ music.

This was a most comprehensive scheme and a plucky venture, and so far as the present writer's experience goes, the standard of performance was in keeping. The audience filled the Church—indeed, probably on most occasions a good many people were turned away. P. A. S.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

Elgar's *For the Fallen*, Brahms's *Requiem*, and Parry's *There is an Old Belief*, were sung at the special service on November 11, with orchestral accompaniments by the London Symphony Orchestra. Mr. E. T. Cook conducted excellent performances. It is good to be able to state that public appreciation showed itself solidly in a collection of £150.—On December 16 a programme mainly of seasonable music will be given: Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, Herbert Howells's *Here is the little door*, Parts 1 and 2 of the *Christmas Oratorio*, and Haydn's *Symphony in D*. On December 30 carols will be sung. The services are at 3 o'clock, and no tickets are required.

NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION

At the recent annual meeting of the above Union Mr. E. Minshall was re-elected president for the thirty-fourth year in succession, and Mr. Arthur Berridge continued in office as hon. secretary. Other officers elected were Mr. Frank Idle and Mr. J. Arthur Meale, festival conductor and organist respectively; and Mr. John A. Langford, chairman of committee. The reports read by the secretary showed a successful year's work and a substantial balance in hand.

NEW WORK BY KARG-ELERT

Messrs. Novello have just published a set of *Fifty-four Studies in Variation Form on the ground-bass of Handel*, by Sigfrid Karg-Elert. The theme is only four bars in length, and the studies are of special interest in regard to registration. Mr. Arthur Meale will play them at his 1 o'clock recital on Wednesday, December 13, at Central Hall, Westminster. No doubt this will be the first English performance.

ST. ANNE'S, SOHO

Mr. A. W. Goldsbrough has left St. Anne's to be assistant at Westminster Abbey. Mr. Goldsbrough came from Manchester Cathedral about three years ago. A fine player, he has worthily maintained the prestige of St. Anne's. His successor, Mr. Albert Orton, who was a pupil of Dr. Thorne, now lives in Thorne's old house at Maida Vale.