

The Music of the Picture-Theatre

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in singing can make a much more solemn note thereto : I made them only for a proof to see how English would do in song.'

It is quite clear, therefore, that Cranmer was referring not to the Litany, but to the *Salve festa dies* and other processions for festival days. Another proof that the Litany was not intended originally to be the only procession in the English Church may be found in a note contained in the Prayer Book of 1549 :

'Upon Christmas Day, Easter Day, the Ascension Day, Whitsunday, and the Feaste of the Trinity, may be used any part of Holy Scripture hereafter to be certainly limited and appointed, in the stead of the Litany.'

No doubt something was intended after the style of the Antiphons and Responds formerly used for this purpose.

I should be interested to learn Dr. Flood's authority for the use of 'Processioner' as meaning the Litany. The word generally means the *Processionale*, or book of processions. Bede does not say that St. Augustine and his companions on entering Canterbury sang 'the Litany and the Antiphon *Deprecamur te*'; he says: 'they sang this Litany *Deprecamur te*.' The Antiphon is of considerable length; the music is published by the Plainsong and Mediæval Music Society if Dr. Flood cares to see it.

There is one more sentence of Dr. Flood's that may possibly be misunderstood. He says there is no 'doubt that in 1545-46 the newly translated English Litany was roughly adapted to the old plainchant melody.' But (1) the Litany was not a 'newly translated' version of any Litany which previously existed in England, but was a compilation from various sources; (2) the melody was not 'the old plainchant melody' of the Litany, but was an adaptation from two or three plainchant phrases.

Dr. Flood also says that *Kyrie Eleison* was popular in Gaul in the early years of the 5th century, but Mr. Edmund Bishop tells us that it was imported into Gaul in the early part of the 6th century.—Yours, &c.,

E. G. P. WYATT.

STILL IN THE VAN

SIR,—A few days ago I saw in Maida Vale a laundry van bearing on its sides the words, 'SONATA LAUNDRY, BEETHOVEN STREET.' After this, who dares to say that the Bonn master 'won't wash?'—Yours, &c.,

JOHN E. WEST.

MR. SCHOLES, HOW DARE YOU?

SIR,—I was greatly astonished to read Mr. Percy A. Scholes's deprecating remarks concerning Brahms's great C minor Symphony in a recent number of the *Observer*. This Symphony is assuredly one of the most glorious ever written, and nothing in the whole of musical literature is more wonderfully thrilling than the Introduction to the magnificent *Finale*. I had the privilege of hearing this Symphony under the immortal composer's own direction, when it was first produced at Leipsic in 1876.—Yours, &c.,

ALGERNON ASHTON.

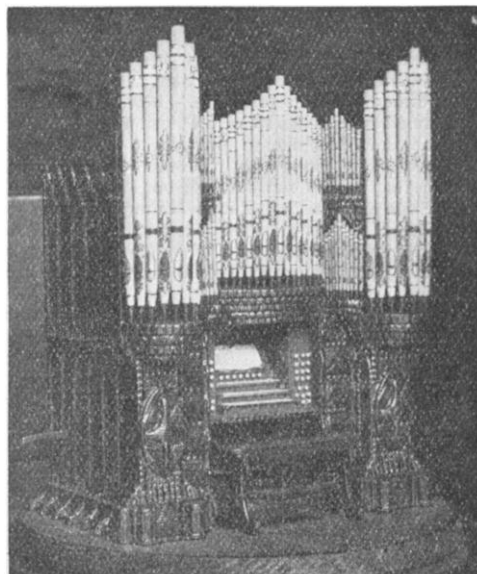
22a, Carlton Vale, Maida Vale, N.W.6.

March 12, 1922.

AN INTERESTING MODEL

SIR,—Enclosed you will find two photographs of a miniature model organ which I have made, and I am sending it with the hope that it may provide some little interest for you or your readers. The organ itself is very small, being only 8½-in. from base to top of largest pipes; the width is 6½-in., and the depth 4-in. The organ-case is elaborately carved and panelled, painted dark oak and varnished. The length of the two largest pipes is just 5-in., while the four small groups of pipes range from 1½-in. to 1¾-in. The pipes themselves are all hand-painted and decorated; the ground colour is a light blue enamel, and the groups of small pipes are a darker shade to give relief. The mouth-piece of each pipe is done in English

