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The Gramophone as an Aid in Teaching Orchestration

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to meet him, as the following sporting offer will show. Unfortunately I am not personally acquainted with the principal of the Guildhall School of Music, but a friend whom I trust has spoken so highly of him that I place complete confidence in his knowledge and judgment. Probably Mr. Tree knows him, and if that be the case he will be able to approach him.

The number of applicants for admission to the School must be in excess of the vacancies, and my proposal is to ask Mr. Ronald to choose two of the best of his latest rejected candidates, as nearly as may be in the same vocal condition, one of whom shall be gratuitously taken in hand by Mr. Tree, and the other by myself. Not all voices yield equally to training, but I am prepared to take the risk of getting the more difficult one. I wish, however, to stipulate that my prospective pupil shall: (1) be seriously and enthusiastically devoted to singing; (2) have perfect intonation; (3) be possessed of a genuine artistic temperament, and (4) should a lady be chosen, she shall under no consideration be under eighteen years of age. I should be pleased to leave it to Mr. Ronald to settle the number of lessons to be given before the results of our respective tuition be submitted to judgment.

I have an open mind; now let Mr. Tree prove that he has a decided claim to be reckoned with seriously.
—Yours, &c.,

A. KEAY.

National Liberal Club.

August 3, 1921.

'THE GRAMOPHONE—PRESENT AND FUTURE'

SIR,—The article in your July issue, under the above heading, heralding a new departure in gramophone construction, which the writer, Mr. Ulric Daubeney, considers an enormous forward movement from existing models, has whetted my curiosity very considerably; for, as recording secretary of the North London Phonograph and Gramophone Society, I have for the last five years witnessed a grand march past of nearly all the 'revolutionary innovations,' connected with the 'talking-machine,' in the shape of sound-boxes, tone-arms, needles, and all the various accessories, about which, as Mr. Daubeney suggests, there has been 'much cry but little wool.' In his guarded reference to the gramophone of the future, which he claims to be a long leap, rather than a step forward towards the perfection of sound reproduction, he seems to indicate the basis of improvement as follows: 'The secret lies mainly in the acoustic properties of the cabinet . . . The object of a horn is to act as a sound-wave chamber and amplifier, much as does the body of a violin or the "bell" of a brass instrument. The larger the horn—within reasonable limits—the greater volume of tone a gramophone will give, and the greater the depth of such tone.'

Now although it is true, generally, that gramophone manufacturers have seldom incorporated the above ideas in their methods of production, being more concerned in appealing to the eye than to the ear (hence the elaborate cabinet and the diminutive amplifying chamber), nevertheless I am pleased to be the possessor of an instrument, the construction of which has been carried out in the light of just those very ideas which Mr. Daubeney deems indispensable. My gramophone is of the external horn type, entirely of wood (with the exception of the motor), solidly constructed in triangular formation to fit the corner of a room. The top of the horn stands 7-ft. from the floor, the flare being 24-in. in diameter. The curved length of the horn is 56-in., literally built up of thick rings of wood tapering internally from 2-in. diameter at the junction of the sound-box to 2-ft. at the other extremity. This is supported by a heavy cabinet having a frontal width of 4-ft., containing three cupboards for the storing of records. The tone is pure, full, and natural, but I cannot claim it to be a novelty, since the inventor has been constructing such instruments for the past fifteen years.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM J. ROBINS.

126, Whidborne Buildings,

King's Cross, W.C. 1.

THE GRAMOPHONE AS AN AID IN TEACHING ORCHESTRATION

SIR,—We hear so much of the educational value of the gramophone to-day, that it seems strange that this instrument has not hitherto been used for the most obviously suitable branch of musical education, *i.e.*, the teaching of orchestration. It is safe to say, I think, that orchestration is the one branch of theoretical music that cannot be taught from a text-book alone. Familiarity with the actual sounds and tone-qualities of each instrument is essential. Surely the most effective method of teaching the subject would be to prepare a series of records embodying a short course of lectures on orchestration, with proper illustrations and examples. The first part should be devoted to musical illustrations of the various instruments, separately; the second part to the principles of balance of tone, orchestral colour, &c. Accompanying the records should be a text-book reproducing the examples and the words of the lectures.

I fully believe that the scarcity of orchestras in the country may ultimately be traced to the difficulty of teaching orchestration. Owing to this difficulty, the subject seems to be practically unknown except to students at the musical colleges, and consequently the average person takes little active interest in orchestral music. If only this great subject, which is surely the most fascinating branch of music to learn, could be introduced to the average music-student as naturally and as universally as harmony and counterpoint, people would begin to demand orchestras, and, what is quite a different thing, to support them.

The difficulty from which the teacher of musical appreciation, as regards the orchestra, suffers, is this: In his theory, he can start from the beginning and the elementary, and work up to the complicated and the advanced; but in his practice he must start with the highest grade. He cannot say to his pupil, 'There is a great difference of tone between an oboe and a clarinet,' and then go to an orchestra and show him what the difference is. All he can do is to explain the difference as best he can. The difficulty and ineffectiveness of this are too well known to need comment.

If any of your readers can see any method of overcoming this difficulty other than the gramophone, I should be interested to hear it. I think the day is past when orchestration was regarded as an abstruse subject too high for ordinary mortals' comprehension.

The gramophone has already done great work in introducing orchestral music to 'the man in the street.' Cannot it also be used for imparting the secrets of its structure, or rather construction, to the earnest seeker after musical proficiency?—Yours, &c.,

Eaglescliffe, JOHN HUNTER BLAIR.

Haddington, Scotland.

August 10, 1921.

[The Gramophone Company has just made a start by issuing a couple of double-sided records giving typical passages played on orchestral instruments—string, woodwind, brass, and percussion.—Ed., *M. T.*]

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

SIR,—Your correspondent who wrote about the making of Madrigal gramophone records last month, and others interested, will be glad to hear that a series of such records sung by the English Singers will be issued by the Education Department of this Company next month, and can be obtained through the usual channels. It will be possible, I hope, to produce records of the Church music of the Elizabethan Masters at some future date.—Yours, &c.,

August 5, 1921.

ALEC ROBERTSON

(Lecturer to Education Department.
The Gramophone Company, Ltd.).

KITSON'S ELEMENTARY HARMONY

SIR,—In your review of Dr Kitson's Elementary Harmony you give the impression that Part 3 is not yet published. I write to say that all three parts were published last year.—Yours, &c.,

H. C.