

'Extremists versus the Rest'

Author(s): Edwin Evans, Leigh Henry and C. Morton Rendle

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 61, No. 934 (Dec. 1, 1920), pp. 831-833

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/910451>

Accessed: 07-01-2016 11:52 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

(Continued from page 826.)

- Mr. Herbert Hodge, St. Nicholas, Cole Abbey (four recitals)—
Finale in B flat, *Walmsley Little*; Theme with Variations,
Faulkes; Air with Variations in F sharp minor, *Wesley*;
Question and Answer, *Wolstenholme*.
- Mr. W. Wolstenholme, New College Chapel, Swiss
Cottage—Fugue à la Gigue, *Bach*; Benediction Nuptiale,
Hollins; Gothic Suite, *Boëllmann*; Evening Song,
Bairstow; Cantilène and Finale in B flat, *Wolstenholme*.
- Mr. Allan Brown, Park Street Baptist Church, Luton—
Overture in C, *Hollins*; Funeral March and 'Hymn of
Seraphs,' *Guilmant*; Fugue in E flat, *Bach*; Aubade,
Johnson. Union Baptist Church, High Wycombe—
Overture in C minor, *Hollins*; Finale from Sonata in
F minor, *Rheinberger*; 'Finlandia'; Schiller March,
Meyerbeer.
- Mr. J. A. Meale, Central Hall, Westminster (three recitals)—
—Pastorale and Finale (Sonata No. 1), *Guilmant*;
Carillon, *Elgar*; Prelude and Fugue in G, *Bach*;
St. Francis of Assisi, *Liszt*.
- Dr. Eaglefield Hull, St. George's, Barnsley—'Caractacus'
March, *Elgar*; Rhapsody, *Howells*; Toccata, *Callaerts*;
Prelude to 'Parsifal.'
- Dr. R. Walker Robson, Christ Church, Crouch End
(three recitals)—Choral Song and Fugue, *S. S. Wesley*;
Minuetto in B minor, *Widor*; Rhapsody in D and
Prelude in E, *Saint-Saëns*; Prelude and Fugue in D,
Bach; 'The Holy Boy' and Villanella, *Ireland*; Final in
B flat, *Franck*; Finale (Sonata in G sharp minor),
Rheinberger.
- Mr. E. T. Cook, Southwark Cathedral—Prelude and
Fugue in A minor, *Bach*; Chorale No. 2, *Franck*;
Andante from String Quartet, *Debussy*; Choral Prelude,
'St. Mary,' *Wood*; Prelude and Fugue on BACH,
Liszt.
- Mr. G. Bernard Gilbert, Town Hall, Stratford—Requiem
Æternam, *Harwood*; Siciliano and Fugue in G minor,
Bach; Grand Chœur in C, *Hollins*.
- Miss T. V. Denman, St. Peter's, Selsey—Carillon,
Wolstenholme; Triumphal March, *Hollins*; Chaconne in
C minor, *Buxtehude*.
- Mr. Herbert E. Knott, St. Anne's, Moseley, Birmingham—
Prelude and Fugue in F sharp minor, *Buxtehude*;
Theme, Variations, and Finale, *Lloyd*; Lament, *Harvey*
Grace.
- Mr. W. H. Steward, Church of the Ascension, Lavender
Hill (four recitals)—Fantasia and Fugue in G minor and
Prelude and Fugue in D, *Bach*; Sonata in C sharp minor,
Harwood; Nocturne, *Dunhill*; Coronation March and
Fantasia in E flat, *Saint-Saëns*; Epilogue, *Willan*.
- Dr. E. C. Bairstow, Temple Street Wesleyan Church,
Keighley—Toccata and Fugue in D minor, *Bach*; Elegy
and Scherzo in A flat, *Bairstow*; Prelude, Fugue, and
Variation, *Franck*; Largo and Finale from 'New World'
Symphony; Légende and Scherzetto, *Vierne*; Fantasia
in F minor, *Mozart*.
- Mr. Q. Mowaren Maclean, All Souls, Langham Place
(two recitals)—Sonata No. 6, *Mendelssohn*; Trumpet Air
and Poco Allegro, *Purcell*; Prelude and Fugue in D,
Bach; Sonata No. 1, *Reger*; Scherzetto and Postlude,
Vierne; Fabliau, *Quef*; Three Pieces, *Frank Bridge*.
- Mr. E. H. Thorne, St. Edward's, Cambridge—Chorale
Preludes 'In dulci júbilo' and 'Liebster Jesu, wir sind
hier,' *Bach*; Benediction Nuptiale, *Saint-Saëns*; Gothic
Suite, *Boëllmann*.
- Mr. T. Guy Lucas, St. Edward's, Cambridge—Toccata
and Fugue in D minor, *Bach*; Andante du Quatuor,
Debussy; Two Choral Preludes 'Melcombe' and
'Christe, Redemptor, Omnium,' *Parry*.
- Mr. Bernhard Old, St. Edward's, Cambridge—Prelude
and Fugue in G, *Bach*; Nocturne, *Borodin*; Voluntary
on 100th Psalm Tune, *Purcell*; Prelude 'La Demoiselle
Eluë,' *Debussy*; 'Now thank we all,' *Karg-Elert*.