gold and dark crimson enamel alternately, the leaf or floral design being in English gold lined with black. The tops of all the pipes have a band of white enamel, lined with very fine bands of gold and crimson, making the effect and grouping very charming. The pedal board, which is of full range, is radiating and concave. There are six composition pedals, representing three for Great and three for Swell, with Balance Swell Pedal in centre. The stops are grouped somewhat in the usual way—Great and Choir on the right, Swell and Pedal on the left. The stops over the Swell manual represent couplers. Perhaps I had better add that I myself am a voluntary organist, and that love for and interest in the organ no doubt provided



the patience, as I may state there are over 2,500 different pieces altogether. The model has occupied my spare time for about three years.—Yours, &c., R. MASSEY.

119, Crescent Road,

Great Lever, Bolton.

February 21st, 1922.

THE MUSIC OF THE PICTURE-THEATRE

SIR,—No music-lover could have read your notes on the problem of the cinema without the utmost sympathy for your point of view, or without desiring an issue which would be as good for music as for the prosperity of the cinema. With all deference to Mr. Gordon Craig and Mr. St. John Ervine, their criticisms can only assist when it has admitted what is obviously permanent in the cinema. The cinema, a precocious art, is passing through acute growing-pains; but the complaint from which it suffers is the same for which these critical gentlemen have found no specific in their own crafts. I postulate as a feasible idea that the very extremity of a problem of this sort as it affects art is in itself an opportunity if used wisely and with deliberation. In the case of the cinema, the cult of the novelette, with all its artistic evils, has been brought nearer to an end in a few years than the publishers of cheap shockers could possibly have feared. The cinema has revealed at close quarters the shoddy stuff of the popular novel and the popular melody. It falls low, but that at least is not entirely because of the cinema, whose capacity, moreover, to transform dull tales and to infuse delight has been proved a hundred times. The failure of the cinema, the theatre, the art gallery, and all the arts which call for practical as well as artistic efficiency, cannot in my opinion be turned to account unless artists recognise the increasing irresponsibility of commerce where art is concerned, and take steps to displace the profit-making element to which the disastrous conditions are due. And if this be not done,

then next year, and ten and twenty years hence, we shall still be reading academic criticism without having advanced a single step towards reform.

An important thing that would be welcomed is the appearance of a magazine entirely devoted to the cinema, and run on critical and progressive lines.—Yours, &c.,

STUART GUTHRIE.

Flansham, Bognor.
March 11, 1922.

SIR,—I venture to congratulate you on the incisiveness of your remarks in your last issue on the subject of cinema music, but my pleasure was tinged with regret at the small chance of their being read by the 'unmusical managers and trade officials . . . usually inartistic and frequently even illiterate.' Truly these are the cuttle-fish. This wonderful race of men, even if they were able, have no time to think for themselves, and engage others to perform this function for them—generally the cheapest they can procure. The 'musical director' is one of these. More often than not this misnamed official has some pretension to his adjectival qualification, and sets out to provide at least a coherent entertainment. But he has not reckoned with Sir Knowall, who, on seeing a film run through on Monday morning, whistles a tune and insists that it is *the* music for such and such a scene. The musical director has no option, and down it goes. The outcome of this unlovely partnership is to be heard at practically every picture-hall from 2.0 to 11.0 p.m. (continuous).

I was recently invited into the orchestra of a cinema to witness the band in action. I was given a sketch of the music to the 'feature film.' It was amazing, appearing more appalling on paper than in performance, which was heart-breaking enough. Rag rubbed shoulders with Tchaikovsky and Bones hobnobbed with Wagner:

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----|--|
| 'Garden Scene,' 1½ minutes | ... | <i>Rose in the Bud.</i> |
| 'The Breaking Point' ... | ... | <i>Unfinished</i> (seven bars X, Y). |
| 'But he forgot,' 1 minute | ... | Barcarolle. |
| 'While in Paris,' 2½ minutes | ... | <i>Air de Ballet</i> (?) (Omitting second section). |
| 'Gerald returns,' 1½ | ,, | <i>Flying Dutchman</i> (to letter 'M'). |

And so on.

Yet the band was a good one—well-balanced, and the instrumentalists efficient. They had to be, to cope with such a jig-saw.

