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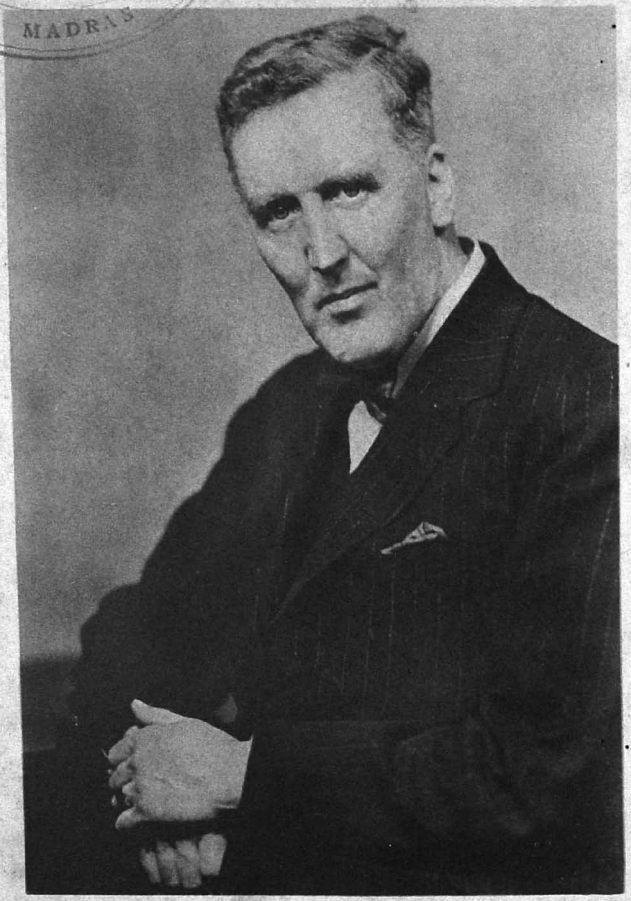

H. C. COLLES

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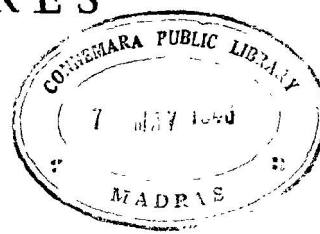

With a Memoir of the Author
by H. J. C.

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PREFACE

ONE short volume cannot recall the whole of a writer's lifework and readers of this book may look in vain for many facets of H. C. Colles's mind with which, as friends and students, they were familiar. Nevertheless, they may find again something of that considerate personality, who both in writing and speech strove to honour his subject and his hearers with the best of his powers.

H. C. C. felt strongly that day-to-day estimates of new works and of music performances seldom stood the test of reproduction in their entirety; here, therefore, references to first hearings and to the performances of individual artists are few.

In his lectures and in his weekly articles in *The Times* newspaper and longer essays elsewhere, he gave so much of his scholarship and his experience that they offer a wide choice of material. Upon some periods of music and their personalities he has written fully in his books and in *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, in which his article on Sir Edward Elgar is a relevant example. In this small collection, therefore, there are obvious omissions for these various reasons.

Many years ago, in editing the Addresses to Students of his friend Sir C. Hubert H. Parry, H.C.C. wrote "the object has been here to take that which came from the warmth of his heart as well as the penetration of his intellect, and through the substance rather than through the figure to let him express himself in the clearest terms to all who have ears to hear."

This modest choice from H.C.C.'s own writing is now dedicated to a like object.

The warmest thanks of the Editor are due to those friends who with wise advice have helped in its preparation; especially to Canon Edmund Fellowes, Dr. Basil Harwood, Dame Myra Hess, Mr. Dyneley Hussey, Miss Marion Scott; and to the Editor and proprietors of *The Times* newspaper and the *Musical Times* for permission to reprint various articles which have appeared in their journals.

H.J.C.

June, 1945

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SOME ENGLISH MUSICIANS

A Master of Song

(5 June 1925)

Mr. Orlando Gibbons organist, died the 5th of June being then Whitsonday at Canterbury wher the Kinge was then to receave Queene Mary who was then to com out of Fraunce.—*Cheque book of the Chapel Royal.*

Orlando Gibbons the organist of the Chapel Royal (that had the best hand in England).—*Domestic State Papers, Charles I, 1625.*

THREE musical tercentenaries remind us that about 300 years ago a great epoch in English music came to an end. William Byrd, Thomas Weelkes, and Orlando Gibbons together form a triumvirate to which we can point in evidence of the fact that at one period in the national history a school of musical composition existed commensurate with those of the sister arts of literature, poetry, and drama. In recalling the third of these men to-day (the third it may be admitted, not only in years but in the importance of his artistic output) we commemorate more than the man himself. To his contemporaries he was "the best hand in England" on the keyboard; to us he is the last link with the spacious art of the Elizabethan era, when men thought in sound as freely as in words, and the rhythm of the madrigal was as familiar as the form of the sonnet.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate here the steps by which the present generation has recovered practical knowledge of this music. The process of recovery is still going on, and the fourth volume of *Tudor Music* devoted to the ecclesiastical works of Gibbons, published by the Oxford University Press for the Carnegie Trust just in time for this tercentenary, is not only the most recent stage in the process, but is a reminder of how many stages the musical scholars of to-day must traverse before we are able to take a whole view of the epoch, or can begin to form any sure estimate of the relative importance of the protagonists in it. After all the research, set on foot by men like Oliphant and Rimbault, and carried on assiduously

till it was taken up by the present editors of the Carnegie Trust's public-spirited enterprise, we have to confess that we know very little about even the master-works or the master-minds of the time. It is not beyond possibility that any day the search through some ill-cared-for cathedral library might yield treasures which would reverse many of the statements of the historians. It has happened lately.

Gibbons, however, has always been one of the more familiar names of the epoch, and we owe it to generations of cathedral musicians and madrigal singers that he has been something more than a name. A small amount of his music has lived in the perpetual hearing of his countrymen through the three hundred years which have intervened since the Whitsunday of his much-lamented death. At this moment we would emphasize that fact more than the recent additions which have been made to our knowledge of him. There can be no question of "discovering" Gibbons. Posterity has long since made its choice of certain master-works; of the Service in F for daily devotion; of a few noble anthems like "Hosanna" and "O clap your hands"; of such a moment of intimate reflection as "Almighty and Everlasting God"; and of a hymn tune or two.

Outside the Church, one madrigal, "The Silver Swan", takes an assured place among any selection of the first dozen of famous madrigals, and for the rest the selection made by Oliphant ninety years ago in *Musa Madrigalesca* fairly represents the best of him. Our editors of to-day may point to other beauties, may show his reputation reinforced by a number of hitherto neglected works. They may further, and in point of fact the editors of *Tudor Music* do, suggest that he left some work which is not equal to his best, but that is no injury to any artist's reputation. We have the satisfaction of knowing that in the case of Gibbons public taste has been substantially right; it has honoured him in holding to a selection, albeit a narrow one, of his finest music.

The tercentenary is properly the occasion for widening the experience. Such performances as that given in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, those which are to be given in London concert-rooms, and in several cathedrals, will make many people wonder that, knowing something of him, they have been so long content to know no more. His Church music, madrigals, and instrumental music (he wrote both for strings and for the keyboard on which he was "the best hand in England") will shed innumerable side-lights on his artistic character.

Gibbons in point of time belongs to the aftermath of the great Tudor composers. He was of their tradition but not of their day. He was a youth of twenty when Queen Elizabeth died; his short working life was occupied as a member of the Chapel Royal of James I, and for the last two years of it he was also organist of Westminster Abbey. He must have been more keenly aware than his older contemporaries could be that the ways of music were changing. If his friend, Sir Christopher Hatton, was the author of the words of "The Silver Swan", and apparently he at any rate chose the words, one can imagine that they were the outcome of conversations in which Gibbons had deplored the imminent decay of the polyphonic art.

> Farewell all joys,
> O death come close mine eyes,
> More geese than swans now live,
> More fools than wise.

So has many a lover of the symphony in these latter days bewailed the onslaughts of the new music. We can neither read the words of Gibbons's madrigals nor examine their musical texture without realizing that he was before all else a classicist. He will no more indulge in those excursions into chromaticism or the innocent joys of word painting with which Weelkes, and sometimes even the veteran Byrd, flirted, than he will be content with the "love-sick line" as the poetic basis for his music. For him art was a serious matter, and the noblest words gave wings to his inspiration. His setting of Sir Walter Raleigh's "What is our life?" is the crowning glory of the English madrigal.

> Our graves that hide us from the searching sun
> Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.
> Thus march we playing to our latest rest,
> Only we die in earnest, that's no jest.

It is by no exterior feature of melody or of harmony that Gibbons cuts to the heart of these words, but the pulse of his rhythm leaves us feeling that he has said all of human fate that music can say.

His nature was reflective, more attuned to the cloister than to the Court, but by his day the cloister had long vanished. In his Church music he upheld and enriched the tradition he had inherited, but

from which the world was turning away. The solo songs of Dowland and his fellows had shown other methods; the talk of the Italian *recitativo* and its occasional introduction into the entertainments of the Court could not be ignored. The problem which beset him was whether the Church could learn from the world and still preserve the traditional dignity of her music. To this he addressed himself manfully in the "verse" anthems, consisting of solos interspersed with choruses and accompanied by organ and sometimes by viols. It is not without significance that one of the most successful of these experiments, "This is the record of John," was "made for Dr. Laud, President of St. John's College" (Oxford), the great Churchman who more than any other was responsible for the preservation of the Church's traditions in the troubled time which followed. In these later anthems Gibbons strove to lead Church music in directions which ultimately it had to follow, as the Church itself outgrew the lingering traditions of monasticism whence all its art had sprung.

Gibbons was a pioneer, if a reluctant one. His were not circumstances in which genius was likely to flow with unfettered spontaneity. His modern editors seem to do him less than justice, therefore, when they lay stress on his failures in a paragraph in which they complain of his overcrowding the words into his musical phrases, and cite as an example the setting of "O spare me a little," at the end of one of the most intimately felt "verse" anthems, "Behold, Thou hast made my days as it were a span long". Anyone who reads this work must be struck by the fact that here Gibbons has handled solo and chorus with an imaginative sense which prefigures something of Brahms's treatment of the same words in the third movement of the *Deutsches Requiem*. But apart from this, the perfect accentuation of the English is a thing to wonder at. "O spare me a little" is inevitable in the two long notes of its first syllables and the four crotchets of its later ones. Awkwardnesses may be found, but this is certainly not one of them. Rather, such things as this place Gibbons in the great line of musicians who have mastered the English language in song: the line which John Merbecke began with *The Book of Common Prayer Noted* fifty years before him and Henry Purcell continued more than fifty years after him in *Dido and Aeneas*. Let those who would judge of his mastery not read him but sing him.

John Dowland
Died 21 January 1626

(23 January 1926)

TERCENTENARIES grow a little embarrassing. They toll the knell of the finest period of English music, and the eulogies they call forth are apt to breed a faint scepticism amongst those (and they are still the majority) who hear a famous name for the first time when the bell tolls. Were these people all so marvellous, and is it not merely the fashion of the moment to extol the "Tudor Period"? There is something to be said for the attitude of the schoolboy who, stumbling through an "easy" sonata from Mozart on the piano, remarked to his master, "Don't you think, sir, that all classical music is very much alike?" All classical music is so stamped with the manners of its time that when its time is in fashion again we are apt to accept the artistic produce *en bloc*, without much thought of the individuality of the artist.

But John Dowland, whose death occurred on or about 21 January 1626, stands apart from his contemporaries. He is more easily distinguished than some of the bigger men whose tercentenaries have lately been celebrated, because he originated a *genre* of his own, and one which all can enjoy, the English song with instrumental accompaniment. He would be a bold man who, coming across an unsigned choral work for the first time, would assign it decisively to Byrd or to Weelkes; faced with an equally unknown song with accompaniment for the lute one might with comparatively little knowledge hazard a guess as to whether Dowland or another was the composer. One soon learns to know the tone of voice of the Dowland song beneath its diversities, just as one knows the tone of voice of a Schubert or a Brahms song. More than that, one has only to look at Dowland among his contemporaries, who were his followers, to realize that Thomas Campion, Robert Jones, and John Bartlet, despite their distinctive charms and their lyrical feeling, were all bound by a limited conception of tunefulness, a conception which does not hold Dowland at all. They "found out musical tunes", but his is the bigger vision of song which begins with the poem and lets it lead the music where it will.

It is Dr. Edmund Fellowes who has given us all the opportunity of testing this for ourselves. His first series of *The English School of Lutenist Songwriters*, completed in fifteen volumes, and four volumes of the second series (Campion's first and second books, Robert Jones's first book, and John Bartlet's only one) are now before us. The whole of Dowland's four books, with three additional songs from *A Musical Banquet*, appeared in several volumes for the first series, but now, for practical purposes, comes a selected edition of fifty songs (two volumes, octavo), issued uniform with the second series; that is to say, without the lute tablatures, but with the accompaniments literally translated into pianoforte notation. Singers will welcome the fact that these fifty songs are issued in two keys for high and low voice. The fifty include seventeen out of the *First Booke of Songs or Ayres*, which are, for the most part, simple in style; some of the finest of his later ones are omitted from this selection, which is intended to be a popular introduction to his art. The knowledge of them will inevitably lead on to further exploration in the complete edition.

Dowland should be taken to the piano by those who want to understand him. A writer of his time (or a little later), describing a liberal education in the arts, said: "I desire no more in you than to sing your part sure and at first sight; withall to play the same upon your Violl or the exercise of the Lute, privately to yourself."

That is all Dowland asks for; we may omit the viol, and in place of the lute Dr. Fellowes has given us the piano part, which may be played by anyone who plays at all. In his life, Dowland was known through Europe as one of the foremost *virtuosi* of the lute, to which he sang his own songs.

> Dowland to thee is dear; whose heavenly touch
> Upon the lute doth ravish human sense.

The songs nowhere suggest that he claimed any vocal virtuosity. A voice pure and "sure" and of a quality to drop back into the position of accompaniment to the soft-toned lute where the tune is given to the instrument must have been characteristics of his singing. But above all he brought to his composition of songs the singer's instinctive sense of how a phrase will lie over the voice. However long a phrase may be—and some are very long, especially in the later songs—they are never impracticable or even awkward to sing. The least accomplished singer, with only just enough voice

to hum them through, feels at once their fitness and their beauty, and longs to do them fuller justice.

It may be that occasionally a word or syllable strikes the modern mind as being a little oddly stressed. The old English fashion of grouping several notes to a syllable will account for some of these places, and the later fashion of thinking in bar lengths accounts for many more. Sometimes, too, it is evident that Dowland's music is inspired by the first verse of a poem and fitted to the subsequent ones. But these things apart, the aptness of his musical phraseology is increasingly fascinating. It is only as one lingers over it, playing and singing, that one realizes its perfection. In the concert-room half of it escapes before it is appreciated, but Dowland did not write for the concert-room or sing to concert audiences. A striking instance, though it is picked up almost at random, is the setting of the words "But this *change must needs* change our delight" in that wonderful song "Mourn! day is with darkness fled". Every bar is packed with rhythmic purpose, but this passage with its stresses on the three words here italicized forms the climax of the song. One is amazed when, on examination, it is seen that the whole song lies within the compass of an octave.

The unvocal songwriter is always straining at the extremes of the voice to gain his climaxes; Dowland, moving among the middle tones, gives the impression of never raising his. And when he does increase the compass beyond the octave it is done with a master phrase; "That now lies sleeping," the end of his famous "Weep you no more, sad fountains," is such a phrase if ever there was one. If that were his only song he would be among the immortals, but how far he is from depending on that for his claim may be discovered by anyone who will go through the fifty songs and search out their magical diversity.

Musical London from the Restoration to Handel[1]

I. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

ILLUSTRATIONS

Little Consort for Strings	*Matthew Locke*
Sonata of three parts	*Henry Purcell*
Toccata for Harpsichord	*Henry Purcell*
Lessons for Harpsichord	*John Blow and Henry Purcell*

MY object is, not to trace out a period of Musical History which has been indeed pretty fully explored, but rather to discover what part the art of music took in the lives of our predecessors dwelling in this city in a time which like our own was one of considerable change and expansion.

Certain likenesses between the changes in London life in the last half of the seventeenth century and the first of the twentieth century are too obvious to need much insistence on them, though those of the earlier period were more drastic than ours have been so far. Londoners of the Restoration period were recovering from the shock of war and disruption within, just as those of the nineteen twenties have been recovering from a similar shock administered from without. We have seen something in our own day corresponding to the reaction in favour of frivolity and the extravagant thirst for entertainment which belonged to the "post-war" spirit of Restoration London.

Moreover, the period which I have chosen is that in which London itself was changed by a number of circumstances (in which destruction by fire, and the energy of post-war commercial expansion, played their parts) from being a medieval city enclosed by its walls to being essentially the widespread London that we know, much of

[1]Three Lectures given at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, February 1928. These lectures and those later in this volume in "Mozart in Musical Life To-day" are published from the author's notes—which he amplified very considerably in delivering them, and which he would have added to still further had he himself prepared them for publication. In the present circumstances, however, it was impossible to do this and, after careful consideration, they have been left almost entirely as he wrote them at the time.

which is now disappearing, and giving place to a London which we have got to learn to know. The Fire (1666) sent the Town spreading west, till London and Westminster were joined by continuous building and the village of Charing was swallowed up between them. The destruction of the Royal Palace of Whitehall by fire (1698) removed the Royal residence to St. James's; Marlborough House was built by Wren for the Duke (1708) over the way and the "new aristocracy" of the Marlborough wars built their mansions up to the fringe of Hyde Park and created Mayfair. The "new rich" of the South Sea Bubble (1711) and similar ventures established themselves in Bloomsbury and other suburbs. With the "new rich" we have the newly charitable among whom Thomas Coram who built his Foundling Hospital in the heart of Bloomsbury (1741) is conspicuous. With it Handel is closely associated by his gift of a score of the *Messiah*.

Consequent on the Fire (1666) came all that rebuilding of the City itself with which the name of Sir Christopher Wren is associated, with St. Paul's Cathedral as its centrepiece. When we read in John Evelyn's *Diary*, 5 October 1694: "I went to St. Paul's to see the choir now finish'd as to the stone work, and the scaffolds struck both within and without in that part" we may ask ourselves, when shall we have a similar experience?

When we read, at a rather earlier date (1689), of the Diarist waiting on the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth to discuss the Revision of the Prayer Book we have a vivid realization of the community between those changing times and our own.

In the Restoration period we see those theatres springing up with which Matthew Locke and Henry Purcell were associated. In Queen Anne's reign we have the opening of the Queen's theatre, further west in the Haymarket, which Handel was to capture for his Operas; a little later, that in Lincoln's Inn Fields is made famous by *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) and finally the opening of one in Covent Garden (1734), which Handel also inhabited and where many of his later works, including Oratorios, were produced.

The century I have chosen, therefore, is one in which many of our familiar landmarks made their appearance, landmarks some of which are now fast vanishing save where some exceptional effort is being made to preserve them. My question is, what part did music play in the lives of the ordinary citizens of this ever growing and changing London? What music did they make for themselves and how did they receive that which great artists offered them? Perhaps an

examination of our ancestors' "reactions" to music may shed some light on our current problems. (*Before* 1660).

First comes the question—From what did this period start?

If we consider only great composers, outstanding performers or regular institutions maintained for the practice of the art of music, we must say that it started from scratch.

The Puritan government had destroyed the music establishments of the Church, closed the theatres and at any rate discouraged public musical entertainment. The historians all unite in agreeing that the decade of the regicides was a dead time. Compared with the Elizabethan age, when England was flooded with the choral song of the madrigalists, or with the first Caroline era, when the Masques of Ben Jonson carried on the vogue of theatrical music which the Shakespearean drama had begun, the age seems singularly barren.

But suppose that we pay a visit to the shop of the only music publisher in London, Mr. John Playford in the Temple close to the Church, and see what he has in his window. Or to be more accurate, suppose that we pick up one of his later volumes and see what he advertised, we shall learn what was current music amongst the townsfolk. Incidentally we shall correct the view of the historians by finding out not only what was produced in that time but what lasted.

At the end of Henry Lawes's third book of *Ayres and Dialogues for* 1, 2 & 3 *voices* (1669) there is a full page "catalogue". It advertises the Madrigals of Gibbons and Wilby, though not those of Weelkes and Byrd. Of publications during the Cromwellian period there are:

1651 *The Dancing Master.*
1653 *Ayres and Dialogues.* Lawes Bk. I.
1655 *Ayres and Dialogues.* Lawes Bk. II.
1656 *Psalms for 3 voyces after the Italian way with a thorough base engraven upon copper* by Wm. Child.
1656 Matthew Locke's *Little Consort for 2 violins and base.*

We find, in fact, that Playford's shop window is filled with books of simple, concerted songs with an accompaniment for a bass viol or bass lute (theorbo), songs both sacred and secular, Psalms and Pastorals; we find a little equally simple concerted instrumental music, and with them be it noted especially such instruction books as:

Playford's *Introduction to the Skill of Musique*
,, *Musical Banquet* or
,, *Musique's recreation on the Lyra Viol*
and Ch. Simpson's *Division Violist.*

We notice the rule of thumb directions in the *Musical Banquet* as to how to tune the instrument and find the notes on the finger board. We notice that many of these publications have the air of being 'Music made Easy' for the amateur, and also that the most instructional of them were quickly sold out and replaced by new and improved editions.

The 12th edition of Playford's *Introduction to the Skill of Musique* was remodelled and edited by Henry Purcell himself in 1694 and by 1730 it reached to its 19th edition.

Obviously, then, the Londoners of the sixteen-fifties made music for themselves, bought songs and sang them, bought instrumental pieces and instruction books and learned to play on instruments. Musicians like Lawes, Locke and Child, deprived of their Church appointments and more or less debarred from theatrical enterprises (I say more or less for we must not forget that the first operas we ever had in England appeared sporadically during this time), occupied themselves by writing, and beginning that campaign for the education of the masses which is to-day the special province of the gramophone companies and the B.B.C.

I feel almost ashamed here of introducing the name of Samuel Pepys, because his musical activities have been so much exploited and it may be suggested that he was exceptional in his time. But the first year of his *Diary* shows in a remarkable way not only what were his own musical interests but what were those of the ordinary man. That Pepys should get up early and practise his lute for an hour, or sing a song of his own composition or another's to his viol before going to his office might merely show him to be an exceptional enthusiast. But in this early period we find him thrown amongst companions (not chosen companions) who took as much delight in making music as himself and displaying various degrees of competence.

It will be allowed that the fleet, lying in the straits in that time when the whole government of the country was hanging in the balance, when it was still an open question whether the warships were to be used to defend the Commonwealth or to bring back the King, was the last place in which one would look for the serious pursuit of music.

If men in that situation not only amuse themselves with singing along with card playing and ninepins, but have taken the trouble to bring their instruments on board to make concerted music together we may take it that the musical life of the time was fairly strong.

On 6 April 1660 we read: "In the afternoon W. Howe and I to our viallins the first time since we came on board" and afterwards Pepys and William Howe are frequently found fiddling together. Presently, however, the party increases, for on 23 April (Easter Monday) the Commander, Sir Edward Montagu (afterwards Lord Sandwich) to whom Pepys always alludes as "My Lord", heard them at it and insisted on joining the concert.

Ap 23 Easter Monday.

In the evening the first time we had any Sport among the seamen, and indeed there was extraordinary good sport after my Lord had done playing at ninepins. After that W. Howe and I went to play 2 trebles in the great cabin below, which my Lord hearing, after supper he called for our instruments, and played a set of Lock's 2 trebles and a base, and that being done, he fell to singing of a song made upon the Rump, with which he played himself very well to the tune of "the Blacksmith" (Green Sleeves).

So "my Lord" or someone else had brought a bass viol along and used it not only to accompany his own singing but to take part in some of Locke's latest compositions.

After this we hear of Mr. Pickering playing a bass part upon the viol, but: "he did it so like a fool that I was ashamed of him".

Again on 2 May: "This day came Mr. North (Sir Dudley North's son[1]) on board, to spend a little time here, which my Lord was a little troubled at, but he seems to be a fine gentleman, and at night did play his part exceeding well at first sight." Mr. North evidently gets into "My Lord's" good graces, for three days later is the entry: "After supper good musique, My Lord, Mr. North, I and W. Howe." We may now get a glimpse of what this "good musique" amounted to by going to Locke's *Little Consort*.

A little oblong volume, the three parts bound each in its own paper cover and enclosed in a portfolio, all of a size which would take next to no room in a sea chest or even slip into a pocket of a tail coat.

[1]Charles, nephew of Roger North.

It may be noticed that most of Playford's publications are of that small size, like modern miniature scores, which make them handy for carrying about, a sure mark that they were for popular use.

The Consort contains ten sets of 4 pieces each, Pavan, Ayre, Corant and Saraband, the sets differing in key. Five sets are for two violins and a bass (these are evidently the ones Pepys played); the other five are for violin, tenor and bass. They are printed in the small diamond-shaped notes so trying to the eyes which gradually gave place to the round note in the next generation. Though the forms are concise and the range limited they are by no means elementary. The players must be skilful time-ists, and no doubt it was in his bad time that Mr. Pickering showed himself a fool, and in his good time that Mr. North "did play his part exceeding well".

Each set is in fact a Suite of Pieces in which the most serious music comes first, in the Pavan. This, a slow dance long popular in England, had been described by Thomas Morley (*Plaine and Easie Introduction*), as a dance in three strains. It always had, in the compositions of the Elizabethans, a certain solemn and ceremonial character, and both the form in three strains and the character are preserved by Locke. In the *Little Consort* it will be noticed that stress is laid on passages of canon and imitation between the parts, a sure sign that this is music of thought rather than of action; music to be listened to rather than danced to. The Ayre, the only number not nominally a dance piece, is in an altogether lighter style. One notices that the two violins twine about in 3rds and 6ths; it is more harmonic than contrapuntal. The Corant is a strongly rhythmic dance in triple time, in which striking cross rhythms between parts are noticeable, and finally comes the Saraband whose courtly Spanish grace is never disturbed either by contrapuntal devices or cross rhythms.

It must be realized further that this style of composition for strings in suites of dance pieces would represent the "new style" to Pepys and his companions. It is true that "Consort Lessons" go back to Thomas Morley, but the typical English manner of composition hitherto had been the Fantasy which Morley himself commends as that which shows the highest art, because in it the composer is free to follow his fancy and is not confined by set forms or dance rhythms. The old English Fantasy is well known to-day in the specimens of Byrd, Gibbons and others which have been edited for modern use and which modern musicians admire as Morley did for their freedom and their artistic development of the devices of Canon

and Fugue. Such things were, however, a little too involved and elaborate for the amateurs of the mid seventeenth century, who, like those of to-day, wanted something with more obvious tune; with the rhythm of the dance and not too difficult in technique. This was what Locke supplied to them in his *Little Consort*.

I have emphasized the publication of Locke's *Little Consort* in 1656 because it makes it clear that the trend of popular chamber music, as practised by amateurs towards the dance suite form and away from the classical Fantasy, was beginning well before the onrush of the French fashion which Charles II brought to his Court at the Restoration. Historians have laid the change to the account of Charles II and, though that monarch was responsible for many changes of fashion and manners and has enough to answer for, Locke's work shows that the prevalence of the dance suite had nothing whatever to do with him. It was the natural result of the growth of popular music requiring something more direct and less introspective than the classical form. We have seen the same thing occurring in our own day, in the classical Sonata giving way to all sorts of shorter and more simply expansive forms.

There is another and a larger work of Locke's for strings, which seems to have been written later and which was never published. It is interesting because it is an attempt to unite the fantasy with the suite. His own MS. has on it the words

Fantasie of 4 parts
by Matt: Locke
Scored by his own hand

and it consists of six suites for violin or treble viol, alto, tenor and bass viols. The interest of this work is that, instead of the Pavan of the *Little Consort*, each set begins with a very fully developed Fantasy in the classical manner, showing all the features of varied themes treated in rich imitative counterpoint. To each of these Fantasies is added a Corant, Ayre and Saraband as in the *Little Consort*, the whole set therefore having something of the character of the Overture form used later by J. S. Bach, in which a serious and highly wrought first movement is succeeded by dance tunes. Had this work been known (curiously enough no one seems to have looked at it) the general estimate of Locke as a composer of concerted string music would, I think, have been materially altered. It is an enterprising attempt to reconcile old and new fashions and

so far as I know an unique attempt. Were there time, I should have liked to give you a specimen from Locke's *Great Consort* but perhaps it is not wholly relevant because it seems that this fine work never went out of his hands and so cannot in any way have influenced the taste of the time. Probably Locke realized that it would be rather above the heads of the majority of amateurs.

Shortly after Pepys and his naval friends had played the *Little Consort* together on board the *Naseby* they set sail for the Hague and returned to London with the King and a great deal else beside. They had little idea of what they were bringing. Royalty and Episcopacy, they were well aware, stood together and when Pepys resumed his life in London one of his many interests was to see how soon the Liturgy of the English Church would be read and sung again in the churches and cathedrals. The King reformed his Chapel Royal and appointed Captain Cooke, who had fought for his father, to train the choristers and be the chief musician therein. The old service books were unearthed, old music was copied out, organs were installed, and institutional music began once again to be made in company with institutional religion. In short the professional musician began to regain his ascendancy over the amateur. Everyone was looking for places at Court; Locke found one presently as organist to the Latin Chapel founded for the Queen. He had composed music for the King's progress through the City and been named "Composer in Ordinary" to His Majesty in return for these efforts.

Charles II's predilection for French music, as indeed for other manners and habits which he had seen at the Court of Louis XIV, is notorious, but I think that the historians have greatly overrated the importance of the King's personal tastes to the people of his realm. It is true that he derided the English Fantasy music for strings and formed a string band on the model of that which Lully led at Versailles. It is true that he brought over French musicians and gave them places at Court, much to the wrath of their English colleagues. It is true that he picked out one of the brightest of the Chapel Royal Boys, Pelham Humfrey and sent him over to France to study the French style under Lully. It is true that London society following the King's example indulged in a "French craze".

What is not in the least true is that English music was either very much the better or very much the worse on these accounts.

On the contrary, it is quite evident that neither Locke nor his greater successor Henry Purcell, nor even such minor men as John

Blow, Michael Wise and Benjamin Rogers were in the least deflected from their courses. No doubt they learnt something from the French music that was worth learning. One may see the influence of it here and there in such things as the form of Purcell's Overtures and the use of strings in his Church Anthems. But historians have written as though the whole of the Church Music, theatre music and domestic music of the Restoration period in England were the result of one pert little choir boy, who died before he could do much harm or good, having been a pupil of Lully. I have even heard Purcell spoken of as a pupil of Lully, which certainly he never was.

Consider the thing from a modern point of view. We have had a Richard Strauss orchestral craze, a Russian Ballet craze, an American Jazz craze and all of them have no doubt stimulated our own composers in various directions. But the more serious of them, men like Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst and Bax, have buffeted their way along, sometimes picking up a technical wrinkle from foreign contemporaries, sometimes consciously rebelling against their dominance, and yet somehow expressing themselves in a way which we feel to be characteristic of our native attitude towards art and life.

It was just the same in the latter part of the seventeenth century. That tendency of the ordinary Englishman to be a little bit sceptical of his countrymen's capacity to be as good as the foreigner in music was even then no new thing. Long before the Restoration we find composers girding against it in the prefaces to their publications; even Henry Lawes, most accepted of song-writers, in his *Ayres and Dialogues* (1653) fights the idea that "English words will not run well in music" and scoffs at the affectation of admiring the foreigner.

Matthew Locke was the last person to sit down under a French craze. He was in fact rather a truculent individual who loved acrimonious controversy, and who was ready to support his own case with a bitter tongue and a sarcastic pen. In the preface to the *Little Consort* published as I have said years before Charles II brought his French ways to England, Locke declares that having studied the foreign music he is sure that he can do better.

Another man who deserves mention in this connexion is John Bannister, the violinist who was the first leader of the King's new string band and whom Pepys describes in his *Diary* (20 February 1666–7) as "mad that the King hath a Frenchman come to be chief of some part of the King's Music."

Another entry of Pepys's a few months earlier (18 June 1666) is illuminating. He says:

> Thence to my Lord Bellasses and there dined with him, and his lady and daughter; and at dinner there played to us a young boy, lately come from France, where he had been learning a year or two on the violin, and plays finely. But impartially I do not find any goodnesse in their ayres (though very good) beyond ours when played by the same hand, I observed in several of Baptiste's (the present great composer) and our Bannister's.

Far more important than any influence, real or supposed, of French composition on English music at this time was the effect of *virtuoso* players of whatever nation on the taste of the ordinary Londoner. People who before had been content with their own amateur efforts at string playing now listened to the more highly trained specialist. Private chamber music parties declined as the public concert room rose in favour. It was John Bannister himself who started public concerts of instrumental music. The *London Gazette* (No. 742) of 30 December 1672 advertises that at Bannister's House in White Friars "now called the Music School": "this present Monday, will be music performed by excellent masters, beginning precisely at 4 in the afternoon, and every afternoon for the future precisely at the same hour."