APPOINTMENTS

- Mr. Henry C. Hart, organist and choirmaster, St. Saviour's,
Denmark Hill, S.E.
- Mr. W. Hunt, organist and choirmaster, St. George's, Belfast.
- Mr. Wallace J. Madge, organist and choirmaster, Clapton
Wesleyan Church.

Letters to the Editor

'EXTREMISTS versus THE REST'

SIR,—May I bore your readers, weary as they are from their November efforts, with two more reminiscences? Several years ago Sir Alexander Mackenzie gave two lectures at the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street. I forget their title, but their purpose was to excommunicate with bell, book, and candle, certain reprehensible practices which had crept into the noble art of musical composition. Will it surprise you, Sir, to learn that I placed my knowledge of the musical underworld at Sir Alexander's disposal in compiling his 'crime alley'—his array of deterrent examples? I did so for two reasons. The first is that I have a profound respect for the conservative element in music, because I cannot see how our beloved republic could 'carry on' without an Extreme Right to steady it. The only Tory I ever fall out with is the Tory who has had a vision of himself on the cross-benches. The second reason is that I well know how beneficial it is to a new set of ideas to be placed upon the index expurgatorius, especially when there are young students in the audience.

My other reminiscence is of one of those early lectures I gave on modern French music a year or two, I believe, before Mr. Newman became publicly aware of its existence. At its conclusion a gentleman walked up to the pianoforte, thumped down very loudly what he believed to be a chord, but what was an ingenious, but otherwise harmless, assembly of passing-notes, then turned truculently to me and inquired: 'There! What d'ye call that? Is it music?' I replied that the presence of ladies in the audience prevented me from putting a name to his performance, but that in any case Ravel was the victim, not the author, of the outrage.

Mr. Newman's essay in this *genre* now reposes in my cabinet. A malicious alphabet has placed it cheek by jowl with another cutting from your esteemed journal, wherein Mr. Frederick Corder quotes horrible examples from Schönberg, under the title, 'An Epoch-Making Composer.'

Before embarking upon his highly original procedure, Mr. Newman paid a compliment to the summary of my lectures on 'The foundations of 20th century music,' which appeared in your issue of August, 1917, saying that although I was merely drawing up a précis of the creed of a certain international group, much as a secretary might draw up a précis of his firm's views on a particular matter, the thing was extremely well done. I am a little perturbed at finding myself one day a Nationalist à outrance, and the next day secretary to a League of Nations; but let that pass. What worries me is that while it is true that some, not all, tenets of the creed I unfolded at Æolian Hall coincide with those held by a large and important section of international musicians, it so happens that the overwhelming majority of these are younger men than myself, some of whom are actually misguided enough to believe that I possess an æsthetic of my own, which had served me tolerably well for many years before I thought of making it public in a series of lectures. I should not like it to be bruited abroad that I had stolen it from them when they were in their teens, if not their cradles. It might ruin my reputation, already much compromised in these encounters.

