

Pianoforte Teaching. Some Practical Hints (Concluded)

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private extemporaneous performances on the same instrument; moreover, he conducted his 'Midsummer Night's Dream' overture and played his G minor pianoforte concerto—the latter between the performances of two operas at the Theatre Royal, but which formed part of the Birmingham Festival scheme three score years ago.

On his return to London, and as a parting gift to Mrs. Moscheles, Mendelssohn drew this humorous sketch for his friend's album. The key to its comicalities is as follows. On the left is the Stork Hotel, Birmingham, where Moscheles had 'put up.' To the right of that old hostelry is a pair of scissors, purchased by Mendelssohn for Mrs. Moscheles, and which he has depicted as a stork stalking along from the Stork to the Town Hall, but with its bill above the building in order to show the superior importance of that sharpened gift over the Town Hall and the Festival. Next is a bread and butter pudding—a favourite dish of Mendelssohn's during his visits to England—with a recipe for the making of it, which he is going to take with him to Germany, and a portion of its ingredients as shown by the bunch of currants, which forms a part of the grouping. Then we have the steamer at anchor off Dover, with Mendelssohn and his two travelling companions—Moscheles and Chorley, the musical critic of the *Athenæum*—standing on the fore deck. Under the steamer is the cravat which Mrs. Moscheles has given him. As Mr. Felix Moscheles says: 'He was in the habit of protesting that he had never been able to master the art of adjusting his cravat, and that not until Mrs. Moscheles pronounced the magic words—"pin it up"—was a flood of light thrown upon the subject.' The lower section of the drawing is a certain umbrella, belonging to Moscheles, which Mendelssohn had unfortunately lost, and the luggage—all of which is humorously disproportionate to the mail coach which is to convey the three travellers to Dover. The artist's inscription, signed 'F.M.B.' and dated 'London, 2 October, '40,' speaks for itself.

Ignaz Moscheles furnishes an equally amusing sequel to this sketch in relating the following incident which happened during the journey to Dover. The coach started from London at midnight with the three inside travellers, but unfortunately there was a fourth occupant, a stranger, who, however, was happily fast asleep. One of the musical trio of passengers said: 'What shall we do with him when he wakes up?' 'Kill him, that's the only way,' replied another. At that moment the somnolent one awaked! Great alarm took possession of the three merry men, as they feared that the stranger must have heard their murderous threat. But with admirable presence of mind Moscheles solemnly remarked: 'And then she declared she *never* would marry that man!'

PIANOFORTE TEACHING

SOME PRACTICAL HINTS BY

FRANKLIN TAYLOR.

(Concluded from page 652.)

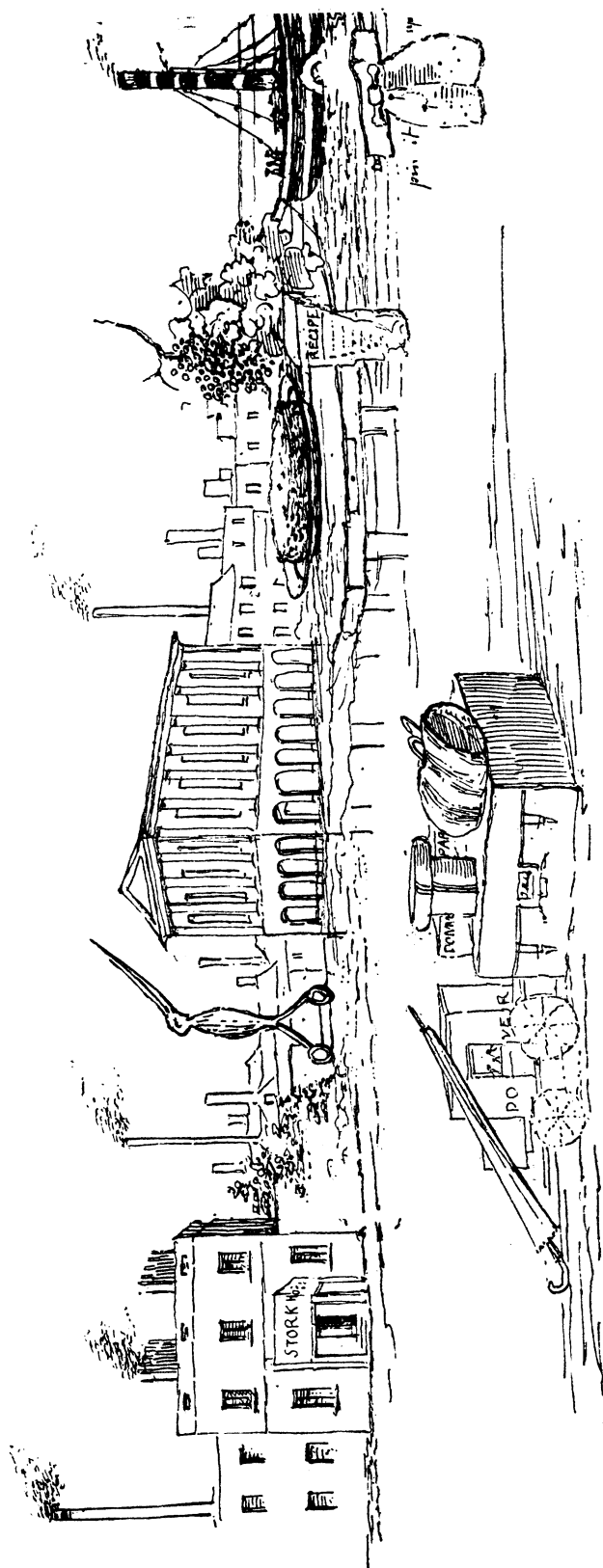
PHRASING AND EXPRESSION.

