

Review

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REVIEWS.—(Continued from page 540.)

Concerto for Organ and Orchestra. By Horatio Parker (Op. 55). [Novello and Company, Limited.]

The literature of the organ is not very extensive in regard to concertos for this instrument. Composers do not seem to favour the combination of organ and orchestra, therefore when one of the moderns like Professor Parker—an able organist himself—puts pen to paper organically, so to speak, the result is looked for with interest not unmixed with high expectation.

The work before us is scored for brass, harp and strings, that is to say in detail, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, drums, harp and strings. The first movement—an *Allegro moderato* in triple time and in the key of E flat minor—opens with solemn sustained chords on the organ, while the strings have broad and dignified unison passages. After a due course of 'development' this concise movement leads into a charming *Andante*, the gem of the work perhaps, in which a solo violin, a solo horn, the harp, with the organ are most happily combined. The only drawback to this section is its brevity. An *Allegretto* in E major, also short, starts with a drum solo of four bars, followed by coquettish passages for the organ, strings and drums, duly relieved by a placid episode in the key of A flat. The last movement (*Allegro moderato*, in E flat) is the most elaborate and the longest, as it occupies nearly half the number of pages in the printed score. It includes a fugal episode for organ alone, with the following as its subject, of which fragmentary use is made as the movement is impressingly developed:—

Full Org. All couplers.
Ped. *fff*

This *Finale* is full of contrasts and contains much effective writing. The foregoing, though by no means exhausting the subject, may be sufficient to call attention to a work which is charged with that earnestness of purpose so characteristic of Professor Parker's creative gifts. The concerto, which is dedicated to Dr. G. R. Sinclair, of Hereford, has been effectively arranged for organ solo by Mr. David Stanley Smith.

Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich. IX. Jahrgang. Erster Theil, Lieder des Oswald von Wolkenstein; Zweiter Theil, Johann Josef Fux, Instrumentalwerke I.

[Wien: Artaria & Co.]

The text of the first volume has been edited by Herr Dr. Josef Schatz, the music by Oswald Koller. Oswald von Wolkenstein was born in the Tyrol about the year 1377, and from his poems he appears to have been a great traveller, and also a great linguist. The story of his life is interesting and often romantic, but we must here refrain from any details; he died in 1445. As regards his music it may be noted that he was a contemporary of Dunstable. Of the three manuscripts of his poems two contain music; some of the songs are for one voice, some for several voices. As documents for the history of the music of that period they are of importance, and some of the melodies have even now freshness and charm.

The prefaces by the editors named above show an immense amount of painstaking research. There are portraits of Wolkenstein, and facsimiles from the manuscripts, &c. It is a volume which will be simply invaluable to all who have to study the poetry and music of the first half of the 15th century.

The second volume is devoted to J. J. Fux, principally known to musicians as the author of the celebrated 'Gradus ad Parnassum,' the text-book used by Haydn when he taught Beethoven counterpoint. Fux was a prolific composer, but until the two volumes of sacred compositions appeared in the *Denkmäler* in 1894 and 1895, little of his music had been printed. As a rule, great theorists are dry composers; but the contents of the volume under notice show that he at any rate was an exception. There are two sonatas, one a *quattro*, the other a *tre* of dignified character, in which Fux's contrapuntal skill is fully displayed; also two most delightful Suites. Both are scored for two oboes, two violins, viola, bassoon, and violone with continuo. Anyone whose idea of Fux is that he was a dry old fogey will do well to look at those Suites.

Aubade and Réverie for Violin and Pianoforte. By A. D'Ambrosio.

Three Compositions for Violin and Pianoforte. By Josef Bláha.

Song of Thanksgiving for Violin and Pianoforte. By Alexander C. Mackenzie.

[Bosworth and Co.]

Two pleasing violin solos with pianoforte accompaniment are 'Aubade' and 'Réverie' by A. D'Ambrosio. Both pieces are most agreeably written for the solo instrument, and the accompaniments are excellent.

Of three compositions for violin and pianoforte by Josef Bláha, the accomplished professor at the Royal Academy of Music, No. 1, a very effective *Sérénade*, is most likely to win general favour. Its character is perhaps more suggestive of an impassioned *Réverie* rather than a soothing *Sérénade*; but, after all, 'What's in a name?' The music is the thing to consider, and here is a solo which will thrill the heart and the fingers of many a violinist. No. 2, 'Chanson Triste,' is a plaintive little *morceau* in G minor (the key chosen by Tschaikovsky for his exquisite little piece with the same title) not lacking in expressiveness; whilst No. 3 is a strong, stirring, and emotional 'Scherzo Bohémienne,' dedicated to Kôcian. This piece requires considerable skill from its performer, as the greater part of it is written in double stopping, some of which necessitates much deftness of fingering to overcome neatly. In each case the accompaniments are very skilful and in every respect most satisfactory.

The 'Song of Thanksgiving' from Sir Alexander Mackenzie's orchestral suite, 'London day by day' has been effectively transcribed for violin and pianoforte.

Essais de Technique et d'Esthétique musicales. Première série: I. Les Maîtres Chanteurs de Richard Wagner; II. Étude sur le discours musical. Par Élie Poirée.

[Paris: E. Fromont.]

The first volume of this work (published in 1898) gives a brief account of the genesis of the 'Meistersinger' and of its contents, after which the thematic material is discussed. The themes connected with the various personages are grouped together, and their interconnections and modifications according to various mental or material states are most clearly set forth. The author's intimate knowledge of the score has enabled him to write in clear, convincing and also concise manner. The second part (published last year) is a larger and far more elaborate volume. Man manifests his psychical activity in two ways: by language and gesture, or by gesture alone, using the latter term in a general sense. Gesture may be divided into movements and sensations, and it is the province of art to evoke them more or less artificially, more or less characteristically. This is the text on which the long but able sermon is based. Space forbids a detailed notice; we feel sure, however, that all who read the first and simpler part of the work will be strongly inclined to devote time and attention to the deeper study on the 'Discours Musical.'