But if my ideas are not my own—and Mr. Newman has generously granted that they are none the worse for that—at least his have the bloom of freshness upon them. Picture to yourself, Sir, a thousand scribes in the hills and dales of Europe eager to join on either side in this merry powder-play; and, until Mr. Newman thought of it, they had one and all overlooked the barrel-organ in 'Il Tabarro.' It could have been served out as ammunition indiscriminately to either party, for it holds arguments for both; but Mr. Newman has taken it for his own. Truly, Sir, the master-strokes of genius were ever simple.—Yours, &c.,

31, Coleherne Road,
Earl's Court, S.W. 10.

EDWIN EVANS.

November 4, 1920.

SIR,—Amusingly bumptious, Mr. Newman's article in your November issue exposes at once his foibles and his dubious methods of attack.

Labelling his opponents 'the little Franco-Russian-Italian group in our midst,' he claims to speak for 'the rest of England.' Undecided by a plebiscite this is but empty bombast. Of this alleged group Mr. Edwin Evans and I alone are cited. Mr. Evans has just concluded a long series of articles on British composers in your periodical: he is a recognised advocate of British music at home and abroad. My essays in some dozen periodicals during the last eight years have included Bantock, Delius, Bax, Lord Berners, Goossens, and many other British composers, dealt with appreciatively. The series in *Musical Opinion*, now running a year, has been about half devoted to British music, though it deals with contemporary music as a whole, irrespective of nationality. Meanwhile the self-announced spokesman of England, Mr. Newman, has been too busy with 'universal' composers, such as Erich Wolff and Marx, or such vitally British matters as 'Brahms and Wolf as Lyrists,' 'Wagner and Franz Lachner,' 'Wagner and Super-Wagner,' &c., to devote any appreciation to those who he now claims have received his profound attention. This is like the husband who affirmed that continual absence with other ladies constituted no neglect of his wife, but a proof of devotion, since 'the less he saw of her the more he thought about her.' Thus the 'Franco-Russian-Italians' are the advocates of British music, while Mr. Newman waits till he has gleaned all there is to be said, and then comes forward to claim national laurels.

His label for Mr. Evans and myself can have been conceived only because we have written appreciatively, among others, of French, Russian, and Italian composers. As I have also written of Spanish, Hungarian, and German, as well as British composers, to be consistent he must extend the label for me to 'Anglo-Franco-Russian-Italian-Spanish-Hungarian-German.' This method promises complications. When Continental developments first reached us from France Mr. Newman sought to decry the new trend by labelling his opponents Francophiles. Later, learning that the movement was more wide-spread, he extended this to 'Franco-Russian-Italian.' But as other countries in turn all undergo similar changes (and these are part of general evolution) we may expect to see him, twenty years hence, classifying his opponents as the 'little Anglo-Franco-Russian-Italian-Spanish-Hungarian-German-Polish-American-Belgian-Dutch-Danish-Czecho-Slovak-Jugo-Slav-Swedish-Norwegian-Finnish-Ukrainian-Serbian-Greek-Portuguese group': it will be interesting to see then who cares to be classed with his 'rest'—or should one say 'remainder'? Of course it is obvious that, having for years maintained a preference for a small phase of a particular nation's music,—that of Germany, now rather unpopular—Mr. Newman seeks to camouflage his position by fabricating similar race-preferences for others.