Thomas Britton, "the musical small coal man," established his concerts over his coal cellar in Clerkenwell in 1678. The greatest artists of the day took part in them from John Bannister the younger to Handel himself when he arrived here in 1711.

Unfortunately (some perhaps will say fortunately) there were no newspaper criticisms of these concerts, so that we have no precise record of the music given and people, then, as now, were much more inclined to remember who they had heard than what they had heard. Evelyn, for example, who describes hearing the famous Italian violinist Matteis at the house of his friend Slingsby, Master of the Mint, more than once, never tells what the great man played just as to-day the average amateur says "I went to hear Kreisler at Queen's Hall" rather than I went to hear the Beethoven or the Elgar Concertos.

All we know is that at the professional concerts of Bannister and at the private houses of the wealthy the latest things in instrumental music were being listened to by the sort of people who formerly

had to make their music for themselves. It was because of this that Henry Purcell grew up in a different musical atmosphere from that in which Matthew Locke had lived and worked.

It is that, and no sort of capitulation to foreign influence, which accounts for the fact that Purcell, having written his Fantasies for Viols put them away in a drawer and proceeded to publish (1683) his *Twelve Sonatas of three parts*. He confessed to "a just imitation of the most fam'd Italian Masters, principally to bring the seriousness and gravity of that sort of music, into vogue among our countrymen whose humor, 'tis time now should begin to loath the levity and balladry of our neighbours". His copying was of what he saw in the Italian style of sonata as fitting to the needs of the public concert. The old English fantasy was introspective and like its vocal companion the madrigal was thought of as music primarily for the performers to enjoy. The sonata was devised to stimulate an audience. Its alternate moods expressed in slow and quick movements, its direct rhetorical manner, its backing of the string parts with a harpsichord accompaniment, were the outward signs of what may be called this concert-room attitude of mind. Purcell realized that the Italian sonata form was capable of maintaining that seriousness and gravity which had belonged to the English fantasy, and he took it as an ally against the trivial dance tunes which the King and Court declared were French and therefore the right thing. He was much too individual a composer to surrender his individuality in learning from the "fam'd Italian Masters". He saw that their sonata style opened up a new avenue for the expression of his individuality, and, as a matter of fact, his Sonatas far surpass in depth of feeling and in the actual technique of composition any known Italian examples of that date. Corelli's first set are generally supposed to be the basis of the Italian School and Purcell's were published simultaneously with Corelli's.

The example of Purcell's Concerted Sonata (No. 7 in E minor) opens with a solemn movement in which at the outset the first violin and the bass move in a canon by augmentation. The powerful declamatory effect of the descending phrase in the bass is repeated from different intervals of the scale. There follows a Canzona, a fugal movement for the three instruments which is not unlike the Fantasies of Gibbons, etc. in style save that Purcell sticks to his point and develops one theme to its logical conclusion. There follows then a slow movement in a sort of saraband rhythm, though Purcell refuses all dance names, and, after a short interpolation in duple

time, a Vivace (Purcell is evidently a little proud of having picked up a few Italian terms), is again in triple time until near the end. The ending is strikingly original. We think of what the Liszt School used to call the "metamorphosis of themes" as a modern invention, yet here is a complete example of it. Purcell turns the tune of the Vivace into duple time, changing it from a light-hearted measure into an emphatic and grandly conclusive one. In this Sonata he certainly vindicated the seriousness of his own artistic nature.

The use of the harpsichord as a background to the strings is the most tangible evidence in these concerted works of the Italian influence on Purcell. The older English composers had not so used the keyboard instrument. The Elizabethan composers of Fantasies could not so use it because their keyboard instrument, commonly called the Virginal, was too weak in tone to form an effective background. Consequently, the Elizabethans (Bull, Byrd, Farnaby, Gibbons, etc.), while they created a great school of solo music for the virginal had done little or nothing in the way of combining it with other instruments. They had indeed so used the lute, which was the normal instrument for vocal accompaniment, but neither lute nor virginal could do what the more pungent-toned harpsichord could do.

In the course of the seventeenth century both lute and virginal were gradually giving way to the harpsichord and organ as instruments of accompaniment. We find interesting evidence of this in the diarists. Pepys tells us how in the stampede of Londoners from the Great Fire (1666) he saw "River full of lighters and boats taking in goods, and good goods swimming in the water, and only I observed that hardly one lighter or boat in three that had the goods of a house in, but there was a pair of Virginalls in it." (V. 395. 2 Sept. 1666.) From this we infer two things (1) that up to the time of the Fire the virginal was as common a household instrument as the piano is to-day, and (2) that a very large proportion of these instruments were either destroyed by the Fire or were among the "good goods" which swam in the water.

The Restoration had brought a boom in the organ building trade. English builders like Renatus Harris and foreign immigrants like Bernhard Schmidt (known as Father Smith) began to repair the ravages made by Puritan zeal on the cathedral and church organs as soon as the King was once more on his throne. Nor was the organ regarded as primarily an ecclesiastical instrument. Pepys's "My Lord" (Sandwich) had one set up in his dining-room and played it

himself. As "My Lord" was very much by way of being a man of fashion we may be sure that he was not singular in this.

In these ways outward circumstances combined to further that general tendency of taste to demand more tone of instruments. Haward, the virginal maker, took to making harpsichords for his richer clients, and foreign *virtuosi* on this instrument began to appear along with the string players. Indeed, in that party at Slingsby's at which Evelyn first heard the famous violinist Nicola Matteis he also heard "Signor Francisco on the harpsichord esteemed one of the greatest masters in Europe on that instrument."

Again, he does not tell us what Signor Francisco played.

Naturally, towards the end of the century, we find a whole crop of "Lessons" for the harpsichord written for amateurs by English composers great and small. The suite form of pieces which Locke had introduced in his *Little Consort for Strings* was applied to the harpsichord. A great deal of what was written is of no more musical importance than is the greater mass of educational music which pours from the press to-day. It served its turn, gave the amateurs something to play and let us hope put a little money into the pockets of the composers.

None of the composers seem to have been deeply concerned about what may be called the higher branches of Keyboard Composition and for a very obvious reason. The keyboard favoured extemporisation. The man who was a real master of it could sit down and play what was in his head. He had the whole range of its melody and harmony under his command and was not limited by having to co-operate with others as the string player was. Even when he played with string players he liked to keep a free hand as to his own contribution to the *ensemble*.

In his sonatas Purcell adopted the custom from the Italians of giving only a rough indication of what the harpsichordist was to do by means of the device known as "Thorough (or Figured) bass". That device merely prescribes the main course of the harmonies, so that the player may not conflict with the strict part playing of his associates. Given those harmonies, the player was expected to improvise in accordance with certain rules which it was the business of an educated musician to understand.

Most modern musicians no longer understand those rules and consequently modern critics and historians condemn the practice as a piece of carelessness or laziness on the part of the composer, while modern performers and conductors of seventeenth and

eighteenth century concerted works think that they can dispense altogether with a part of the music which the composers did not trouble to write out in full.

There could be no greater mistake than this. It may be said definitely that all concerted musical works whether vocal or instrumental require the use of the keyboard instrument with voices, strings or orchestra as part of the musical texture, and this practice extended through the time of Bach and Handel in chamber music, opera and oratorio. To ignore it is merely to misconceive the style of the time.

While the greater part of the surviving solo music for the harpsichord is in the nature of the little pieces for amateurs, Purcell has left us one magnificent piece in a larger style which is sufficient to indicate what his own playing was like. It is called a "Toccata" (you observe the Italian name) and was no doubt written in emulation of the performances of the Italian *virtuosi*. It is interesting to know that a copy of this Toccata found among the MSS. of J. S. Bach was printed in the Bach-Gesellschaft edition as a doubtful work of that master.

It has the spaciousness and the rhapsodic energy of Bach's Toccatas, but remember that Purcell died when J. S. Bach was only ten years old. Unfortunately for us, Pepys gave up keeping his *Diary* before Purcell came to years of maturity and Evelyn, whose interest in music was much more superficial than Pepys's, only mentions him once (1698) after his death.

We have no good firsthand account of the impressions made on contemporaries by Purcell's improvisation or keyboard performance generally. We only know of the general admiration which his exceptional musical gifts excited during his short life, an admiration which left no doubt in the minds of his countrymen that when the French craze had abated and the Italian *virtuosi* had been adored, paid and dismissed, he had vindicated the power of the Englishman to make his own music in his own way, and by doing so to contribute on equal terms with the Continentals to the store of the world's artistic treasure.

II. VOCAL MUSIC

ILLUSTRATIONS

Orpheus's Hymn	*Henry Lawes*
Nature's Song (*Cupid and Death*)	*Matthew Locke*
Elegy on the Death of Matthew Locke	*Henry Purcell*
Scene from *Dido and Æneas*	*Henry Purcell*
Aria from *Rinaldo*	*G. F. Handel*
Song "On the brow of Richmond Hill"	*Henry Purcell*

OUR course here lies between two dates, one just before the Restoration of the Monarchy, the other some eighty years later. On 4 March 1660, Pepys entered in his diary: "Sang Orpheus's Hymn to my Viall" and on 23 March 1728 Dr. Arbuthnot wrote in the *London Journal*, as follows: "As there is nothing which surprises all true lovers of Musick more than the neglect into which the Italian Operas are at present fallen, so I cannot but think it a very extraordinary instance of the fickle and inconstant temper of the English nation: a failing which they have always been endeavouring to cast upon their neighbours in France." The connexion between the two is not at once obvious, but a brief tracing of history may make it so. In these eighty years much had happened and the main musical interest of the average Londoner had changed from being the amateur performance to being a fashionable entertainment in a theatre, called Opera. The song called "Orpheus' Hymn" was a favourite one published in the 2nd Book of *Ayres and Dialogues* of Henry Lawes (1655). I alluded earlier to Lawes's effort in the preface of that book, to dispel the notion that "English words will not run well in Musick". It is dedicated

$$\text{To all } \left\{ \begin{matrix} \text{Understanding} \\ \text{Lovers} \end{matrix} \right\} \text{ of Musick.}$$

Beneath this dedication Lawes asserted that if the words do not run well it is the fault "either of the composer or the singer". When you hear that song sung I think you will agree that, whatever may be its merits or its shortcomings as a piece of music, in it Lawes has

concentrated on making the words "run well", expressing their energy in bold declamatory phrases.

If the London public had believed in what Henry Lawes said and did, not only would Dr. Arbuthnot's jeremiad have remained unwritten, but the whole course of Opera in England would have been different, and we should not have been wondering 200 years later again whether publicly financed Opera is a sane project or the vision of unpractical idealists.

The foundations of an English Opera would have been well and truly laid when the theatres opened in London at the time of the Restoration, and, building on that foundation, subsequent artists would have been able to build up a form of opera suitable to the language, and form the taste of their countrymen.

Instead, however, in subsequent years Opera in London ran an unsteady course. The several attempts to present it, whether by English or Continental composers and singers, threw the London public into paroxysms of excitement followed by periods of disgust. Locke, Bannister and Purcell were the chief contributors to an English repertory. After their deaths Colley Cibber describes the Italian Opera as "stealing into England; but in as rude a disguise and as unlike itself as possible, in a lame, hobbling translation . . . sung by our own unskilful voices, with graces misapplied to almost every sentiment, and with action lifeless and unmeaning to every character." At last came Handel with the real thing, the style of which he had studied in Italy itself. The London public was fairly swept off its feet in an enthusiasm which was as generous as it was unintelligent. At the end of some eighteen years of Handel's work in London, the Opera, endowed with a subsidy, was on the verge of bankruptcy, Gay was drawing all London to the ridicule of itself in *The Beggar's Opera* and the few honest enthusiasts like Arbuthnot were again in despair.

But to return; while Pepys and others likeminded were singing "Ayres and Dialogues" to their viols, and while the regular theatres were still closed by order of the government, that enterprising actor-manager, William Davenant, was getting round the law by giving from time to time theatrical entertainments which, being sung, did not technically come under the ban of the law. He began with *The Siege of Rhodes*, which Henry Purcell at a later date (Preface to *The Fairie Queen*, 1692) called "the first Opera we ever had in England, and is indeed a perfect Opera". As Purcell's father had sung in that opera he knew of it by repute, though the music to which five

composers (including Lawes and Locke) contributed, was not preserved. Davenant went on to a curious entertainment described as "The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru expressed by instrumental and vocal music and by art of perspective in scenes (1658)". This may be the Opera which John Evelyn saw in 1656. Evelyn does not trouble to name the opera which he saw when he visited his brother in London on 5 May 1659. All he said of it is that it was "a new Opera after the Italian way with recitative music and scenes, much inferior to the Italian composure and magnificence". You notice in the remark the superiority of the English gentleman who had seen Italian Opera in Venice towards the home-made product. He goes on to declare that "it was prodigious that in a time of such public consternation such a vanity should be kept up or permitted". This was, of course, the time when the future of the realm was in uncertainty about the possible return of the King; in fact just the time at which the Commander of the Fleet with Pepys and others were playing chamber music.

But there was another entertainment of this time which was not called an Opera, but which practically was one, the music of which by Christopher Gibbons (son of Orlando Gibbons, the Madrigal writer) and Matthew Locke has survived in Locke's MS., and has been reproduced on the modern stage. This was *Cupid and Death* which Locke calls "a moral representation", but which we should describe as a Comic Opera with some spoken dialogue, musical movements and dances, the play written by James Shirley. It was given at the Military Ground in Leicester Fields (1659) but apparently had had an earlier performance. It has a genuinely comic situation of the kind which we to-day call "Gilbertian". The gist of it is that Cupid and Death put up by chance at the same Inn when having dined well both fall into a drunken slumber with their weapons beside them. The chamberlain with a taste for practical joking changes their weapons, so that in the morning Cupid goes off armed with death-dealing shafts while Death carries Cupid's arrows. Cupid meets some young men and maidens in gentle dalliance together and looses his shaft to seal their love. They fall down dead. Death sees an old couple tottering along and, thinking to end their earthly course, dispatches his shaft to finish them off. But behold, they throw down their crutches, embrace and dance and behave in an unseemly and kittenish fashion, to the disgust of Nature who is equally outraged by both occurrences. Eventually, matters are set right by Mercury who descends from Heaven and receives

the dead lovers into the Elysian Fields. You perceive that it is an excellent comic opera plot and it is excellently carried out in the music of Gibbons and Locke, especially the latter. As to the "Moral" I must leave that to you. Possibly it provides an argument for prohibition, or at any rate for the better regulation of public houses.

The point I want to bring out of it is that Locke wrote two scenes of real opera in which the action is carried on through the vocal music:

> The first is that in which Nature hastens to warn her children that Cupid has become "frantic" and is dealing death instead of love. While she is doing so Cupid enters and pierces the heart of a young lover who falls to the ground. No sooner has the catastrophe taken place than Death enters. Nature fears that he will do his worst and when she sees his rejuvenating effect on the old people she declares that she has no patience to look any longer.
>
> The other is the scene in which Mercury chides Cupid and Death for their misdeeds and pacifies Nature by showing the slain lovers throned in Elysium.

In the first of these scenes, it is noticeable that Locke applies exactly the same declamatory method to the words which Lawes had used in his Orpheus Hymn.

Both are written in what may be called a strict time recitative in which the music reproduced the natural accumulation of the English words with extraordinary closeness. The method which Lawes began in the purely lyrical song adapts itself in Locke's hands to the requirements of swift dramatic expression on the stage.

It was the haphazard course down which the purveyors of theatrical entertainment drifted, when the theatres were re-opened at the Restoration, which led to that fickleness and inconstancy of the public so vigorously deplored by Arbuthnot in the eighteenth century.

Nobody seems to have thought out the problem of Opera from the beginning, or to have realized that the first principle of Opera of whatever kind is to take a story of some real and human interest, clothe it in intelligible language and bring the arts of the musician to bear to express the situation and the words in musical terms.

It is on that principle that all the great operas of the world have been made, from Monteverdi to Wagner. It was on that principle that Locke had begun to work on *Cupid and Death*, and it was the

London public's failure to understand that principle which rendered nugatory all his subsequent work with that of Purcell, Handel and many later composers in this country. One sees that failure in every account of the Restoration operas, from which it is evident that the public got excited over singers and their powers, over scenery and transformation scenes (called "Machines") over all the accessories of effect, but never over the drama and its due expression in music.

At the Restoration Davenant quickly established his company of players at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields; another manager, Thomas Killigrew, opened a theatre in Drury Lane which has been a famous theatrical site ever since and ten years later the Duke's Theatre in Dorset Gardens to the east of the Temple was opened under the management of the actor Betterton and Davenant's widow. It was there that most of the more elaborate musical entertainments called "Operas" were produced.

Old plays (notably Shakespeare's) were altered to increase what may be called the pantomimic interests. We have first

> The Tragedy of Macbeth altered by Sir William Davenant being drest in all its finery, as new cloaths, new scenes, machines as flying for the witches with all the singing and dancing in it; the first composed by Mr. Locke, the others by Mr. Charwell and Mr. Priest; it being all excellently performed being in the nature of an Opera, it recompensed double the expense; it proves still a lasting play.

This is the account of Downes the prompter, who published in 1708 a description of all the plays produced with his assistance. On this followed a similar treatment of *The Tempest* and then what Locke evidently considered to be his masterpiece, the "Opera" of *Psyche* which Thomas Shadwell wrote for musical treatment and of which Locke published the score in 1675 under the title *The English Opera.*

In a preface written in Locke's usual self-assertive and somewhat acrid style he defends the title, points to the varied beauties of his own works and says

> Which variety, without vanity be it said, was never in Court or theatre till now perfected in this Nation: though I must confess that there has been something done (and more by me than any other) in this kind. And therefore it may justly wear the title

though all the tragedy be not in music: for the author prudently considered that though Italy was and is the great Academy of the world in that science and way of entertainment, England is not; and therefore mixed with it interlocutions as more proper to our genius.

That last remark is very illuminating. It points to that aversion which English audiences have always shown and still show to hearing the prose of their own language sung, however aptly it is set, in stage dialogue. A composer may elaborate the more lyrical passages of the drama as much as he likes, but if one man is to converse with another on everyday affairs on the stage he must not make a song about it. That is a popular prejudice which other nations do not share, and English audiences are quite willing to hear people remark on the weather or offer one another a drink to musical notes so long as they do it in a foreign language, but they must not do it in English.

Debussy may set the most commonplace remarks of Maeterlinck's characters to music without a hint of absurdity. He may end a scene with "Don't forget to light the lamp," or words to that effect, as easily as with "If I were God I should pity the hearts of men...." The Frenchman does not feel that music is only appropriate to a great sentiment or necessarily makes a chance remark sound pompous. It all depends on what music is used and how the words are set.

Locke and still more his great disciple and successor Henry Purcell had an unerring instinct for giving the right values to words in their stage music and they had as great an ability as either French or Italian composers of their day to render a play into flexible and continuous vocal music. But that was not what their public wanted or cared for. What was wanted of an Opera was "finery, new clothes, new scenes, machines, with all the singing and dancing" as Downes innocently says, spatchcocked into a mangled and halting play.

Consequently, all through those years when after the death of Locke (1677) Purcell was lavishing his gorgeous music on the stage of Dorset Gardens, through that depressing period after Purcell's early death when composers of smaller talents kept on tricking out one operatic futility after another, until Handel marched in and firmly planted the Italian Opera in the Queen's Theatre, then newly built in the Haymarket, London audiences went on bickering

and chaffering over rival singers, the supposed merits of the Italian language, which they did not understand, over their own, and occupied themselves solely with the appurtenances of the thing, instead of with its artistic significance.

If Locke and Purcell, with their magnificent powers of vocal declamation, their melodic gifts and their power of characterization, failed to establish a reasonable understanding of the difference between an Opera and a Christmas pantomime, it was hardly likely that such minor composers as John Eccles, Daniel Purcell (Henry's brother) and Thomas Clayton (who set Addison's *Rosamond*) would do so. The hopes of English Opera were dead long before Handel set foot on these shores.

They had never run very high: and when Henry Purcell as a growing youth saw the success of his father's old friend Matthew Locke, his own ambitions were fired to emulation. When in 1680, the year that he obtained his important appointment as Organist of Westminster Abbey, he also appeared first as a theatrical composer with his music to *Theodosius, or The Force of Love*; we are told that "the Court, especially the ladies by their daily charming preference for it, gave it great encouragement." One can see them simpering over the sentimental play and gushing over the young composer. We know how much those "charming preferences" are worth!

There was a fashion among the nineteenth-century historians of attaching impossibly early dates to certain of Purcell's works in a misplaced attempt to belaud him as an infant prodigy, as though infant prodigies were things to be proud of! The thing to be proud of in Purcell's case is that after nine or ten years of turning out songs and dance tunes to be fitted into plays which were generally silly and sometimes licentious, he could show that he had kept his ideals and perfected his handicraft in a complete opera of exquisite truth and tenderness.

This was *Dido and Aeneas* which we now know, thanks to the late Mr. Barclay Squire, to have been written about 1689, at any rate after the Revolution and accession of William III and Mary. The London theatrical world was impossible; Purcell could get no further with it, but Mr. Priest, the ballet master at Dorset Gardens also kept a ladies' school at Chelsea, and apparently suggested to Purcell that he should write something to show off his young ladies' singing and dancing.

Purcell did much more than that. A play put together by Nahum Tate told the story of the love of the Queen of Carthage and the

hero of Troy. They were parted, not by the order of the Gods but by the machinations of witches who raised a storm, sent a messenger to simulate the divine power and tear Aeneas from the arms of Dido. The Queen left among her maidens, sings one of the most beautiful songs of lament ever written, dies of a broken heart and is mourned in a chorus which is one of the supreme *finales* of all music.

Dido and Aeneas never came on the professional stage. It was too real and heartfelt a thing to get a foothold there. After its performance by Mr. Priest's young ladies it waited for the bicentenary of Purcell's death (1895) for a stage representation. Then Sir Charles Stanford made the pupils of the Royal College of Music give it, since when musicians have increasingly realized its unique qualities. It has been frequently given by more or less amateur companies in England and it has been heard in Germany, in Paris, and in Vienna on the occasion of the Beethoven Centenary festival. It is now realized to be one of the world's great Operas.

One short passage from it, not the well-known lament of Dido, but the crisis of the action, in which the Spirit accosts Aeneas and bids him leave Carthage, is relevant as an example here. In the compelling phrases of that message, in Aeneas's startled inquiry "To-night", in his acceptance of inexorable fate, and his affliction at the thought of his deserted Queen, Purcell may be realized as a master of dramatic characterization.

If Purcell's Operas were the subject of this lecture it would be necessary that I should dwell at length on the beauties of at least two of his works produced on the public stage of Dorset Gardens—*King Arthur* and *The Fairie Queen*. Both contain music as fine in itself as any in *Dido*, and some of it is on a grander scale. But in both he was limited by the conditions I have suggested. His music was excluded from taking any part in the more human situations of the plays. Dryden, who wrote the play of *King Arthur*, was willing to "write down" to the supposed artificialities of Opera and in *The Fairie Queen* Purcell was not expected to set a single line of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was deliberately perverted for the purpose.

If we ask what it was that threw the Town into a paroxysm of excitement when Handel arrived, and made it turn again with relief eighteen years later to the ribald wit and the artless singing of *The Beggar's Opera* we can find an answer best by an example. The first song by Handel ever delivered from the London stage was from the

opera called *Rinaldo*; and this first song in it, sung by a minor character, was not intended to be by any means the best. It is typical of the ordinary song by which the action of the play was set going, and it may be said that in *Rinaldo* the whole play is carried on in successions of conversational remarks in recitative followed by arias in which the several characters express their sentiments on what has emerged from the conversation. This was the convention of the type of Italian Opera to which Handel had given his allegiance. The plan of the thing is simplicity itself, and indeed it follows a logic of its own understandable to people who know the language.

Each character who comes on the stage sings a recitative which, being unencumbered with musical decoration of any sort, will serve to explain why he is there. To a foreign audience, however, the words are naturally unintelligible, and as the music to which they are set has no virtue or character of its own, they might as well be without it. However, they have only to wait for a moment and the last arrival, or at any rate the last speaker in the recitative, is certain to burst into a full blown aria. The *aria* in fact, is like the "close up" of a modern film. The action waits while hero or heroine register emotion. The aria can engage the interest of a foreign audience on purely musical grounds, at any rate when the aria is a thing of such rich and flowing melody as Handel was able to give. Burney, defending the cause of the Handelian Opera, expressly says that it should be listened to as one listens to an instrumental concerto.

Moreover, the arias followed set forms like the movements of a classical sonata, and each one was decorated with some particular kind of ornament devised to display the singer's powers of vocalization.

The aria from *Rinaldo*, "Sorva Balze" is of the kind called *aria di portamento*, that is a song in which the phrasing of short groups of notes (generally pairs of notes) is all important. A perfunctory writer of such a song, or one without any artistic perception, would make the device sound purely mechanical. Handel, however, even in his most careless moments, is always an artist.

The character who opens the Opera with this song is a young Captain of the Crusading Army encamped before the walls of Jerusalem. He has begun by expatiating in recitative on the qualities of his Commander, Rinaldo, who will be the hero of the opera. In the song he grows lyrical about "the temple of Glory" and the

portamento device gives a gay and buoyant feeling to the music suitable to the young man's character, but so far and no further does the music accord with the dramatic situation.

In 1710 when *Rinaldo* was brought on to the stage of the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket (the site is now occupied by His Majesty's Theatre) Handel had rushed over to try his luck amongst a people unknown to him except for the travellers whom he had met in Italy. He had no intention of staying, indeed he had only short leave from his duties as Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover, to which he was bound to return early in the spring. He wrote *Rinaldo* in a hurry to a libretto hastily prepared for him, but the strength of his melody, the gorgeous mounting of the Opera, including the flight of live birds in Armida's garden (which Addison ridiculed in the *Spectator*), and his power of commanding his singers and players, caused such a sensation that his speedy return was inevitable. The story is too well known to need repetition. All I want to emphasize here and now is that Handel came and saw and conquered London (for the time being) with Italian Opera as his all-powerful weapon. He imagined, as well he might, that he was coming to a country plunged in a night of ignorance as regards the art of music. He came prepared to give his best and he stayed to fight for what he knew as the best in continental art. It was only after he had been here some time that he began to realize that before him, and before the birth of Italian Opera, there had been music and great music in England. He gradually assimilated that fact and made use of it.

I want to leave you with the genuine flavour of English song in your ears, in which words and music belong to one another, so I will remind you of two songs of Purcell, both of them published in Dr. Arthur Somervell's Collection. Neither belongs to opera, but I have chosen them for special reasons. The first is an Elegy on the Death of Matthew Locke in which Purcell celebrates the gifts of his master in terms of peculiar intimacy. Throughout it both words and music insist on the power of Locke to express the feelings of the heart in his melody, to rouse to passion or to console, and the first lines lay stress on his understanding of the "power of numbers", that is the mating of his music with poetic metre and accent.

The other song is chosen for its sheer loveliness. There are people who say "Yes, it is all very well to talk of the mating of English verse with music in the seventeenth century composers, but after

all not one of them could really write a great tune like the best of Handel's."

I have heard it said over and over again. If any of you should ever say that after hearing Purcell's "On the brow of Richmond Hill" all I have to answer is "Well, God help you, for I cannot"

III. CANTATA AND ORATORIO

ILLUSTRATIONS

"Come if you dare!" (*King Arthur*)	*Henry Purcell*
"The trumpet's loud clangour" (*Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*)	*G. F. Handel*
Scene from *Belshazzar*	*G. F. Handel*

HANDEL is unique among musicians in the fact that he alone of them has influenced deeply English social life and institutions.

Take any other composer you like to name; take the greatest, Bach or Beethoven, and imagine him wiped out at an early age. Some thousands of musical people in this country, as in every other, would confess their lives to be infinitely poorer for the loss, but it could not honestly be said that the daily life of the people of this country would have been noticeably different during the last 200 years.

Imagine Handel beaten by the "inconstancy and fickleness" of the London public in 1728! Suppose that when his subsidized opera went bankrupt he had thrown up the sponge, had gone back to Germany there to take up a post as Kapellmeister at a small German Court, or like Gluck (who tried his hand at Italian Opera in England) he had betaken himself to Vienna and Paris, and shaken the dust of England forever from his shoes. We know that we should have lost more than this music. We should have lost a part of our life. He would not have written *Messiah*. That means that not only would he not have written the music by which all the world remembers him to-day, but he would not have written the music on which this country has lived ever since.

We should not have had the Cathedral choirs of Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester, enlarging their annual meeting for combined singing into the thing which we now know as the Three Choirs Festival.

We should not have had the industrial workers of the North of

England forming themselves into choirs and singing together as though their lives depended on it.

We should not have had the type of man of whom Sir Henry Coward is an example, who, thrown into a factory at the age of nine, spent every spare moment and every spare penny (the latter were very few) in teaching himself to read and write in order that he might perform and teach others to perform the choruses of Handel.

It may be suggested that we should not have preserved the Crystal Palace or built the Albert Hall, and though superior people may sneer and say that it is a pity we did either, we know that it is these things which have enabled big music to take its place in the framework of our national life.

We can see also that it is due not only to the character of Handel's music, but to his character as a man, that all this has come about.

If he had been what in political circles used to be called a mere "carpet bagger", none of all this would have happened. He would have failed to produce his great works because he would have failed to discover the potentialities for music of the people of this country.

If ever there was a man who possessed the qualities of character which we like to think of as those of "John Bull" it was Handel. He was as tenacious as he was stupid. Defeat simply made him hold on the harder. When his operatic concern went bankrupt he raced off to the Continent—for what? Simply to get together more Italian singers and bring them back to London to start another operatic concern on the same lines. He went on throwing reinforcements into the field without any very clearly laid plan of attack, and when he eventually found a way which could effectively counter the strokes of his opponents he stumbled on it by accident.

When Handel had been here some time he began to realize that there had been music and great music in this country before him. The realization came gradually and it took him about twenty years to discover how to turn it to account.

He went to the newly built St. Paul's Cathedral to play the organ because it was the best in London. He made friends with the members of the cathedral choir and used to repair with them when his organ playing was done to a neighbouring tavern where they made music together all the evening. He got to know the sort of thing they were in the habit of singing daily, the old English cathedral music, the anthems of Purcell. He found that in some ways the choir music of the English Church was like, and in other ways very

unlike the music on which he had been brought up by old Zackow in the Lutheran town of Halle before ever he came in touch with the Italian Opera. Incidentally Handel learnt to talk English. He never talked it well but he talked it fluently.

When he had been here two years it was proposed that he should compose the "Ode of Compliment" required for Queen Anne's Birthday. What was wanted? It was his friends the Cathedral singers and those of the Chapel Royal who could tell him better than anyone, for it was they who sang these odes. No doubt they unearthed for him copies of similar Royal Odes which Purcell, Blow and others had written for such occasions.

There must be solos for the principal men of the choir; not forgetting the male altos (counter tenors) for whom Purcell had written so effectively because he sang alto himself. Handel must have chuckled to himself over our cathedral altos squawking in falsetto, but if that was the sort of thing the English liked, they should have it. As a matter of fact he began his "Ode for Queen Anne's Birthday" with a recitative in which the male alto was invited to do his worst and probably did.

Handel probably did not chuckle over the fulsome doggerel of the *words* which were given him to set, because fulsomeness was the common form of address to Royal personages of whatever country in his day, and also because he did not know enough English to realize what awful doggerel these particular words contained. The verses had a couplet of refrain,

> The day that gave great Anna birth
> And brought a lasting peace on earth,

and Handel cheerfully adopted this refrain for a series of impressive choral numbers after each solo.

Ever since the reign of King Charles II "Odes and welcome songs" had been one of the chief forms of choral composition in England. We have by Purcell, in addition to innumerable "Birthday Odes", the celebration of such uninspiring events as

1. The King's return from Windsor;
2. The Duke of York's return from Scotland;
3. The King's coming from Newmarket.

Occasionally a matter of some public importance was made a theme for an ode, such as the discovery of the Ryehouse Plot, by which the King had been preserved from assassination. Purcell joined

some of his finest music to some of the worst words of minor poets for these occasions, which is one reason why English people to-day have so little knowledge of what their greatest native-born composer wrote.

But the love of ode writing and performance on festive occasions had been extended outside the Court and official circles.

The choral odes on the Festival of St. Cecilia performed annually in the City of London from 1682 onwards are the most interesting. They too varied in musical and poetic quality. But the verses were written by men of talent, from Dryden to Tom D'Urfey; as they were designed solely in praise of the divine art, they were relieved of that quality of personal fulsomeness which defaces the Royal Odes. A large choir and orchestra were brought together and the best performers employed. The last of Purcell's own contributions to them (1692) is a masterpiece, and only its difficulties of *ensemble* prevent it from being frequently heard now.