PHRASING is best described to the pupil as the necessity for dividing the music into separate sentences, and as being analogous to supplying marks of punctuation to a literary composition from which they have been omitted. Since every phrase ends with a cadence of some kind, it will be a great help to the pupil if he possesses a fair knowledge of harmony, but even without this knowledge an attentive pupil will be able, by careful listening, to discover the separation of the phrases, and in the endeavour will be doing much towards the cultivation of his ear.

When this separation into sentences or phrases has been accomplished, the next thing will be to give to each phrase its appropriate variations of force, and the pupil must be taught to observe that there are three possible ways of treating a phrase, ways which may conveniently be expressed by the signs \ll , \gg , and $\ll\gg$, and that each separate sentence requires to be treated in one of the three. In the absence of any special indications the pupil should begin his experiments by trying the first and second forms, and comparing results. In the majority of cases the first will prove to be the most suitable, the third form being seldom required, and indeed being usually marked definitely by the composer. In describing the first of these forms I do not mean to imply that the strongest part of the phrase always occurs exactly in the middle; the proper effect would often be more accurately indicated by $\ll\gg$ or $\ll\gg$. The general character of the phrase will of course determine this.

With regard to the amount of variety in phrasing, I have always noticed that the playing of even intelligent pupils is inclined to err on the side of monotony, and I believe that, as a matter of fact, all variety, whether of tone, as in *cres.* or *dimin.*, or of pace, as in *accel.*, *ritard.*, or the duration of a pause, appears greater to the player than to the listener; I therefore always recommend my pupils to exaggerate in such matters, until they find out for themselves the limits beyond which the effect would become grotesque, and I have often been amused to observe the efforts they have to make before they arrive at anything worth calling variety at all.

Another cause of monotony which is very generally noticeable in the playing of pupils, and indeed not of pupils alone, is deficiency of accent. I have heard it advanced that the reason of the unrhythmical quality of the playing of English pianists as compared with those of other nationalities lies in the fact that English children do not dance at an early age nearly as much as French, German, or



for "Farrington's Antiquities" album
 London Jan 25 1890
 J.M. [Signature]

Facsimile of a pen-and-ink sketch
 by Mendelssohn in the possession of
 Mr. Felix Moscheles, and reproduced
 by his kind permission.

Austrian. How this may be I do not know; perhaps it is because they have but a weak sense of rhythm that they are less given to dancing. In any case, the cultivation of a feeling for accent and rhythm is a subject which requires the constant attention of a teacher, and a great deal will depend on the choice of the music given out for study. I should say, avoid all 'Moonlight Reveries' and 'Rippling Waves' and give plenty of well-marked rhythmical pieces in March, Gavotte, or Waltz form, together with movements (generally the first and last) of the Sonatas and Sonatinas of Haydn, Mozart, Clementi, &c.