His claim to have 'most musicians of standing' with him is further 'spoof.' He makes great play with the names of Delius, the Editor of the *Musical Times*, and 'Autolykus' of *Musical Opinion*. It rather spoils his mass-effect when one knows that the two latter gentlemen are one and the same. On the other hand, I know several musicians of established standing here in England who, unless sense of humour aid them, will feel anything but pleased to be numbered among the cronies of a reactionary set.

Mr. Newman labels me 'extremist,' implying that I am blind to all save the most startling contemporary music. Facts confute him: I do not rely, as he does, on mere affirmations. I have consistently expressed in print, since I commenced writing, my affection for Bach, Mozart, Scarlatti, Couperin, Pergolesi, Weber (of the operas), 15th and 16th century Netherland polyphony, the British Tudor composers, and the 17th century Italians. Had Mr. Newman missed these contributions, he was present at a lecture recently while I expressed myself fairly fully concerning them. The difference between him and me is that, while he accepts as transcendent a particular phase of German music and musical thought—for symphonic development is one long whole,—I am more particular, not following the track of 'ninety-eight per cent.,' but preferring my own taste. One must be judged by acts, not affirmations. I

have expressed open admiration for composers of that German phase, but also admit other phases as being equally important. Mr. Newman's taste (we cannot answer for what he has not made public) covers some two centuries, mine some six centuries, which seems to render him more 'extreme' than I, unless he refers to my taste: for I am *extremely* particular, which he, being in accord with ninety-eight per cent. of the musical population, cannot be. He forgets, however, that there are two extremes—revolutionary and reactionary. Even in modern music I admire composers diametrically opposed in thought and style.

Mr. Newman's fallacy is that he takes all he thinks and states as absolute and infallible, and that he judges in terms of gross weight—of quantity, not quality. But examination proves that his claim to speak for 'the rest of England,' or in any way save as statement of personal opinion—in which case he merely pits his against mine—is just mere pretension and bluster.

This is all I wish to say. To reply to Mr. Newman's technical challenges requires more than a letter. I am answering elsewhere, in article form.

Meanwhile I wish to say emphatically that I have never doubted Mr. Newman's erudition, as he hints. I believe I have read all his books, and most of his articles, and no one who has done this, and then compared them with what has been written elsewhere earlier can doubt the learning he has absorbed. If, however, I need to trace the source of any future brilliancy of his, and need to view his library, to do which he so courteously invites me in the phrase of Gibbon, I shall wire him—that he may be sure to be out. For I have not yet been able particularly to distinguish him among other pressmen—and unhappy complications have occurred at times through the master being mistaken for the flunkey.—Yours, &c.,

LEIGH HENRY.

SIR,—I have read with increasing interest and amusement the series of attacks by Mr. Newman upon the 'Extremists,' and would be glad if you could find space in your columns for this letter. I am not a musician myself, and it might be interesting to hear the opinion of one who stands outside, and is interested more in the argument than in music itself.

In effect, what Mr. Newman's argument amounts to is this—that Mr. Leigh Henry and Mr. Edwin Evans are concerned only in theories, that they do not concern themselves whether this or that work is a decent specimen of its own theory, *i.e.*, that it is a real work of art. So long as the method is new, they do not care a hang about the quality of the music. Another point in his argument is (and this is the logical conclusion of the first point) that Mr. Leigh Henry and Mr. Edwin Evans approve of anything and everything that is 'modern' and have no good word to say for the masters of the past.

Probably most thinking people will admit the truism that Mr. Newman elaborates so laboriously—that the quality of the music is of more importance than the theory of its construction, interesting though the latter may be. But it is the next step in Mr. Newman's mental processes that convicts him of unwarrantable dogmatism. In effect he says, 'And those pieces of Stravinsky's of which I approve as worthy *are* worthy: while those which I assert are poor specimens *are* poor specimens.' It seems impossible for him to comprehend that others might have different values. True, he never puts this attitude into a single sentence, but he writes the whole of his long articles on that dogmatic assumption, apparently taking it for granted that his taste is absolute and irrefutable. It is true he says, with mock modesty, 'If anything is wrong with us it is with our taste,' but there is no hint in any of his articles that he has the slightest misgiving on that score. He takes it for granted that his taste is *the* taste, and that anyone who differs from his standard is an extremist of the worst kind.