I would like to say parenthetically that what we want at the present day is a Society of Musicians like the Bach Cantata Club which would go carefully through all the choral works of Purcell, performing them in suitable conditions, which are clearly not those of the ordinary concert room, in order to rediscover the power of Purcell's art as we have rediscovered that of Bach.

Take one short extract from an ode of Purcell which is neither one of the Royal Odes nor one of the St. Cecilia Odes, but was written for a gathering of Yorkshiremen in London in 1689, and is known as "The Yorkshire Feast Song".

The poem was written by D'Urfey in praise of the ancient glories of the City and County of York, and the Yorkshiremen who assembled in the Merchant Taylor's Hall in Threadneedle Street to enjoy a good dinner paid £100 for the musical performance, which at that time represented a very large sum. Purcell was evidently given a free hand, for he wrote for a large orchestra including flutes, oboes and trumpets with the strings, and included parts for six solo voices and a full choir. One number from it is a tenor solo (with obbligato for two flutes) followed by an unaccompanied chorus.

> The bashful Thames for beauty so renowned
> In haste ran by her puny town
> And poor Augusta was ashamed to own.
> Augusta then did drooping lie
> Tho' now she rears her tow'ring front so high.

My reason for carrying you back to the Yorkshire Feast song (apart from the fact that I can never miss an opportunity of letting one of the neglected beauties of Purcell be heard) is to make it quite clear that the choral concert was becoming a popular institution in London in the generation before Handel.

That is why Handel, tenaciously clinging to his Italian Opera through the first twenty years of his life here, seems so amazingly slow to realize in what direction to appeal to the English people at large. He deliberately copied Purcell's manner in some external features of his own Birthday Ode for Queen Anne, but it does not seem to have occurred to him that outside the Court circle, which buzzed round the throne and patronized his Opera House, there was even then a large public waiting to welcome the concerted choral music which he was so well able to give them. He had to learn through meeting with all sorts and conditions of English people what was the kind of music in which they could participate with a full and enthusiastic sympathy.

It is a commonplace to say that in order to know the life of any people one must get beyond its capital city. We learn little of French life by a trip to Paris and our American friends never tire of insisting that New York is not America.

One can well believe that Handel's real experience of England began during that curious episode of his career when James Brydges, first Duke of Chandos, engaged him as the chief musician of his more than princely household and carried him into the country to live on his newly founded estate at Canons, in Hertfordshire. The Chandos family was a reasonably established one, but the Dukedom and the fortune which purchased the estate were new, the result of successful army contracting in the Marlborough wars, and the first Duke was determined to manifest the magnificence in a manner more characteristic of his new honours than of his old family tradition. He built a splendid palace, laid out gardens, employed a whole retinue of retainers and established his private chapel with a full complement of singers. It was there that Handel got his first experience of regular composition to the English language and regular work with a choir of English singers. For the chapel he wrote the famous series of "Chandos Anthems", but his busy theatrical mind would not confine itself to Church music. He wrote at least two English "Masques" for performance in the Duke's private theatre, though, strange to say, no precise details of when or how they were performed have come down to us. However, we

have the scores. One was *Acis and Galatea*, the other was *Esther*, not conceived as a Biblical oratorio, but written to words adapted from the French of Racine's drama and intended to be acted and sung. In the comparative seclusion of Canons, in fact, Handel was experimenting in English opera. Perhaps he came to the conclusion that it was not a success; certainly his rather heavy-handed dealing with English words and his lack of understanding of how to make them "run" in music, justifies that conclusion. The general method is still the Italian one of recitative and aria, with, however, the important source of contrast offered by the dramatic chorus representing crowds of oppressed Israelites, persecuting Persians and other similar accessories to the stories of the principal characters.

When we get a bit of bald recitative to the words:

> Our souls with ardour glow
> To execute the blow

interpolated between Haman's savage aria, "Pluck root and branch," and a chorus of soldiery preparing to begin their ruthless task, we realize that the conventions of the Italian stage were still holding Handel firmly in their grip.

But what he did find at Canons was that the English voices could be used very effectively in massive choruses of a kind for which the Italian Operatic stage offered no opportunity. He found that choral music, whether sacred or secular, was a thing which not only English singers could do well, but English audiences enjoyed. He may have found, though of this there is no direct evidence, that the *Biblical story* of *Esther* made an appeal to the members of the Duke's household, for at that date the one literature which the average Englishman could be relied on to know was the Bible.

The outstanding fact is that at Canons Handel composed dramatic entertainments in English and that one of them, *Esther*, became many years later the first of his publicly performed oratorios.

What made Handel turn ultimately from Italian Opera to English oratorio? Many of his admiring biographers have treated the change as though it were a sort of religious conversion. Sermons have been preached on how Handel turned from the vanities of the theatre to the contemplation of divine mysteries through "sacred" music, and historians of a pietistic turn of mind have written as though:

> Consideration like an angel came
> And whipp'd the offending Adam out of him!

The gradualness of the change, and the fact that Handel went on writing Italian Operas as long as he could keep a company together to perform them, disposes at once of that kind of argument.

Handel's religion was that of the average man of his time, perhaps of the average man of any time. He dealt squarely and he fought fairly. (It is worth mention that he paid his debts in full after each of his two bankruptcies.) He had a rough but sturdy moral sense, and a general conviction that his own sense of right and wrong came from a higher power than himself. If questioned he would probably have replied like the yokel who heard a sermon on the higher criticism of the Gospels, "Somehow I think there be a God after all." He had the average man's conviction that the form of religion in which he had been brought up (in his case Lutheran protestantism) was a better form than that of other people. We know that when he was sent the official text on which he was to compose the Anthems for the Coronation of George II he took it as a personal insult, declared that he had read his Bible very well and should choose for himself. He also gave proof of having read his Bible on another occasion when he flew into a temper and declared to a recalcitrant singer, "Madam they tell me that you are a devil, but you will find that I am Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils".

Certainly he was no pietist and it is doubtful if he ever looked on his oratorios as "sacred" music at all in the sense of being devotional exercises. In *Semele, Alexander's Feast* and *Hercules* he made repeated efforts to extend the scope of his oratorio subjects outside what could be conceivably regarded as "sacred" history. It was rather an inspired opportunism which made him provide oratorios as a public entertainment. It began with a private performance of *Esther* given by the choir boys of the Chapel Royal in 1732 as a birthday compliment to Handel. Dr. Burney, who in after life knew some of the choir boys who had taken part in it, says that it was "*represented in action*", that is to say as a Masque according to Handel's first intention.

The next thing we know is an announcement of it in concert form to be given at York Buildings, an undertaking with which Handel had nothing to do. In other words *Esther* was being pirated, and, as the law of the day gave the composer no protection, the only thing he could do was to announce a performance of his own.

There is one consolation to the artist whose work is pirated. It means that people want it. Handel was shrewd enough to realize that, and enough of an impresario to act quickly. On the day

before the piratical performance the *Daily Journal* came out with the following lengthy advertisement:

> By His Majesty's Command at the Kings Theatre in the Haymarket, on Tuesday the 2nd day of May will be performed the sacred story of *Esther*, an oratorio in English, formerly composed by Mr. Handel and now revived by him with several additions and now to be performed by a great number of voices and instruments.
>
> N.B. There will be no acting on the stage, but the house will be fitted up in a decent manner for the audience. The Musick to be disposed after the manner of the Coronation Service. Tickets to be delivered at the usual prices.

We note in this (1) Handel's instant securance of Royal Patronage, (2) his additions, which would give him a superiority over the pirated edition, (3) and the popular attraction offered by great numbers of instruments and voices.

Moreover, the N.B. explains the conditions. The public was then unused to the arrangements of oratorio so they were told that the performers would be grouped as at the Coronation Service, that is in rising tiers. There had also been some hint of ecclesiastical objection to acting a Biblical drama and the assurance that this would not be done was given.

Thus Handel's oratorio got started. It proved a success so it went on. Moreover, shortly after this his Opera House was faced with a new rival "The Opera of the Nobility" which Frederick Prince of Wales patronized chiefly to annoy his Royal Father who had always patronized Handel. The rivals had a strong company and had brought a famous Italian composer, Nicolo Porpora, to England to compose for them. He might write arias which were just as pleasing to the "fickle and inconstant" aristocracy as Handel's, but there was no fear of the rival following Handel onto his own ground of oratorio in English, ground which he had secured for himself by becoming himself Englished.

Here he entrenched himself, and as the years passed he ransacked the Old Testament for stirring tales of Jewish heroes which appealed to his Bible-loving audience, and offered the right material for his dramatic genius to transmute into music.

Unfortunately for us, he never learnt the simple fact that the Bible is not only great drama but great literature. He risked the per-

manence of nine-tenths of his Old Testament oratorios by setting his music not to the language of the Bible but to some nerveless and flaccid verse put together by a hack "librettist".

Imagine him with the lament of David for Saul and Jonathan before him, to which the famous Dead March is a prelude, and instead of "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; how are the mighty fallen", setting

> Mourn Israel thy beauty lost
> Thy choicest youth on Gilboa slain,
> How have thy fairest hopes been crossed
> What heaps of mighty warriors strew the plain.

No doubt it was all the same to Handel. All he wanted from a libretto was the general idea to vitalize his own musical imagination. But it is not all the same to us. Over and over again in the midst of his finest musical inspirations (and this third part of *Saul* is one of the finest things he ever wrote) we have to wince under the hopeless banality of the words, and when we think of the original words lying there waiting for him if only he would take them, the loss seems one to make angels weep.

We cannot be thankful enough that the egregious Charles Jennens by some lucky stroke (or was it the direct intervention of Providence?) made up the book for *Messiah* out of the Biblical text itself. Imagine if he had written it all in his own verse of the quality of *Saul* or had even put it together from mangled fragments of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, what an intolerable hotchpotch it would have been.

Messiah and *Israel in Egypt* have been able to retain their places in public esteem, because they are unhampered by stilted or ridiculous librettist's English. He also escaped from the toils when he set two poems of Dryden, the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* and *Alexander's Feast*, both of them originally intended for that festival which Purcell had adorned with his music. Dryden could at least provide a composer with lines of a dignified sonority, and though Handel sometimes misused them in order to gain a purely musical effect, on the whole they chimed well with his broad-paced melody and massive harmony.

Here let us make one direct comparison between him and Purcell afforded by the coincidence that they both set very similar lines by Dryden.

Dryden's *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687) which Handel set half a century later, contains the lines

> The trumpets loud clangour
> Excites us to arms
> With shrill notes of anger
> And mortal alarms.
> The double double double beat
> Of the thundering drum
> Cries "Hark the foes come;
> Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat."

Three years later when Dryden wanted a battle song for Purcell to set in *King Arthur* he plagiarized himself with the words:

> "Come if you dare!" our trumpets sound,
> "Come if you dare!" the foes rebound,
> "We come, we come, we come, we come,"
> Says the double double double beat of the thund'ring drum.

Handel has taken several wrinkles out of Purcell's setting. His very tune is an echo of Purcell's; but his is a trumpet tune, whereas Purcell's is a vocal one springing out of the lilt of the battle cry. Purcell's gets the whole of its energy from the verbal accent. Handel copies him in "the double double double beat" but indulges in a wilful misaccentuation for "*the* thund'ring drum". Purcell, writing part of an actual stage battle scene, makes the officer lead the charge followed stanza for stanza by the chorus. Handel, writing for the concert room, makes the solo precede the chorus for the sake of piling up a purely musical climax. He emphasizes just the words which ought to have least emphasis, those about it being too late to retreat, oblivious of the misconception their repetition may arouse.

It is generally realized now that Oratorio justifies itself best when its stories are treated in the epic manner rather than the dramatic. Handel undoubtedly felt this too and his greatest achievements in oratorio were epic. The very first work which he wrote as an oratorio (that is intending a purely concert performance) was *Deborah* and it was inspired by the magnificent song in which the prophetess sang the triumphs of the Lord's people over their enemies. This theme is constantly the ruling one in his greatest

oratorios. Let it be remembered that in the middle of the eighteenth century the British people regarded themselves very much as the Lord's people, and were ready to appropriate the Judaic triumphs to their own case.

> The Nations not so blest as thee
> Must in their turn to tyrants fall.

Handel wrote in the period when "Rule Britannia" was becoming a national symbol, and his own *Judas Maccabaeus* was written to celebrate the final victory of the Protestant succession over the legitimist Prince whom history has agreed to call the "Young Pretender". The epics of Judaism had a reality for his audiences which they have lost for us.

But Handel's own outlook was also indissoluably bound up with the theatre. He saw every scene which his music described in a great theatrical pageant. Sometimes that led him to forget that what may be possible in the theatre becomes either absurd or tedious in the concert room.

The love scenes between David and Micah in *Saul*, the attempts of the two elders to seduce Susannah, and the Judgement of Solomon between the two women over the dead baby are to us frankly impossible, and make the modern performance of Handel's oratorios impracticable. Handel viewed them as theatrical scenes, and felt no misgivings about them. At worst, they were similar to the sort of thing which was accepted on the stage of his opera house. At best, the dramatic scenes of his oratorios far surpass anything which the operatic stage could accomplish. In *Belshazzar* for example his theatrical sense runs riot. He creates what may be called choral scenery just as he does with the plague choruses of *Israel in Egypt*.

In Part II of *Belshazzar*, he shows in this way the troops of Cyrus streaming across the plains, finding the river Euphrates, stealthily approaching the defenceless city. Then the scene changes to the banqueting hall of Belshazzar where the infidel King "made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand". When the revels are at their height and the King is wantonly insulting the name of Jehovah, his gaze is suddenly arrested by the mysterious writing on the wall. He gives an exclamation of horror. The Court is thrown into confusion. Cries of "Help the King; he

faints" come brokenly from every side. Then the courtiers see the writing and become awe-struck and terrified at the sight. At last, the King recovers himself sufficiently to summon his soothsayers and astrologers to explain the portent. As Handel saw it was pure drama. He seems to have forgotten that it is not actually presented to the eyes, for he offers no explanation of the staccato figure scratched out on the violins which represents the writing on the wall.

We begin with the drinking song of Belshazzar which follows on a general chorus of the revels, and I should add that after the recitative, in which the soothsayers are summoned, there is a bustling instrumental movement with a "posthorn" motif, in which Handel intends us to see the messengers scurrying along the highways and byeways to deliver the King's message. If I were Mr. C. B. Cochran I would give *Belshazzar* in the Albert Hall with a vast choir and orchestra and the scenes of Handel's imagination shown on a film.

Epilogue

I promised you a moral for our own day from these considerations of London's music 200 years ago. I hope that you have found one for yourselves. I hardly know which to choose.

(1) I might suggest that we need another Handel to requicken our imagination as Handel requickened that of the eighteenth century.
(2) I might end with a solemn warning against that "inconstancy and fickleness", of which Arbuthnot complained,
(3) or put in a final word against that persistent prejudice in favour of the foreigner which has persisted since the days of Henry Lawes in the Londoner's view on music.

None of these, however, quite meets the case. I think the history of those "turning times" from Charles II to George II brings out clearly that, underneath the fashions and the frenzies, the taste of the average amateur of the arts was governed by what may be called a certain "horse sense", an instinct of what was good for himself. What often seemed like fickleness on the surface was really the result of a queer kind of constancy to instincts which remained undefined by any process of intellectual analysis.

(1) There was for example that instinct that a song is a song and a

speech is a speech, which Locke recognized when he allowed his author to mix "interlocutions" with the music of his "Opera"

That instinct certainly worked hardly for the artists.

It prevented Purcell from writing the Operas which his genius undoubtedly prompted him to write. It went far to account for the success of *The Beggar's Opera* which brought Handel's first great venture to ruin. You will remember that the Beggar says in his prologue, "I hope I may be forgiven, that I have not made my Opera throughout unnatural like those in vogue, for I have no recitative." But, even if it destroyed Purcell and nearly drove away Handel, the average Londoner remained unmoved. He stuck to his instinct. So comic opera, that in which the play and the music remained separate entities, flourished till it reached its apotheosis in Gilbert and Sullivan, while serious or "Grand" opera remained an exotic.

(2) With this went the feeling that in some way or other music is inclined to lose its dignity when it is mixed up with the stage, and that its dignity is very important to its ideal existence. Hence came the enormous vogue of Handel's oratorios, being a sort of unstaged music-drama. In subsequent generations, foreign visitors were almost forced to turn to the writing of oratorios; Haydn, Mendelssohn, Dvořák are salient examples, and English composers from the least to the greatest made the production of oratorios their highest aim.

This has been put down to Handel's influence. I hope I have shown you that it was no such thing, but the influence of English instincts working blindly on Handel, and leading him to produce the form that would satisfy them.

It has had ridiculous results as well as splendid ones. It has produced travesties of art and some masterpieces.

(3) A third instinct is that big music must be rather *an occasional event* than an every-day experience. That has brought it about that we have refused to establish regular institutions for music as continental nations have done with their state-aided opera houses and orchestras. It has wrought havoc among professional musicians who are always living from hand to mouth in this country.

Are these instincts right or wrong? If wrong have we any hope of altering what is clearly so deeply rooted and so little thought out?

To these questions I attempt no answer. I only suggest that they must be taken into account by any one who would solve another

and a larger question, that most constantly asked in every tone of voice from one of scornful incredulity to one of earnest enthusiasm.

Are the English a musical nation? My answer to that is "Yes, but——"

Purcell Restored

(14 February 1931)

"THAT a few private Persons should venture on so expensive a Work as an Opera, when none but Princes or States exhibit 'em abroad, I hope is no Dishonour to our Nation. . . . If this happens to please, we cannot reasonably propose to ourselves any great advantage, considering the mighty charge in setting it out, and the extraordinary expense that attends it every day 'tis represented. If it deserves their Favour? if they are satisfied we venture boldly, doing all we can to please 'em? We hope the English are too generous not to encourage so great an undertaking."

Thus the promoters of "*The Fairie Queen*: An Opera, represented at the Queen's Theatre by Their Majesties' Servants" in 1692, and the University of Cambridge, mending the grammar, might well use the same words of their revival, with one difference. The "few private persons" who do these things now propose no advantage of a commercial kind for themselves. We who enjoy their effort know that no State-aided venture would give us anything like this; indeed no professional opera company, dominated as all are by the traditions of later ages and foreign manners, could be expected to get at the heart of the matter as these students of the seventeenth-century English opera have done. Purcell despaired of "ever having as good voices among us as they have in Italy". He wrote in a style which depended little on vocal power.

The Italian voices invaded this country in the years following his early death to make impossible once and for all such song as he could give, and the debased Italian style, which opera singers of all countries are forced to emulate to-day, can make neither head nor tail of his music. It demands not tone but style, not vocalization but intelligence. Wrongly treated its elaborate phraseology may become banal, or, worst of all, quaint; when the purpose of every phrase, every contrast of rhythm, and every subtlety of tone-colour in the combination of single voices, choir, and instruments is realized it becomes exquisitely decorative. As Mr. Dennis Arundell says in the introduction to the 1931 version, "Purcell's music takes the place of Shakespeare's descriptive poetry".

The Fairie Queen is in Purcell's short career what *The Magic Flute* is in Mozart's. Both are prophetic, and neither composer was able to fulfil the prophecy. Both turned a trivial entertainment into a work of art. Both put more into their music than the occasion seemed to warrant, and both had to leave it to succeeding generations to find out what was put there. Their difference was in their successors, for Mozart pointed forward to the German romantic opera of Weber and Wagner; Purcell only to that vacuity which is the history of opera in England. His country failed him not so much from lack of generosity as from sheer stupidity.

In the short appreciation of the Cambridge production published after a late first night we spoke of the Masque of the Four Seasons as musically the most impressive thing in the opera, and almost as soon as the words had been written the writer was tempted to retract the phrase. That masque, the heir of a century of "courtly masquing airs", is undoubtedly the most brilliantly effective *ensemble*, so much so that one feels that Purcell risked anti-climax in designing it for the end of the fourth, rather than of the fifth, act. But the librettist, the stage producer, and the composer together designed a still greater finale only partially successful in a masque not of symbols but of ideas. They would transport us to a new world, quite unlike anything we have in England, the original stage direction declared, and that their fancy might have free play they called it Chinese, blandly unaware that they had chosen to represent the primitive world by its most ancient and sophisticated civilization.

Thus, thus the gloomy world
  At first began to shine,
  And from the power divine
A glory round it hurl'd
  Which made it bright,
  And gave it birth in light.

Purcell seized the opportunity not only for one of his most highly developed songs to these words, but a whole series of musical events culminating in the clamorous call to Hymen. Marred though the scene is by the grotesque dance of monkeys and other details, the dialogue between the Chinese Man and Woman expatiating on the beauty of a pure love stirs Purcell to an increasing warmth of expression. He is, as it were, peering over the barrier set up by the

conventions of the stage of his time, on tiptoe to join his music not to these cold type figures but to the feelings of real lovers with beating hearts like those of his own *Dido and Aeneas*. If only he had been allowed to write the music for Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius, English opera might have lived. The skilful stage-craft at Cambridge placed this scene behind a dark curtain with a large circular hole cut in it so that one sees it as though through the lens of a telescope. The device gives a vista to the eye which helps to focus the vision of Purcell's music here. Indeed, the whole production aims at bringing into focus all the heterogeneous elements of which *The Fairie Queen* is compounded, and it is in accomplishing this that the "few private persons" are to be congratulated on the success of "so great an undertaking".

Lully and Purcell

(12 April 1941)

TWO men were browsing in a musician's library. The elder man picked up a score of an opera by Lully and said: "I always want to find out why Lully seems to be so completely dead and Purcell so entrancingly alive." "Probably it is because Purcell is English," replied the younger promptly. "No, I don't think so; as I grow older I put less and less faith in nationalism as it concerns music, and more and more faith in Purcell as he concerns me," was the response of the elder.

Next day he picked up Miss Dorothy Sayers's war pamphlet, *The Mysterious English*, and found it giving him his answer, an answer which justified the younger man's reply, though not in the trite form in which it had failed to satisfy him. That English propensity for collecting oddments which is part of the clue to the mystery at once put him in mind of Purcell's quasi-opera *The Fairie Queen*, with its strange incursion of a duet for a Chinese man and a Chinese woman on a scene "quite different to what we have in this part of the world", as the stage direction has it. When the Chinese have uttered unexceptionable sentiments to quite un-Chinese music, "six monkeys come from behind the trees and dance".

Miss Sayers more than explains all this; she shows without intending anything of the sort why English opera was the strange medley that the Restoration artists made of it, and why Purcell was at one moment copying the style of Lully and at another lauding "the fam'd Italian masters" to the skies and denouncing the "levity" of the French.

Levity, indeed! Look at the score of Lully's *Alceste* and then accuse an audience, which could endure its Prologue and five acts, of levity. Was ever a work more stately in movement, more classical in contour, more sumptuous in design, placed before a polite audience and called entertainment? Consider the battle scene and compare it with that in Purcell's *King Arthur*. The attacking force moves forward with bands playing and drums beating, the leaders on both sides rally their troops with words of encouragement to which the rival choruses respond in stalwart measures.

Battle is given, the citadel stormed; all is done in the best manner of a stage combat. Dryden and Purcell knew that a battle is better imagined than depicted. It is "supposed to be given behind the scenes, with drums, trumpets, and military sounds and excursions", after which a tenor voice leads the chorus in "Come if you dare", a blood-stirring song, if ever there was one. But Lully would have objected that this is not an opera at all. It is a short cut to a scene of victory, burking all the difficulties of stage presentation in order to get swiftly to the climax. No doubt, says the English composer—but who cares about operatic propriety—the point is that the battle must be won, and it is won.

> Then return to our lasses like fortunate traders,
> Triumphant with spoils of the vanquished invaders.

The emotion behind the appearances is always what grips Purcell and what makes him grip us. He will take any means which comes to hand, searching modern harmonies, an irregular rhythm suddenly interjected, or a scrap of counterpoint from his Elizabethan predecessors. Lully would have found these devices incongruous, disturbing. Compare again the statuesque lament of Alceste with the simple pathos of "With drooping wings" in *Dido*. And there is an early Pastorale by Lully in which three magicians gloat over the prospect of youth dying untimely, which may be contrasted with the horrid laughter of Purcell's witches in the same opera.

In short, Purcell, as Miss Sayers declares of her Englishman, "picks up useful tips for himself . . . without caring whether they look appropriate, or consistent, so long as he can make them work". They work splendidly for him.

That Pick-Pocket Opera

(17 November 1922)

A BOOK of a hundred years ago, with some rare entertainment in it, has come into my hands. When a man, writing about 1820, confesses to being over eighty years of age, and says: "A journal which I have occasionally kept has helped the power of reminiscence, so that past images by its aid, like the new mode of perpetuating impressions by the steel cylinder in this stupendous age of invention, are never worn out, but the rather are ever being renewed." Well! we skip all that and dip greedily for tit-bits.

Ephraim Hardcastle was the son of a weaver of Spital Fields. He was brought up in the workshop, a place of "plastered walls, grotesque implements, nooks crowded with hour glasses, obsolete tobacco-pipes, crazy lanterns, broken pitchers, and all the *arcana* for graphic imitation that give character to pictures of humble life."

Hogarth was in and out of the place constantly. He drew a caricature on the plastered wall of one of the apprentices and labelled it "Filch". The apprentice retorted with one of Hogarth and his dog and labelled it "The two pugs", which so delighted Hogarth that he destroyed his own. The apprentice must have been a smart fellow.

These weavers, journeymen and apprentices, are a fascinating society, but only one of them, an old Frenchman nicknamed "Father Luke", justifies me in devoting a "music article" to their remembrance. He was a universal genius, a notable scene-painter who sometimes lent a hand in the theatre of Lincoln's Inn Fields, a maker of puppets for street shows, and a player on the oboe. He used to take part in the now celebrated concerts of Thomas Britton, "the musical small-coal man".

But what brings him nearer to us than all is that he had a grandson, "the comeliest young man in the parish", who took to evil courses and had to be hurried off to the East Indies to escape the severity of the law. "Father Luke" was heartbroken and exclaimed, "Ah! my poor boy, is was Mistaire Captain *Macheafe* vot make ze ruin of you, mine unhappy child!" So there we have it. What the

penny novelettes were to the nineteenth century and the "pictures" are sometimes said to be to the twentieth, Captain Macheath our idol of Hammersmith, once was to the eighteenth.

I might leave the moral to work what way it will, had not our chronicler carried it further. The matter caused a stir. A meeting of journeymen weavers was held at the Old King's Head, at which "Father Luke" addressed the youngsters vigorously on the evils of *The Beggar's Opera*, and the meeting, with what "Father Luke" said and what command of English the old man had, was the subject of an after-dinner talk twenty-five years later! Hardcastle introduced the talk casually: "It was well said of mine compatriot Mastare Luke," said Roubilliac, one evening at my great-uncle Zachary's, over a bowl of punch; "Poor old Luke, he speak varee well, mais he is like mineself—a little too moche of se pepper-box, Mistare Hardcastle's. I vonce know his family in France, he is all varee good people."

"Well! What did he say?" said Mister Henry Fielding.

This is an intriguing company, and when Fielding begins to chaff the scûlptor with "How is it, friend *Ru*, that you have picked up our tongue so nicely, hey?" and kicks Garrick under the table to make him join in the fun, and, further, when a great "boo-boo" of laughter proclaims Handel to be one of the company, we realize that great-uncle Zachary knew the sort of party to bring together over a bowl of punch. The talk rolls along with Roubilliac's French-English and Handel's German-English through a dozen pages or more.

Did our chronicler hear it? If he did he was a small boy of ten at the time and had no business to be so near the punch-bowl. If he did not, well, great-uncle Zachary told him later, and the dialogue, reported as though "the stupendous age of invention" had provided him with a dictaphone, may still be worth something. It has, at any rate, a better chance of veracity than Johnson's Parliamentary debates had. Handel brought the talk back to *The Beggar's Opera* with: "Vot tid your gomical old veever say ubon the subject of the Peggar's Obera? I am eager for to learn. O! vot a bick-bocket drama it vos!"

It had picked Handel's pocket, anyway, and off started Roubilliac into an account of how the old weaver castigated Mr. Pope and Mr. Dean Swift for the countenance they gave to its rascality. This was meat and drink to Handel.

He poured forth questions. Is it true, he asked (I spare the tran-

scription of all his misplaced p's and b's) that the apprentices were forbidden to go to the abominable Newgate Opera, and that they were forbidden to sing the songs. Both Roubilliac and Zachary assented.

"Then I will wager mine life," he went on, "dat evry veever man andt poy, by goles, all at once tune their melodious bibes and vas singing in obbosition, morning, noon and night . . . Ha! Ha! Ha! Haugh! Vos I nod right—hey! misder Fielding?" said Handel, "I del you, mine cood sir, the more you gommand misder John Pull to hold his tongue py de Lordt, the more wide misder Pull vill oben his moud."

They were hammer-and-tongs at it now, and when Roubilliac had nearly taken offence at a jest of Handel against the French, and when Handel had feelingly extolled the morality of his own opera, the poetry of Metastasio and Tasso, the recitative amidst "the delight of fine music", when he had said what he thought of the Duchess of Queensbury, and of Miss Fenton, now also a Duchess, and a pretty pair they made, it was time for Fielding to take a hand.

"I do not wonder at your feeling rather sore upon the subject," said Fielding, rather maliciously, "but upon my conscience Mister Handel, with deference, I do not see the mighty mischief of these lively songs of my old friend Johnny Gay."

"O! your most homple servant, Sir," replied the great composer. "Den I am concerned for your want of daste. Vot! shall you be gontent to hear your taughder blay ubon her harbsichordt and accombany mid her innocend voice such paldertash as—

"Oh bonder vell, pe nod severe;
To save a wretchedt wive!
For on the rope dat hangs mine tdear
Tepends boor Bolly's life."

And so the outburst went on, while Fielding quietly lit another pipe and remarked at the end, "Well, I discover no mighty mischief there. My girls might sing it with all my heart."

This was too much, and with a final sally to the effect that if he had a son, "vot Heaven has not granted", and if Mr. Fielding's daughters were more beautiful than the three Graces, that son should never lead one of them to the altar, the great composer took his hat and cane and made his bow. And so he leaves the room and these pages together. But what a night to have imagined! And our author may really have been present.

Parry as Song-Writer

(1921)

I

TWO sets of songs by the late Sir Hubert Parry, published by Messrs. Novello, brought his sets of *English Lyrics* up to twelve volumes, and placed before the public all that it is thought desirable to publish of the songs the composer left in manuscript.

Parry was among the least methodical of composers in the classification of his works. He abandoned opus numbers at the stage at which they become useful—that is, when they had reached the early twenties—and since then the date of the copyright or the occasion for which a work was written has been the chief means of determining the order of his compositions. But, in the case of songs for a single voice with pianoforte accompaniment, Parry fell into a convenient habit of publishing in sets periodically in a uniform edition, and hence it comes that in the twelve books of *English Lyrics* we have a *corpus* of his work in this genre from which it should be possible now to form a fair estimate of his character as a song-writer.

The first set of *English Lyrics* appeared in 1886 (published by Stanley Lucas, afterwards acquired by Novello), and was followed by a second set in 1887. This last was also the year of *Blest Pair of Sirens*, the choral work which more than any other established Parry in public esteem, and marked him as a composer who had passed the stage of youthful experiment, had formed his own ideals, chosen his own means of expression, making certain acceptances and certain refusals in technique, from which in point of fact he never after departed seriously.

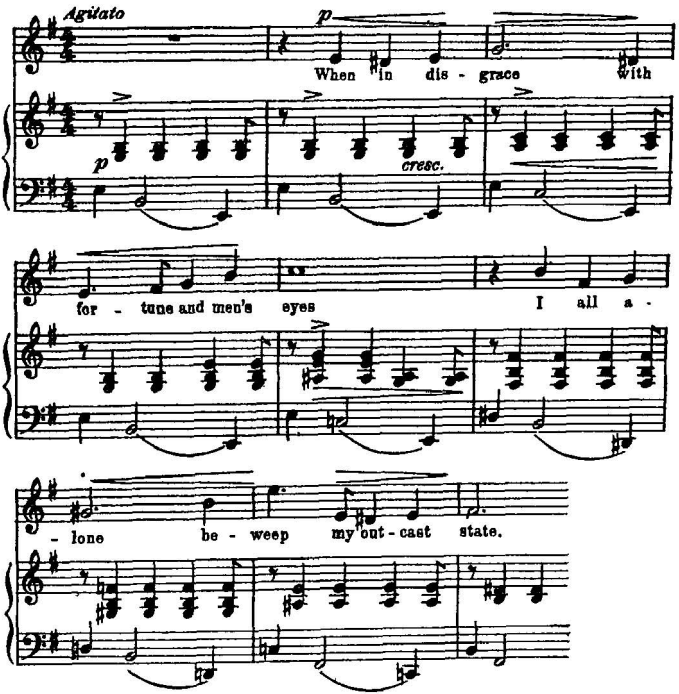
He was then in his fortieth year; a comprehensive list of compositions already stood to his credit. It included two symphonies, a pianoforte concerto, a variety of concerted chamber works, and such memorable choral works as the Scenes from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and Shirley's Ode, *The Glories of our Blood*

and State. Among these are various song publications, one of the most interesting being the three *Odes from Anacreon* (Moore's version), which enlivened appropriately the wine parties of Oxford undergraduates in the 'eighties. Big, bold, baritone songs, with a touch of the devil in them, much of the jollity of life, and some of the sentiment which youth feels about old age, they are entirely honest, happy, and clean. "A garland of Shakespearean and other old-fashioned lyrics" was published by Lambourn Cock as Op. 21. It contains some things, such as "A Sea Dirge"', which ought to be available now. Indeed it would be well worth while to go through the desultory publications before the *English Lyrics* began to appear, and make a little supplement drawn from the best of the early songs which have gone out of print.

