

Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 15, No. 355 (Sep. 1, 1872), p. 597

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3354268>

Accessed: 13-12-2015 12:25 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

The Choice. Song. Words by Reginald Charles Oldknow. Music by Virginia Gabriel.

UNLESS reviewers are expected to follow, rather than to lead, public opinion, we cannot but feel somewhat surprised that a song like this should be submitted for critical judgment; for it can scarcely be supposed that, from a musical point of view, it can have the slightest claim upon our attention. If a childish tune, accompanied chiefly with tonic and dominant harmonies, can attract a sufficient number of the music-buying public to make the publication of such effusions profitable, so much the better for the publishers, and so much the worse for the art; but it can hardly be imagined that those who have higher views of the true aim of music should assist in disseminating such pieces. We have spoken of the puerility of the music, but lest our readers should imagine that it does not match with the words, here is the opening verse—

“First came a Count, who sigh’d as he laid at my feet a bouquet;
With thanks for his elegant present I paid, but to him I said nay!
And then came a Duke, who bracelet and rings in my basket would lay,
To reward him I whisper’d the prettiest things, but to him I said nay.”

It would scarcely be credited that these lines should be written for “music;” but Virginia Gabriel has composed them, and the song is published in two keys, so that its beauties may be shared by vocalists with high and low registers. That the composition will be extensively bought and extensively sung there can be little doubt; and this is a “great fact,” which should be taken to heart by those who constantly tell us that the love for high art is rapidly growing amongst the masses.

AUGENER AND CO.

Playthings; for the Pianoforte. By Francis Edward Gladstone.

THIS composition, evidently moulded upon Schumann’s “Kinderscenen,” contains four little sketches, “The Humming Top,” “The Broken Toy,” “The Rocking Horse,” and a Finale, illustrative of the child unsheathing his wooden sword and marching forth to mimic war. They are all well written and eminently suggestive of their titles; but the question that naturally suggests itself with all such pianoforte pieces, is, by whom are they intended to be played? We should of course imagine that they are expressly written for young children, but then they should be adapted to their limited mental and physical capacities; and with our experience of juvenile pupils, we are inclined to think that a little pianist who could do full justice to “The Humming Top,” would have got “far above that sort of thing” in his play hours, and would certainly not spend his valuable time in useless grief over a “Broken Toy.” Beyond this objection—which applies quite as much to many of the German compositions of this class—we have nothing but praise to offer. The wail of sorrow at the appearance of the now useless toy is well expressed in the music; and the “Rocking Horse” (which is in our opinion the best of the numbers), has a swing throughout, which excellently illustrates the monotony of the motion that children so much delight in. The last few bars of the conclusion are extremely happy. The March is good, although scarcely so much to our liking as the other pieces. The subject is bold, but the modulations seem hardly in character with so simple a theme, especially those in the four bars commencing the second part.

HENRY STEAD AND CO.

Coquette. Polka de Salon; pour Piano. Par Alfred Noyer.

THE line which divides a “Polka,” from a “Polka de Salon,” is, we presume, sufficiently understood by purchasers, and therefore it will not be necessary for us to decide whether Mr. Noyer’s Dance really justifies its title. It is, however, a spirited Polka, and the passages, which lie well under the hand, are both attractive and brilliant. The weakest part of the piece is where the composer quits his themes and degenerates into scales upon tonic and dominant harmonies. The substitution of “padding” for episodes which grow naturally out of the general design of a composition is always a sign of feebleness.

J. McDOWELL AND CO.

Pastorale, pour le Piano. Par C. Bachmann.

THIS Pastorale has many good points. The first theme, accompanied with the usual pedal, is characteristic, but scarcely so attractive as the second subject, which is extremely graceful and melodious. The whole piece is simplicity itself, but is none the less welcome on that

account. It is healthy music; and, as such, deserves a word of recognition.

Barcarolle, pour Piano. Par H. Kowalski.

WE like this Barcarolle better than either of the two pieces by the same composer which we recently reviewed. There is a decided character about the principal theme which ensures it a welcome on its re-appearance; and the episodes are also highly attractive. The subject, in the subdominant, is an excellent contrast to the opening melody, and the passages with which it is afterwards ornamented are effective and in good taste. We can conscientiously recommend this composition to pianists of moderate ability.

Si j’étais Roi, d’Ad. Adam. Reverie pour le Piano. Par S. Lambert.

A WEAK air by a weak composer is a strange theme for a Reverie; and we can scarcely wonder, therefore, that the author of this trifle has produced but a feeble piece. Beyond a few bars of introduction, and a kind of variation upon the subject (a mere exercise upon repeated notes), there is indeed nothing attempted; but amateurs may find attractive qualities in the “Reverie,” which are hidden from us.

Polonia. Mazurka pour Piano. Par Michel Bergson.

AS a writer of light pieces this composer may, we think, take a place; for although there is nothing particularly original in his Mazurka, it is effective pianoforte music, and has the true Mazurka character. A good point is gained by the alternation of the minor and major key at the commencement, and the principal theme is graceful. We think it a pity when these foreign pieces are published in England that the continental fingering should be retained. We know, by experience, how English pupils are perplexed by the attempt to find a fifth finger on their hand; and although they may be constantly told that the second finger means the first, and the third means the second, it is a rare thing to find any child who can recollect it.

Original Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

DEAR SIR,—Will you allow me a space in your next issue to reply to the review, which appears in your August number, on my small book of Hymn tunes, &c.

Another “Amateur dabbler” having ventured to rush into print, by publishing a few Hymn tunes, &c., has brought down upon himself the wrath of your reviewer, and his sledge-hammer has been used with no sparing hand.

Your reviewer’s first objection is of so little moment, that it leads one almost to consider that he was determined to pick out something to object to. Again, he says, “making the leading note in the chord of the dominant 7th descend a whole tone in proceeding to the following chord, as B, A, which occurs in tune 10, bar three, and in other pieces.” Now, Sir, does your critic mean to say that the leading note of the dominant 7th, should, as is the stiff rule laid down, always ascend? If so, I need only refer him for an example to an anthem, written by Mr. Barnby, “Make me a clean heart, O God,” bar 24 to 25, in which he will find that the leading note descends a whole tone, exactly as it occurs in my tune, as per the following example:—

In tune 10. BARNBY.

Your reviewer then goes on and says: “further, proceeding from a chord of G minor, with B flat at the top, to the first inversion of a chord of the minor 9th, as (“of,” in the article), G, with B natural, in the bass, which we have in tune 6, bars two and ten, and in chant 9.” If your critic will again refer to Mendelssohn’s “St. Paul,” recit. No. 36, at the words, “and there is no breath in them,” he will find the same progression for the chord of A minor. And lastly, he says, “having the root of the chord of the dominant major 9th, in one of the inner parts, so as to bring the four notes in alphabetical succession, C, D, E, and F sharp, into combination, which is to be found in tune 10, bar 5, and in many other places.” I will now ask your reviewer to look over Dr. Wesley’s beautiful anthem, “O Lord, my God,” or, “Solomon’s song,” he will then find that the same chord occurs no less than three times, and the parts distri-