

Ancient and Modern Forms of Hymn Tunes

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Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 33, No. 592 (Jun. 1, 1892), p. 367

Published by: Musical Times Publications Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3364387>

Accessed: 07-06-2016 18:20 UTC

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operas by that master, followed by an admirable discourse delivered by M. Arthur Pougin, the eminent Paris musical savant, and the performance of a "Hymne à Grétry," specially written for the occasion by M. Sylvain Dupuis. The proceedings terminated with the fiftieth representation at Liège of Grétry's *chef d'œuvre*, "Richard Cœur de Lion," which was most enthusiastically received by an audience which crowded every part of the house.

Columbus centenary celebrations are in course of preparation also at Mexico, where the proceedings will include the performance, at the National Theatre, of a new opera, "Cristoforo Colombo a San Domingo," by Señor Giulio Morales, the son of Melesio Morales, a professor at the Conservatorio of Mexico, whose opera "Cleopatra" met with distinguished and lasting success at that capital last year.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ANCIENT AND MODERN FORMS OF HYMN TUNES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In your last issue is a letter from the Rev. Christopher Thompson commenting upon the false accents so frequently met with in iambic-metre hymns. These cases are indeed painfully numerous in the finest hymns—witness such instances as "Keep me, O keep me, King of kings," and "Sorrow and love flow mingling down." The errors become so noticeable through the poetry being wedded to music—a purpose for which it was probably never intended by the writers. When read, the false accents can be so far palliated as not to interfere materially with the rhythmical flow of the metre; but the result is far different when sung to the inexorable ictus of a metrical tune. The merits of many such hymns are so universally acknowledged that it would be vain—nay, wrong—to advocate their exclusion from hymnals; but I confess I fail to see that the suggestion of reverting to the original form in which some of the tunes were set would afford a remedy. The inconsistency is due to the inevitable accents upon the *first* and *third* beats in each bar of the music. Can these accents be modified by doubling the length of the unaccented notes at the commencement of each line?

I was (as far as I know) the first to publish a collection ("The Church Tune and Chorale Book," Novello, 1858) containing common-time tunes written in ONE UNIFORM MEASURE of four beats to a bar, with compensating rests or dots to complete the short, or six-foot, lines. That the consistency of this plan commended itself to other editors is plain from the subsequent issue of "Hymns Ancient and Modern," and of nearly every hymnal of importance, barred upon the same system.

Would that all organists could be drilled into playing hymn-tunes in strict time. How constantly do we hear the beats ruthlessly ignored, to the annoyance of every one possessed of a feeling for accurate time.—Yours, &c.,

T. L. FORBES.

8, Lancaster Place, Belsize Square, N.W.,
May 4, 1892.

AN IMPROVEMENT IN VIOLINS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—On page 273 of your last number you quote from a contemporary a notice of an improvement in violins by Mr. J. D. Herring, and stigmatise it as "meaningless balderdash." I have had this patented improvement applied to two of my violins, and am glad to say that the result is in every way satisfactory. It is well known that however much care may be taken in stringing a violin it is almost impossible to obtain anything like true fifths in all the different positions, and consequently passages across the strings in the higher positions are difficult to play in tune, to say nothing of fifths in double stops. But when Mr. Herring's clever invention is applied, the vibratory power of the instrument is so much increased that these discordant

fifths are forced into a sort of sympathetic union, the result being a smooth harmonious sound. Added to this, the tone is much more free and full, and the notes in all parts of the instrument very equal. I can heartily recommend all violinists to give the device a fair trial, and feel sure they will be delighted with the result.—Yours faithfully,

W. BRADLEY.

63, Bowker Street,
Higher Broughton, Manchester.

[The paragraph we quoted was so vaguely worded, no clue to the nature of the invention being afforded, that we think it deserved our strong epithet, which of course could not be intended to refer to the invention itself. We are glad to hear intelligible witness borne to its merits.—ED. M. T.]

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

. Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

Notice is sent to all subscribers whose payment (in advance) is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscription is not renewed. We again remind those who are disappointed in obtaining back numbers that, although the music is always kept in stock, only a sufficient quantity of the rest of the paper is printed to supply the current sale.

ANXIOUS.—Write to the Secretary of either the Royal Academy of Music or the Royal College of Music, who will send you full particulars of the Examinations available to you.

G. B. RONCONI (Boston).—Surely you have become confused. Music written in the treble clef, when attempted by a bass or tenor voice, is, of course, sung an octave lower. But every student (in this country, at least) knows that the notation in such cases does not represent the real sounds. Your notion that this is a "secret" is too funny.

MUSICAL.—Much time may be saved by using hand gymnastics (see *Ridley Prentice's Book in Novello's Primers*) to develop strength and flexibility. They must not, however, be regarded as replacing, but as supplementing practice on the instrument.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

ALNWICK.—A fine organ, built by Messrs. Harrison and Harrison, of Durham, for the Parish Church, Alnwick, was opened on the 5th ult. by Mr. J. M. Preston, Organist of St. George's Church, Jesmond. Frequent Recitals have been given by Mr. Ions, of Newcastle Cathedral, and others; as well as by Mr. C. Stanley Wise, Organist of the Church, under whose supervision the instrument was built.

BECCLES.—A Concert was given by the Choral Society on the 10th ult. Parry's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* and his *Blest Pair of Sirens* were the principal pieces; the solo vocalists being Miss Pierce and Mr. Dan Price. Mr. W. H. Williamson was the Conductor.

BERKHAMPTSTEAD, HERTS.—A very successful miscellaneous Concert, under the direction of Mr. J. T. Bavin (Master of Music at Berkhamstead School), was given in the Town Hall on the 16th ult. The vocalists, Miss Annie Matthews, Madame Sutton Shepley, Mr. Lawrence Fryer, and Mr. Sutton Shepley, all well deserved the hearty applause with which their efforts were greeted, and Mr. W. Saunders aroused the enthusiasm of his audience by his violin solos. The Rev. C. J. Langley's pianoforte solo, which was also well received, proved that his power of execution is far beyond that possessed by the majority of amateurs. The programme included Bach's Concerto in C for three pianofortes (Miss Fricker, Rev. C. J. Langley, and Mr. Bavin) and Schumann's Andante with variations (Op. 46) for two pianofortes (Rev. C. J. Langley and Mr. Bavin); while Mr. Bavin also undertook the duties of accompanist.

CAMBRIDGE.—A Lecture upon "Music before the Christian Era" was delivered at the Alexandra Hall, by Mrs. Brownlow, on the 19th ult., under the auspices of the Local Lectures Association. The chair was occupied by Mr. Sedley Taylor, and there was a fairly numerous attendance. The lecturer dealt with pre-historic, Egyptian, Semitic, Greek, and Latin musical practices, and sang several examples in illustration of her remarks.

CHELTEMHAM.—Herr Lortzing's Choir gave a very successful "At Home" in the Rotunda on the 7th ult. Hamish MacCunn's *Bonny Kilmeny* was well rendered, the solos being sung by Miss Rae, Mr. Bentley, and Mr. Prior. Roedel's Cantata for female voices, *Merrie England*, was also successfully performed—solos by Mrs. F. Danberry, Miss Boissier, and Miss Wilkins. A couple of pieces for mandolines and guitars completed the programme.