One of the most common defects in the playing of even advanced pupils is feebleness of the left hand, and this I think arises less from physical disability than from the fact that the player's ear is too much engaged in following the doings of the right hand, where the melody is to be found, to be able to afford much attention to the left. Pupils should therefore be encouraged to play the *bass part* of their music alone (not necessarily the whole of the part for the left hand) in order to accustom the ear to its melody, so that when playing the work complete they are playing *two* melodies which fit together perfectly, and are playing them with equal intention (though probably with different degrees of force), instead of playing with the right hand and accompanying, more or less negligently, with the left. The pupil should learn to take as much interest, for instance, in the following melody, which is the bass of Chopin's Waltz in E flat (Op. 18), as he does in the more elaborate melody to which it serves as support.



Likewise, in studying polyphonic music, such as Bach's three-part Inventions, the pupil should begin by playing each part separately, not only to learn the melody of each, but in order to recognise the frequent imitations and entrances of the theme, all of which will require prominence when the parts are afterwards combined. And in learning a piece in *cantabile* style, the melody must be studied and practised by itself, for the sake of the phrasing and expression. A singer does not need constant accompaniment in order to improve his rendering of the song.

It would be both possible and pleasant to write much more on the subject of phrasing, but want of space forbids. Those who desire further information may be referred to my book, 'Technique and Expression,'* in which the matter is discussed at greater length.

READING AT SIGHT.

Sight-reading is a highly important and too often neglected branch of musical study, and can scarcely be begun too early, provided the pupil's technique is sufficiently advanced to enable him to play with a certain moderate degree of facility. The best material to begin with is to be found in very easy arrangements of popular tunes, such as those contained in Peters' Albums of 'Volks und Studenten Lieder,' 'Opern-Melodien,' &c., and each movement should be played through three times, in approximately correct *tempo*, without stopping to correct mistakes. Later, albums of Gavottes, Marches, Minuets, &c., are serviceable, and for players who are competent to deal with quick chromatic changes of harmony, Chopin's Mazurkas afford admirable material.

The chief cause of the difficulty experienced lies in the reader's giving his whole attention to the note he is playing, instead of realising beforehand what he has to play next; but it is not difficult to make a pupil see that if he were asked to read aloud a piece of English prose, he would not look steadfastly at each syllable as he pronounced it, but would, as a matter of course, be always reading two or three words in advance, otherwise he would soon hesitate, or, at any rate, read very slowly. And it is quite the same in reading music, though it takes time to acquire the habit of reading in advance, because the sense of music is less definite and less readily grasped than that of language. The only way in which the teacher can help a beginner is by slowly moving a pencil along the line, about a bar in advance of the playing, so as to lead the pupil's eye onward, at the same time giving occasional verbal directions in *very* few words, such as 'change to G major,' 'observe tied notes,' and so forth, by which means the pupil will be taught the kind of thing he has to look out for.

A knowledge of harmony is a great advantage in sight-reading, as in most things musical, but even this will not dispense with the necessity for looking ahead; indeed, if relied on too confidently, it has its dangers, tempting the reader to play harmonic progressions and resolutions as he expects to find them, instead of as they happen to be written.

THEORY.

It is difficult to say how much theory is necessary for the pianoforte pupil. In a general sense, no doubt, the more knowledge the better, but, considered particularly, there are two points which seem to stand out as absolutely indispensable. First, the pupil must be taught the construction of the scale and the formation of common chords and chords of the seventh; and secondly, he must learn enough of the principles of modulation to be able to tell in what key he is playing at any part of his piece. As soon as the elementary principles of key-relationship are understood, and the order of appearance of the sharps and

* Novello and Co., Ltd.