It is not easy to see whence salvation will come. I fear it is a long cry to the third alternative suggested in your notes, that of a specially composed setting for each film, nor am I quite certain that this would prove ideal. Progress is sure to be slow, but a great step forward would be the extended and *complete* performance of recognised items, chosen to convey and may be to emphasise the general feeling (I hate 'atmosphere') of the picture or of any one part of it. This calls for a careful and earnest mental search through what must needs be a very wide range of music. The task is rendered none the easier by the prevailing custom which requires the musical director to provide his own music. (Incidentally a grant of even £2 to £3 a week would soon enable a discriminating musician to establish a library which would prove an asset in more than one sense to the company concerned.)

Parallel with this should be an improvement in the treatment of the breathing spaces which the orchestra must needs take. At present the pianoforte forges ahead, quite indifferent to the screen, playing from cover to cover any album of pieces which happens to come to hand. The Chopin Polonaise Album is a hot favourite. Alternatively, a deep pedal rumbling heralds the performance of an organ, not infrequently an instrument discarded by a discerning organ committee, and now redecorated as a grand orchestral organ. Both of these are equally painful, bad, and inartistic.

Where the theatre is fortunate enough to possess an organ designed and built with an eye to the work it has to perform, the problem is partly solved, for the majority of films, apart

from rough and ready comedy, afford good opportunity for an organist's powers of invention and improvisation. I recall hearing one of our leading organists (called in by a frantic management to fill a gap) improvise to a film for over an hour, and by allotting a definite theme to each of the chief characters, gave as near a perfect interpretation as could be wished. Its value to the audience was enhanced by the fact that the themes were chosen for the most part from well-known songs. I am glad to record that even the management was visibly affected, as it offered two guineas in excess of the prearranged fee.

In the ordinary way, the organ does not shine—for many reasons, a digression into which is tempting but not opportune. Yet apart from this, why do we not get more instrumental variety? Why the eternal solo pianoforte? Why not a string quartet, solo strings with pianoforte, organ and pianoforte treated antiphonally, pianoforte and woodwind, &c.? As a humble Tommy I once marched two miles to Church service with nothing more than the big drum and trombone. Ludicrous may be, but a very welcome change and not uninteresting musically!

The keynote to success in an entertainment lasting ten hours is variety.—Yours, &c.,

March 11, 1922.

MORIC FAN.

'A NOTE ON BEST SELLERS'

SIR,—I have just read the article in the March issue of the *Musical Times*, entitled, 'A Note on Best Sellers,' and I submit the following for 'A. K.'s' consideration.

I have not the faintest notion to whom 'A. K.' may be referring, but it seems to me that there is a lot of cheap (yet superior) rubbish being written lately on the subject of 'best-sellers' by self-appointed and (mostly) anonymous critics. There are other people (just as well qualified to judge, perhaps, as 'A. K.') who, if they knew to what 'A. K.' refers, might not be quite so cocksure of the 'poison gas' element in these much-maligned 'best-sellers.' Cannot 'A. K.' come out into the open, and give us names? We should like to be able to form our own judgment—perhaps.

I imagine no publisher who spends so much money and time 'nursing' a best-seller would object to its being advertised as such!

Anonymous criticism is very easy (if you can get an editor to publish it), but it also seems to me to be rather cowardly, and surely the entire *raison d'être* of criticism is nullified if readers do not know definitely to *what* the criticism refers, so, Sir, I ask for names.—Yours, &c.,

15, Frognal,
Hampstead, N.W.3.

ALBERT W. KETĚLBEY.

March 22, 1922.

Sharps and Flats

I have just been reading, playing, and singing some seventy-five songs for the fifth or sixth time. It must have been rather trying to my neighbours. . . .—*L. Dunton Green.*

No musician ever makes a noise.—*Herbert Fryer.*

I consider myself a melodist and a classic. That is all.—*Alfredo Casella.*

Perhaps the most inspiring moment of the whole ceremony of the Royal Wedding was the famous *Sevenfold Amen*. Unaccompanied by the organ, the choir's voice thrilled through the building until it melted away in a whisper.—*Lady Diana Manners.*

The most beautiful feature of the marriage ceremony was the singing of the choir—particularly when they sang Stainer's *Sevenfold Amen* was their singing perfection. 'It made you feel as though you were among the angels,' said someone who was there.—*Hannen Swaffer.*

The auditorium could have accommodated three times the number of patrons had the seating capacity made it possible.—*Rene Devries, Musical Courier.*