

Music under Bolshevism

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'Concerts of Antient Musick,' and on the dissolution of that Society were removed to Buckingham Palace, and presented by Queen Victoria to the Royal College of Music. They contain many MS. insertions made for their use at the Concerts of Antient Music. An original edition of *Alexander's Feast*, edited by Mozart, belonged to the celebrated contrapuntist and composer, Eduard Grell, whose name is stamped on the title-page, and a German edition of *The Messiah*, by Joh. Ad. Hiller, contains very interesting contemporary MS. notes about the work and its first production at Berlin. A copy of *Songs from Messiah*, published by Walsh, is probably the earliest edition of this work, as the words 'To be sung an Octave lower' are engraved over the beginning of the air, 'He was despised,' the notes of which are printed an octave higher than in any subsequent edition. There is no copy of this edition in the British Museum, and Mr. Flower's copy may be the only one now in existence.

One of the greatest treasures of Mr. Flower's Handel collection is the autograph copy of the words of *Theodora*, by T. Morel, the author, with Handel's autograph inscription, 'I intend to perform this oratorio at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden. George Frideric Handel.' A reproduction of the autograph is given by kind permission of Mr. Flower.

Theodora.

*An
Oratorio.*

*I intend to perform this Oratorio. at the
Theatre Royal in Covent Garden
George Frideric Handel*

The portraits in Mr. Flower's possession include the original of Hogarth's oil painting of Handel, a contemporary oil painting of Handel as a boy, by an unknown artist, a very fine contemporary miniature of the master and a number of interesting prints of Handel portraits, the very rare portrait engraving by Faber of the Handel singer, Carestini, and one each of Faustina Hasse, Dr. Arnold, and others connected with the Handel circle. He has also an autograph letter of the famous singer Grimaldi, called Nicolini, and a number of other interesting Handel souvenirs.

The MS. volumes from the Aylesford collection contain also a considerable number of vocal and instrumental compositions of Handel's circle and other musicians, mostly of the Georgian period. Among these are several unique—and, in some instances, entirely unknown—works by famous 18th century composers, especially violinists; but we must reserve their description for another occasion, as it would lead beyond the limits of this article, and much has to be sifted and cleared up before it can be profitably undertaken.

A considerable number of works on Handel, and matters connected with him, completes a remarkable

collection which Mr. Flower has not brought together from selfish reasons, but intends to make accessible to serious students of the great master's works.

AN ITALIAN VIEW OF BRITISH MUSIC

The *Critica Musicale* of Florence for February contains a long article on English musical life—apparently one of a series—by Vittorio Ricci. He is concerned in this number with editors, critics, and instrument-makers, and begins with a general statement about the great development of musical education, noting, by the way, that music is more generally appreciated than any other art. Even in the lower classes, he remarks, there are few people who have not some knowledge of the elements of music. He attributes to this fact the number and excellence of the choral societies, and singles out for special praise the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. Curiously enough, although the details given are accurate in the main, all notice of the Competitive Festival is confined to a foot-note.

His knowledge of publishers is considerable, although apparently he thinks it worth while to mention specially the publishers of Mr. Frank Bridge and of Mr. Cyril Scott, and omit those of Elgar. The *Musical Times*, he says, 'is rich in very valuable articles touching upon all points of musical science.' Amongst the dailies he singles out *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, 'which on a special day of the week dedicate many long columns to music, and their articles are often exceedingly important.' The literary works on music chosen in illustration of his remarks are the 'bulky *Dictionary*' of Grove, the *Oxford History of Music*, and the histories of Mr. Davey, Dr. Walker, and Mr. C. A. Harris.

In conclusion Signor Ricci remarks that the last few months have marked a considerable improvement in the British world of music, which suffered no less than the Continent from the economic upset of the after-war period. On the other hand, the conditions of opera, which appeared to have most brilliant prospects thanks to the 'wealthy and able *maestro* Beecham,' are now worse than ever, and Covent Garden, once famous for its summer season, is now the home of all kinds of entertainment, not excluding the cinema.

F. B.

MUSIC UNDER BOLSHEVISM

BY C. D. GRAHAM

A telegram from Moscow, recently issued by the Russian Trade Delegation in London, throws an instructive sidelight on Bolshevik mentality. According to this document it appears that the Soviet is devoting particular attention to the maintenance and development of science and the arts, with particular reference to music. The Musical Department of the People's Commissariat, for example, has set itself to encourage 'the new musical institutions created by the revolution.' Among the institutions referred to are the Petrograd Philharmonic Orchestra and the Moscow Philharmonic and Symphonic Orchestras. All these, however, were in existence long before the revolution, and to claim them as products of Bolshevism is to carry special pleading to lengths which are scarcely permissible.

even in political propaganda. Imagine, too, the unkind remarks that will be made by English composers concerning the apathy of our own Government when they learn that in Russia—as it is to-day—the Soviet thinks so highly of music as a panacea for famine and disease that official publications on the subject outnumber all others by more than three to one. Indignation may give place to doubt when we try to reconcile this statement with a recent foreign interview with Glazounov, in the course of which that eminent composer said that although he had completed several new works, he was unable to get them printed in Russia owing to the complete break-down of the music publishing apparatus.