It is to be noticed that one quite early song, "O world! O life! O time!" written very many years ago, appears in the twelfth set now before us and it is among the most beautiful of the series. But, before the appearance of the first set of *English Lyrics*, Parry's song-writing was merely an off-shoot among more absorbing activities. The years 1886-87 saw not only the appearance of the first two sets of *English Lyrics*, the first with words chosen from Philip Sidney, Shelley, Scott, and Shakespeare, the second containing five songs, all by Shakespeare; but there was also published (Stanley Lucas) a set of four Sonnets by Shakespeare which are by far the most important of Parry's works for single voice and pianoforte outside the collection by which he is now mainly represented These Sonnets are: "When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes" (xxix.), "Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing" (lxxxvii.), "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day" (xviii.), and "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought" (xxx.). They mark even more decisively than the two books of *English Lyrics* the starting-point of Parry's maturity as a song-writer. They show him handling with easy mastery the most baffling of poetic forms, never tempted to distort it for the sake of musical elaboration, never failing to find the point of a line in a supple vocal phrase or an apt comment in the harmonic expression, yet always securing a balanced musical design to match the formal characteristics of the verse.

As these Sonnets are so little known, a quotation may illustrate this point here. The passage given as Ex. 1 is the opening of Sonnet No. xxix.:

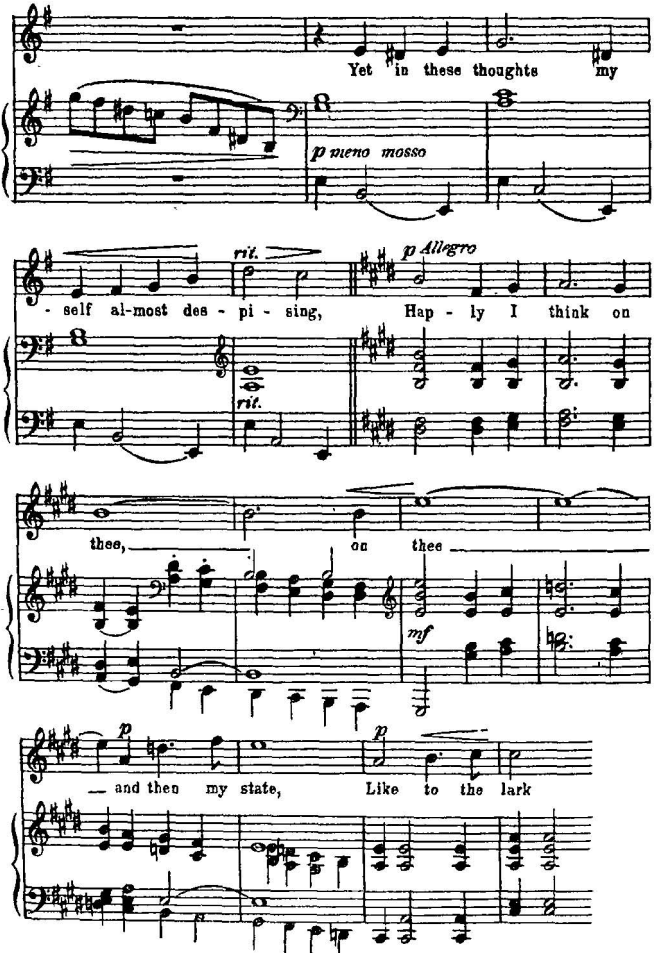
Ex.1.



Its restraint and directness combined appeal at once to all who love the flavour of Shakespeare's lines. It is good reading vocalized. Indeed, one of the best tributes to Parry's genius in this respect was offered by a man of letters who once journeyed from London to Lancashire to hear *L'Allegro*, because, he said, "Parry is the only composer who, without annoying one, can set music to the things one has always loved."

The melody sweeps forward through two quatrains, the restless syncopation always heightening the disquiet of the mood until the crisis of the third quatrain, where it is resolved in the following:

Ex. 2.



It is quite impossible to analyse the extraordinary sense of satisfaction which this passage gives. The material is of the simplest description, the change from the minor to the major mode and from syncopations to plain chords, the repetitions of the phrase

"On thee" (Parry rarely allows himself any repetition of words), are all the commonplaces of musical device. But the absolute rightness of the thing is magical. Those who do not feel the magic need scarcely trouble to pursue the study of Parry's songs further. They will not find anything, whether in his early or late examples, which is likely to interest them deeply. But those who do feel it will be encouraged to the study by the knowledge that, working through a large number of songs, not all of which are masterpieces, and many of which contain obvious defects of manner—especially in their instrumental writing—there is the prospect of discovering innumerable moments of eloquence, the art of which is entirely independent of artifice.

It is Parry's power of adding just so much music as can absorb the words, so that the song becomes a saturated solution of poetry in music, which produces his triumphs, and he was at first most sure of finding the right solvent when he took up the poets of the Elizabethan era rather than those of modern times. Of the thirteen songs which form the 1886–87 group, ten are by Shakespeare, and five of them are Sonnets, for besides the four published together, there is Sonnet lxxi, in the second book of Lyrics. It might be said of him that the fewer the notes the finer is the music, and he felt little temptation to multiply notes when his thought was in contact with the precise, verbal expression of the earlier poets.

The later sets of Lyrics (III to X) came out mostly in pairs. Books III and IV (1895-96) are contrasted by the choice of authors. In the former Lovelace, Beddoes, and Suckling prevail, though Sturgis's "Through the Ivory Gate", perhaps the best-known of the larger songs through performances at recitals, is also found here. Emerson, Byron, Keats are prominent in Book IV, though he harks back to the Elizabethans with an exquisite setting of "Weep you no more, sad fountains".

Several of the songs which have been brought nearest to popularity are contained in the two Books, V and VI, which belong to the years 1902-03. "Proud Maisie" is most constantly chosen to represent Parry by singers who plume themselves on their "British programmes", and beside it in Book V is "Crabbed Age and Youth", in which the pitfall of a trite rhythm offered by the short lines is wonderfully evaded; the Coda is a masterpiece of prolongation only paralleled by Purcell's "Knotting Song".

In Book VI is the bustling "Love is a bable", followed by "A Lover's Garland", the words of which "from the Greek by A. P.

Graves", seem to have travelled via Ireland and have brought a rare Irish fragrance to the melody. Perhaps this is why Mr. Plunket Greene was able to make this lovely song so peculiarly his own, so that it has overshadowed the statuesque English melody given to "And yet I love her till I die" in the same volume.

Books VII and VIII were published together in 1907, and show a very distinct change of character from that of their predecessors. Book VII consists indeed mainly of old lyrics, but Book VIII abandons the old for the new. Even in setting Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, Parry seems less completely at his ease than formerly. Certain restless figures in the instrumental part obtrude into the setting of Sonnet cix.

The recurrence of the little nervous *arpeggio* in the lower part never quite explains itself in relation to those words which it seems intended to underline. Again, "Follow a Shadow" depends on the balance of vocal declamation with a pictorial instrumental figure which is exceedingly difficult of adjustment in performance.

These signs of experiment, though they lie on the surface, are symptoms of a deeper change of outlook. Parry seems to be seeking to make the song a more personal type of expression than it had formerly been to him, and the beautiful "Sleep" which ends the volume, with its long-drawn vocal phrases and its intimate rocking accompaniment, seems particularly the outcome of this change.

It is not surprising that the next volume (VIII) should consist entirely of modern lyrics, three of which are by Julian Sturgis, author of "Sleep" and of "Through the Ivory Gate", and to whose words Parry became increasingly partial. Sturgis often gave him the things he wanted to talk about, and that became more essential to Parry than the pure beauty of rhythmic language which had first attracted him to the Elizabethans. "Whence?" a poem in praise of "the prophet of days to be", appealed direct to that political idealism which he was never weary of expressing in the greater choral works of the period, ranging from *Voces Clamantium* (Hereford, 1903) to *The Vision of Life*, produced at Cardiff in the year that these songs were published. He set the words with enthusiasm, launching impetuously into that angular phraseology which has become too familiar as one of his minor characteristics.

There is something amiss with the turbulent interjections in the instrumental part, which here seem to belong more to the orchestra than to the pianoforte, and, when he writes them for the orchestra,

again seem to belong to something else, and yet the thing is splendid; it carries a thrill with it, culminating in the gorgeous cadence of the last line.

The songs in this volume are very varied. "Whence?" is followed by the icy chill of Langdon Elwyn Mitchell's "Nightfall in Winter", and this with George Meredith's "Dirge in Woods" makes a rare and singularly successful excursion into the purely descriptive type of song. "Grapes", at the end of the volume, recalls something of the mood of the youthful *Odes from Anacreon*.

Book VIII, in fact, marks a new epoch in his style, which is further illustrated by the contents of the later books. The ninth, published two years later (1909), stands apart from the others by the fact that it is devoted to the poems of one auther, and that a personal friend, Miss Mary Coleridge, who had died recently, and whose thoughtful little poems with their touch of mysticism and their charm of imagery gave Parry congenial material. "A Fairy Town", "The Witches' Wood", "Armida's Garden", hint at allegories which are made plain in the last of the series, "There". The set is the nearest thing to a song-cycle that Parry ever wrote, and they should be sung together if a singer could be found with the qualities of voice and brain to do justice to each number. They are by no means all equally successful, which is one reason for suggesting that they should be sung in sequence. One can hardly suppose, for example, that anyone would pick out "Three Aspects" as a song to be sung purely for its own sake, yet it has force as an introduction to those which follow it. It is an instance of an unfortunate tendency of technique in Parry's songs of this period, the tendency to overcrowd the instrumental part with fussy figures which are not genuinely expressive.

Another and happier characteristic of these songs is an aspiration after a freer scheme of tonality than that which had contented him formerly. This aspiration, already evidenced in the ending of "Whence?" is carried to the point of achieving delightful results by adroit modulation as in "Whether I live"; but it goes no further. Parry himself never "crossed the boundary line" between his own accepted harmonic technique and those resources of combined chords and keys which are commonplaces of "modernism", but which always remained for him contradictions in terms.

This freer scheme, however, influences several of the last set of songs which he prepared for publication and which appeared in the last year of his life (1918). This, the tenth book of *English Lyrics*,

contains six songs for high voice and was dedicated to Mrs. Hamilton Harty (Miss Agnes Nicholls), who was Parry's chosen interpreter of many of the soprano parts in his larger works and whose voice clearly inspired certain of the later songs. "My heart is like a singing bird" is hardly what he would have chosen to set had he not had a particular voice in mind, and he revelled in writing the soaring, exuberant phrases in which Miss Agnes Nicholls excelled and ninety per cent of sopranos fail.

Beautifully as the lyric is treated to suit this special medium it was impossible to produce anything but a song of obvious emotion, and the later numbers of the set, "Gone were but the winter cold", "A moment of farewell", and particularly "From a city window", are the things which make this volume compare with the varied interests of Book VIII.

We must leave such comparisons aside for the moment, however, in order to glance at the contents of the two new volumes and see what addition they make to our knowledge of Parry as a song-writer. These fifteen songs were edited by Dr. Emily Daymond, Mr. H. Plunket Greene, and Dr. Charles Wood. It is known that Parry intended two more sets of English Lyrics, and the preface which the three editors initial says that "five or six of them had actually been mentioned by him as among those that he meant to publish". Further it tells us that "The songs now published comprise examples that represent the composer at widely different periods of his life: from 'O world! O life! O time!' (first written about 1870 and finally revised a few years ago) to the song that concludes the whole series, which, with its singularly appropriate words, was actually signed on his last birthday, February 27, 1918." It seems fairly safe to guess, however, that a wide gap separates "O world! O life! O time!" from its companions, and that the majority belong more nearly to that period which is represented by the publications of 1907 and subsequent years.

Book XI contains eight songs for a low or mezzo voice; Book XII contains seven, all for high voice. These have been disposed with more care for effective contrast than the composer himself generally bestowed on such matters, and it should be said at once that the whole task of editing has been carried out with rare sympathy and careful scholarship. Book XI begins with "One golden thread", a trifling poem by Julia Chatterton, treated with such delicacy that the music raises it to unexpected consequence. That is true of several of these songs. Parry sees the ideal behind a weak and even jejune

verbal expression, and makes one forget the defect in viewing with him the content of the whole. The lyrics of Alfred Perceval Graves, four of which are included here, all have a dewy, folk-song flavour which calls out the happiest side of Parry's art, and lovers of "I'm weaving sweet violets" will quickly discover the charm of "The Spirit of the Spring", "The Blackbird", "The Faithful Lover", and "She is my love".

"If I might ride on puissant wing" (Sturgis) is so lightly poised that its charm is less readily discovered, and may be very easily brushed away by imperfect performance. Amongst these are two songs of a more severe type, "What part of dread eternity", the authorship of which is unidentified, and Massinger's "Why art thou slow", which alone in this volume recalls the more classical standpoint of Parry's earlier style.

Book XII is still more various. It begins and ends with Julia Chatterton, and it must be confessed that, apart from the personal sentiment which attaches to his last birthday song, "The sound of hidden music" is not the one which we should linger over with the keenest sense of satisfaction. Herrick's "To Blossoms", and Beddoes' "Dream Pedlary", raise more subtle problems of design and rhythm, and more amply fulfil the expectations they arouse. "Rosaline" (Thomas Lodge) contrasts strongly with these miniatures, and is remarkable for its frank exuberance, and as being almost the only one among Parry's larger songs which seems made for a tenor voice of the robust, full-bodied type. The other big song of this set, "When the sun's great orb", is almost overwhelming in its difficulty of execution and interpretation. It is one of several written for Miss Alice Elieson (Mrs. H. Warner) to words by her husband, and its mighty theme:

> The trumpet's blast resounds
> In clear and resonant tones
> The reveille for the resurrection of the dead. . . .

inspired Parry to a unique effort. The result is a song in which the strength and the weakness of his later style are contrasted with singular sharpness. Even those most eager to perceive the majestic conception at the back of it must share a doubt of the way in which it is presented. But the explanation of what exactly that doubt is must belong to a more detailed analysis than would be appropriate at the close of this summary of his work as a song-writer.

The object has been to suggest the wide field which the twelve books of *English Lyrics* cover and to show that they offer grounds for regarding Parry as one of the great song-writers of his time. It was right to publish "When the sun's great orb", for without it we should lose an essential aspect of him.[1]

[1]The editors of the posthumous volumes of Parry's Songs were anxious to make quite clear that the responsibility for including "When the sun's great orb" in Book XII was theirs. It was not one of the five or six songs mentioned by the composer as among those which he meant to publish. This is here assumed.

II

THERE are two kinds of creative artists: those who change the externals of their personal styles so completely in the course of their careers that subsequently their lives appear to be a gradual emergence from the chrysalis condition into a full and free vitality, and those who, early discovering a species of technique well suited to their ideal expression, continue to pursue it without conspicuous outward change. The latter have the advantage in their early days. Their troubles may come later when they find either that their contemporaries have moved away from them, or possibly that they themselves have something new to say for which they cannot command the language.

But there is compensation even for this. The artist of the constant type has the satisfaction denied to the other of looking back over his life's work and finding his sign-manual on every part of it. It was his real self from the first; he can be well content that it shall remain his real self at the last. That was Parry's case, and the choral *Songs of Farewell* are the final testimony to it.

Such a song, however, as "When the sun's great orb" gives evidence of struggle. It woke in him a vision of the cataclysm of all creation. He summoned his powers of emphatic declamation, and conceived a bold scheme of brooding rhythms and hard unyielding chord progressions such as belong to the prophetic passages of the cantatas (cf. *Voces Clamantium*). Here he is on his own ground.

Later, as the imagery of *clashing thunder, the* "earthquake's awful roar", and "the din of all hell's fury" accumulates, he adopts one device after another, abandoning each without exploring its possibilities of development very far. He hastens towards the climax of the last trump, and in his haste makes use of a recurring semiquaver passage burdened by semitones.

That is bad. The diminished 7th chord, too constantly his resource in moments of crisis (as whole-tone chords are to a younger generation of composers), is at its worst when combined with these facile chromatics. It is the fury of the stage thunderstorm—just a noise, to make the flesh creep; but only a very unsophisticated flesh will respond to its stimulus. Still he is content with it as a

point of detail, and hurries on to the clangour of the trumpet's tones over a figurate chord of A. Breaking off from this, the culmination is reached.

Granted that after what has passed one would be thankful to have the word "Resurrection" ended on any other chord than the, to him, inevitable diminished 7th, one can still admire the bold sweep of the phrase, and that D flat chord, coming where it does, is an inspiration.

The ending of the pianoforte part should be studied because here—for once, at least—Parry satisfies the ear with a series of bold discords not founded on the diminished 7th but on the augmented triad, the strident chord which has provided the basis for the greater part of modern harmony. The two strong accents show him on the threshold of a new harmonic kingdom, from which, however, he deliberately turned away.

Here if anywhere, then, we see Parry at the moment where, the old methods failing him, he is unable to grapple with new ones, and the doubt expressed about this song is simply whether the impulse is sufficiently strong to compel the hearer to forget the incidental weaknesses. A great singer might achieve it, but it would be by focusing attention on the declamation of the poem to the exclusion of the instrumental detail. The great song, however, is one which will bear the closest scrutiny of all its features.

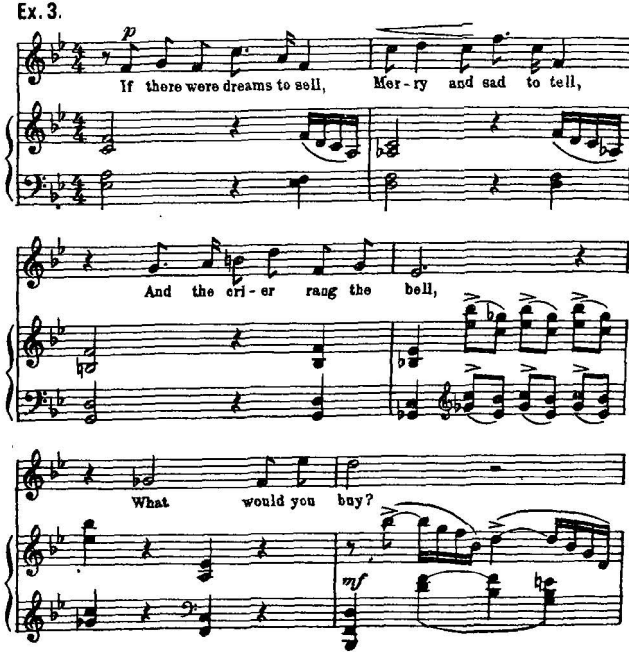
"What part of dread Eternity" (Book XI.), a song designed on as large a scale as "When the sun's great orb", survives the test in every particular. It is built on a peculiarly firm musical plan. The greater part of the material is evolved from a questioning motive announced in the pianoforte part. This is developed symphonically, until at the end of the first verse it expands into a new and intensely expressive melody which dominates the whole centre of the song. It seems inspired by the reference in the words to "the world's yearning tide". Throughout there is nothing desultory or casual. When a new figure of accompaniment is wanted it is evolved spontaneously from what has gone before. The whole is subject to a purely musical logic, even to the point of combining the principle of recapitulation with fresh developments in the last stanza. At the same time its relevance to the mood and temper of the poem is never in doubt. Though presumably a late song it has the same quality of close contact with the words which is characteristic of the early settings of Shakespeare's Sonnets, and it reassures one against the suggestion, to which "When the sun's great orb" gives colour,

that Parry lost something of his grip in the later songs. These two are the outstanding big songs in the last volumes.

But while the big songs repay study and lend themselves to analysis, the little ones often have less definable qualities which so seize one as to confirm Ben Jonson's encomium of "small proportions" and "short measures". "If I might ride on puissant wing" is a case in point. To quote a phrase of it would be simply to court misunderstanding. The reader might say, "There 's nothing much in that." But sing it and play it through without trying to "make" anything of it, above all in strict time (the singer is entrusted with a *poco rit.* at two cadences), and if you have found the right time at the start the delicate thread of rhythm on which the whole song is hung will prove to be just strong enough. Anything more would be too much. The poise is perfect.

There is nothing else at once so slender and so complete in these volumes, though "Dream Pedlary" (Beddoes) approaches it nearly. Here, however, one may more safely quote:

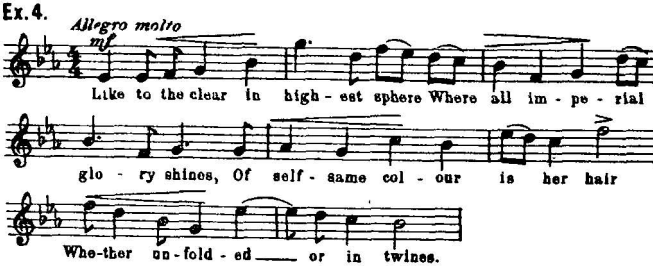
Ex. 3.



Here is more of positive feature; the shimmer of the semi-quaver *arpeggio*, the swaying pairs of quaver chords and other figures serve to bind the apt vocal phrases together and contribute to the rare atmosphere of the whole.

A third type, which contrasts equally with both those already described, is represented by "Rosaline" (Thomas Lodge). This song swings along by sheer impulse of tune, and the instrument acts only in support of the voice:

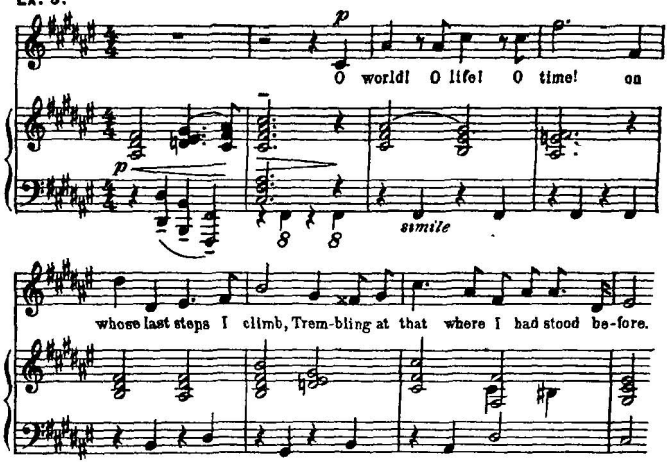
Ex. 4.



There is no subtlety of word-painting, no peculiar point of harmonic colour, no meticulous care even for declamation. The tune takes precedence of all other considerations and its exuberance is itself the song.

The evidence of the manuscript, the handwriting, and the age of the paper show without date that "Rosaline" is among the earlier songs. Knowing that, it would be easy to say that one could have guessed it without the knowledge. But if the guess were based on the character of unsullied youth and freshness which pervades every phrase, then the date of "The Spirit of the Spring" (A. P. Graves) could be decided on the same principle; and if it were based on the style which places tune first, then the well-known setting of Blake's "Jerusalem", written during the course of the last war, might be mistaken for an early song by those who did not know the circumstances. If, on the other hand, one notices that a certain meditative seriousness grows on Parry's mood with advancing years, as it certainly does, then there would be the temptation to put "O world! O life! O time!" very much later than 1870:

Ex. 5.



The truth is that if we recognize a young and an old Parry we have also to realize that both were there all his life, that age came early and youth stayed late. The youth in him is one of the dearest remembrances of all who knew him in his later years. The age in the boy appears in a number of different ways—in the expression of countenance in a certain photograph of him taken as a member of a football team at Eton, and in some words in his diary written on the first discovery of Bach's *Forty-Eight*: "It is to me a companion in travel, my comfort in trouble, my solace in sickness, and my sharer of happiness."

This from a boy of sixteen!

With such evidence one hesitates to date any of his work from internal evidence; rather one endorses his own reply when a friend listening with him to a revival of an early composition remarked on his change of style. "Same chap," was his comment.

III

AT the end of my first article I wrote: "It was right to publish 'When the sun's great orb', for without it we should lose an essential aspect of Parry." I made an attempt to discover that essential aspect by a process of analysis and of contrast with other songs. It is possible that Parry would have withheld it from publication or remodelled some of its details, but we cannot be certain. For one of the contradictions of his style—almost the only important contradiction it contains—is due to the mixture of responsibility and impulse which at one moment would make him consider and weigh what he said either in words or music with an almost excessive conscientiousness, and at another allow him to pass some detail which seems incompatible with his own standard of self-criticism. It is a contradiction which cannot be ignored if we are to get anything like a discriminating appreciation of his music. It is as futile on the one hand to maintain, as some of his warmest admirers have maintained, that the whole of his output was checked by a severe self-criticism, as it is short-sighted on the other to allow his great music to sink into oblivion because its workmanship in certain instances bears signs of haste and even of makeshift. The baffling thing is that the hasty workmanship often appears in works to which he gave the closest and most carefully considered thought. If we are to get at the kernel of Parry's mind we have to recognize both sides of the case.

There was a definite cause for such defects in many of his big choral works. They were generally written against time for a special occasion in the hardly won intervals of an exceptionally busy life. In those cases he concentrated on the things which mattered most to him and which were never the details of phraseology or of instrumentation. The only pity was that he did not realize how much those details might count to the generality of his hearers.

With the songs, however, the case was different. He could, and frequently did, hold back a song with a view to polishing its expression, or, as he himself used to put it "solving its problems". Yet some of the songs which he did publish, in the ninth and tenth

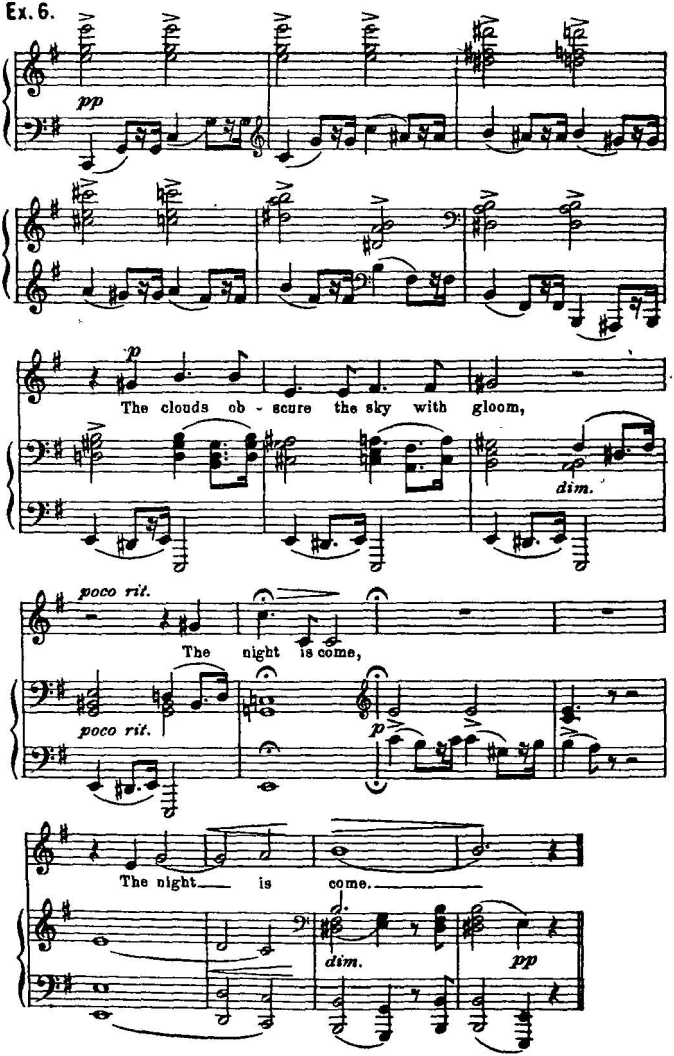
sets of the *Lyrics* particularly, appear with some imperfectly solved problems in the instrumental part. "The Witches' Wood" (Mary E. Coleridge, Book IX) and "The City Window" (Langdon Elwyn Mitchell, Book X) are examples. In both, the function of the pianoforte part is to enforce the descriptive qualities of the verse, and both contain ideas of great musical beauty. To discuss how far these ideas permeate every feature would be to labour a point which has been already sufficiently accentuated in the case of the later songs.

There are two ways in which a composer may approach a descriptive poem. In one his music holds a mirror to the words; their features are reflected in its form. The other takes little or no account of the features, but dwells entirely in the mood which their total combines to produce. The songs just named illustrate the first method, but the latter was the more congenial to Parry. The greatest of his descriptive songs is one in which any attempt to emphasize one image of the poem at the expense of another would have been fatal. This is the setting in Book VIII of Langdon Elwyn Mitchell's "Nightfall in Winter".

Cold is the air,
The woods are bare
And brown; the herd
Stands in the yard.
The frost doth fall;
And round the hill
The hares move slow;
The homeward crow,
Alone and high
Crosses the sky
All silently.

The poet makes no comment, and the musician may make none. He takes quiet note of every feature of the scene in the waning light and the growing cold. There is a numbness everywhere. It is this which Parry has caught and held in the rhythm which prevails throughout, in the long, repeated notes which fall with a dull thud on every accent, and the vocal declamation, all on the middle notes of the voice, moving constantly by small intervals. The end of the song is here quoted to show its nature, but it is only in the balance of the whole that we get the measure of his insight into the qualities of the poem:

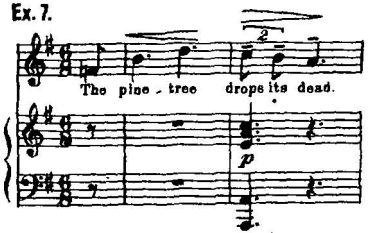
Ex. 6.


pp
p
The clouds ob - scure the sky with gloom,
dim.
poco rit.
The night is come,
poco rit.
p
The night is come.
dim.
pp

It is worth noticing particularly how the rhythm is carried through to its logical conclusion in the final cadence. There is no trace here of the conventional Coda to round off the song which is sometimes met with, and generally with regret, at the end of a deeply felt song.

"Dirge in Woods" (George Meredith), in the same volume, deserves to be placed beside "Nightfall in Winter", for here the words demand a contrast in the picture of the wind swaying the pine-tops above, while beneath, the wood is "quiet as under the sea". The slow 6-8 measure prevails through the greater part of the song, but the stillness beneath is suggested in one extraordinarily subtle touch:

Ex. 7.



In the interpolation of that pair of quavers one sees the light pine-needles dropping straight to earth, unwavering though the wind sighs overhead. This is an instance of Parry's command of the magic of simplicity, the musical counterpart to the monosyllables by which Meredith gains the effect of his line.

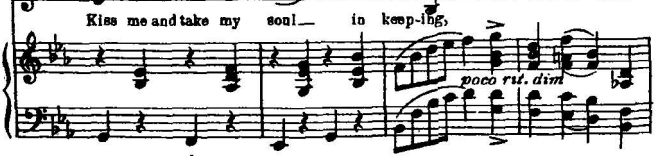
If the study of these examples has been at all successful, it will have shown something of Parry's adaptability to types of poetry varying widely in mood and in manner. Something was said in the first article of his increasing fondness for lyrics by Julian Sturgis and others, which, whatever their merits and suitability for music, must be described as minor poetry. The minor poem has certain definite advantages as the text for a song. Granted that it is free from banalities of expression, it may allow a musician greater liberty of action from the fact that it gives him scope to supply the personality which it lacks. In the majority of instances where Parry chose such verse he carried it through by the strength of his own impulse. He makes real even such a stanza as:

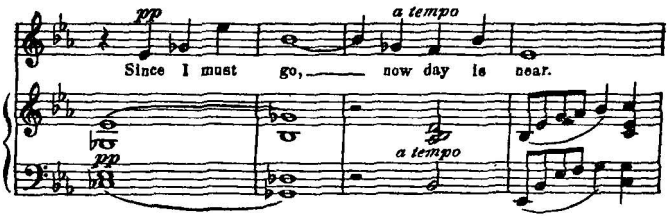
O bird flying far to the ocean,
O bird flying far to the sea,
I ask for one buoyant emotion,
One thrill of thy rapture for me.

Only a great artist could have done so. This, from "A Moment of Farewell" (Sturgis, Book X), suggests a comparison with the earlier setting of Byron's "There be none of beauty's daughters" (Book IV). Byron's poem has a colour of its own to which the composer must bend his mood. Parry completely reflected that colour in the shape of his melody, which is so apt to the mellifluous lines that one hardly finds in it the traits of the typical Parry melody as they are found in the Sturgis song. Parry rarely set the romantic poets, but this and the Keats song which follows it, "Bright Star", suggest that he might have addded many other facets to his style as a song-writer had he chosen to do so.