flats—F, C, G, D, A, E, B, and B, E, A, D, G, C, F—has been committed to memory, the pupil is in a position to analyse simple compositions for modulation, and I will try to describe briefly the method which I generally use with my own pupils. I first explain that by the expression 'in the key of so and so' we mean that the composition consists of the notes of a certain scale exclusively, and that if no extra sharp, flat, or natural occurs at all, the piece remains in the same key throughout. The analysis then begins by seeking out the first chromatic sign to be found, and I show that if it is a modulating sharp it occurs on the seventh degree of the new scale, if a flat, on the fourth,* and if a natural on the seventh or fourth, depending on whether it cancels a flat or a sharp in the scale just quitted. The note situated one semitone above the sharp, or one semitone and two tones below the flat, may then be assumed to be the keynote, and if it is a true modulation, it will be immediately

followed by the chord of the new tonic. If this expected chord does not appear at once it is not an essential change, but merely an accidental, probably an auxiliary note, the nature of which I then take the opportunity to explain. It is also necessary to show that when two or more sharps or flats occur at the same moment, it is the most advanced in the 'order of appearance' which must be taken for investigation. The term *accidental* as applied in the Instruction Books to all sharps, &c., which do not belong to the signature is illogical and misleading, and this fact also must be made clear to the pupil.

By way of proving that the pupil understands his analysis, as also of affording opportunity to point out mistakes, I require him to mark his piece in the manner of the following example, in which the new keys are shown by a capital letter if major, and a small one if minor, while the true accidentals are marked with an asterisk—



It must be admitted that this is but a rough and ready method, and can only apply to simple and direct modulations, but I have always found it useful, and at any rate it serves to make the pupil aware that modulations do take place in most compositions, a fact of which the average pupil is often entirely ignorant.

Many pianoforte students now attend harmony classes, and learn to write from figured basses, and the knowledge they gain should be of great value to them, but I am afraid that for the majority their work only exists upon paper, and has little or no musical meaning—indeed, I frequently meet with quite advanced players who are yet incapable of playing three consecutive chords in correct progression on the keyboard. To remedy this unhappy state of things, all pupils should be made to *play* their harmony exercises through several times (after they have been corrected!) that they may learn through the ear as well as the eye. And, at the least, as a very small step towards a possible future power of extemporising, all pupils should be able to play the prepared authentic cadence in every key.

CHOICE OF MUSIC FOR STUDY.

I do not think it would be well to attempt to give in this place anything like a catalogue of teaching pieces, because all good teachers will be familiar with the standard works as a matter

of course, and as for lighter music, of the kind which is in demand for the making of a 'little music in the evening,' there is now such an abundance to be found in the Albums and other collections of all the chief publishers, English and foreign, that the difficulty of selecting suitable pieces is infinitely less than was the case twenty years ago. But I should like to emphasize the importance, in all educational matters, of progressive order, in the advantages of which I firmly believe, and which I myself have carried out in the arrangement of the various books of my collection of 'Progressive Studies,'* as also in a Pianoforte Tutor† for beginners compiled by me some years ago, in which no single detail of notation—whether rest, dot, tie, &c.—is introduced without the explanation being given at the moment of its introduction.

The composers whose works appear to me the most valuable for teaching purposes are, in the earlier stages, Clementi, Dussek, Bach (there are some quite easy movements to be found in the 'Supplement' to Peters' Edition), Burgmüller, some Kullak, Reinecke, and Kuhlau. The works of the last-named are often particularly useful, as the use of the sign *8va* is generally avoided, the higher notes being written on leger-lines, and thus the pupil is obliged to learn to read notes written in the higher registers, an accomplishment often present to a very limited extent only. For more advanced pupils we have Mozart, Heller

* The alliteration, Sharp Seventh and Flat Fourth, helps to fix this in the pupil's memory.

* Novello and Co., Ltd.

† Enoch and Sons.

(almost indispensable for teaching the elements of phrasing), Haydn (often undertaken too early, before the pupil's technique is equal to the execution of the numerous trills and other ornaments), Bach again, easy Mendelssohn and Beethoven, and, farther on, as the general technical progress justifies it, Hummel (extremely valuable, and too often neglected by teachers), Mendelssohn, yet more Bach (probably the Fugues by this time), Schubert, and a few of Moscheles' compositions. Chopin, Schumann, and most of Beethoven should be left until the pupil is able to understand as well as execute them, or he will lose all the pleasure which is experienced by every student who is capable of undertaking them successfully.

Studies, by which I mean for the moment studies of technique only, not of interpretation, occupy an intermediate position between finger-exercises and musical compositions. They are compositions, in the sense that they have a beginning and ending, and conform to the rules of musical grammar, but they are *not* compositions, in so far that they do not aim at expressing any musical thought, their object being simply the furtherance of technique. Studies of this kind should always be chosen with a view to the pupil's improvement in some particular branch of technique, and, as a rule, should follow when the pupil has become fairly capable in that particular branch. Thus, so soon as the scales can be played in moderate *tempo* without difficulty, the teacher should give a series of scale-studies, by which means the pupil learns to apply to actual compositions the work done in technical exercises.

