

Review

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One of Sir George Grove's pet ideas was the publication of the autograph scores of all Beethoven's symphonies in photographic facsimile. With characteristic enthusiasm he mooted the proposal in a letter to *The Times* of September 15, 1891; moreover, it was typical of his warm-hearted hero-worship that he should also enthruse his friends and even his relations. In a letter to his brother-in-law, the late Dean Bradley, he says:

A. P. Stanley is to you what Beethoven is to me—every additional trait or expression is a gem, and gives me the keenest pleasure. Those facsimiles I proposed in my letter to *The Times* will be an inestimable boon to musical people all over the world, and I hope to get them carried out. Suppose one could have a facsimile of the MS. of St. Matthew's Gospel, or of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, or that instead of having to go to Rome or Petersburg to see it, one could have it in one's own house, and handle it, and mark it, and have it always at hand, eh? And the parallel is rather close, because the Symphonies, like the Epistles, have many places in them where the original must have been mistaken by the editor.

This interesting proposal, however, was never carried out; doubtless its great cost, and the chances of so few would-be purchasers were deterrents against realizing a wish so very dear to the heart of Beethoven-loving 'G.' How he would have rejoiced in Herr Ernst von Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's gift!

#### REHEARSING FOR A CHORAL COMPETITION.

For the purpose of non-identification I will locate the rehearsal in the village of Loom Fowt. If the place is mythical, the members of the choir are human beings filled with a desire to win the first prize in a competition soon to be held in a neighbouring town. The *first* prize, not the second, nor the third, is to be won by these worthy Lancastrians. The Loom Fowt choir consists of forty voices, mostly cotton-mill workers and colliers, leavened by the inclusion of the learned village newsagent, whose decision is absolutely final whenever methods of pronunciation are in dispute.

The conductor of the choir, Silas by name, is likewise conductor of the village brass band. He is a 'gradely musicianer' who earns his daily bread in the humble occupation of 'twisting-in' at the little weaving shed down in the valley. To-night this 'gradely musicianer' has forgotten all about healds and reeds, for he is living in the atmosphere his soul loves best—an atmosphere which he would permanently breathe were it possible for his body to subsist upon atmosphere alone. He is about to take his choir through that magnificent barbaric chorus of Elgar's, 'The Challenge of Thor,' and as I am well known to the conductor and his committee, they have granted me the privilege of remaining in the practice-room during the progress of this momentous rehearsal.

The conductor stands before his choir without a copy of the music, for he has committed to memory every note of that wonderful chorus. 'Neau then! are yo' ready? Hauve a minnit. As this has to be sung at th' competition 'beaut 'companiment, Ah'll just gie yo' three little beats like this (! ! !) afore yo' start, an' then yo' mun brast off like clockwark. Piano, mind yo', *piano!* Neau then (*sotto voce*), one, two, three':

I am the God Thor,  
I am the War God,  
I am the Thunderer.

The conductor claps his hands and immediately there is silence. With his eyes fixed on one of the basses, he sarcastically remarks: 'Ah tow'd thee at

th' last practice, Tummy, that th' art o' part-singin' wer' to thry an' mak' th' tone seaund as if it aw coom fro' *one* v'ice. Neau when tha geets to that D flat on th' fust part o' th' word "Thunderer," tha'rt not supposed to be sellin' coal, an' tha'rt not supposed to be sheautin' at a footbaw match. If Ah've to spayke to thee ony more, tha'll be one 'at winno' sing wi' this kire i' th' competition.'

After a little homily upon the wickedness of wasting valuable time, another start is made:

Here in my Northland,  
My fastness and fortress,  
Reign I for ever!  
(*Tenors and basses.*)  
Here amid icebergs  
Rule I the nations.

Another clap of the conductor's hands; this time it is the tenors who are at fault. 'Well! of all th' wake stuff 'at ever Ah yeard i' me life, this is th' wakest. Yo're noan sittin' on icebergs, yo're singin' abeaut 'em. Do let us ha' some tone. Thry an' imagine yo're on Crowden Moor i' th' middle o' winter an' i' th' dead o' neet, wrapped up in a fur-lined o'ercoat, wi' a drop o' summat warm an' stimmilatin' i' th' pocket an' 'ondy to geet at. Just thry, their's good lads! Neau then, from mark B agen.'

At this attempt the effort is decidedly better, and the singers are allowed to proceed:

This is my hammer,  
Miolner the mighty.

'*Stop!*' cries a thunderous voice from among the basses. It is the learned newsagent, our specialist in pronunciation. He is about to exercise his authority, granted by the Committee, to stop the singing whenever he detects anything wrong in that particular department. 'It's thee, Smiler,' says the learned newsagent. 'Ah've tow'd thee times beaut number 'at tha munno' bring thy coal-pit manners to these rehearsals. Tha may talk abeaut a "hommor" as mich as tha' likes when tha'rt i' th' pit, but when tha'rt here it'll ha' to be "hammer," with an aspirate on th' fust letter. Dunno' let me ha' to tell thee ony more.' (To the conductor) 'That'll do, Silas. Tha con proceed.' He did!

T. DARMAN WARD.

## Reviews.

*Form in music.* By Stewart Macpherson.  
[Joseph Williams, Ltd.]

In these days of nebulous eccentricity on the part of young composers, it is a plucky thing to issue another book on the subject of Form. But as a professor of harmony and composition at the Royal Academy of Music, Mr. Stewart Macpherson doubtless has very good reason for making known his views on the subject, even though they differ from those held by other theorists, and showing students the methods which the great masters adopted to make their deathless creations intelligible from a constructive point of view. One has only to sample such masterpieces to find that form is not another word for formality. The wide range of examples given in the book proves this, and nothing can be better than that the minds of budding composers should be imbued with the principles of form as applied by those who have well deserved the designation 'genius.' It is perfectly true that composers cannot be made by textbooks, but their pathway towards success may be smoothed by a careful study of the works created by the great ones in music, and Mr. Macpherson's treatise deserves the attention of both teachers and their pupils. We notice that in Ex. 19 (p. 11) the extract from Mendelssohn's 'O rest in the Lord' is given in the key of G. Is it not better to quote extracts exactly as they appear in the text, rather than by changing the key signatures? A wrong clef on p. 57 needs correction.