Amongst the many facets which he did develop, one returns to his settings of the Elizabethans as the most completely satisfying. Of those in the earlier sets, several are among the best known of his songs. Some of the most delicate, "Weep you no more, sad fountains" and "Lay a garland on my hearse", for example, should be much better known than they are. But "On a time the amorous Silvy" (Book VII), one of the last of the kind which he published, is scarcely ever heard. The picture of the tender dalliance and reluctant parting of Silvy and her shepherd is completed in the following exquisite cadence:

Ex. 8.





In the thoughtful poise of the few chords used, in the balance of tonality, and in the rhythm of the melody extending without straining that of the verse, we find an epitome of Parry's art as a song-writer.

The Modern Symphony

(9 January 1909)

IT would be difficult to sift the causes for the unprecedented enthusiasm over Sir Edward Elgar's symphony, and to do so might be disappointing. We might find that to some extent the demand has been created by the supply, for to announce frequent performances is a sure way of arousing public interest. We should certainly find that, so far from the English origin of the work being a disadvantage, it is a strong commercial asset. For, having got the idea firmly rooted that Sir Edward Elgar is a great composer, the British public thinks it "greatly to his credit that he remains an Englishman", and is quite convinced that his music is all the better for its native origin. So wonder on that point may cease, and it may be conceded that the symphony has had every circumstance in its favour which a well-organized production and a well-prepared public could give it.

But, when all the artificial aids to popularity have been placed on one side, there still remains a certain residuum which is valuable as an indication of musical taste. In all the different points of view which have been expressed—from those of the indiscriminate eulogists to the discoveries of the plaguing finders of plagiarisms—there has been a general belief that the appearance of Elgar's symphony at this particular stage in musical development is important. On the one hand, it has been hailed as the beginning of a new era in the life of symphonic form; on the other, it has been assailed as failing in that very respect. Some assert that, after all, it only transfers the methods of modern programme music to the symphony, and, as it were, fits them into its shell; while the reminiscence-hunters say that even its themes are not new. Leaving out of count the last group as irrelevant to our point, it seems that the contrary opinions of the first two rest upon a disagreement as to what symphonic form actually is. To the latter, the symphony appears as a fully-developed type of musical expression, a medium for the utterance of certain kinds of musical ideas in a certain way. Since the form has for them definite limits, they have no hesitation in pronouncing ideas not of that character to be unsuitable for sym-

phonic treatment—or, more shortly, to be unsymphonic. For them, the first eight symphonies of Beethoven (the vagaries of the "Pastoral" are passed over with an indulgent smile), Schubert's C major Symphony, and the first three by Brahms must stand as the limits of true symphonic expression, while the ninth of Beethoven and, at any rate, the finale of Brahms's fourth include types of expression which do not belong to the symphony proper. If this view is accepted, it is difficult to see what more can be done, or how symphonies can be written to-day which do not merely cover well-trodden ground.

Perhaps it has been partly owing to the prevalence of this view that so many composers of late years have left the symphony and contented themselves with the production of illustrative music. The literary basis for music held out opportunities for the use of varieties of expression, emotional, dramatic, or directly descriptive, which were beyond the pale of the symphony in the days of its glory. For some time such music seemed to open up an endless vista of possibilities, and very great have been the additions to the resources of the art from its widespread vogue. But the vista no longer seems endless; and so far have we walked along the path that now the hearers of a new piece of illustrative music frequently come away feeling that they have been merely repeating old experiences, while the composers themselves seem to feel that this kind of work imposes limits of its own which are sometimes as galling as "rules of form" were to their predecessors of the last century. The statements of Richard Strauss about his music are not to be taken too seriously; but apparently even he longs at times for a wider acceptation for his music than the depicting either of heroic battles or infantine toilets, while lesser men, through their writers of programme notes, resort to the most pitiable attempts to escape responsibility for their subjects. It is a commonplace to leave the subject of a new work only half told, or to state that it was written after reading such and such a poem, which cannot mean that at this late date composers are ashamed or afraid to write programme music. Simply, they are conscious that music must have something to say beyond what can be contained in any description of words, and that that something is, after all, its kernel. So they take their story or their poem as an aid to expression, and they hope to carry their audience with them beyond it and to convey the message of the music in spite of it.

To those who believe in the larger possibilities of the symphony,

this process seems rather like the action of Charles Lamb's Chinaman, who burnt down his house in order to enjoy roast pig. Why have a literary basis at all if in the end it merely stands between the composer and his audience, and obscures his real meaning? All the subtlety of expression conveyed by characteristic phrases combined and contrasted in a thousand ways unknown to the older symphonists, all the wealth of emotional force which a modern conception of harmony and of orchestral colour can give, have been gained through the illustrative use of music; but there is no need for a composer to cumber himself with its paraphernalia in order to use these resources to the full. They now lie ready to his hand, and he has only to rediscover the true significance of a perfectly balanced design in order to write music at once spontaneous and direct in expression and breathing the pure spirit of beauty which has earned the name of absolute music.

But in this realization of the meaning of design rests the difficulty. To take the materials of programme music and merely fit them into the shell of the classical symphonic form, as has so often been attempted, must result in the same confusion as arises when people write programme music and refuse to tell what it is all about. The symphony of to-day must involve new principles of design appropriate to its material; and consequently many people have looked eagerly to Sir Edward Elgar's work for light on the question of what those principles are. Some assert that they find them made convincingly clear through every page of the symphony, and they are the eulogists; others, who have looked no less hopefully, are disappointed. One cannot be surprised by the divergence of opinion, because it appears that the composer has not kept the issue clear in his own mind. Though his main purpose was to write a piece of music which should be a consistent expression of emotion contained in an outline of self-sufficient beauty, yet certain of the themes were for him so closely connected with sundry ideas—for the most part moral qualities, such as aspiration, courage, love, and hatred—that in some places, forgetful that the audience could have no such connecting idea, he has used them without reference to the musical context. Wherever he has done so the continuity of the design is broken, the hearer's thought is checked, and he is sent groping after the idea which lies behind the music in order to find the connexion. This will not do for a symphony, and the fact that it is possible to point to half a dozen such places in the two largest movements is sufficient to account for the feeling of disappoint-

ment. But these are only points of detail in a structure of undeniable strength. The original, yet well-ordered, contrasts of tonality, the workmanship of the exposition of the first allegro, the whole plan of the two middle movements, and much of the working out of the finale can fairly claim to shed light upon the essential question of how modern musical thought can take shape as a symphony.

This fact is so valuable that it is in itself sufficient to justify an unusual enthusiasm. The actual life of the symphony, of course, will depend upon the intrinsic beauty and interest of the musical ideas which it contains, and this is a side of the question into which we have not entered. It will no doubt be the precursor of a number of symphonic efforts, many of which will fall far short of it, but some of which may reach beyond it; and the influence of Elgar's first symphony upon these will be, perhaps, even more important than its own success. If its success is only partial, it may for that very reason do more to clear the vision as to what is needed than if by a single stroke of genius Elgar had produced a work beyond the range of criticism. It clearly points to the possibility of a form of orchestral composition which, while discarding the clumsy mechanism of programme music, can combine its vivid utterance with the pure enjoyment of outline and beautiful design which belonged so conspicuously to the symphonies of the classical school.

Brahms and Elgar

(13 December 1924)

WE have to thank the Royal Philharmonic Society for suddenly interpolating Elgar's first symphony in a season when all the conductors—English and foreign—Wood, Harty, Furtwängler, Bruno Walter, and presently Weingartner, seem to have entered into a pact to play us the symphonies of Brahms. Even if one has always held to that persuasion, which is apparently now taking possession of the majority, that the symphonies of Brahms cannot be played too often, one recognizes that Brahms's view of symphonic design had very distinct limits. He ruled out of it certain kinds of musical expression as unsymphonic, and every composer who has handled the form successfully since his day has done so by rejecting his canon in one way or another. Elgar is one of these.

The first criticism which leapt to the tongue or the pen when his Symphony in A flat was produced sixteen years ago, and one which was repeated during the performance under Herr Bruno Walter, was that Elgar's mind is unsymphonic, that his ideas stand staring at one another and no amount of manipulation will make them coalesce. Yet that criticism seems to rest to a certain extent on the implicit acceptance of the Brahms standpoint towards the symphonic form. When we hear Brahms's second symphony magnificently played, as it was under Herr Bruno Walter lately, we are held spellbound by the wonderful efflorescence which springs from the four notes of the basses in the first two bars. A semitone and a drooping fourth, and from them comes a symphony. He, as it were, takes the bare grain, gives it the soil, the sun and the rain, and lets the plant grow. But Elgar plants a garden by the process of bedding out. His ideas are shaped before he begins to consider their arrangement, their contrasts of form and colour, and the effects of their juxtapositions. The choral-tune (how sorry he must be that he ever invited talk by labelling it *nobilmente*!), the restless *appassionato* theme in D minor, the cross-accent theme where 3-2 and 6-4 times are worked together, the rising fifths of the passage marked *giusto*, are salient specimens from which his scheme of contrasts is devised.

Each is ready grown to take its place in the border; or, to change to a more generally accepted metaphor, his is the dramatic method which assembles diverse characters and watches their inter-action on one another.

Nor is the dramatic method essentially opposed to the symphonic style. It has been pointed out often that the greatest musical dramatists, Mozart and Wagner, are great masters of symphonic style, that in fact *The Ring* does on a gigantic scale what the "Jupiter" Symphony and the finale to the second act of *Figaro* alike do on a small scale. The musical themes, like the characters on the stage, announce themselves, weave a plot, and reach a solution. This is what Elgar has set out to do in the A flat Symphony. All we have to ask ourselves is—How far do his characters interest us, their plot absorb and its solution satisfy us?

Mr. Cecil Gray, in an engagingly provocative essay on Elgar recently published, has attempted to establish a contrast between Elgar and Brahms, and has involved himself in some contradiction by only half-perceiving their differences of standpoint. When he says that "Brahms seldom succeeds in conceiving themes sufficiently contrasted to generate the action", he is complaining of Brahms for not building on the dramatic method, and when he continues with: "Similarly, Elgar is equally incapable of conceiving themes which are capable of spontaneous generation, of giving birth to the whole movement, as in a fugue of Bach or the fifth symphony of Beethoven" it appears that Elgar, and by implication Brahms too, comes under his censure for not adopting the other method. One is left in some doubt as to what Brahms can do. Apparently not very much except lay out a ground-plan, and therefore we need not follow Mr. Gray any farther as a guide to Brahms. But about Elgar he has more to say, some of it pertinent and some impertinent. When he speaks of him as an *improvisatore*, who "simply takes the first handful [of musical ideas] that presents itself, seeming to write from bar to bar without any very clear idea of what he is going to do next," and then uses words like "triviality and tawdriness" in connexion with these ideas, he has got hold of something which those who want to defend Elgar's symphonic style, and this work in particular, must meet. The accusation of writing from bar to bar does not present much difficulty. The Symphony in A flat may have its moments where the rhapsodic impulse carries the composer away from his plan, and he comes back to it with something of a wrench and a twist, but the im-

manence of the *nobilmente* theme, its relation to subsidiary ones, the metamorphosis of the helter-skelter scherzo into the Sunday morning slow movement, are sufficient evidences of pre-arrangement which refute the accusation. But as to the quality of the tunes themselves we may ask—How is it that when from score-reading or from trial at the piano one has been tempted to admit some of Mr. Gray's unpleasant epithets, the hearing of the work as a whole obliterates that impression? Is it only the splendour of the orchestration which magnifies triviality into nobility? That has been often maintained, but if so Elgar's wizardry with the orchestra is unique. When Liszt, Tchaikovsky, or Saint-Saëns write trivial themes and score them richly, the richness is merely nauseous and anything but ennobling. The answer seems to be that whatever may be said of his ideas when they are examined in an attitude of detachment they justify themselves ultimately because they are all a part of something which the composer most urgently wants to say. The Elgarian tone of voice is familiar to every one. We can all of us recognize it in any phrase of his music heard at haphazard. One cannot describe it or say exactly where it is, but its omnipresence means that behind all his work there is the urge of a definite personality. The man is made known in the music, not concealed behind it. In so frank a self-revelation there must be something ingenuous, but the sincerity of purpose sweeps past minor defects, whether of style or character, and achieves at last a great symphony.

Elgar and Mahler

(1 February 1930)

TWO names have been prominent in concert programmes lately—Elgar and Mahler. The one is a household word to every Englishman; the other a stranger whose works attract the curious. From time to time the English composer is persuaded to leave his retirement, to stand before the orchestra and restate his own case, telling us again what his music meant to him when he wrote it, how he heard it with the inward ear before ever another hearer responded to its sound.

The privilege of self-interpretation was denied to Mahler in regard to his last and most personal work. He had been one of the greatest exponents of other men's musical thoughts; he had to leave it to others to discover his own in *Das Lied von der Erde*. That he was happy in having Herr Bruno Walter as foster-father to his child does not entirely do away with the disadvantages of the posthumous production. Elgar dedicated his first symphony to Hans Richter, "true artist and true friend". Richter first showed the world what was in it, but he did so with the composer at his elbow, and how much more has Elgar shown since he took it and its successors, the second symphony and the concertos, into his own hands?

Elgar and Mahler were close contemporaries, Mahler a few years the younger. He died in Vienna actually in the week of May, 1911, in which Elgar's second symphony made its first brilliant appearance at the London Musical Festival under its composer's direction. Their years of keenest creative activity were the same, the first decade of the century, though Mahler had begun to exercise himself in the symphonic form earlier and produced during a strenuous and comparatively short life no fewer than ten works which bear the name. It is obvious that their mature works have certain superficial characteristics in common. They both belong to that opulent period when it could be said (as Sir Edward Elgar is reputed once to have said), "If a composer writes for forty harps, get forty harps." Both loved the luxuries of orchestral tone, and neither readily distinguished between luxuries and necessities. Both were excessively influenced by that tendency of the post-Wagnerian era (we

in England think of it more as a post-Victorian interlude) to confound importance with size in works of art.

Elgar happily was to outlive the worship of size. His chamber music and the violoncello concerto of a later date offer a criticism on that expansion for expansion's sake, which has proved to be the weak point of his first symphony. The comparative brevity of the second symphony was remarked as a good sign on its first appearance. At just the same time Mahler, too, by following the excessive magniloquence of his eighth (choral) symphony with the more intimate manner of *Das Lied von der Erde*, showed signs of the discovery that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of his possessions. That last work was for him perhaps a turning point. Only once before in the series of his symphonies had he allowed himself a quiet ending. That was also in a vocal *finale*, the setting of the poem from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which ended his fourth, called the "children's" symphony. But the quietude of the oft-repeated "Ewig" at the end of *Das Lied* is different, not the *naiveté* of the child's simple faith, but the forward gaze of the grown soul.

The quiet ending of Elgar's second symphony is rather the backward glance over the trodden path before setting out on a fresh quest for adventure, yet there is enough of likeness between them to suggest that the two composers had arrived at the same stage of their inward development simultaneously, but by very different routes. Mahler began with a determination to achieve the greatest things; Elgar began by writing what he liked because he liked it, and his early likings ranged from "Salut d'amour" to the *Froissart* overture. While Elgar was thus occupied and was incidentally filling some minor musical posts in the English provinces, Mahler was conducting Mozart and Wagner before the most critical audiences of Europe and winning the admiration, not easily gained, of Brahms. His own first orchestral work had to be big and serious, and the first symphony certainly is that, even if it is a big and serious mistake.

Elgar started with tunes, Mahler with designs. It took Elgar half a lifetime (he was fifty-one when his first symphony appeared) to discover how to make his tunes cover a large design. It took Mahler nearly all his to realize that a design grows out of the forms of its tunes. In all his earlier symphonies, and he wrote only symphonies and songs, he seems to have laid out his design and to have proceeded to fill it with whatever came handy. One knows a tune of Elgar the moment it is heard, even if it is only an unidentifiable

phrase or even a single bar. He may be as easily caricatured as Handel or Wagner because everything he writes bears his own stamp. It would be scarcely possible to produce a caricature of Mahler recognizable by those who know his work thoroughly. He never achieved a distinctly personal idiom.

Even the things which strike one as most beautiful in *Das Lied von der Erde* are apt to bear a curious likeness to something else that is familiar. It may be only coincidence, but it is odd that the opening of *Der Einsame im Herbst* should carry one back to the loneliness of Pimen's cell in Moussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, and that from the cry of the world's love and sorrow in the last number should emerge a tune akin to Dvořák's "Quis est Homo". To compare the passages note for note is to lead to the conclusion that the likenesses are not great, at any rate they are not continued for very long. The working out is entirely Mahler's; still, the fact remains that the initial ideas were shared with others, who, moreover, had found them first. When Elgar's first symphony came out, someone attempted to prove that its main tune on which all depends was like the Grail theme in *Parsifal*. He was able to show as much note-for-note likeness as can be claimed about these examples of Mahler, but the attempt fell flat because everyone else, including those who disliked the tune, had instantly recognized it as typically "Elgarian", while the Grail theme is as typically Wagnerian.

Certain names readily pass into adjectives, and fashion flows and ebbs round them, leaving what they stand for unchanged. Mahler's is not one of them. Since his death he has been much played on the Continent as one whose gifts deserve a wider recognition than the public willingly granted; but his music has never become part of human nature's daily food; Elgar's has, for English people at any rate. Even if a younger generation is at the moment seeking other nutriment with other flavours, musicians know that they can return to it with a permanent satisfaction, because it is the direct expression of the man who made it.

A Recovered MS.

(2 October 1942)

THERE has been a little mystery about one of Elgar's works, a Concert Allegro for pianoforte which Miss Fanny Davies produced at St. James's Hall on 2 December, 1901, and gave again at Manchester at one of the "Gentlemen's Concerts", on 26 February 1906. These two dates are duly entered in the catalogue of Sir Edward Elgar's works in *Grove's Dictionary* (1940), which owes its completeness to the devotion and industry of his daughter. The mystery is exposed in the words there added, "MS. lost".

The composer's manuscript, though apparently not the one from which Miss Davies played on these occasions, has just come to light, and with it some letters of hers relating to it. The letters mark two stages. Those undated and beginning "Dear Doctor Elgar" beg for a piece, if only a little one, to put into an English group in a recital programme intended to begin with Purcell and end with Elgar. The later ones ask to have the manuscript again for the second occasion. They tentatively suggest some pianistic emendations, expressed with much admiration of the general plan of the work, and one of them contains the significant remark, "I hope you will get to like the piano better!" That lets the cat out of the bag. Elgar did not like the piano, his thoughts were not piano thoughts; he used it chiefly as the drudge of the composing room—something which would help him to write for other instruments or voices. Evidently this Concert Allegro for piano, a sort of concerto without an orchestra he called it, was undertaken against the grain as an act of friendship towards a fellow artist rather than as a spontaneous enterprise of his own.

The work is none the less interesting, and as *The Times* of 3 December 1901 remarked, characteristic of himself. This was the time in which everything that Elgar produced was certain to attract critical attention, and a piano work of this size played by "the eminent pianist" was regarded as a sign that the composer of the "Enigma" Variations and *The Dream of Gerontius* was venturing on new ground. For this reason, no doubt, the critic of *The Times* was a little reticent, though respectful, in what he wrote of the Concert

Allegro. Others less considerate were inclined to blame the composer for daring to write something which they could not immediately declare to be a flawless masterpiece. He, for his part, was quite content to put the work aside after its first hearing and devote himself to his oratorios and to the orchestra.

But Miss Davies's ardour was not easily quelled, and she was badgering him very persuasively to let her have it again, and why should he not? Apparently she played it twice in the Manchester programme, and it was there received with acclamation, though the composer was not present. Later, Elgar used chaffingly to accuse Fanny Davies of having lost the manuscript. Perhaps she had, but careful search after her death failed to find it among her music. Whether she had or not there was the rough copy which he had put away with her letters on the subject, a copy so rough that no one could have played from it, scored all over with his corrections and deletions, but quite complete and legible to the discerning eye. The work itself was not lost, but he kept it out of sight, and beyond pencilling it into his private record as Opus 46 he allowed it, probably wished it, to be forgotten.

The music consists of an introduction in bravura style followed by a full sonata form allegro with a first subject developed in a rather too facile sequence and a second subject which is not labelled *nobilmente* but might have been, a glowing tune of the kind which justifies the term "characteristic". It has the energy and spontaneity of the Elgar of forty years ago, and only wants the colour of his orchestra to have made it one of the successes of that day.

The rough copy shows that he felt this, for to the title on the cover written in his own hand are added the words "and orchestra" in pencil. Moreover, markings throughout the score show that he planned to turn it into a piece for piano and orchestra. That is what it ought to have been from the first, for the passages marked "with orch." seem so inevitable that if it had not appeared publicly as a solo work one would take this copy to be the short score of the first movement of a concerto awaiting orchestration. It represents, in fact, Elgar's first essay in the combination of a solo instrument with the orchestra, a fact which gives it an added historical importance now.

Towards the end of his life, Elgar began to write a piano concerto of which only fragmentary sketches remain. Comparison of these sketches with the early Concert Allegro does not show any thematic connexion between them. The project of the concerto may indicate

a wish to fulfil a task and solve a problem which he felt had been burked at the outset of his career. At that time he had in hand both the Third Symphony and an opera. It was all too much for his failing strength, but at any rate up to the end he was trying to "like the piano better".

The "London" Symphony

(8 May 1920)

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S "London" Symphony is a fact, and its setting in a surrounding of excellent but at present unfulfilled intentions, expressed in the discussions of the Musical Congress, throws into relief its importance as a matter of fact. That is the one significant thing about "British music", that although it exists always in a turmoil of hopes and fears, aspirations and disappointments, its tide continues at intervals to throw up an occasional accomplished fact. A century ago English church music was almost dead when Wesley wrote *The Wilderness*; the Victorian era had no opera but it produced Sullivan; the oratorio was said to be outworn when Elgar wrote *The Dream of Gerontius*. A great deal of the advocacy of British music consists in describing it as just as good as some other music, but it is not what is "just as good" but what is different which counts, and the "London" Symphony is very different from any contemporary music produced either in this country or elsewhere.

In the first place, Vaughan Williams's attitude towards his "programme" is different from that of other symphonic composers. We are all used to the composers who tell us that they have a programme, but do not want to tell us what it is for fear we should not listen to their music but only care for what it illustrates. That is not Vaughan Williams's position. On the contrary he tells us plainly what is the basis of his symphony, that conglomeration of people and things which we all know, rail at, hate, love, and admire at once, and call London. When the symphony ended with the wonderful diminuendo, the last note faded away, not into silence but into the distant murmur of the traffic in Oxford Street. The music just receded again into the mass of common things from which it had sprung. In the course of the symphony everyone had recognized certain evidences of these common things, the jingle of a hansom cab in a quiet street, the cry of a lavender seller, the Westminster chimes; things which you cannot help hearing but do not notice very much in London life. There is no use in pointing them out; they are only the accidents which we occasionally use as sym-

bols of the life which occasions them. In the symphony none of them has much to do with the main thread of the music, save perhaps that the chimes in the finale serve to cut the thread. An American said that the thing which struck him most about London in contrast to his own cities was its way of suddenly putting up the shutters. London, he said, is like an unchaperoned girl, afraid to stay out alone at night. The characteristic seems to have entered into the structure of the symphony.

If Vaughan Williams does not tell us the details of his programme, therefore, it is not because he fears to tell us too much, but because we already know far more than he can tell us. We can all make up our own pictures if we want them, sometimes they leap to the inward eye unbidden. The simple, solemn sounds with which the Finale opens gave us one which could not have been in the composer's mind when he wrote the symphony before the war. It was the picture of Whitehall with a dark scaffolding enclosing an unfinished cenotaph and the figure of Nelson looking down from his pillar in the background. It came, no doubt, because at that moment, after the hectic bustle of the scherzo, the composer had paused for a moment to consider some big things which London rarely pauses for, but never quite forgets.

The thoughts which spring from London life cannot be all pleasant, all hopeful, or all beautiful. It may even be suggested that what Londoners are most likely to want is something which presents the strongest possible contrast to their surroundings. The last consideration may, possibly will, prevent the symphony from ever becoming popular in London. But there are other things worth doing with art besides the provision of popular entertainment. If the symphony were merely another attempt at musical realism it could be condemned by this line of argument. Some one said of one of the works of a young British composer that it was a wonderful creation, because it was just like stones being rattled together in a sack. To this an elder musician wisely replied: "But if you want that noise, why not get a sack and rattle stones in it?" Realism is generally recognized now in the other arts as the refuge of the uncreative mind. So-called modern music lags behind in not being quite sure of this, because musicians have only recently realized that their art contains any possibility of taking realism seriously.

But the composer of the "London" Symphony has understood that music begins where realistic noise leaves off. If his thoughts are

not all pleasant, or all hopeful individually in their relations to one another, he builds up something which is beautiful in its entirety. And a symphony is a matter of relations. Out of the slow pulsing heart-beat of the introduction comes a first Allegro which is packed full of arrestingly beautiful musical ideas, melodies, harmonies, colours, all stamped with strong personal character. If there is a fault in the scheme as a whole, it is in the persistence with which the composer holds on his course in his voyage to discover the essential design, knitting the external details together and giving them their value as music. Even the Scherzo, for all its bizarre brilliance, does not give the impression of easy movement and light handling, and the slow movement rather anticipates the serious mood in which the symphony ends. It is a splendid mood, a mood which looks beyond the surface appearances of things and makes even commonplaces of music expression contribute to a constant aspiration. Those to whom music is primarily aspiration in sound are not likely to forget the "London" Symphony and, if they happen to live in London itself, will require its performance periodically as a restorative. Others for whom music is either a recreation or a sensation (the rattling of stones in a sack) will not feel the need of it. But their willingness to forget it will not affect its position as one of the substantial facts which show that music in this country is still a cause worth fighting for.

A Pastoral Symphony

(28 January 1922)

THE first question which people will ask about this symphony is, why "Pastoral"? Dr. Vaughan Williams has made no attempt to answer it in words. He supplied a note to the Philharmonic programme which seemed to take almost a malicious pleasure in saying nothing: "The mood of this Symphony is, as its title suggests, almost entirely quiet and contemplative—there are few fortissimos and few allegros. The only really quick passage is the coda to the third movement, and that is all pianissimo."

Some twenty scraps of tune were then quoted without comment, save the assurance that they occur in the music in the order shown, like the cast on a theatre programme. But the cast of this symphony is relatively unimportant. These scraps of tune are not individual characters, since the scheme is not dramatic; nor are they features in a landscape, since the scheme is not pictorial. To make a list of them is no more illuminating than to jot down salient images or turns of expression, such as "summer's day", "rough winds", "darling buds of May", "the eye of heaven" in the hope of making a synopsis of Sonnet xviii. Complete the list as you will, but nothing of the sonnet has been caught in it.

Music has been called "l'art de penser avec les sons", and in the symphony music is most itself. There the process of thought can go on in complete freedom from other associations. It is the musician's opportunity to speak his own language, and we have no business to ask him to translate. He has a right to his "take it or leave it" attitude. But if he gives his symphony a title, such as "Pastoral", that may be taken as an invitation to look for a translation, and Dr. Vaughan Williams is, of course, only the latest of a very long line of composers who have first offered a verbal analogy to their music and then been fearful of the consequences. Beethoven with the same title committed himself much more deeply, and then drew back with his famous phrase "Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerei". It was too late; he had not only supplied the descriptive titles to the several movements which set his hearers picture-making for themselves instead of listening to him, but he

had allowed himself to be distracted from the art of thinking in sound by the bird-songs and the storm and the thanksgiving after rain.

But what Beethoven set out to do in the first movement of his "Pastoral" Symphony is what Vaughan Williams does consistently through the whole course of his four. He just places himself in surroundings which stimulate a certain way of musical thought, and, having set its action free, the thought continues to unfold itself untrammelled by objective considerations of sight or sound or human action. That the music approximates to what he calls the "classical pattern" is natural because the artist must have his form, and the form of the symphony is to the musician very much what the form of the sonnet is to the poet. There is even a close likeness of method between Beethoven's first movement and this symphony in the way the melody gradually assumes different shapes in the process of repetition with variation over long sustained harmonies. The themes do not contrast; they coalesce. It is only occasionally that something stands out from the general texture and calls special attention to itself very much as some unusually telling figure of speech, "the darling buds of May", for example, will do in the sonnet. Such are the cor anglais melody in the first movement, the call on the "natural" trumpet with the flattened seventh in the second, and the folk-song-like phrase which makes "a kind of trio" to the *moderato pesante* (third movement). But even to remark on them seems dangerous, lest to dwell on one figure should drag it from its context and mar the sense.

The theme of the Finale, which is first heard sung by the soprano voice above a distant drum roll and last heard fading away beneath a single violin note, is something more than an incident. It pervades the whole of this wonderful movement, and creates a climax, not a battering climax of full orchestral tone but one reached in an intense unison of violins. This movement is in a sense the finest of the four, or rather it is the one which justifies and fulfils the other three. One has climbed the hill, and can look away to a horizon which seems infinitely distant as the eye is led to it through receding gradations of blue.

But my pen hesitates here as I catch myself offering an analogy, the very thing which the composer has seemed so anxiously to avoid. That is inevitable, however, if one is to converse about music at all. To me this symphony speaks like that wide down country in which, because there is no incident, every blade of grass and tuft of

moss is an incident; round it there is a great space, and from the summit spreads a great distance. Nor is this merely a fanciful illustration. The technical style supports it. One may appeal to these twenty fragments of tune which are put forward as its thematic material. Every one of them is based on the simplest diatonic intervals of music. They are of the stuff of plain-song and folk-song, the blades of grass and tufts of moss, the primitive growth of musical nature. And the harmony comes simply from the profusion of these things. It is no matter of "chords"—that is to say notes stuck on to heighten the effectiveness of the tunes; rather the interlacing growth of these intervals brings a polyphony on which the ear rests, as one's foot does in the turf of the hillside. And the spaciousness begun by the contrapuntal texture is completed by the clarity of the instrumentation. Here are no murky sounds such as those which properly surround the "London "Symphony; one breathes a clean air from first to last. Nothing could point this contrast more directly than the endings of the two Scherzos, though both are diminuendos to a vanishing point. The Nocturne of the "London" Symphony loses itself in mist; this coda, "the one really quick passage", evaporates into light. So there it is, a symphony above all else, since one has only to listen to the music to know all the composer's thought; yet "Pastoral" has no very far-fetched analogy since its thought keeps close to simple things.

Vaughan Williams's Progress

(4 February 1922)

THE new symphony by Vaughan Williams has naturally filled the thoughts of musicians. A work of this kind must be the subject of a considerable variety of opinion. It has to contend with all sorts of prepossessions existing in the minds of its very different hearers. Of these, two kinds seem to be of special importance—those which are the outcome of experiences of other kinds of music, especially contemporary music, by other composers, and those which belong to knowledge of its composer's previous work, from which some image of his mind has been built up which the new work disturbs.

The former kind of prepossession hardly admits of argument. If after hearing this "Pastoral" Symphony a man says, "Yes, all very well, but give me the luxuriant tones of the *Poème de l'extase* or the unbridled impulses of *Le sacré du Printemps* or the exuberant varieties of *The Planets*," there is only one answer: "By all means take them." His preference for more energetically stimulating forms of music passes no adequate criticism on a symphony which aims at something different, any more than the sense of satisfaction in it precludes a delight in these and other ebullitions of the musical impulse. But if a man is disappointed in the "Pastoral" Symphony as a successor to the "Sea" Symphony and the "London" Symphony, one can examine his case a little further.

These are Vaughan Williams's three major works up to the present, and each is a landmark in his career. At some period in comparatively early life he conceived a passion for Walt Whitman. He discovered in Whitman's poems certain qualities which were a close counterpart to his own aspirations in music—the love of plainness, plain things, and the plain words which describe them, the assurance that things which are have necessarily a beauty in themselves if one can only get close enough to see it, and the conviction, therefore, that the thing for the artist to do is just to get very close to the things which are, not to peer at them through the microscope as the scientist does, but to let them permeate him through his natural senses. How far Vaughan Williams had steeped himself in

these principles appeared in the "Sea" Symphony, when with Whitman's text as his guide he plunged headlong into the midst of his subject with "Behold, the sea itself". But there is another side to Whitman's character, one which Robert Louis Stevenson has laid stress on in *Familiar Studies*, that is his conscious conception of a mission: "He is 'The Answerer'; he is to find some way of speaking about life that shall satisfy, if only for the moment, man's enduring astonishment at his own position. And besides having an answer ready, it is he who shall provoke the question."

While Vaughan Williams linked his music with Whitman's poetry, he shouldered some part of this responsibility, and bore it finely. The progress of thought from the vision of "the sea itself" to the final exploration of the soul, "Steer for the deep waters only", supplies the main impulse to his symphony: yet possibly even then there was something in the didactic side of Whitman which irked him a little. He selected with care amongst Whitman's profuse expressions, and he had some difficulty in dealing musically with certain of the lines he retained.