With regard to the second point (Mr. Leigh Henry's non-appreciation of the past and his extreme appreciation of the 'modern'), I was present a short time ago at a lecture wherein Mr. Henry dealt most appreciatively with the Elizabethan madrigalists, Monteverde, Scarlatti, Pergolesi, Mozart, Gluck, Rossini, and Verdi: while in the *Musical Standard* of September 25 he wrote, 'I deny the imputation

that I desire to see the work of the old masters destroyed. I believe in the continuity of musical art.'

This seems to imply that Mr. Leigh Henry's musical sense is not so narrow as Mr. Newman asserts. But this counting of heads, this gross summing up of units seems to me a fundamental fallacy. Taste is a personal matter, and the fact that Beethoven does not appeal to Mr. Henry argues nothing more than the obvious fact that it is practically impossible for a fastidious taste to embrace the whole of the past with a more or less even appreciation. To me, the alert mind that faces the work of the past in a critical spirit is worth more than floods of sentimental adoration and blind acceptance. Why, therefore, should not Beethoven sometimes be 'bombastic and sententious' and Brahms sometimes 'intolerably dull and utterly platitudinary'?

Another point in connection with the subject of taste. Mr. Newman seems to imply negligibility by employing the terms 'fragments,' 'mere studies' (one is reminded irresistibly of 'mere people'), and 'sketches.' But we know Sappho by fragments, and some of Da Vinci's finest things are his sketches, 'mere pages torn from a sketch-book.'

Surely bigness does not constitute greatness. Greatness of conception is the thing that matters, and this can be seen in the slightest sketch. The taste that weighs by avoirdupois and relies upon a ballot to back it up is in every sense of the term vulgar. The man in the street is a dangerous person to associate with too often, and if Mr. Newman does not take care he will find himself neither prophet, priest, nor king, but the man in the street himself, with all that man's gross values and vulgar conceptions.—Yours, &c.,

C. MORTON RENDLE.

3, Glebe Road, Bromley, Kent,
November 8, 1920.

NEW SCALES AND CHORDS

SIR,—Had your article on 'Some New Scales and Chords' not been signed by so distinguished a name as that of Prof. Walford Davies I should have been tempted to regard it as in the nature of a hoax! As it is, I must admit that I have read it through twice without getting any very clear idea of what it is driving at. It seems to have set out to 'explain' or account for certain progressions found in modern music; but, to the best of my remembrance these progressions are quite as well accounted for (so far as it is necessary or possible to 'account for' them) by the theories of the late Dr. Prout or even Macfarren—whom I remember to have read with mingled awe and wonder many years ago. Prout—or was it Macfarren?—said quite clearly that it was possible to use a triad, either major or minor, over every note in the chromatic scale of any given key; and this would seem to 'account for' all the chords given by Prof. Davies at the bottom of page 736, together of course, with a good many more. . . . But, in truth, all this talk of explaining or accounting for various progressions is rather nonsensical, and leads nowhere. Surely all that need be said is that in the earlier 'harmonic' days of music musicians were content to make up their chords (for the most part) of the more obvious products of the harmonic series; whereas now they are led to 'colour' them by allowing in also the more remote products. (This is putting it very shortly; but I fear to intrude too much upon your space.)

In column 1, page 736, Prof. Davies speaks of 2,047 possible 'soundings' of groups of notes, but in col. 1, p. 738, the number is given as 2,049. There is doubtless a slip of the pen or a printer's error here, but just as a matter of curiosity one would like to know which is correct.