To Ivan, lacking the bare means of subsistence, are also offered such questionable delights as discussions of his folk-songs, 'vocal and instrumental methodology,' and the 'construction of new tonal systems.' This last branch of the inquiries being undertaken by the National Institute of Musical Science should gladden the hearts of any young composers who are beginning to find themselves gravelled for lack of new dissonances. As business men, however, the Bolsheviks should appreciate the possibilities of a scheme that might, by means of a little judicious advertisement, develop into a new source of revenue. We may yet see something of this kind:

'Latest Tonal Systems while you wait! Do not invent your own Interplay of Sonorities, but send for sample of our up-to-date Tonal Tabloids. Extra strength, specially adapted to Symphonic Poems, &c., dealing with Battle, Murder, Sudden Death, and the Joylessness of Things Generally! Mr. X. Stravaginsky writes: "I owe everything to your wonderful System. Press and Public alike acclaim stupendous realism of my latest work, 'Gloom.' Please send at once another packet of your Cacophony Capsules.'"

It is, indeed, difficult to take seriously the cynical disregard of the functions of humane government displayed in this telegram. The actual facts, however, are stranger still; and information upon which implicit reliance can be placed fully confirms the Bolshevik policy of providing a starving population with circuses in preference to bread. As though to emphasise the prevalent misery, there are given nightly at Petrograd representations of opera and ballet which in splendour and costliness of mounting transcend anything of the kind to be seen in Russia before the war, or in the heyday of the Vienna Opera. It seems incredible that such lavish spectacles, together with first-rate classical concerts, can be given at all; but what are we to make of the fact that admission to them may be obtained without payment of any sort by all who care to avail themselves of the privilege? Such cynical indifference to the claims of a stricken populace invites inevitable comparison with the perverted mentality of another notorious patron of the arts, for in similar circumstances Nero was also a firm believer in the efficacy of 'instrumental methodology.'

Musical America for April 1 contains a note from a Montreal correspondent to the effect that Joseph Bonnet proposes to become a priest on his return to France from his present Canadian tour. Arrangements have been made for his reception as a divinity student at Paris. He will join the Benedictine order.

Occasional Notes

In a vague sort of way musicians have long believed their art to be possessed of healing powers. They remember the harping of David before Saul; they quote Congreve's tribute (usually ascribing it to Shakespeare); and they sing with approval:

In sweet music is such art
Killing care, and grief of heart
Fall asleep, or, hearing, die.

Yet not many of them seem to be aware that at the present time music is being employed as a medicine in a systematic manner, and with a measure of success that must inevitably lead to important developments. How this is being done may be seen in the Annual Report of the Vocal Therapy Society, a Report which every musician should read. (It may be had from the Secretary, at 27, Grosvenor Place, S.W. 1.) This is the first full statement issued by the Society, and covers the period from Armistice Day, November 11, 1918 (the date of the first meeting of the committee) to November 11, 1921. The mere words 'annual report' suggest the driest of reading—lists of subscribers, balance sheets, and the like. But here is a document so full of poignant interest as to make the reader wholesomely uncomfortable. We have not forgotten the war—every quarter-day gives us a painful reminder; more or less we bear in mind those who lost their lives in it; but do we remember the wounded and shell-shocked who are still slowly recovering? Apparently not, for here is a Society doing wonderful work for them, and yet hardly able to maintain its activities—still less extend them—for want of money.

What is the Vocal Therapy Society doing? It is curing, largely by means of music, certain types of disability resulting from wounds and shell-shock—stammering, loss of speech, facial paralysis, nervous collapse, lung trouble, &c. The work is under the direction of an executive composed of medical and musical experts, among them Sir James Dundas Grant, Sir Frederick Mott, Drs. Walford Davies, Arthur Somerville, and J. E. Borland, and Messrs. Walter Ford and Geoffrey Shaw. Musicians among the vice-presidents include Sir Henry Wood, Sir Henry Hadow, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and Mr. Plunket Greene. Any doubt as to the practical nature of the Society's work should be settled by such names as these. If more evidence be needed, it is set forth, case by case, in the Report. Here you may read—in fact it is your duty to read—of (for example) T., shot through the right lung; lung full of adhesions, and very confined in action; after some months of treatment, in which breathing exercises played an important part, T. improved and went on to voice-production. He was 'very husky at first . . . owing to a wound in his throat,' but his voice developed, and he was soon singing at concerts. T. is now discharged, and is 'keeping very fit.' S. was a shell-shocked stammerer, hysterical, and 'with practically no confidence in himself.' After treatment by breathing, relaxation, speech, and singing, he was 'able to sing solos before a large audience'; discharged with good prospects, 'a fairly normal and contented man.' A. had been dumb for several years; recovered his voice, but stammered badly; 'his greatest joy was found in singing, and regularly every day for nearly six months he worked at singing