In the "London" Symphony he drew rather away from this part of the Whitman gospel. Here his music stood alone, without either the help or the hindrance of words; but apart from that, it is certainly less forthright and confident than its predecessor, and that not from any diminution of creative energy, still less from a falling off in technical handling, but from a certain hesitancy in the composer's choice of a standpoint. While he provokes question, he is not so ready with the answer. The symphony is full of London sounds, but we are asked to consider them as accidents, not essentials of the music. Vaughan Williams's first and most sympathetic commentator, George Butterworth, felt it necessary to apologize for discussing the music in relation to its acknowledged subject, and the composer has suggested that "Symphony by a Londoner" would be a better title. Will he some years hence experience the same misgivings about the title of the new work? Hardly, because in the interval between writing the "London" Symphony and the "Pastoral" Symphony, he has outgrown that argumentative side of the Whitman philosophy which Stevenson has pointed to as the limitation of Whitman's art. In the "London" Symphony it dogged his steps, making him alternately venturesome and retiring. Now he has no problem to propound, no cause to espouse, consequently no fear that the hearer will forget the music in the discovery of other less essential interests. For there is nothing in the "Pastoral"

Symphony but music. He is not concerned to find "a way of speaking about life" which shall satisfy anyone else even for a moment, though his unconcern may achieve this more fully than any amount of taking thought could do. He is just living his own life simply, unaffectedly. So far from having lost touch with those plain things the love of which was the first bond between him and his favourite poet, he stands closer to them than ever before. If the "Pastoral" Symphony had appeared alone, without the other two—which is practically unthinkable—it would be difficult indeed to place it. Then the suggestions of what it leaves out of count might have some relevance. Viewed in the light of the other two, however, its position becomes perfectly clear; it is just another stanza in the "chant of pleasant exploration".

"Sir John in Love"

(8 July 1939)

THERE are divergent views about the value of a national idiom to pure instrumental music, views illustrated by the symphonies of Elgar on the one hand, and those of Vaughan Williams on the other. There can be only one about its importance to opera or indeed to any vocal music where the first essential is that the music should be the counterpart of the language. English opera stuck fast after the death of Purcell for some 200 years mainly for lack of a genius who, to use the Wagnerian expression, could fertilize the language in song. Talented composers attempted the fertilizing process first through Italianate melody, then through Germanic orchestral methods, with the result that everyone felt uncomfortable, and, vaguely sensing a misfit, fell back on the absurd explanation that the English language is bad for singing.

They did not find it bad in the more concise forms of the ballad opera from *The Beggar's Opera* to Gilbert and Sullivan, and they never stopped to consider why it was so good there and so manifestly bad in the setting of a play to continuous music which it was generally agreed to call "Grand" opera. If pressed to examine the point the objector to English grand opera will probably say that an English lyric may find its apt musical setting as well as one in any other language; he will admit that heroic or romantic verse may be well managed, even though the successful examples in English opera have been comparatively few. It is the prose statements of his native tongue which he cannot bear to hear mouthed musically. No, he declares, you simply cannot sing those things in English. Perhaps the Italians and the Germans can. Anyhow we can enjoy the tunes of Verdi and the orchestral opulence of Wagner and occasionally switch on an electric torch in a dark interval to get a glimpse of the synopsis and find out what it is all about. That is what we may call the ordinary Covent Garden tone of mind, and it is that which Vaughan Williams attacks and triumphantly puts to rout in his opera, *Sir John in Love*.

Falstaff and his fellows were not poetical gentlemen, and Shakespeare in *The Merry Wives* for the most part made them talk plain

English. Falstaff may occasionally assert his gentlehood in an heroic couplet.

> Falstaff will learn the honour of the age,
> French thrift, you rogues; myself and skirted page.

This Vaughan Williams sets to eight bars of music which might be a stray leaf torn from an Elizabethan song-book, but it is not. It is merely his own conception of how such a couplet should be declaimed in order to complete the discomfiture of the two rapscallions, Nym and Pistol. But Falstaff more frequently swaggers in prose: "And here another letter to Page's wife, who even now gave me good eyes too, examined my parts with most judicious œillades: sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly."

What can a composer do, with this sort of thing? Think of ranting it in grand operatic fashion, with high notes, and wide intervals, and a climax on the "portly belly". It would be merely disgusting. Vaughan Williams does it all on a diatonic tune of five or six notes, with the right spacing to give emphasis, while the orchestra slyly hints at the old tune, "John, come kiss me now". His Falstaff is just a silly besotted old thing, showing off.

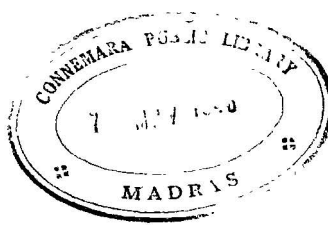
About these folk-tunes Vaughan Williams says in his preface: "When a particular folk tune appeared to me to be the fitting accompaniment to the situation, I have used it. When I could not find a folk tune, I have made shift to make up something of my own."

In that he is perhaps wilfully misleading, because the listener to *Sir John in Love* is never conscious from the first moment to the last of any "making shift". It all comes out with complete naturalness, whether the composer is making up something of his own, as he generally is, or recalling something which we have heard before. No one can say that all the best tunes are the folk-tunes, though "Greensleeves" is a tune hard to beat.

What some people do say, and not without justification, is that they find the actual sound of the music, particularly of the orchestration, harsh and ungrateful to the ear. Even Fenton's "Have you seen but a bright lily grow?" (Vaughan Williams occasionally indulges in a lyric that is not Shakespeare's) is not the melting love-song of their dreams. But to that it may be replied that their operatic dreams have been dreamed for the most part in Covent

Garden to the strains of Wagner and Puccini, and if the complaint is that Vaughan Williams has eschewed the mellifluousness of the later nineteenth century his answer will probably be "Certainly, because there was something else to be done with this particular play". His music is drawn to scale; Fenton and Anne are not to bawl their loves to a distant gallery, while the orchestra does its best to prevent their voices from reaching to it.

We could wish that his arrangement of the play had given us more of Fenton and Anne, and apparently he has wished so too, for he has lately published a Prologue Episode, and Interlude, not yet performed in London, to be added to *Sir John in Love*, which includes another scene for them. Some day this opera as completed with these additions must find its way on to the public stage. We shall hope that that will be at Sadler's Wells, where its uncompromising English style would have the best chance of an intelligent production and a sympathetic reception. For this it will be necessary to begin with a realization that it is not meant to compete with continental masterpieces by stealing their thunder. It is meant to be enjoyed by English people who know their Shakespeare and are also at home with the music of their own Country from "Sumer is icumen in" to Purcell's *Fairie Queen*. Such people may be inclined to think of it as the "perfect opera" ("a story sung with proper action") which Purcell dreamed of on the English stage.



Job: A Masque

(1 December 1934)

THE substance of *Job* is now well known. It has taken a permanent place in the repertory of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, and Vaughan Williams's music in the richer form which this score represents has been heard in a few concert performances. But *Job* has not yet been seen and heard complete, because those theatres which have brought it on to the stage cannot command the full orchestral palette, and perhaps should not, since such an orchestra would be liable to overweight a small theatre, to say nothing of overcrowding its orchestra pit.

We have still to hope that some day there may be given a performance on a scale which can realize all the composer's intentions both as to stagecraft and to music. It should not be beyond possibility of attainment, for after all there is nothing extravagant about either; Vaughan Williams's orchestra is actually smaller than that of many a modern concert work, Holst's *The Planets*, for example. The only difficulty is in pooling the resources of concert-room and theatre. With a stage and auditorium of the size of Drury Lane, the Sadler's Wells Ballet, and the B.B.C.'s orchestra *Job* might be produced in a series of special performances which would give a new realization of its beauty and power. Let us hope that the publication of the score is a first step in that direction.

There can be no doubt that we have here one of the most original conceptions of our time, but its originality is to be distinguished from mere novelty. Indeed, the Continental musicians who witnessed the performance at Oxford some years ago at the festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music were inclined to cavil at its lack of musical novelty. This, they said, is not modern music; it accepts its methods from the past; it bolsters its essential ideas with thick harmonies and colours them with a sensuously beautiful orchestration, whereas the whole tendency of modern music is to eliminate accessories and to present the composer's idea as directly as possible. That is a tenable line of criticism, but the suggestion that the style of Vaughan Williams's music runs counter to modern tendencies is no refutation of its originality; it may

betoken a greater originality than that of its contemporaries. One is tempted to make a momentary comparison of *Job* with its contemporary, Stravinsky's *Perséphone, mélodrame en trois parties.* Granted that no real judgement can be formed of the latter merely from hearing its music, it is yet clear that novelty of style and expression is very important to Stravinsky, and that concentration thereon brings him perilously near to accepting eccentricity in place of originality.

The originality of *Job* is of a quite different order. It owns to no pre-arranged technical standpoint, makes no conscious exclusions implying contempt for this or that feature of musical expression as outmoded. It is an originality big enough to draw its material in great part from well-known sources, from the English folk dance, from the polite dances of a bygone age, Pavan, Galliard, and Minuet, and from some non-musical associations of idea. In the piano transcript, published some time ago, there were certain descriptions of the choreography which are not included in the full score. Such were at the beginning of the dance of Job's sons and daughters, "The figures of this dance should take suggestions from the dances 'Jenny pluck pears' and 'Hunsdon House', also the dancing group in the Munich glyptothek", and suggestions for certain tableaux were directed to be taken from well-known pictures in the National Gallery. No doubt these were considered superfluous now that the stage treatment has become more or less stereotyped, but it would have been valuable to have as preface to the full score as frank and full a statement as possible of what the composer's conceptions of the several scenes were before practical considerations led to their modification.

But all these details, from the primitive dance figures to the elaborate orchestral texture, have been assembled and moulded together to give expression to what the composer found in Blake's illustrations to the Book of Job. The masque for dancing is no mere illustration of an illustration, even though its scenes reproduce the pictures and follow their sequence closely. The originality lies in the composer's power to write music which goes further than the sum of these antecedents, and the more we study the score, or, better still, listen to it, the more keenly aware we become of this power. The virility of the melodic and rhythmic lines is great enough to carry the weight of the orchestral elaboration alike in "Satan's Dance of Triumph" and in the visions of plague, pestilence, famine, and battle which emanate from Job's dream. These are at

once the most strenuous and the most conventional scenes. In contrast to them are the noble simplicity of the "Saraband of the Sons of God", the subtle voluptuousness of the "Minuet of the Sons of Job", and the radiance of the Galliard in which the "Sons of the Morning" procure the banishment of Satan.

Probably what will most secure for this masque its place as a landmark in history is that, just at the moment when all the brilliance of the ballet as an art-form seemed most in danger of becoming dissipated on trivial themes perversely handled, Vaughan Williams produced a work which with singleness of purpose developed a great theme greatly. It swept aside the false standards and fashionable affectations of decadence and linked the modern art of the musical theatre with the traditions of the unsophisticated folk-art of his country. Thus the history of 300 years ago repeats itself, for this was what Milton did when he enriched the world with *Comus*.

"Five Tudor Portraits"

(6 February 1937)

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S *Five Tudor Portraits*, given in London for the first time in January 1937 is more than just the latest example of the composer's fertility of invention. That has had sufficiently ample proof in the publications of the Oxford Press, which since the appearance in 1935 of the severest of his orchestral works, the Symphony in F minor, have included such diverse things as the comic opera *The Poisoned Kiss*, produced at Cambridge last year, and the dramatic fantasy *Riders to the Sea*, inspired by the Keltic imagination of J. M. Synge.

These and other works have created the impression that while Vaughan Williams's tone of voice is the most distinctive and recognizable among living composers, one never knows what he will be at next. The voice may be used for good converse on any subject that comes his way. But the *Five Tudor Portraits* are evidently a matter of more vital concern, and the reason seems to be that he has found a bit of himself in the mixture of satire and sympathy, ribaldry and tenderness, gathered in the "breathless rhymes" of John Skelton. Many years ago Walt Whitman seized him in the same way, because of the latter's combination of vaulting idealism with downright matter-of-fact statement, and the result was the "Sea" Symphony ranging from "a rude brief recitative of ships sailing the seas" to the explorations of the soul. But the "Sea" Symphony, still Vaughan Williams's greatest choral work, manipulated the poet for the purposes of the composition. It magnified the idealistic side of him at the expense of the other. Neither that nor any other musical work could give expression to what R. L. Stevenson aptly called the "bull in a china shop" side of Whitman.

The first thing we feel about the *Five Tudor Portraits* is that the sixteenth-century poet and the twentieth-century musician are really setting out on the same course together. Naturally the poems are selected and grouped for the purposes of a musical suite, but there is no aspect of the old Norfolk parson's observation of the life about him which the composer rejects from the first as unsuitable or inconvenient. That has given the composer all sorts of subtle

problems to solve in the setting of the words, but the fact that all his life he has been setting to music English poetry and prose, the Bible and Bunyan and George Herbert, Shakespeare (*Sir John in Love*) and modern poets great and small, has given him an ease in that matter which rivals Henry Purcell's. The English language now holds no terrors for him, and his treatment of it is full of delight for the singers and the hearers. We speak of the hearers in the hall. It may be that the listeners by wireless could not make head or tail of half of it, for the rapid enunciation of English words by a large number of voices is very difficult to put over. Every verbal point must be made if the flavour of this union between poet and composer is to be appreciated.

The third and fourth movements are likely to be the least intelligible at a first hearing, the "Epitaph of John Jayberd of Diss" for the obvious reason that it is chiefly in monkish Latin, "Jane Scroop—Her lament for Philip Sparrow" because the uninitiated may be misled into thinking it is meant to be funny, as "drunken Alice" at "The Tunning of Elinor Rumming" is funny. Vaughan Williams has tried to forestall this error in a note in which he says "Jane saw no reason and I see no reason, why she should not pray for the peace of her Sparrow's soul". If it were "a parody" it would indeed be too long as some have said it is, for parody can never be short enough. Actually, it is the whole heart and soul of a girl brought up in a convent (and who, therefore, naturally used conventual language) and who loved her pet and lost it. Everything she knew—her Mass Book, her music, and her birds—is woven into her piteous lament, and the music is a complete realization of the child's heart, which, after all, was somewhere in John Skelton deep down beneath all his ribald balladry.

One is inclined to claim that "Jane Scroop" is the loveliest piece of music that Vaughan Williams has ever written, and because of that let no one think that it can be picked out and given alone as the best of the *Five Tudor Portraits*. It would lose half its beauty if it were separated from its more robust surroundings, and the others are made actual because the delicate humour which comes to the surface in "Jane Scroop" is somewhere in their background preventing them from ever degrading their portraiture to the level of caricature.

It could be said that all this is more to the praise of the poet than of the musician, and that may be so. But it is a very persistent characteristic of the best things in English music, from Byrd's

madrigals "framed to the life of the words" onwards, that their life consists in the musician's capacity to share the poet's experience. That is the reason why it is so difficult to carry the best of English music abroad. One may offer the F Minor Symphony to a foreign audience more easily than the *Five Tudor Portraits* and yet be certain that the latter represents more directly and positively the essentials of Vaughan Williams's music. For the moment all that it is intended to do here is to draw a distinction between this and the many other recent works of the composer which native audiences have found good and noted for periodic repetition. Short and unpretentious as it is, it seems to be beyond question one of his representative works which stands with the "Sea" Symphony, *On Wenlock Edge*, and, possibly, the "Pastoral" Symphony as part of his unique contribution to English musical literature.

The Delius Festival

(2 November 1929)

SIX concerts, in which were performed all the greater works of Delius and a representative selection of the smaller ones, attracted full houses. This (apparent) enthusiasm for music which has hitherto enjoyed no exceptional vogue may be discounted a little by a measure of compassionate curiosity which urges his fellow-countrymen to be present with the stricken composer on a great occasion, and it may be a little discounted by the quickly flying word that at last some good orchestral playing is being heard in London. But these are trifles which do not for a moment obscure the welcome fact that the art of Delius has obtained a wide recognition. On what solid foundation is this newly found popularity based, and what future may be expected for the music thus revealed?

The strength and weakness of Delius is his solitariness. He belongs to no school, follows no tradition, and is like no other composer in the form, content, or style of his music. He constantly presents to those who would study him a paradox. It might reasonably be expected, for example, that a composer whose music is so all-over-alike in style, idiom, and subject-matter would weary his audiences by monotony. But this festival has revealed a very great variety within this undeniable sameness, and an undoubted capacity to sustain whole programmes single-handed.

Another true enough generalization would be that Delius's music is contemplative rather than emotional—the emotion either is recollected in exceptional tranquillity or it has never been experienced direct at all. Delius is no romantic worshipping his own emotions; he is almost always quite detached. Yet in "Appalachia" we feel the shock of the impression that America made upon him; the emotion is immediate, a passionate response to the appeal of negro pathos. Only in "The First Cuckoo" and in the more affirmative parts of *A Mass of Life* is there any such direct expression of emotion. But these are more than enough to invalidate the generalization.

Again, a trait which was detected and adversely criticized in

the concert which Delius gave in London thirty years ago was his melancholy. Nostalgia, regret, disheartened-ness—these are his themes, these are the moods with which his music vibrates in most natural sympathy. The choice of lugubrious subjects may appear to be an absurd criticism of his music—even pathological emotions have produced good works of art, often of a most delicate and subtle beauty. Yet unless a composer has some more positive attitude to show towards life than vain regrets (for regrets are mostly vain) he will not achieve greatness. Greatness has been reserved by the judgement of the world for the products of a healthy and vital mind. Great tragic art could not be called "optimistic", but it never provokes the kind of comment that has been made on Dowson's *Songs of Sunset*, set with such intimate understanding by Delius, "Come, come, my good man, pull yourself together, it is not as bad as all that." The whole scale of values which as humans we are bound to employ in judging all our experience necessarily has this bias in favour of health, vigour, and the will-to-live. The decadents in every art have created beauty from the failures or the perversions of this vital spirit, but they always rank definitely below the great. Most of the works of Delius have a rich beauty that has rightly been called autumnal, and if he had not written *A Mass of Life*, with its affirmations and more positive outlook—the youthful vigour of the immature piano concerto may also legitimately be put in the scale on this side—he would have achieved a place only among the minor poets of the orchestra.

It has been claimed for him that he is the last of his line, the true product of the end of a great period of art (the nineteenth century), the herald of a winter that is already upon us, when, it must be confessed, most of the new music is very bleak indeed. But this is to claim too much. The music that ended with Brahms was vigorous enough, when it was cut off by the revolt against tonality as the bed-rock basis of structure. Delius is far too detached emotionally to earn the title of romantic, and technically he inherits very little even from Wagner. Furthermore, so solitary a figure could not be the only sign of so widespread a tendency as the decline of romanticism. Elgar and Strauss, to name his far more tough-minded contemporaries, have the will-to-live very much in evidence in their music. He remains a solitary paradox, the contemplator of life who does not think, but dreams.

This spiritual isolation is reflected in his technique. Variation form offers endless scope for reflecting on a subject without getting

any farther. Delius is not happy in his use of sonata form, which demands progressive development of the thought; his use of variations is masterly. Other symptoms of his lack of vigour are a rhythmic languor and the absence of counterpoint. He is reported to have said that harmony is an instinct—which it certainly is not, but equally certainly it is his natural and normal way of thinking, and the beauty of his music lies in its texture. But the texture is not contrapuntal, and it is counterpoint that makes for vigour. His harmony, moreover, is curiously static; it belongs to a world from which time and movement have been banished. His discords are so spaced as to sound concordant. In the old days the function of a discord was to cause a feeling of movement by pressing forward to its resolution. Delius uses peculiarly soft discords which demand no resolution; the first and fourth beats of almost every bar of "The First Cuckoo" will provide instances of these soft discords, these highly flavoured concords, which float motionless in a timeless atmosphere.

Unhurried contemplation permits an acute sensibility to record its own aching sense of the beautiful. The spirit of to-day asks rather for the naked truth than for what is pleasing to its sense of beauty. In that respect Delius certainly belongs to the last century rather than to this, but in all else he belongs to no nation or period or school, for there are in him too many contradictions. This constitutes the strength of his appeal. He is as little likely to influence those who come after him as he has been influenced by those who have gone before. He is himself alone, and his uniqueness will ensure him a lasting shrine in one of the quiet and shady groves of the temple of music.

THE OPERA

A Classical Modernist

(26 May 1923)

AN edition of Monteverdi's "fable in music", the famous *Orfeo*, carefully edited by Francesco Malipiero, has been issued by Messrs. J. and W. Chester. It is noteworthy that this classic of the opera not only appears through an English firm, but is engraved and printed in England, and it may be said at once that the whole design does credit to English craftsmanship. Signor Malipiero is known in this country through his compositions as a leader in what is regarded as the "advanced" school of Italian musicianship, and we have caught a glimpse of him as a lover of the classics in his delicate handling of a suite of pieces by Cimarosa. Indeed, one of the best claims to "advancement" which the modern school—whether in Italy, England, or elsewhere—is able to prefer is found in their attitude towards music of other ages having other manners than their own.

The "moderns" of a generation ago were inclined to deal roughly with the "primitives". Mis-reading the Wagnerian gospel, they held that the musical efforts of the ages culminated in the orchestra of the later nineteenth century; that composers who had not their advantages had either spent misfortunate lives in struggling to attain them, or, remaining content with their limitations, had wasted their energies on types of art which died with themselves or soon after them. The editorship and criticism of the older music in the nineteenth century is marred by an attitude of patronage towards the originals, whether those originals were the English madrigals of the Elizabethan era which Rimbault and others "corrected", or the cantatas of J. S. Bach himself. Even so enlightened a musician as Robert Franz could seriously take it in hand to show how Bach might have completed his orchestration in the contrapuntal manner, as though Bach (of all men!) were unable to write as much counterpoint as he wanted in his accompaniments. We have had an example of this attitude of patronage before us lately in a production of *The Magic Flute*, wherein it was assumed that

Mozart would be all the better for having his spoken dialogue dressed up into recitatives, with his own themes used as orchestral *leit-motiven*, as though Mozart could not write recitatives (and employ *leit-motiven*, too, for that matter) where he wanted them.

Evidently, then, the attitude still lingers. But modern minds have foresworn it, just as a century earlier literary criticism and editorship refused the dictatorial methods of Johnson. Such an editor as Signor Malipiero must come to Monteverdi with a certain feeling of kinship. The latter was breaking fresh ground, working without precedent, shaping a new music with the aid of the very diverse materials offered by the old. His technical position presents a close parallel to that of composers of the present day. Fully trained and, indeed, highly skilled in the methods of classical music as it existed in the madrigal, he realized their inadequacy for the expression of his dramatic ideal. The styles of the "Frottole" or part-songs, also of vocal declamation newly exploited by the Florentine dramatists, lay open to him; a considerable array of instruments was at his disposal (he indicates in his score the presence of no less than thirty-three instruments), and, together with the skill of singers in executing passages of outstanding difficulty, gave him an almost bewildering opportunity for the use of what we now call "colour". His problem was identical with that of our modernists—how to mould all these divergent technical and material resources to his own end; and as we read the score which Signor Malipiero lays before us we realize that Monteverdi succeeded, as all the great innovators since him have succeeded, by subordinating all questions of style and technique to the purposes of his intensely felt need for expression.

The juxtaposition of the madrigal-like choruses of nymphs and shepherds with the free dialogue of principal characters, the reflection of their feeling in the instrumental passages or *ritornelli* which link the scenes together, show at once how far the composer has mastered his material, a mastery little affected by the "crudities" of detail so often and so excessively dwelt on by historians. Indeed, there has been too much tendency to regard detail, whether in its praise or dispraise, in discussing this amazing work. The florid passages, both vocal and instrumental, of Orpheus's address to the Spirits are always quoted. But this scena in itself is only made musically significant by what follows it, like the demons' chorus in *The Dream of Gerontius*. When violins, "cornetti", and harp have run riot in strenuous competition with the voice, there comes the

solemnity of Orpheus's meeting with Charon; the pathos of his appeal on a chromatically rising phrase, "Rendetemi il mio ben", repeated as he crosses the Styx, and then that most impressive chorus of spirits, low-toned voices accompanied by grave instruments, including five trombones, the whole a piece of musical characterization which Gluck himself could scarcely rival a hundred and fifty years later. If only we could hear it!

Signor Malipiero puts it within our grasp. His score makes clear exactly what Monteverdi wrote, even to showing the original clefs of the voices. Yet it reads like a modern operatic score. The *ritornelli* for stringed instruments are printed in the form of a piano score, but the part-writing is clearly preserved. The *obbligato* parts for special instruments are printed in full where they occur, and all Monteverdi's indications of instrumentation are retained. Where he accompanied the voice only with an unfigured bass, the editor's filling up of the chords is written in small notes and done in perfect taste. Perhaps we shall hear it. An English translation, had that been possible, would have increased the hope.

Verdi at Work

(19 May 1923)

"A LIBRETTO, a libretto, and the opera is written," exclaimed Verdi in one of his letters to Léon Escudier, his Paris publisher. Those letters (now appearing serially, in an English translation, in *Music and Letters*), are full of sidelights on the making of opera by the man who knew more about it than all the other great composers of the world put together, with the possible exception of Mozart. While Wagner was puzzling out what the theatre ought to be, Verdi's mind was concentrated with Latin clear-sightedness on the theatre as it was.

In these letters we see him recasting his *Macbeth* for its production in Paris, cutting out what he found to be weak or characterless, rewriting arias, devising the ballet afresh, and so on. He has in mind a perfectly clear picture of what the result will be. Nothing is left out of this picture, from the movements of chorus girls to the tone of the bass clarinet. It is a picture of sight and sound in one, not an ideal vision like Wagner's of poetry fertilized by music, but a realistic picture of the stage and the orchestra at each particular moment of the particular work under consideration. He finds it all a little irksome at first. He says once: "You cannot imagine how tedious and difficult it is to work oneself up over a thing done at some other time, and to take up the thread broken so many years ago. It will soon be done—but I detest mosaic in music. Patience, patience, patience!"

Few can add this patience to the swift, spontaneous impulse which produces works in a flash. Somewhere else Verdi speaks of an Act as the work of a moment. It is the method of the real maker of operas as opposed to that of the musician who composes music and leaves the rest to Providence or a producer. So when we find Verdi crying out for a libretto it is not the cry of the mere musician waiting to be fed from a spoon by an author or a dramatist, the sort of cry which has so often gone up from composers of this country. The context shows that. The words occur in a letter of June 1865, after the failure of the remodelled *Macbeth*, when the contract for a new work was under discussion.

> Nothing could be easier than to come to an agreement for the writing of an opera; we should agree in half a minute if there were a libretto or at least a ready-made subject. *King Lear* is magnificent, sublime, pathetic, but not sufficiently spectacular for an opera. In this respect *Cleopatra* is better, but the protagonist's love and character and her very misfortunes arouse little sympathy. At any rate, to judge of it one would have to see it. In fine, everything depends on the libretto.

And then follows the exclamation.

One sees at once that "libretto" to him means subject matter, something which he can take and mould into operatic form as he conceived it, not something already in an operatic form to which he should add a musical counterpart. M. Prodhomme (in introducing these letters to the readers of *Music and Letters*), points out that they show how Verdi, having received the libretto, "revised and corrected it according to his taste, without regard to the skilful distribution of arias and recitatives arranged by the librettist," and also reminds us that after his death a *scenario* for *King Lear* of his own writing was found among his papers. Presumably, those words "not sufficiently spectacular" explain why the matter rested there. They do not mean any superficial view of a great subject, but simply that a subject, however great, had to represent a stage picture to him above all else if he was to make an opera at all. Given the subject and the right pictorial suggestion, all the rest was "mosaic" work, the fitting of details into their right places.

This is borne out in another letter, where, after being forced to accept the fact that *Macbeth* had been a failure in Paris, he writes: "Allow me to make a few observations all the same. The duet in the first act, the *finale* in the second, and the sleep-walking scene did not have the effect they ought to have had. Well, there must have been something in the performance that was not quite right. I am not speaking of the rest of the opera, but often through trying to do too much, nothing is done."

The last is a word for all operatic producers and artists to engrave on their memories. If his conception had been carried out he could be certain of success, but that "trying to do too much" on the part of his interpreters might wreck all.

It is particularly worth while to recall Verdi's attitude of mind at this moment, when London has just been presented with a new opera by a native composer. So many past failures have been

attributed to bad "books"—and, indeed, in English opera they have had much to answer for. But Verdi would have it that the composer is to blame for accepting the bad "book", not the librettist for offering it, because it is the composer who must envisage the whole product in its representation on the stage before ever he begins to write his music. That is what very few English composers have ever gained enough practical experience to be able to do, and what no composer, save one of unaccountable genius, can be expected to do until he has seen and heard his first experiments and had the chance of reconsidering them. It was, indeed, by that process that Verdi himself made his "sense of the stage" the unerring thing it became, and the episode of *Macbeth* shows that even with him the process was gradual. *The Perfect Fool* would be noteworthy for this if for nothing else, that it shows us a native composer trying to take the whole problem of opera-making into his own grasp and treating it as one. If his grasp is not equally secure on every issue, that is nothing to be wondered at. We should wonder, indeed, if it were in what is practically a first opera. At any rate, it shows that Holst may become a real maker of operas, which is more than being a composer of them.

Design and Purpose

(5 May 1934)

"RATHER a depressing opera," remarked a stallholder to her neighbour in the course of one of those conversational episodes which Sir Thomas Beecham has so roundly condemned.

The expression seemed to show with what little knowledge of what they may expect to see and hear some people enter the opera house. They have cheerfully paid large sums for their seats; they expect to be rewarded by a cheerful entertainment. Their demand does not preclude some horrors. The heroine may be murdered or commit suicide, or die of consumption or asphyxiation; *Carmen*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Bohème*, and *Aida* are all, no doubt, thought of as thoroughly cheerful operas by these opera-goers. Let the end be what it will (after all one can always slip away before the last scene just as one may always come in in the course of the first scene), the important point is that the principal characters should reach their ends through a series of brilliant spectacles, should comport themselves gracefully even under stress of the most violent emotion, should give out their voices in an exuberant stream of melody, and at well-chosen moments have the encouraging support of a full chorus and *corps de ballet*.

Unfortunately for its popularity *Fidelio* is not constructed on these principles. Beethoven no doubt was well aware of their existence when he took up his quarters in the theatre "an der Wien" and prepared to compose, since a Viennese audience of the early nineteenth century could be quite as exigent in its demand for cheerfulness as a London one is to-day. The first audience did not perhaps show a much higher intelligence when the opera was first produced on 20 November 1805, but there were excuses then which have since been removed. *Fidelio* in three acts was cumbersome and overlong; moreover the city was in the hands of the French invader, and the theatre was largely filled by Napoleon's officers. All circumstances seemed to combine with the composer's personal difficulties of temperament, his ill-health, increasing deaf-

ness, quarrelsomeness, and touchiness, to prevent the work from being a success; yet it has survived all contemporary successes and even gets revived in London once in seven years or so.

Beethoven was not writing for the public of that moment or of any moment. He yielded to the plea for a revision of his score less in order to make it acceptable to the kind of listener who had recently demanded that he should forswear "Eroica" and produce more works in the style of the first two symphonies and the Septet than to make his own conception complete and unequivocal. He had accepted Bouilly's story because it embodied certain salient ideas of heroism and fidelity in the struggle for personal liberty which were the mainspring of his own inner life, and which had already been illustrated in a different form through "Eroica". His "Singspiel" was to be of the same mind as the symphony, and was likely to meet with the same opposition from those who had not entered into the spirit of the latter. But he had other difficulties of a technical kind to encounter, for, despite all his early experience in the opera house at Bonn, his sense of the theatre was by no means so keen as his sense of the orchestra, and his tendency to think instrumentally grew stronger the more his deafness cut him off from human contact.

His determination to adhere to the "Singspiel" form with spoken dialogue seems to show some distrust of the singing voice as the chief vehicle of expression. A more instinctive composer for the theatre could scarcely have resisted the temptation to set to music Roceo's description of his prisoner's wasted condition. Beethoven felt words, especially conversational words, to be an impediment in his musical speech. He wrestled with them to make them amenable to his design; "O namen—namenlose Freude" for example; he ignored their plain implications when he had something better to do in the Quartet "Mir ist so wunderbar". But that number is the first of several supremely beautiful slow movements which arrive at crucial points in the dramatic situation. Leonora turns from indignation to resolve with the words "Komm' Hoffnung", and is fortified by the rich melody of the horns welling up around her voice in a sublime Adagio. Florestan is introduced at the beginning of Act II with an orchestral slow movement in which the haunting rhythm of drums and the palpitating string chords are more searching than even the despairing cry "Gott! welch' Dunkel hier!" with which the voice enters. When Leonora's pity and fear have been concentrated in the spoken word, "Sie dringt in die Tiefe des

Herzens," the Terzett, "Euch werde Lohn", brings relief in a healing melody.