In saying 'the ratio 1:2 could not be imagined to cease in the created universe with the departure of a man's mind should it perish,' &c., Prof. Davies disposes in very summary fashion of what is really a fundamental philosophical problem which has vexed the mind of man for ages. The matter, however, could hardly be well discussed in a musical journal, so I content myself with merely touching upon it.—Yours, &c.,

A. R. C.

Worthing.
D

SIR,—It is true that I have not had the pleasure of reading Prof. Walford Davies's paper, addressed to the British Association, on the subject of 'Euphonic Scales,' but judging from his recent contribution to the *Musical Times*, I am disposed to think that his theories are unlikely to be so fruitful in good results as he seems inclined to believe.

In the first place, if the history of European music teaches one fact more plainly than another, it is that the foundation of harmony is to be found not in the so-called perfect consonances (4th, 5th, and 8ve), but rather in the three directly intelligible intervals, as Hauptmann terms them—namely, the 8ve, the 5th, and the major 3rd. In his selection of the former series, Prof. Walford Davies would appear to be influenced by the example of the ancient Greeks, especially if, as Helmholtz maintained, the four-stringed lyre was tuned *c-F-G-c'*, which is precisely the foundation of the new 'euphonic scales.' However this may be, it was the system of tuning by 5ths which caused the Greeks to overlook (or at least to ignore) the beauty of the major 3rd, with the result that music was the one art in which they failed, comparatively speaking, to make a mark. Of course, the selection of *any* three intervals upon which to build up these scales must be purely arbitrary; but why Prof. Davies should return to the exploded notion of the perfection of 4ths, to the exclusion of the most beautiful interval in nature, I confess puzzles me.

Prof. Davies tells us that between the sounding of the octave and the sounding of all twelve notes of the scale together, he has found that there are 2,047 possible soundings of groups of notes. Towards the conclusion of the paper the number is given as 2,049. I have not been at the pains to ascertain which of these is a misprint. But alongside of such numbers the eighty-four scales of the Chinese appear a very little thing; although, on the other hand, the scales of Prof. Davies are as nothing when compared with the 16,000 scales of the ancient Hindus. However, it is a comfort to reflect, as Stainer said long ago, 'music has made the scales, not the scales music.'

And are these 'vast new harmonic riches' really new? Are they only 'now to be had for the asking'? Were they quite unknown to Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven? Were they not, on the contrary, there all the time? Is it not rather to be feared that these naughty boys were in the orchard before the 20th century composers got there, and wickedly appropriated the best of the fruit?

According to Prof. Davies, 'the lucid mastery of resource' to be attained by the composer (or composers) for whom the world is waiting, will be as much superior to that of Bach as Bach's was to that of Palestrina. But was Bach's 'lucid mastery of resource' really greater than that of Palestrina? I think not. Palestrina, and others of that era, produced the finest unaccompanied vocal music that the world has ever known. Wilbye and Gibbons are the last great names of a school which, for choral music unaccompanied by instruments, has never since been equalled, much less surpassed. Bach's work, although far from neglecting the glorious traditions of this school, was mainly built upon the 'new music' of the 17th century; and vocal music in combination with that of instruments finds its culmination in him. The Requiem of Mozart and the Missa Solemnis of Beethoven may possibly be placed alongside the compositions of Bach; but can a third work be named worthy of such a position? Again, in purely instrumental work Beethoven still remains supreme. Notwithstanding all that has been written since his day, no successor has been able to scale those empyrean heights. We do not expect another Milton or another Shakespeare, why then should we suppose that any amount of 'lucid mastery of resource'—in other words, any amount of juggling with the twelve sounds of an equally tempered scale, should enable some yet unknown man (or woman!) to surpass the achievements of Palestrina, Bach, or Beethoven?

But to proceed to details. As it has been admitted long ago that any chord can be employed in any key, it is not easy to perceive the necessity for selecting six, or seven, or nine, or any other number of notes from the chromatic series, since the composer is already at liberty to confine himself to any such scale, if he feels that it gives him all he