

Review

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*Sonatina in E flat, for the Pianoforte.  
Three Rondos for the Pianoforte.*

Composed by Gustav Merkel.  
[Patey and Willis.]

SONATINAS foreshadowing the works of the great composers are of all things the very best practice for juvenile pianists; for the sooner they are taught to think that form and design are essential in musical compositions the sooner will they learn to estimate mere showy pieces at their true value. Judging from the specimen before us, we have every hope that a name has been added to the list of composers for the young, for in every respect the Sonatina in E flat fulfils all the conditions we require in such works. The first movement is planned on a recognised model, and contains passages which employ both hands with good effect throughout. The Rondo is based upon a spirited theme, and is sufficiently developed for the dimensions of the work. Equal praise must be given to the three Rondos, all of which are melodious and well written for the instrument. The first, an Allegretto in E flat, has a particularly striking theme; the second, a Barcarole, in A minor and major, apart from its attractiveness, contains good exercise for double notes; and the third, an Allegretto in A major, although perhaps not quite so pleasing as its companions, may be confidently recommended as a piece well adapted for teaching.

*The Birthday Book of Musicians and Composers, for every day in the Year.* By E. Pauer.  
[Forsyth Brothers.]

HERR PAUER tells us in the preface to this work that the popularity of the Birthday Book identified with the names of celebrated literary men has suggested to him the idea of compiling a similar one devoted to musicians and composers. The notion is indeed an excellent one, and much praise is due to an artist actively engaged in his profession for devoting so much time to his self-imposed task. When we say, however, that the names of Wesley, the composer, and Braham, the vocalist, are omitted, it will sufficiently show that *all* the eminent musicians are not included. We may also remark that it would assuredly have been better to simply record the date of birth after the names, without any opinion upon the relative merits of the persons mentioned, and to have used the same sized type for each. The terms "meritorious," "distinguished," "celebrated," &c., are not required in a mere Birthday Book, and appear the more strange as some well-known artists are left without any such observations. Apart from these objections—which, with a few wrong dates, may be easily remedied in a second edition—the book is well worthy of the patronage of all music-lovers; an alphabetical index at the conclusion affording easy reference to each name.

*The Morning and Evening Service, set to Music in the Key of G.* By Philip Armes, Mus. Doc., Oxon.  
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE Organist of Durham Cathedral is sufficiently conservative to adhere to the old system of notation, the minim being the unit of time measurement almost throughout this Service. Curiously enough, however, at the opening of the Nunc Dimittis the signature, alike in the voice parts and the accompaniment, is 3-4, though the music is in 3-2 time. This, of course, is a mere inadvertence. In style this Service is solid and contrapuntal, but a modern tone is imparted by frequent changes of key. The most abrupt transition occurs in the Jubilate, the second verse of which is in E flat and the third in E natural. It may be noted that the organ and the voices frequently move independently of each other, and Dr. Armes manifests considerable skill in polyphonic writing. Perhaps the most effective of the four canticles is the Magnificat, especially the extremely vigorous and spirited setting of verses 6-8. Objection may be taken to some minor points in the Service. For example, the shortening of the word "tookest" to "took'st" should have been avoided, and the consecutive sevenths between treble and bass (Magnificat, page 9, bar 5) and the fourths between alto and bass (page 11, bar 7) have a somewhat harsh effect. On the whole, however, Dr. Armes may be congratulated on his most recent addition to the repertory of the Cathedral.

*Select Overtures.* Arranged for the Organ. By Arthur Henry Brown. [B. Williams.]

THESE transcriptions, five in number, are as follows:—Grand Overture in D, by Mehul—taken, we believe, from an opera entitled "Le Trésor supposé"—Mozart's "Titus," Gluck's "Orpheus," Arne's "Comus," and Boyce's "The Chaplet." We should suppose that not one of these pieces has hitherto been arranged for the organ, and if there be any merit in avoiding ground already well trodden, Mr. Brown is fully entitled to commendation for the same. But the main point is whether the works he has selected are appropriate to the instrument, and at the best only a qualified answer can be given in the affirmative. The Preludes of Mozart and Gluck are certainly not organ music in any sense of the term, but Méhul's Overture, a broadly written, dignified piece, the Handelian "Comus," and Boyce's composition, are fairly and legitimately effective. The last-named piece is in three movements—a Fugato in C, a Gavotte in A minor, and a Minuet in C. It may be noted that Boyce died in 1779, not 1799 as here stated.

*The Child and the Flowers.* Written by Mary Mark Lemon. Composed by Odoardo Barri. [B. Williams.]

WE have so often recorded our opinion of the "dying child" class of poetry, which, from its appealing directly to the feelings of the listeners, half accomplishes the work of the composer, that it is unnecessary in noticing this song to do more than announce to those who cling to such sentimental effusions that the verses—which are far above the average—have as much in them about the "Angels" and the "Golden Gate" as can possibly be desired. The music, however, is by no means conventional. A melodious theme, delicately accompanied, and thoroughly vocal, expresses the words most sympathetically; and indeed the song has so much merit that we shall be extremely glad to meet with another composition by the same author wedded to more healthful poetry.

*The Wolseley March.* For the Pianoforte. Composed, and Dedicated to General Lord Wolseley of Cairo, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., by Mrs. Mounsey Bartholomew.  
[Duncan Davison and Co.]

WHETHER Mrs. Bartholomew has been inspired by the occasion we cannot say, but certainly her March, dedicated to the hero of the day, is thoroughly worthy both of herself and the subject which called it forth. The bold Theme in A is excellently contrasted with what we suppose must be called the "Trio," in the subdominant. The Coda, too, is full of life, and most effectively concludes a composition which, attractive as it is for the pianoforte, seems to demand the resources of a military band.

*The Office of the Holy Communion, set to Music in the Key of F.* By Edward J. Bellerby, Mus. Bac., Oxon.  
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. BELLERBY'S music is of an easy character, and is doubtless intended for parish choirs of rather limited resources. It is, upon the whole, tolerably successful, but it is one of those compositions which, after having been heard more than once, leave a very indefinite impression upon the hearers. Some will say this is as it should be in music for the Holy Communion. If so, then Mr. Bellerby has been very successful.

*God be merciful.* Motett. By Joseph Smith, Mus. Doc.  
[Weekes and Co.]

THIS is a composition of some importance, it having gained the prize at the Welsh Eisteddfod of 1880. The composer shows that he has abilities of no mean order, but, judging from this specimen, they are chiefly technical, and original thoughts are few and far between. The choruses, of which there are two rather developed specimens, are carefully and well written, and are such as a good choir would delight in, but, from an inventive point of view, they cannot be classed very high. As regards the Trio for treble, alto and tenor, to the words "O let the nations be glad," the voice parts are undoubtedly pleasing and effective, but the accompaniment in places sounds laboured and, as it were, fitted on to the vocal part without adding to its beauty.