These things declare the deeper side of Beethoven's nature as we know it in the slow movements of sonatas, quartets, and symphonies. His opera contains innumerable other and contrasting emotions, from the simple good nature of Rocco's gold song near the beginning to the clamorous triumph of right and justice in the finale. But all have, as it were, to be measured by the expressive depths of the slow movements, and the opera only yields its secrets to those who are prepared to bring to it the kind of attention which they give to the symphony in the concert room. It may demand some patience, but more a disposition to sympathy with the purpose which possessed Beethoven in the act of writing it. With those simple qualifications in the listener, *Fidelio* is soon found to contain all that we associate with the name of Beethoven, and beside that the thought of cheerful entertainment can be put aside as insignificant.

Opera and the Time Machine

(6 March 1943)

SUPPOSE a fairy gift; a magic aeroplane which can span time as well as space instantaneously. It will transport us to the opera houses of Europe, and if necessary farther afield, in any year from the end of the sixteenth century to 1940, and bestow the privilege of attending all first performances of operas great and small, "grand" and comic, within that period. What date shall we choose? Here is a game, one of many possible games, which Dr. A. Loewenberg's monumental volume, *Annals of Opera*,[1] encourages you to play. The indulgence is countenanced by Professor Edward J. Dent, who in a scholarly preface recommends "browsing at random on these pages", in order to get "all sorts of new lights" on the history of opera.

The method of the book is a chronological arrangement of the productions of operas from Peri's *La Dafne* (1597) to Zanella's *Il Revisore* (1940); not all operas, for, as Dr. Loewenberg says, "the number of entries could easily have been doubled; but the book had to be kept within reasonable proportions". It contains, however, all those operas which made some mark in their own day or whose composers used them as stepping stones to higher things. The copious volume runs to upwards of 900 pages, including elaborate indexes, and Professor Dent, a competent authority, boldly declares that "every work named in these pages has been contributory, in however slight a way, to the general history of the musical drama".

Before we begin playing our games with it a high tribute must be paid to the unremitting industry and care of the compiler. To quote Professor Dent again: "For every opera named we are given the names of librettist and composer, as well as the name of the theatre and the town in which the first production took place; but besides these bare facts we are often supplied with a vast quantity of subsidiary information especially as regards the source of the

[1] *Annals of Opera*. 1597-1940. Compiled from the Original Sources. By Alfred Loewenberg. With an introduction by Edward J. Dent. Cambridge: Heffer.

plot, subsequent revivals in other cities and translations into various languages." Nor is this information taken from existing books of reference. It is described as "compiled from original sources", which means original scores and librettos, playbills and contemporary newspapers and periodicals, with references also to memoirs, letters and diaries. The number of years of close research which the process must have entailed is not to be computed. Certain it is that Dr. Loewenberg has devoted to his task many years of a life which fortunately is still not so far advanced as to leave no room for anything else. At any rate, we shall wish for him the opportunity of really making the round of all the great opera houses of the world and hearing what has survived the terror which has temporarily eclipsed the art which employed the genius of Europe through 350 years. May that experience prove an adequate reward.

But now to our game. What year shall we choose for a first flight? Let us take a date at random, put Dr. Loewenberg into the pilot's seat, turn the dial back a hundred years, and see where it takes us.

Our first hop lands us at Dresden just in time to hear the first performance of Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*, a critical moment in the career of the man who was to change the whole outlook of Europe towards the art of the musical drama. After the years of privation in Paris which had forced Wagner to sell this his own libretto to be set by another composer, he established himself with this production in the heart of his native Saxony. The first performance was on 2 January 1843, but we are reminded that it was only given four hearings in Dresden in that year, and was not revived there again till 1865, after Wagner's years of exile.

We must be in Paris next day (3 January) for Donizetti's fascinating comedy, *Don Pasquale*, his "last great success, and of his sixty-six operas the one which is most popular at present". Dr. Loewenberg traces its history down to its production at Glyndebourne in June 1938, an event still fresh in memory.

After this eventful first night we remain in Paris to hear a new opera by Auber, *La Part du Diable*, given on 16 January, which though not so perennial in its appeal had altogether 263 performances at the Opéra Comique, went round the world and reached Rio de Janeiro as early as 1846. Next, we call at Milan for Verdi's *I Lombardi* (11 February), another opera to tour the world. It was, in fact, the first Verdi opera to be given in New York where it arrived in 1847. Returning to Paris for one of the less important

operas of Halévy, *Charles VI* (15 March), we must stay on to see the redoubtable Balfe figuring among the international stars of the Opéra Comique with *Le Puits d'Amour* (20 April), the first opera which he wrote to a French text.

Paris indeed at this date is the operatic centre of Europe, for out of thirteen new productions of the year seven take place in one or other of its many musical theatres. Nor is there much sign of that national exclusiveness which welled up again later in the century. Donizetti having scored his last success (*Don Pasquale*) at the Opéra Comique registered his last failure at the Opéra on 13 November. "Donizetti himself thought *Don Sebastien* to be his masterpiece; the disappointment caused by the failure accelerated the paralysis which finished his activity in 1844," is Dr. Loewenberg's comment. On the Parisian stage the Anglo-Irish composer was made as welcome as the Italian, and Balfe was favoured with a libretto for *Le Puits d'Armour* by the famous Scribe.

But though we may linger in Paris through most of the year and make excursions from it for minor works to Palermo and Ferrara as well as to the more celebrated theatres already mentioned, we must be back in London by 27 November to witness the first appearance at Drury Lane of the most famous of all Balfe's many operas, *The Bohemian Girl*. Its melodies still linger in our ears and words of the librettist, Alfred Bunn, have even found their way into the recent *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*:

> I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls
> With vassals and serfs at my side.

Dr. Loewenberg speaks of *The Bohemian Girl* as "the most successful English opera of the early nineteenth century, and about the only one which made headway in other countries as well". It received its hundredth performance at Drury Lane within a year and went thence to Dublin, New York, Philadelphia and Sydney. It was translated into German, Italian, Swedish, French, Croatian and Russian. Its fiftieth anniversary (1893) was celebrated at Drury Lane, and its seventy-fifth (1918) at the Shaftesbury Theatre, in London. Surely the Royal Carl Rosa Opera Company will not let its centenary pass unnoticed, war or no war!

Our trip through 1843 has shown it to be a productive year. We have seen in it Verdi and Wagner coming into their own, each on his native soil; Donizetti and Balfe at the summit of their

successes, and the older French composers, Auber and Halévy, each adding to their large outputs. It is a year of turning points in operatic history.

If we switch over the dial to fifty years later and take a similar trip in 1893 we shall have to travel much farther afield, from Moscow to Mexico and from Berlin to Boston, in order to witness the upwards of three dozen first performances which are scheduled within the year. Some of the names of composers remain so obscure even to the present day that we may be inclined to question Professor Dent's declaration that all have contributed something to operatic history. They need not be listed here.

But 1893 can claim pre-eminence in the *Annals of Opera* for two outstanding events: Verdi's comedy of *Falstaff*, the text by Böito after Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, was produced at the Scala, Milan, on 9 February; and the varied events of the year were completed on 23 December with Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* at Weimar.

As the nineteenth century draws to its close autumn is in the air. The great Wagnerian controversy is over; Wagnerism is represented by its innocent disciple, Humperdinck, and Strauss was not to announce his succession as "Richard the Second" till the beginning of the new century. The grand old Verdi speaks his last word with a smile and a sigh; Gilbert and Sullivan come together once more at the Savoy Theatre with *Utopia Limited* running in London for 245 nights, but little else after it; Bruneau buttresses the new Gallic nationalism at the Opéra Comique with *L'attaque du Moulin*, founded on a story of Zola, a sinister reminiscence of the Franco-Prussian War. For the rest, the year gives the impression that many are called but few chosen.

But there is one bright token for the future in this otherwise autumnal year, Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, produced at Turin on 1 February. Dr. Loewenberg greets it as "Puccini's first great international success; given all over Italy and at—" a list of places which mean virtually all over the world. The mantle of Verdi seemed to have fallen on Puccini. The brilliant list of his productions closes on 25 April 1926, with *Turandot*, under Toscanini at the Scala, Milan.

Those who really were at the Scala on that night could have given Dr. Loewenberg a story which might have been worth a line in his annals. He duly notes that Puccini's last opera was "completed after his death in 1924 by F. Alfano, who added the last duet and

the final scene". It might have been said that it was not the completed opera that was heard on 25 April.

At the end of the pathetic scene of the death of the little slave girl in the last act, where the music comes to a quiet cadence, Toscanini laid down his baton. Speaking to the large audience, though but little raising of his voice, he said: "Here the master laid down his pen." After a pause an attempt at applause was quickly hushed and the audience left the theatre in silence. No more solemn tribute to a composer's memory can ever have been paid on an occasion which was planned to be the glittering première of a famous opera.

Dr. Loewenberg speaks of *Turandot* as "so far the last world success in the history of opera," and duly reports its rapid appearance in every opera house of repute. "The last world success," and that is seventeen years ago. During subsequent years, operas continued to be poured out and some by famous composers with librettists of high repute. Those by Richard Strauss, Respighi, Shostakovich (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*) seem to have gone furthest afield. But Strauss's short reign as "Richard the Second" had closed with *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1911, and his last entry on the last page of the annals merely shows how far he had fallen from his peak of power. All alike seem to be merely writing for their local publics with the hope, an increasingly faint hope, that what has pleased at home may please elsewhere, if it can secure a passport to enter a foreign country. For all countries were becoming more and more foreign to one another in the years before the present storm broke.

What is perhaps likely to be even more disastrous is that all the composers of music were becoming more and more foreign alike to their collaborators, the singers, and to the great public who once looked for entertainment in the opera house. The latter turned from opera to the ballet under the tutelage of Diaghilev, or sought the picture-house for which they needed no tutelage. Anyhow, the "last world success in the history of opera" was that of Puccini's posthumously produced *Turandot*, and one asks, Will there ever be another? Have all the masters laid down their pens?

Prophecy is not within Dr. Loewenberg's province or ours. He can merely carry us back in thought, and all the conditions of our present encourage us to backward thinking. We sit with our feet on the fender accepting whatever world-radio may offer, and nine-tenths of that must necessarily be something out of the past. We revive Mozart, we modernize Verdi, we reiterate Puccini. We only do not do the same with Wagner because he is out of the fashion at

the moment for supposed political reasons. If we had a real aeroplane and the free use of it, should we fly to the Scala, or to Moscow, or to the Metropolitan of New York, to hear a first night of any opera by a living composer? Should we use it to hear any great singer of to-day (there still are a few) "creating" any new role?

It requires no prophet to see that these are conditions which are liable to stifle artistic enterprise. Wagner foresaw and aimed at producing through his music-drama a "fellowship of all the artists", and the last gleam of his vision appeared when Toscanini conducted *Tristan* at Bayreuth in 1930. Toscanini was already an exile from Italy, and now all the artists are in exile, not as a result of war or of political antipathies alone but as a result of the distances placed between them and their public by mechanics; a strange result of the invention designed to bring music into the homes of the people. Certain it is that there must be some revival of fellowship and personal contact before opera can have fresh annals for Dr. Loewenberg to record or for us to "browse" upon.

CHURCH MUSIC

John Merbecke

(3 June 1939)

JOHN MERBECKE is one of the most interesting figures of English musical history. Not only was he a pioneer in setting English prose to music but he had a ready pen exercised in the writing of prose of a kind which shows us his personality. It is that which distinguishes him from most of his contemporaries, the master musicians of the sixteenth century. Two Masses and a Motet by him survive; good work of its period, but neither in quality nor quantity entitling him to a position among the great Tudor masters. He lives to-day through his *Book of Common Prayer Noted* (1550), some portions of which are in daily use in the Anglican Church Service.

But this in itself would not make him the interesting figure that he is. The greatest composers of the past often elude us as men. Such giants as William Byrd in the Elizabethan era, and Henry Purcell a hundred years later, set us puzzling over problems which their music raises, but which our scanty knowledge of their lives will not help us to solve. A preface, or a dedication, may tell us a little. Byrd gives us reasons for his faith in madrigal singing; Purcell expatiates on his admiration for the "fam'd Italian masters" of the Sonata. We snatch at such details and try to reconstruct the man's mind from them. But Merbecke tells us all about himself so that we should know him quite well if he had never written either the Latin Church Music or the *Book of Common Prayer Noted.*

He was what in the modern jargon of politics is called a man of the "extreme Left". Had he lived to-day he would probably have been expelled from the Labour Party and would not have asked to be reinstated. But in the last years of Henry VIII's reign his political platform was naturally religion, and he incurred the penalty then the equivalent to expulsion from a party. In 1543 he was condemned to be burned at the stake for heresy. He was pardoned and was restored to his position as a singing man at Windsor, but not apparently at his own request, certainly not as a result of any recan-

tation of his extreme views. Foxe's account of Merbecke's interview with Bishop Gardiner rings true. It exactly accords with the tone and temper of the man as revealed in his own writings. There were no two sides to a religious question for him. What he found in the Bible, of which he had begun to write out a copy in his own hand and of which he had made the first English Concordance, was revealed truth, and it was useless for the Bishop to tell him to go back to his music, which had become a matter of secondary importance to him. Why, then, did the Bishop not allow him to suffer the consequences of his pig-headedness? There were plenty of good singing men who were also reputable composers to be had. Yet the Bishop seemed quite convinced that Merbecke was worth saving.

Mr. J. Eric Hunt has just published a book[1] which contains facsimiles of Cranmer's first Litany (1544), with the music thereto, and of Merbecke's *Book of Common Prayer Noted* (1550), together with a reasoned statement of the facts relating to a gradual process of turning the Liturgy into English and providing it with the necessary music. Its contents are no doubt familiar to liturgiologists and should be equally so to musicians. But there has recently been so much editing of Merbecke's melodies for use in parish churches that this reference to first sources should be salutary. Merbecke's authority is often claimed for traditional melodies taken from the older plainsong of the Church which he merely adapted and adopted. His adaptations are apt to be regarded as sacrosanct. The makeshift character of the compilation is ignored, and he has been too much praised and too little understood. Only fourteen copies of his original printed edition are known to exist. Eleven are in England, two in Dublin and one in California. But now photography places a complete replica of one of them (the British Museum Music Library), with some pages from another (the King's Library) showing variants, in the hands of every one for a few shillings, and theories can be verified by reference to the facts. A copy of Mr. Hunt's book should be in the library of every choir which sings Merbecke.

The notation adopted for the music to Cranmer's Litany and for Merbecke's Book is very similar. The fount appears to be the same, but Merbecke uses the dotted note, with valuable results in accommodating the music to verbal rhythms, which Cranmer did not

[1] *Cranmer's First Litany, 1544, and Merbecke's Book of Common Prayer Noted* 1550. By J. Eric Hunt. S.P.C.K.

use. Compare "our iniquities" in the Litany with "everlastingly" in the "Quicunque Vult". There is the same idea of expressing accentuation, but the later work achieves it more neatly. It has been suggested that Merbecke may have helped Cranmer to set "the Latin note" to the English words of the Litany, and that therefore in the *Book of Common Prayer Noted* he was improving on his own earlier work. This might even account for the leniency shown him at the time of his arrest. Cranmer, and through him Gardiner, may already have discovered Merbecke's exceptional talent for such work. Any singing man could write good counterpoint, but this capacity for pioneership rather than conventional musicianship was the "goodly gift" to which Gardiner referred in the conversation which Foxe has made famous.

The *Book of Common Prayer Noted* was the first work published which attempted to deal with those niceties of setting the English language to music with which English composers have been grappling with varying success ever since. That is why it remains an epoch-making document. It may be unfortunate that Merbecke did not esteem his "goodly gift" more highly, for he lived for thirty-five years after this publication without producing any more music. Mr. Hunt gives us some interesting quotations from his protestant pamphlets, particularly the "Briefe Conference between the Pope and his Secretarie", which is not without a certain imaginative insight into a situation and skill in managing dialogue, despite the author's extreme partisanship. The whole collection of facts and facsimiles here brought together provides a picture of a man who was very much more remarkable than his music. Perhaps it was that which the Bishop perceived when he decided to deny him the martyr's crown.

A Hint from William Byrd

(23 December 1922)

CAROLS are the only subject for 23 December. It was suggested to me as a bright new idea, "Why don't you write something about carols for Christmas?" The suggestion hardly seems to be sparkling with originality, but the real objection to carols as a subject for discussion is that it invariably compels the writer to become *laudator temporis acti*, and there is already too much tendency that way as Christmas approaches for all of us who have passed the years of zestful youth.

There are so many things which are not quite all that they should be, and carols are among them. Cannot we find something in which this Christmas is better than the ghost of Christmas-past and write about that? Possibly we might. For example, musical people in London are to have the chance of enjoying that best of children's operas, *Hansel and Gretel*, and the very thought of Covent Garden filled in the afternoons beginning on Boxing Day with those chattering parties of small people who used to make the most dreary of Drury Lane Pantomimes worth going to, is cheering. Moreover, if we are to praise this Christmas for its music we shall not forget that somewhere or other in the south of London some performances of *Bethlehem*, Mr. Boughton's musical version of the Coventry Nativity play, will be going on. Lovers of *The Immortal Hour*, who now are many, will be sure to find that out. If it is adequately given they will not be disappointed, for the music is every bit as attractive as that of the work they know, perhaps even more so, since old English carols have a more definite place in it than those suggestions from Irish folksong have which hover round the score of *The Immortal Hour*. But even this is to praise the new for the sake of the old.

Is there any reason, other than the undeniable one that Christmas time makes us all look backwards towards earlier and possibly happier Christmases, to set the old carols above new ones? There are new carols, of course; quite a number of them appear every year. Some of them are new words to old music, others new music to old words; some are new in words and music. But one very

rarely finds one of these last which seems to say anything not better said in the old terms both of words and music. There is just this reason, that almost always an element of self-consciousness enters into the modern carol, from which poets and composers of an earlier time did not suffer. A carol nowadays means a song written for Christmas time about the Nativity. But a carol was once a song about anything which engaged the common interest of people and it was only as the Christmas festival became more exclusively prominent in the affections of the people at large that the name and the thing became confined to Christmas. This meant that the makers of carols in the thirteenth and following centuries until the Elizabethan age did not adopt a special manner or tone of voice. They used just the same technique that they used for any other song of rejoicing. Tunes were often transferable, as in the case of "Sumer is icumen in", which has been preserved with the alternative Latin words:

Perspice Christicola
Que dignacio.

The carol went on growing naturally alongside of other forms of art up to the Elizabethan era, when William Byrd scattered specimens of it through his *Songs of Sundry Natures* and companion volumes. He certainly had no fear that the use of an elaborate technique in combining voices and instruments or voices alone would spoil the carol or injure its direct appeal. Bring any four competent singers together and make them sing through the chorus "Rejoice, rejoice with heart and voice", and Byrd's spontaneous attitude towards the carol is proved at once. Byrd could still write good carols because his way of expressing himself in polyphonic song was natural, not only to him as a musician, but to great numbers of people of his day who claimed no great musicianship. After his day, for one reason or another, that deplorable process of specialization which made one group of people "musical" and the others "unmusical" set in in this country, so that when musicians wanted to write carols for ordinary people to sing they were tempted either to "write down" to a puerile standard of taste or to copy the elementary types of carol already familiar to everyone. So we get in modern carol music either the pretty part-song or the *pseudo*-archaic style, both of which are unreal.

Are we doing anything to right this? The most hopeful sign

seems to be the competitive festival movement which of late years has set thousands of people all over the country using their voices in the way which Byrd desired when he set down his reasons "to perswade everyone to learne to sing". Amongst them is the remark that the gift of a good voice is so rare that "there is not one among a thousand that hath it". The modern competitive festivals may yet find him wrong in this respect, but they are with him in proving that to sing "is the onely way to know where Nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voyce". Such a festival specially devoted to the Elizabethans with Byrd at their head is in immediate prospect. *The Times* has described its object, and two of Byrd's finest carols, "This day Christ was born", and "Lullaby my sweet little Baby", will be found in its programme. But apart from this, it is out of the revival of popular song that the new and true carol may emerge in process of time to help renew the spirit of Christmas-yet-to-come.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley

(2 July 1910)

SAMUEL SEBASTIAN WESLEY is distinguished as the only man of commanding genius who remained content to exercise his art solely within the limits of Anglican Church Music. The Cathedral Choral Service was his ideal; he wanted no more, but he wanted that in its most perfect form. It was to him what the ideal theatre was to Wagner, and in his narrower sphere he spent his life fighting with equal tenacity for his object. The fact that he held four Cathedral appointments in turn, with that of organist of Leeds parish church between them, was partly the outcome of the profound dissatisfaction which he felt at the mismanagement of musical affairs in the various Cathedrals which he served. His pamphlets, "A few words on Cathedral Music and the musical system of the Church with a plan of reform" (1849) and "Reply to the Inquiries of the Cathedral Commissioners relative to improvement in the music of Divine Worship in Cathedrals" (1854), give a graphic picture of the slovenliness which existed in choirs. It is recorded that his most popular anthem, "Blessed be the God and Father", was written for one Easter Sunday at Hereford Cathedral when only boys and one bass were available; and the circumstance can be traced in the composition itself since bass recitative alternates with treble solo and duet, and in the final chorus all the conspicuous "leads" of the chief subject are assigned to the outside parts.

But Wesley would not settle down to write music which inefficient choirs could get through somehow. On the contrary, he knew that, though trenchant criticism in speech and in print might do much, the strongest incentive to reform would be the composition of music which demands the highest executive powers of performers. He pleaded that singers are the musician's material as the block of marble is that of the sculptor; that the musician in charge must have power to command adequate material and the right to choose it, and he proceeded to show his power of dealing with the material when found by the composition of a number of remarkable choral masterpieces. Like Wagner, he had an extraordinary capacity for making theoretical advocacy and practical

demonstration run in double harness. His faith was that the Cathedral Service should be developed upon the foundation of the old pure choral style but should never be confined to its limits. "It would, no doubt, be difficult," he wrote, "to impart to the richer portions of the service all the high qualities of modern art, and yet preserve the necessary regard to the features in detail. To accomplish this is the task of the modern church musician." He hated mere antiquarianism with all the hatred of a virile creative mind, but to say that he despised the old music is to misinterpret him. The preface to the Service in E, which has been often quoted as evidence against him, criticizes mainly the weaker services contained in the first volume of Boyce's Cathedral Music. It condemns Tallis only as the author of the Service in D minor, which is generally agreed to be his least inspired piece of work, and the sarcasm at the expense of the work of Rogers and Aldrich now only seems a little too sharply pointed for its purpose. Having protested against the worship of his musical ancestors, he proceeded to show his admiration for their more vital work in the broad opening phrases of his Te Deum, in the massive Gloria for double choir after the Jubilate, and in many other passages of his own Service. His words must be read in conjunction with his works if they are to be understood.

This Service in E is the one piece of strictly liturgical music in which Wesley put his ideas to practical test, for the simple one in F is written in the style of "unvarying syllabic accentuation" which he objected to in others. But the Service in E is a remarkable achievement. He accepted the principle that liturgical words must proceed without the interruption caused by much repetition, and he determined to give them expression by every means which variety of melodic outline, contrasts of unison singing with harmony, the different effects of colour produced by various grouping of the voices, and above all daring harmonies and striking modulations from one key to another, could give. The musical structure is of the loosest kind, and yet the composer is so faithful to the spirit of his text that he very rarely gives the effect of artistic incoherence. One of his most striking devices is his way of using some arresting chord or progression of chords to give prominence to a word which he has no time to dwell upon in any other way. For example, at the beginning of the Te Deum the exigencies of his musical form require that the words "The Father everlasting" should be sung to the same melody as "We acknowledge Thee to be the

Lord", but with a single organ chord (a 7th on A sharp in the key of E major) he throws the word "Father" into relief without destroying the context. In the Creed again, the words "visible and invisible" and "the quick and the dead" are made eloquent by a transitory modulation into the key of G major which emphasizes the antithesis in the sense of the words without breaking the musical outline. These are small details, but they are examples of the inspired flashes of insight which illuminate Wesley's music at a thousand points. They are not to be confounded with the practice of dwelling upon an effective chord for its own sake which has been the curse of Anglican church music of the last half-century. Wesley did not often fall into that trap, though instances of an unwise use of highly-coloured harmonies may be pointed to in his work. The chord of the 13th at the beginning of his anthem "Wash me thoroughly" may perhaps be cast up against him; but that is chiefly because the chord has been made nauseous through the sickly inanities of the men who have copied Wesley's weaker characteristics. It may be questioned whether another instance can be produced of an artist whose own work was so consistently good and whose influence on his successors was so fatal.

Many attempts have been made to gauge Wesley's position in artistic history by comparing the larger anthems with choral works by his contemporaries, Mendelssohn, Spohr, and others. But the attempt is really a futile one, for none of the influences which affected them most strongly had any great hold upon Wesley, and they had little cognizance of the school of music in which he spent his life. Even the style of Bach, upon which Mendelssohn founded his sacred compositions, rarely appears in Wesley's anthems, in spite of the fact that he had been brought up on Bach's music from childhood. Though in the most imposing of his anthems, "O Lord, Thou art my God," Bach's contrapuntal manner of treating the double choir in the motets makes itself felt, the likeness of method will not bear very close comparison, and there is no sort of analogy between Wesley's anthems and Bach's church cantatas.

The comparison with contemporary German composers only serves to show how completely different was his outlook from theirs. Mendelssohn excelled in expressing his ideas in carefully moulded and finished shapes. His religious works, oratorios, cantatas, and Psalms all break up into clearly defined movements complete in themselves. Wesley's works contain all the elements of choruses, concerted numbers, solos, and declamatory recitative,

but in his most characteristic ones, such as "Ascribe unto the Lord" and "Praise the Lord, O my Soul" these elements are much more closely knit together. Each is used in turn to concentrate attention upon the thought of the words, and none is elaborated into a complete whole. In general it may be said that the nearer Wesley approaches to the oratorio form of Spohr and Mendelssohn the weaker he becomes. The anthem "O Give Thanks" is a case in point. The first fugal chorus is formal and uninspired, and the soprano aria which follows is very much in Mendelssohn's manner. In the middle of it, Wesley lights upon one of his splendid flights of melody, for the words "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship Thee," but afterwards drops back into a conventional recapitulation of the poorer music of the earlier part. Orthodox methods of expansion and development did not really suit Wesley. He required the stimulus of fresh words to fire his imagination and urge him on to new melodic ideas. Even the famous fugal chorus in *The Wilderness*, in spite of its exuberance, has something artificial in its effect. Works of such commanding stature as "O Lord, Thou art my God" and "Let us lift up our hearts", also suffer to some extent from the effort to depict a large design. The great choral climaxes of the former stand like mountain peaks in a broad landscape; but there is a good deal of flat country between them, and the bass solo in the middle is far below his best level. It is obviously brought in for the sake of contrast, whereas in "Let us lift up our Hearts" it is the earlier choral work which seems overloaded, and the entrance of the solo voice, again a bass, marks the point at which Wesley bursts out into a piece of magnificent lyrical utterance. The rich sweep of melody to the words "Thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I long for", the urgency of the appeal "Haste Thee to help me" marked by restless modulations of key, and the declamatory insistence on the words "Thou art my hope" make this song the finest piece of writing for single voice which he ever accomplished.

To hear Wesley at his very best—that is in works which from beginning to end are completely characteristic of himself—we have to turn away from his most ambitious efforts to some of the short anthems. The funeral anthem "All go to one place" has a poignancy, combined with dignity of expression, which reminds one of certain famous passages in Brahms's "German" Requiem. "Cast me not away" has received fuller recognition because it is written in a more consistent *a cappella* style, but it is not more heartfelt. A

third anthem, which, fortunately, is sung in every Cathedral, is the serenely beautiful "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace", which was originally designed to follow the Collect, "Lighten our darkness". It is not only that these contain exquisite melodies or that they are examples of the magical effects which can be gained from combined human voices. Their power lies deeper. There is something in the reflective attitude of the musician towards his subject which is specially the outcome of his life in an English Cathedral. They could not have been written by a man who was much concerned with the more strenuous aspects of artistic life. Whether they touch on the sorrows and aspirations of the human soul or on the mysteries of faith, it is with a certain reticence which does not weaken their force, but rather strengthens it. They sum up Wesley's life-long convictions as to the function of Cathedral music. He saw in the cathedral service the means of contemplating in terms of art the deepest emotions and the highest aspirations of humanity. He found the existing organization quite inadequate to its purpose, and he devoted his life to the realization of his ideal.

Church Music

(22 July 1922)

I CONFESS myself reluctant to embark on the subject of Church music. It has been the cause of so much dissension, and advice has been poured out so liberally on those responsible for it by those who have no responsibility in the matter, that one fears to add to the confusion. Besides, it is obvious that so many considerations come into play here which have little to do with any artistic problem, traditions and associations, religious convictions and dearly held prejudices, that the wayfaring man may be no great fool and yet err therein. But the difficulties of the subject are, in truth, merely an indication that Church music is more of a human problem than many another question of art can claim to be, at any rate in this country.

The other day a leading article in *The Times* drew attention to the committee recently appointed by the Archbishops to conduct an inquiry into the state of Church music and the fact provides a starting point. It limits the scope to the special problem of the Church of England, and, even so, the problem is still more than large enough to fill the space available for its consideration here. Let us draw the limits closer still, and realize that there is a distinction between Church music and music in church.

At the present day, churches of all kinds are used for the performance of all sorts of music which is not strictly Church music. There seems to be a fairly general agreement that this is legitimate and desirable, and such uses of the churches range from the festivals of the Three Choirs to performances of cantatas and similar works by the choirs of village churches. But this is not Church music. The parson merely stipulates that it shall be associated with words or ideas, at any rate, not too widely divergent from the ideals of the Christian religion.

A canon of Hereford last year pointed out to me with evident satisfaction that one festival programme had ranged from the Latin "Stabat Mater" to the Gnostic "Hymn of Jesus", and thence by way of Goethe's Pantheism (as set by Brahms) to Blake's denunciation of orthodoxy under figure of the "wheel of Religion". Prob-

ably the musicians who took part in it were serenely unaware that in the course of four hours or so they had thrown themselves whole-heartedly into a series of sentiments so widely incompatible with one another that no Church could pretend to embrace them and remain a Church at all. They were artistically perfectly compatible, because each one of the works was the genuine expression of a sincere artistic conviction. This is all that the artist demands of concert music, whether it takes place in a cathedral or a Concert Hall, and most churchmen are agreed that artistic seriousness is a sufficient passport to the cathedral on such occasions as these.

But a different standard must obtain where the services of the Church are concerned, and one of the difficulties of the present time is that many church musicians do not appreciate that standard or realize that it needs an appropriate expression in music. I have recently heard musicians talk as though a commission to report on the needs of Church music were a commission to effect drastic reforms in the Liturgy. It may be very desirable to reform the Liturgy; but whether that is so or not, it is no business of the musician as such. His business is the simpler one of finding the right music for the Liturgy which happens to be in use, and to do that he must begin by understanding it and sympathizing with its intention. If he cannot honestly do so, he must leave Church music, properly so-called, for some more congenial branch of his art.

And here it may be suggested that the musical colleges might do more to put their young organists and choirmasters into touch with the principles on which their art is founded. I recently had an opportunity of going through Merbecke's *Book of Common Prayer Noted* with a young organist who was just finishing his course at one of the colleges. He had never seen it before, though he had heard of Merbecke's "service", and had probably played parts of it from modern arrangements with organ accompaniment. Evidently the idea that the daily offices of the Church had been set throughout to a simple unison song for priest and people, quite independent of such accessories as organ and choir, was entirely unfamiliar to him. He had been used to think of a service as a patchwork of chants (either dull "Gregorians" or juicy "Anglicans") with *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, an anthem and voluntaries thrown in to relieve the monotony. No wonder that, in these conditions, it is difficult to get the young men to interest themselves in Church music at all.

The problem, then, for the musician is to see the service whole and to realize that it has a meaning and a form of its own which

has to find expression in the style of the music if the result is to be a work of art. Nothing is more general in the attitude of young musicians to-day than their interest in folk-song and polyphony.

Plain-song is the folk-song of the Church, and is no less interesting than its secular counterpart, and all the best types of Church music are fascinating developments of polyphony. Once get to the groundwork of the thing and study what artists have built on that groundwork, and where forgetting it they have indulged in mere excrescences, and Church music becomes a living witness to the aspirations and the failures of a large section of humanity. I shall try to suggest in succeeding articles how this view bears on two practical aspects of the case to-day, the cathedral and the parish church services.

The Cathedral Service

(29 July 1922)

THERE is a widespread dissatisfaction with the musical services of cathedrals to-day. It comes both from within and from without—from within, because the Chapters are beginning to ask whether, in these times of financial pressure, they can afford or ought to afford to keep up their musical establishments at full strength; from without, because people are asking whether this daily performance of a musical service is not apt to be deadening, rather than quickening, to the spirit. Musicians are inclined to join in the disparagement, to declare that the daily service makes a high artistic standard impossible, that the choir should be reserved rather for special occasions, say Sundays and Holydays, in order that their singing may be something of an event both to themselves and to their hearers, something to be worked for and lived for. This argument seems to me to be a confession of amateurishness, for the difference between the amateur and the artist is that the one acts on impulse and can only do his best when he is "keyed up", the other has the assurance of an established technique and aims at an ideal attainment by the constant exercise of his art.