From this point of view, the best studies are those in which one particular progression or figure is reiterated throughout in varied positions, as in the studies of Czerny, Cramer, Mayer, Loeschhorn, &c., and I have no liking for the form generally adopted by Kalkbrenner and others, in which there appears to be a striving after musical effect, together with a too great variety of technical figuration. Of course, these remarks do not apply to studies of phrasing and performance, "*Vortragsstudien*," as the Germans call them, such as those by Heller, Moscheles, Chopin, Liszt, and many others. For our practical purpose these differ in no respect from pieces otherwise designated.

In choosing music for pupils now-a-days the teacher has to take into consideration not only the composer, but the editor. I think there can be no question that the idea, excellent in itself, of training the player in the way he should go by supplying a sufficient number of marks of expression and phrasing has of late been very much overdone, and with by no means satisfactory results. I have seen modern editions of works with which I am perfectly familiar, but which I was yet positively unable to recognise at the first glance! Time-signatures are changed, sometimes a double time-signature is given, such as C 12-8 (the meaning

being that triplets occur in some of the bars), sometimes bar-lines are drawn through each staff separately and then across both (intended to indicate a certain variety in the phrasing), and finally the whole thing is decorated with a mass of curved lines, horizontal lines, dotted lines, abbreviations and initials (generally unintelligible without frequent reference to the preface), to say nothing of weird signs which look like designs for railway signals! And all this even in quite simple music, intended for pupils who have barely passed the elementary stage, and who surely have enough to do if they attend to the comparatively few directions which the composer has deemed sufficient. The result is that this overwhelming mass of instructions defeats its own end, and nothing is attended to.

Moreover, this over-anxiety on the part of editors to instruct the player as to every little detail is often actively mischievous. A long experience of examination in pianoforte playing has taught me more of the results of different methods of teaching than I could possibly have learnt otherwise, and I do not hesitate to say that a rigid insistence on attention to marks and signs on the part of the teacher, and a slavish observance of them on that of the student, dulls the pupil's musical perception, and prevents him from properly cultivating and exercising his judgment. For instance, one of the earliest ideas of the editors, long before the highly variegated editions of to-day came into existence, was to join together the ends of all slurs during the continuance of an unbroken *legato*, and to leave them disconnected at points where a break would be necessary or allowable. At first sight this would appear to be an innocuous and even desirable arrangement, but the result is that pupils accustomed to this method, and unaware that composers, as a rule, did not trouble themselves about such minute details, consider the break at the end of every slur a necessity, and when they play from a copy which has not received the attentions of the editor turn such a phrase as—

Original marking.

 into—



Indeed, the careful and conscientious pupil is in such matters as the above often in worse case than the careless, especially if the latter possesses a certain amount of musical sense.

In conclusion, I may perhaps be permitted to add a word of warning against the too prevalent practice of allowing the pupil to learn pieces of a difficulty far in advance of his technical powers. Young and inexperienced teachers are the most frequent sinners

in this respect. Beginners in teaching (I have been a beginner myself, and I know) have just finished their own education at some great School of Music or elsewhere, they have their favourite composers or special compositions, and they are keenly anxious to make their pupils play them like they do themselves! Or they are tempted to seek relief from continually hearing music of a more or less childish standard, and prefer to listen to compositions which interest them, however imperfectly rendered. All this by way of excuse, but that the practice is a mischievous one I have no doubt whatever.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

AMONGST the musical visitors to the Birmingham Festival were Professor Julius Buths, of Düsseldorf, and Herr Otto Lessman, Editor of the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* and one of the most distinguished critics in Germany. Professor Buths, who was born in 1851, has, for the past eleven years, been musical director at Düsseldorf, an important post in Germany and one formerly held by Mendelssohn. Music is not, however, his only interest, pictures being a favourite hobby. Moreover, he took an intelligent delight in visiting with a few friends the splendid Free Library of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, appropriately situated in Paradise Street. The fine Shakespeare collection there specially attracted his attention, and, by the courtesy of the Librarian, he was permitted to examine a First Folio and other rare treasures that are carefully preserved in the strong-room of that splendid Institution. The Professor subsequently paid a flying visit to Stratford-on-Avon before returning to Düsseldorf, thus making a pilgrimage which formed an interesting finish to his Festival experiences at Birmingham.

PROFESSOR BUTHS intends, we understand, to perform at Düsseldorf during the coming season a Symphony in G minor, 'quite Mozartean in character,' by John Christian Bach, the manuscript of which is in the possession of Dr. Erich Priege, of Bonn. The eleventh son of the great Leipzig Cantor, John Christian was known as 'the English Bach,' by reason of his residence in London during the last twenty years of his life, where he ranked as one of the chief musicians of the day. He died in London on New Year's Day, 1782, and is buried in the Roman Catholic portion of Old St. Pancras Churchyard. No stone marks the spot of the interment, and it would be impossible to point to the exact location of his remains. The burial register of the parish of St. Pancras records his name as

JOHN CHRISTIAN BACH.

At some future time we hope to give a few biographical particulars of 'the English Bach.'

HERE is enthusiasm in matters choral in Greater Britain. Lady Mary Lygon, who went out to Australia with her brother, Earl Beauchamp, Governor of New South Wales, has successfully initiated a musical competition in Sydney. In a private letter to Dr. McNaught, Lady Mary writes: 'We had entries in all the twenty-five classes; and one choir (the Grafton Cathedral Choir and Choral Society) came 500 or 600 miles—two days' journey by sea!—to compete in the last two classes.' Advance, Australia, in the great Commonwealth of music.

THE *Yorkshire Post* of the 17th ult. contains, in its 'Music and Art' column the following paragraph from the pen of its erudite musical critic:—

'Answers to correspondents' often furnish excellent material for the imaginative mind; they are in their suggestiveness something like the one-sided conversation heard when a friend is operating on the telephone. Thus, when we find in the October MUSICAL TIMES a querist answered thus:—'Taking into consideration all your circumstances, the concertina seems the most promising of the three instruments you name'—we are at once launched upon a sea of conjecture. What were the circumstances, and what could be the instruments that yield priority to the concertina? For our own part, we should take the one to be a desert island, the others the Jew's harp and comb.

While we are very glad to hear from time to time of the usefulness of the 'Answers to Correspondents' section of this journal, it is an additional source of gratification to find that it furnishes material for some amusing 'copy' in so important a newspaper as the *Yorkshire Post*. Travellers to desert islands will in future know the kind of instruments best suited to those 'circumstances.'

So much has been said upon the shortcomings of the chorus at the recent Festival, especially in Mr. Elgar's 'Dream of Gerontius,' that any further comment is unnecessary. Their achievements in some of the other works, in justice be it recorded, gave better evidence of that high attainment which we naturally expect at Birmingham with all its splendid Festival traditions. But any defects in a first-rate festival choir once more point to the great need of a general levelling-up of choral technique in this country. Richter has done wonders for us in regard to the performance of orchestral music, and we want a number of English Richters up and down the country to galvanise choral singing into new life. The days of the stodgy four-in-a-bar conductor and the mechanical chorus singer are no more. There must be a *spirituality* in the interpretation of choral music—a spirituality that cannot be expressed by so many crotchets and quavers or even dynamic signs, but which must be felt. The music must come from the heart or it will not touch the heart. Choral singing is a glorious heritage of this fair land of ours, and its supremacy must be maintained by a determination to reach the highest ideals of soul-stirring interpretation.

A SPECIAL Thanksgiving Service was announced to be held in St. Paul's Cathedral, on the 27th ult., for the safe return from the war in South Africa of the City Imperial Volunteers. The music selected included Professor Stanford's *Te Deum* in B flat, special Psalms, three hymns—'Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,' 'Now thank we all our God,' and 'All people that on earth do dwell'—in addition to the National Anthem to be sung at the close of the service. Sir George Martin composed a special Antiphon for the occasion. This, which was to be sung before and after the Psalms, is a setting of the words: 'O Lord God, Thou strength of my life: Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.' It was arranged that the organ should be supplemented by the band of the Royal Military School of Music (Kneller Hall), that Mr. Charles Macpherson, sub-organist of St. Paul's, should officiate at the organ, and Sir George Martin conduct this most memorable service in the Mother Church of the City of London.