But apart from that there is another defence of the cathedral service as an institution which the "advanced" musician who is impatient of its conventions is apt to forget. This was brought home to me the other day when I put the question before a friend, who may be said to represent the lay mind from the fact that he has no special interests, either ecclesiastical or musical. The idea that the regular cathedral services should be either truncated or abandoned seemed to him to be almost as unthinkable as a proposal to destroy the buildings themselves. Next to the architecture, he said, the music is the cathedral, as far as the ordinary man is concerned. Deans and Chapters might bear that in mind before deciding to close their choir schools and dismiss their lay clerks. The ordinary citizen of a cathedral city may not be a frequent worshipper at daily matins and evensong, but nevertheless he feels the musical service to be part of an inherited possession, like the great building which he passes every day often without looking at it.

Cathedral music presents a closer counterpart to cathedral architecture than my friend was aware. Most of our English cathedrals are the most extraordinary conglomerations of styles from the stalwart Norman to the decorated Tudor. To these may be added suggestions of the debased Gothic of the seventeenth century, with hints of a pseudo-classicism in eighteenth-century monuments. Somehow or other the whole succeeds in being greater than the sum of its parts. They become unified by their sincerity and the incongruities of detail are forgotten. It is the same with the music. You may hear responses by Tallis, psalms sung to Anglican chants by Garrett and Hopkins, canticles by Boyce, and an anthem by Purcell, without realizing that you have been shuttlecocked to and fro between four centuries, and that they were, for the most part, centuries of declining taste. Analyse the thing dispassionately, and without regard to the prevailing spirit of the service, and you will probably exclaim, like Dvořák when he heard the psalms at St. Paul's: "Why do they go on repeating such a bad tune so often?" But most people are little tempted to this sort of analysis.

This is not put forward as an argument for keeping the cathedral services exactly as they are, or for resisting reform. There are things here and there even in the fabric of the cathedrals which restoration and renovation may improve, and there are some monuments in Westminster Abbey which even a thorough-going conservative might wish to see removed. But as we should resent anything like a suggestion of a "clean sweep" in the fabric of the cathedrals so we should in their music. The cathedral service represents the history of English music as no other institution in the country does. We should refuse to obliterate the traces of our history even if they display some of our weaknesses. Fortunately, however, there need not be the ruthlessness about a musical renovation that there is apt to be about a structural one. The most glaring defects of the present day cathedral service are in the manner of performance rather than in the music performed. It has become subject to two fetishes of the last two centuries, four-part harmony and the organ, both of them good servants but bad masters. The love of the former accounts for the rigid rhythm of the Anglican Chant, and when the boys are away and the men sing "Gregorians" the organ too often pins them down to a series of harmonies in major and minor keys. Moreover, the organ has encroached on the sphere of the voices till it even executes a florid fantasia during the monotone recitation of the Apostles' Creed. A certain revival in

the use of unaccompanied anthems has been noticeable in recent years, but against this must be set the tendency to substitute for the anthem proper selections from choral works originally written with orchestral accompaniment. This increases the supremacy of the organ and in many cases such works would be better kept for those special occasions outside strict Church music of which mention has been made. In singing the older works the use of editions made at a time when the principles of modal polyphony were little understood has also served to debase the tradition of cathedral singing.

All these are suggestions of the ways in which the cathedral practice wants clearing and purifying if it is to be worthy of maintenance. It is the very opposite to that point of view, surely the wrong one, which seeks to justify the maintenance of these musical establishments by approximating them to the popular ideals of an attractive entertainment. The cathedral choir has a higher responsibility than this—the responsibility of witnessing to the religious spirit of the English people as it has been handed down through the ages in terms of music.

The Parochial Ideal

(5 August 1922)

IT is not altogether obvious to-day that a wide difference exists between the music of the parish church service and that of the cathedral, or that it is necessary to consider the two separately. The same Offices belong to both; the difference, it would seem at first sight, is only one of means for adequate musical performance. Many parish churches, it appears, especially in London and the larger towns, have as ample means as the cathedrals, some more ample and more adaptable. For example, instead of being hampered by the regulations of a foundation, the authorities in parish churches are generally able to engage musicians at will and to get rid of them when they prove unsuitable to the type of service for which they are required. Many musicians will agree that they get a freer scope for their art in serving a "musical" parish church than in a cathedral, and in one important branch of church music, the singing of the Communion Office, it is the parish churches and not the cathedrals which have led the revival of the last half-century.

Why then consider them separately at all? The best answer is that it is considering them as one which has led to the present chaotic condition of the Church's music. The cathedrals represent a certain continuous tradition to which each age has contributed something of increase or of loss. On the whole, however, it has been a steadfast tradition, and it may be said of cathedral music what Bunyan's Mr. Valiant-For-Truth said for himself: "My marks and scars I carry with me to be a witness for me." But that is not the case of the parish church. From the time of the Elizabethan settlement until the middle of the last century there was practically no tradition of music for parochial use beyond what was provided by the metrical psalter of Sternhold and Hopkins and certain sporadic collections of hymns. The idea of singing the Office "in a Playne Tune", accepted by the Prayer Books down to the time of Elizabeth, and for which Merbecke had made practical provision in the case of the first Prayer Book, gradually faded out of existence. The ideal of priest and people combining to sing the service was wholly lost, the people's part was droned by a single clerk, and a

scanty choir sang interludes of metrical versions of the psalms and hymns at intervals. The parish church service became evidence chiefly of unmusical England.

The revival of the last century had no model of its own to work on and develop. There seemed nothing to be done but to copy the cathedrals. The droning clerk was swept away and his place taken by boys and men in surplices. If they could not sing real cathedral music, they might at least sing a plausible imitation of it. Most congregations were not musical enough to know the difference between the real thing and its counterfeit reproduction. They meekly stood, sat, or knelt in silence while the choir performed their musical devotions for them. They still do. To the honour of parish church organists and amateur choir members, be it said that the new form of parish church choral service soon developed a remarkable amount of technique, and, in many cases, surpassed its model in efficiency. In one all-important branch of the revival, the singing of the Communion, the cathedral offered no model. The earnest clergy and organists who promoted it had to go abroad for their material. They hastily adapted the plain-song of the Latin Mass (the musical principles of which they did not understand) and arranged settings of the Mass by great foreign composers who never intended their music for popular worship. They also called in the help of inferior composers, who undertook to supply a felt want with "simple and effective settings" of the liturgy. Some of these were fairly good, judged by purely musical standards, but all were bad, judged by the only possible standard of Church music, the intention of the service. That in the case of the English parish church is the co-operation of all concerned in an audible act of worship.

It has taken half a century or so to make the false position transparently clear to the majority. People are driven away from their parish churches either on the plea that they "can't join" or that they "can't listen". The only remedy is to return to first principles, to what the early compilers of the Prayer Book understood as a "playne tune". I prefer this phrase to "plain-song" which has acquired a special technical significance and for the ordinary man means something archaic and "High Church". Let it be something written to-day in the major key if you will, but let it be something which is still a tune whether harmony is added to it or not, something which everyone can learn whether he is a "musician" or not, and in which everyone must bear his part if the service is to be performed

at all. A beginning has been made and the recognition of the principle is growing rapidly. It represents a new movement in the Church parallel to the secular folksong revival. It has been fed by the realization of the form and meaning of the ancient plain-song and of Merbecke's adaptation of it to the English Liturgy. It has been fostered by a few excellent modern services written in the folksong manner. The difficulty of finding suitable music for the people to sing is now very much reduced. The trouble is that they have so largely lost the habit of singing that they require an overwhelming amount of energy to persuade them to learn the "playne tune".

But it will certainly be urged that to abandon all that is meant by the "fully choral service" would surely be a great loss to the Church and to art. I submit that if the people cannot be persuaded to take up their responsibility while the surpliced choir still occupies the chancel, then the surpliced choir must go in order to revive the people's song. I know churches where this has been done, and, as to the loss to art, I can only say that, as a musician, these are the churches which I would generally choose to attend. But it does not follow that the alternative is between the dismissal of the choir and the exclusion of the people. There are innumerable opportunities of combining and contrasting the harmony of the one with the unison of the other, only the unison must be there to be so combined. The opportunities have been fairly fully explored by the more thoughtful of parish choirmasters and have been illustrated in various books which have appeared lately. But one point I would emphasize as a last word. It is the service itself which the people must sing, not merely hymns and other interpolations. Until the words "O Lord open Thou our lips", are fulfilled in fact the English Church service will never regain the musical life which it has lost.

Joy in Music

(11 April 1925)

THE end of the Lenten season closes a musical episode. There have been many performances, both in church and concert-room, of fine music written for the season, of which the two settings of "The Passion" by J. S. Bach are the master works. In recent years Bach's Passion music has become so traditional that there must be many thousands of people in London and elsewhere who make a point of hearing it annually, and who hear very little other first-rate music during the rest of the year. It is also very evident to those who follow the choice of Church music as shown in published service lists that in many churches a standard for music in Lent is maintained which is discarded when Easter arrives. Not only in the special services convened for singing the Passion music, but in the ordinary offices of ordinary churches not particularly noted for their music, it is now quite usual to find some fine piece of polyphony attempted during Lent, perhaps a "Kyrie" or a "Sanctus" of Byrd or of Palestrina, but it is equally customary to find that the same congregation is invited to hear the message of Easter joy expressed in terms of "Smithson in G", that is to say, some tenth-rate composer with a turn for vapid jubilation.

The fact is regrettable, but the reason for it is intelligible. In the first place, music written in any unfamiliar or archaic mode hardly expresses spontaneous joy to the average hearer. On the contrary, it induces a mood of reflection because its apprehension entails some intellectual effort. It is only very occasionally, therefore, that the old Church composers, for all their breadth and splendour, touch this particular chord of feeling in their modern hearers. William Byrd did it in his great "Haec Dies", but its exuberant festivity is rare. Moreover, apart from all questions of time and mode, there is nothing which composers, even the great ones among them, have handled so uncertainly as the theme of joy. The pæan and the dithyramb are the most perilous of musical forms. Any artificial effort to maintain the mood of ecstasy is instantly betrayed, for it is the mood furthest removed from normal human experience, a thing which the artist sees momentarily in a vision. Too often it

eludes his grasp when he seeks to translate it into sound; his workmanship becomes laboured and his music topples over into bombast or vulgarity.

Bach's claim to be regarded as the greatest of all composers is fortified by his power to express unfettered joy. Had we known him only as the composer of the Passions or of the many cantatas which touch intimately on sorrow and death, such things as "God's time is the best", "My spirit was in heaviness", and "Since Christ is all my being", he would no doubt still have appeared pre-eminent, but he would have moved in regions of feeling to which many others, and some quite minor artists, have contributed. But when he soars to the empyrean in the motet "Sing to the Lord", in the "Et resurrexit", "Sanctus", and "Osanna" of the B minor Mass, and in the Ascension-tide cantata, we recognize at once that strength of wing which leaves all others behind.

It may be suggested that it is only in a classical epoch—that is, one in which problems of technical method are not greatly in question—that the artist is sufficiently free to rise to the heights of the theme of joy. It is a hundred years since Beethoven wrestled his way towards it in the finale of the Choral Symphony, and since him composers have been labouring under his legacy of personal responsibility. Modern music, too, led by Beethoven, has been obsessed by the idea of climax, and climax is a thing of time and space, not of eternity. It means pressing towards a mark, the effort to attain and satisfaction in the moment of attainment. That view reaches its apotheosis in such works as Scriabin's *Poème de l'extase* and *Prometheus*, which are utterly opposed in spirit to the serenity of Bach, "sublime on radiant spires". Perhaps no large work of modern times has shown so strong a tendency to rise superior to the limitations of climax as Delius's *A Mass of Life*. Without endorsing the extreme claims which are made for it by the fashionable criticism of the moment, we may recognize that in the first brilliant chorus the composer launches into his theme, careless of all conventions, untroubled by the thought of husbanding this strength for efforts to come. With all its manifest inequalities and even occasional banalities jostling its many beauties, it stands out as a work which puts spontaneity before all else, and the product of a mind completely assured of its creative power. It is not, however, a theme of joy, for it broods over the most dismal of mundane philosophies. It is part of the present-day cult to make light of the words or the thought which a composer chooses to clothe with vocal music. We

are bidden not to mind it, and to regard the distinction of sacred and secular merely as an outworn fetish of the Victorians. Some composers even spurn the influence of words altogether by setting nonsense syllables to music. That may suffice if art is restricted merely to self-expression. But in the past the Christian religion has made it something more, and has been the chief agent in generating that spirit of joy which Bach exemplifies with such astounding confidence. It may even be questioned whether it has ever been achieved, save by composers who have lived in the spirit of Herbert's "Rise, heart: thy Lord is risen."

GENERAL

Substance and Style

(18 June 1921)

IT strikes one at the end of a week of British music (now completed as an accompaniment to the Congress of the British Music Society) that the composers of this country are just as acquisitive to-day as ever they were. It has always been so from the days when Taverner and Tye assimilated Flemish methods in their masses on the tune of "The Western Wynde", through Byrd's adaptation of the Italian madrigal, Purcell's sonatas in "just imitation of the most fam'd Italian masters", the long line of composers, too many to name, whose oratorios were after the model of the great Germans, to the orchestral rhapsodists who engage attention now with their Eternal Rhythms and sempiternal Planets.

Nor is this the shame to them that it is sometimes supposed to be. Looking back over history it is easy to see that those composers who are looked on now as most representatively English have been those most directly and often confessedly indebted to the technical methods which came from other countries. To a certain extent every branch of the European family is indebted to its neighbours. Even that most self-contained group of the Russian nationalists owed initiative to Weber, and much of its brilliance to Berlioz and Liszt. Glinka's overture to *Russlan*, Rimsky-Korsakov's to *Ivan the Terrible*, Borodin's Symphony in B minor show these influences clearly enough. Yet Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Borodin between them built up something which all the world recognizes at once as distinctively Russian music. It is not so easy to trace in the English composers of a much longer period sufficient characteristics in common to be able to speak confidently of an English style developed through successive generations. It is still less easy to discover in a handful of the most enterprising of the moderns, Holst, Goossens, John Ireland, and Arthur Bliss, for example, any common denominator which either associates them with their immediate predecessors in England or separates them

from their contemporaries abroad. It might be easier to find one which does the opposite.

This failure of our composers to achieve continuity, the lack even of desire for it, has been the cause of much weeping and gnashing of teeth by the advocates of the national cause in musical art, but seeing that it has subsisted through some 400 years it may be asked whether it is not in itself the outcome of national temperament. It is urged that in this we contradict our reputation in other departments of life; that we are not good linguists, nor are our manners generally adaptable to those of other nations. Yet we are not precisians in language or habits. We are fairly ready to adopt a good thing when we know of it, from a French phrase as an addition to the language, to an American soda fountain as an addition to our drinks. Only cranks strive to preserve the pure Anglo-Saxon tongue or drink beer because it is English. The Englishman who knows French or Latin or German or American slang never gets very far in conversation or in writing without using it. Indeed, it may almost be said that lack of education is the only preserver of the English language. Did not the practical education of the war endow us with "no bon", "na-poo", "strafe" and a host of other useful words?

Whatever we can get we use in other things besides music, and the musician has much more of foreign products ready to his hand, because in the special province of his art, at any rate, he is an exceptionally well educated person. That is why the educated musician, as opposed to the folksinger in this country, never has been able to restrict himself to a British idiom, and in these days of increased inter-communication is never likely to do so. The first characteristic of the Briton is to use all he knows, and the British musician knows a lot. Consequently, each generation adopts whatever seems to be the best idiom in current use. With the Victorians it was the German symphonic style; then the prismatic colours of Debussy's harmony became attractive; now the Parisian Russian of Stravinsky. One composer, like Goossens, for example, may choose his idiom and stick to it; the majority, like Holst, will pick up fragments from a dozen sources and hurl them together in haste to say what they will. With the best this results somehow in a personal style, never in a national idiom. If music were all a matter of idiom that of this country would be the negligible thing which some even of our friends abroad still imagine it to be. But we know better. Those sonatas of Purcell far surpassed any of the

"fam'd Italian models" which he praised, not in style, but in substance and character. His music said more than theirs. And the same thing has happened more lately, only here and there it may be, but quite certainly in Parry's choral works, Elgar's symphonies, Rutland Boughton's operas. Many say that *The Planets* is the latest instance. But the important thing is that scattered through our chequered history are these instances of living and moving works which matter whatever their style may be, and they are British music.

Vienna's Music

(1 December 1928)

ON returning from a week of Schubert in Vienna the impulse is to write more of Vienna than of Schubert. What the week contained in the way of musical performances has been chronicled more or less daily. Now that it is all over, the celebrations of the centenary, the receptions and the speechmakings, the laying of wreaths and the gatherings for acts of commemorative piety, sink in memory to matters of only momentary interest. Even such outstanding events as the Busch Quartet's playing of the Quartet in G, and the Philharmonic Orchestra's playing of the Symphony in C, though either of them alone would have made the journey to Vienna worth while, are not remembered as the be all and end all of this Schubert festival. Neither Schubert nor festival plays the largest part in the dominant impression, but rather Vienna itself and the way the Viennese take their music.

The Schubert celebrations were more homely than were those for Beethoven in the spring of last year. They were not so well organized, but on the whole they were sufficiently organized. Save for the German Burgomasters, who were the City of Vienna's more particular concern, there was no widespread invitation to the nations to send official representatives. Visitors from abroad who chose to come were welcomed with all courtesy, and were allowed to join in, but what they joined in was not so much a festival, in the sense in which we customarily use that term, as a week of music only a little fuller than an ordinary week, and one in which the programmes were concentrated on the most Viennese of all the great composers whom Vienna has made her own. With the exception of the cantata, *Lazarus*, and the two one-act operas, *Der häusliche Krieg* and *Die Zwillingsbruder*, none of the works heard during the week were unfamiliar to the majority of the audiences, and those which were most likely to be so to the visitor, the Church music and the male voiced part-songs, were evidently the most familiar to the people at large.

We think of Schubert primarily as the creator of a great literature of song in the German language and as the composer of some

masterpieces of symphonic and chamber music. To his own people he is the man who gave them music for the Sunday Mass and part-songs for their holidays and convivial evenings. These things belong as much to the school children who sang at Schubert's birth house and the Workers' Choral Society which assembled at the Rathaus as to the more august artistic bodies, the Singverein and the Männergesangverein. They are part of daily life, not the property of the concert room, and the fact that they are the backbone of such polished performances as the Männergesangverein gives in the concert room is one of the factors which keep the concert room itself in touch with daily life.

Vienna no doubt has its coteries and special artistic cults, as every large city of to-day has, but the main stream of its musical life is comparatively independent of them. Perhaps it is rather too independent of the currents and whirlpools of modern music even when they occur in its midst. It was not surprising that in a Schubert week one should not hear the name of Schönberg mentioned, but I was assured that one might be in Vienna for a considerable time without having that name or any of the works of the Schönberg school forced on one's attention. Indeed, an English lady, who after a residence of years in Vienna was about to leave it, told me that she looked forward to the chance of hearing some modern music in London. It was impossible confidently to assure her that such a chance would afford substantial compensation for her loss. Still, it must be recognized that so definite a taste as Vienna shows carries with it a certain limitation. One wonders what the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (whose Schubert under Furtwängler was as satisfying last Sunday as their Beethoven under Weingartner and their Bruckner under Schalk were last year) would make of music which brought some bewilderingly new experience. Their great merit is that they play the music that is old in a way to give it new birth in each performance, but could they do the opposite, find the eternal life in the newborn work? At any rate, it is evident that the orchestral players, like the choralists, have founded their style on the interpretation of familiar types of music. They played some of Schubert's minuets, and their subtle lilting rhythms made one realize the minuet for the first time as the ancestor of the Johann Strauss waltzes. Rhythm, based on the regular accents of the dance, is instinctive to every Viennese musician, but neither with the male voice singers nor with the orchestral players does it ever result in accent at the expense of tone. Indeed, the first

delight of listening to the orchestras of Vienna, whether at the opera or in the concert room, is in the fact that wind instruments, especially the brass, can be so glowing and so mellow. The note comes at the right moment and with the right emphasis, but it comes without a blare or a splutter. Having come it grows; it is made eloquent by the way in which it is sustained and leads to the next. Phrasing is perfect and unforced because each player knows without reflection what is to come. The result is a style which would be scarcely possible to an orchestra of whom catholicity was expected in the way it is expected of our London orchestras. Those who are vociferously complaining without much knowledge of the roughness of London orchestral playing should at least remember that it is the penalty paid for demanding all sorts of musical experiences.

The English visitor to Continental music may be inclined to be too deprecatory in comparing what he has left at home with what he finds abroad, but at least he may find wholehearted enjoyment in meeting the settled style and the sense of conviction which belongs to the music of Vienna. A musical organization has been built up there, growing gradually through the century which has followed the careers of Beethoven and of Schubert, exactly suited to the needs of the people and the life of the place. Even recent political troubles have not been allowed to hamper its existence or check its growth. Apart from the famous State Opera, heavily subsidized, there is the venerable Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde which spreads a maternal wing over the innumerable agencies and activities of music making. It is difficult not to be envious there. Founded at the same time as our own Royal Philharmonic Society.it was not left to struggle for existence as one of a number of concert-giving societies. It acquired property and accumulated art treasures. It owns the building which is the home of the finest concert-giving societies. Publishers and concert agents have their offices beneath its roof, and on the top floor of the building Herr Mandyczewski, wisest of Vienna's musical scholars, presides over the archives. It is the centre and the symbol of Vienna's far-reaching musical life.

A Musical Scholar

(20 July 1929)

IN the director's box in the balcony of the Musikverein's hall in Vienna there was generally to be seen at Philharmonic and other concerts an old man of whom a stranger would be certain to ask: "Who is that?" He was short of stature, but not stout. An ample and well-tended white beard was the feature which caught the eye. It was conspicuous against the black clothes, and the black skull cap above it suggested ecclesiasticism. Seeing him there, the stranger would be certain to look again and would notice two things—the compactness of the well-formed features above the beard and the singular intentness of attitude while the music was in progress. The answer to the question was Eusebius Mandyczewski.

It is difficult to imagine the director's box without him, more difficult to imagine the top storey of the Musikverein building without his presidency. You climbed the stairs and rang the bell of the door which admits to the museum and library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. If you were lucky the keeper of the archives would answer the summons himself. If he knew you—splendid! A strong grasp of the hand, an indrawing movement, a warm inquiry for mutual friends, immediate contact with all the life of the great composers stored on those shelves which were his life. If you were a stranger, a very little excuse was sufficient to dispel the strangeness. A mere sightseer, one who showed signs of intelligence, might be shown some of the more spectacular treasures. "Yes, that is our greatest treasure, the skull of Joseph Haydn, the actual skull, not a cast." His eyes twinkled at signs of the Englishman's squeamish reverence (Haydn's skull under a glass case, like the wax flowers of a Victorian drawing-room!) "But why not? It is most interesting." He knew, however, that it was not half as interesting or half as important as the manuscripts which he could produce for the student. If you had a special subject in view and had come armed with a note-book he fastened on it at once. He could put his hand immediately on the right source of

information, or it would come as readily from his well-stored mind as from the well-arranged shelves.

Mandyczewski had succeeded C. F. Pohl as archivist and librarian when he was only thirty years old, so that the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde had been the centre of his life for over forty years when he died. In recent years, he more than anyone else had kept that august society true to its name. He was trained to the business of "Musikwissenschaft" (we in England have no name for the thing and no training for the craft) by Nottebohm, famous for his research into the contents of the sketch books of Beethoven. Mandyczewski himself brought the *Zweite Beethoveniana* of his master into the form in which it is in the hands of every musician to-day. Kalbeck says that it was due to Brahms that Nottebohm's work received its final form, and presumably the close friendship between Mandyczewski and Brahms in later years originated through the personal devotion of both to Nottebohm.

This friendship was one of the mainsprings of Mandyczewski's life, and though it came comparatively late in Brahms's it was of essential importance to him. He discussed his compositions with his friend and brought his later vocal works (many more than now exist) to him to be tried through by singers of the Gesellschaft choir. Mandyczewski told the writer that there were many *a capella* pieces for mixed voices the manuscript parts of which were left temporarily by Brahms under his care in the library. He used to hope that Brahms would forget about them, but all but a few, now to be found published in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde's edition, were recalled sooner or later and were destroyed. Brahms trusted his posthumous reputation to no one, but he left his library, including his own manuscripts, to the Gesellschaft in order that they might be under the care of Mandyczewski. The visitor who could persuade Mandyczewski to take down the cases of Brahms's manuscripts (he was not difficult to persuade) and pore over them for an hour received a lesson never to be forgotten.

That indeed was the only way to get the best that he had to give on any aspect of the great Viennese period in music, of which he was a profound scholar. His collected editions of Schubert and of Haydn are monuments to his industry, and invaluable legacies to his successors, but he would not write books. The mass of material left him by Pohl on Haydn had finally to be assembled by another hand. He had that fear of committing himself to statements which might call for later revisions which besets the learned, and perhaps

also he was indolent. Certainly his avoidance of writing enabled him to retain that air of being at leisure which made it worth while to climb those stairs to the library at any time. It also saved him from mustiness. He never degenerated into a musical bookworm. That was why his friendship was worth having to Brahms and to many another living in the active world of musical art.

We are apt to think of musical scholarship as a thing apart from musicalness. To say that a man is learned is almost to suggest that he is unmusical. We imagine the scholar to be hidden away in the silence of the British Museum while the symphony is being played at Queen's Hall. We forget that all that music of the past which has been brought back into active life within the last generation or so has been the product of a scholarship which has gone hand in hand with practical musicianship. The very structure of the Musikverein building in Vienna makes visible a fellowship between the art workers which is too little sought for here. On the top floor (nearest the sky, with the best light) is the learning of the library; lower down are the offices of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde and other societies responsible for the executive side of the art; below, again, is the great concert hall where the composers of the library are re-created in a continuous round of performances; and outside facing the streets (it is an island site), are the publishers' and instrument makers' shops. Over the highest circle of this hierarchy Eusebius Mandyczewski was for nearly half a century the presiding genius.

Who is Bach?

(5 April 1930)

"PRAY, Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "who is Bach? Is he a piper?" The company, a musical one gathered round Dr. Burney's harpsichord, was properly shocked. "Many exclamations of surprise you will believe followed this question," writes Fanny Burney, and Mrs. Thrale rallied the Doctor on his affectation of ignorance. She told him of the many fine performances she had heard at the famous concerts which in 1777 were drawing all London, except Dr. Johnson, to the Hanover Square Rooms. So he scored his point, and having done so must proceed to labour it a little.

"Pray," said he, "Madam, what is the expense?"

"O!" answered she, "much trouble and solicitation to get a Subscriber's Ticket;—or else, half a guinea."

"Trouble and solicitation," said he, "I will have nothing to do with; but I would be willing to give eighteen pence." It was time for a diversion, and the migration of the company to the dining-room to drink chocolate provided it, but the Doctor's mind still ran on Bach, who cropped up again later in his conversation. In what way Fanny Burney's diary tells.

For us the interesting point is that the ready answer of these ardent ladies to the Doctor's question was something quite different from that which any of us would give. We should threaten to carry him to Queen's Hall, where he might hear the St. Matthew Passion in its entirety sung by the Bach Choir. "And pray, Sir," he would probably ask, "for how long must I endure this music?" and on his being told that it will last for upwards of five hours with an interval for dinner, we might expect the rejoinder, "Sir, I would be willing to give eighteen pence to remain at home."

Of the company among whom the Doctor hurled his little bomb-shell probably only Charles Burney knew the name of Johann Sebastian Bach, and even he thought of him primarily as the father of *the* Bach, and not at all, as the composer of the St. Matthew Passion. In the fourth volume of his *General History of Music* which appeared twelve years later, and when all the Bachs with whom

we are concerned were dead, Burney wrote of "the great Sebastian Bach, music director at Leipzig", as "no less celebrated for his performances on the organ and compositions for that instrument, than for being the father of four sons, all great musicians in different branches of the art. . . ." Few English organists then could play Bach's works, because their organs had no pedals. The works for clavier had hardly come abroad; the scores of the cantatas were locked up in cupboards at the Thomasschule. Burney could know nothing about them. On the evidence before him he summed up as follows:

> If Sebastian Bach and his admirable son Emanuel, instead of remaining musical directors in commercial cities, had been fortunately employed for the stage and the public of great capitals, such as Naples, Paris, or London, and for performances of the first class, they would doubtless have simplified their styles more to the level of their judges; the one would have sacrificed all unmeaning art and contrivance, and the other been less fantastical and *recherché*, and both, by writing in a style more popular and generally intelligible and pleasing, would have extended their fame, and been indisputably the greatest musicians of the present century.

That we know better to-day does not make Burney's judgment the less valuable historically. It was true in its time. The musical taste of the eighteenth century was based on the style of Italian opera, in which a smooth vocal melody preserved its unruffled surface above supporting harmony, a style which aimed at achieving a direct, never an introspective, type of expression. To this day, despite Wagner and Strauss, the Italian clarity has a marked advantage in the theatre. In Burney's day any deeper search after expression in the concert room or in domestic music suggested only "unmeaning art and contrivance"; the romantic movement had still to be born to show anything desirable in art which could be called "fantastical and *recherché*". Burney, in the course of that conversation which has been recalled above, had humorously confessed himself to be no "diviner, not having had time to consult the stars, though in Sir Isaac Newton's house". His criticism of the two greater Bachs, father and son, shows him to have come nearer to divination than he could suspect himself to be. The qualities detected in them which debarred them from acceptance as "the

greatest musicians of the present century" were to make the son the herald of the nineteenth century and the father the hero of the twentieth.

But Dr. Johnson's question remains unanswered. "Who is Bach? Is he a piper?" He, too, though he meant only to incite the ladies to the defence of a popular musician, had stumbled near to a truth about their precious Bach. The title of "Stadtpfeifer" was one of which the Bach family had every cause to be proud, and the *Ursprung der Musicalisch-Bachischen Familie*, carefully compiled by J. S. Bach himself, records it frequently of his several ancestors. The document has been reproduced in facsimile, with an English translation and notes by that indefatigable researcher, Professor Sanford Terry. He has also given us all that it is possible to collect of the life and times of Mrs. Thrale's Bach in *John Christian Bach: A Biography*. (Both are published by the Oxford University Press.)

This John Christian, the youngest of J. S. Bach's sons, who learnt his craft in Italy from Padre Martini (to whom Mozart also resorted) and who practised it in London; who, with his partner, Abel, built the Hanover Square Rooms, composed concertos for these concerts, operas for the King's Theatre, and songs for Vauxhall; who first set the name of the "Piano Forte" on the title-page of music for a clavier published in England, whose portrait painted by Gainsborough is now well known; who looked well, dressed well, and did all things well (except write oratorios and play the organ, both of which things Handel had done better), might be insulted by being called "a piper", but came of the "Pfeifer" stock of the Bachs. He had every gift to make his music acceptable in his generation, but none to make it endure afterwards.

The latter fact, though it is illustrated in the ample quotations from his works given by Professor Terry, does not make his story the less interesting. Rather it adds to his story's instruction. The fame of the name in this country rested solely on John Christian. Only the learned, like Burney, knew that there were any other Bachs. But John Christian did not establish his family's fame. We do not hear that he ever played a note of his father's music, and, his own fame dying with him, that of Johann Sebastian had to wait to be rekindled by Mendelssohn, who handed the torch to Sterndale Bennett. We must thank them to-day for having given us the right answer to Dr. Johnson's question.

Beethoven's Finales

(7 March 1936)

IT is impossible to believe that when Beethoven yielded to Artaria's demand for a new finale to the Quartet in B flat (Op. 130) he was really truckling to the commercial instinct. Thayer says that Beethoven listened to the protests against the "Grosse Fuge" unwillingly but "vowing he would ne'er consent, consented". It is not that Beethoven was consistently superior to the commercial instinct. Was he ever consistent about any superficial concern of daily life? That he could "write down" to its requirements is shown abundantly in his negotiations with Maelzel which resulted in "Wellington's Sieg". But even in that he was following out an idea which, though presented to him by the mechanical inventor, he had made his own, and he had persuaded himself that in pursuing it he was carrying out a mission to the unregenerate English. That was a different thing from deliberately truncating a finished masterpiece at the bidding of a publisher.

For once, he recognized in the case of the quartet that the publisher, "hell hound" though he might be, was in the right; that the "Grosse Fuge" was in fact misplaced as a finale to this particular quartet, which with its presto, its "Danza Tedesca", and its "Cavatina" had not led the minds of its hearers up to so momentous an event as this fugue. He yielded therefore, in obedience to his own judgement and wrote instead a movement of the rondo type completely free from that strenuousness of thought which was growing on him in his later years and of which the "Grosse Fuge" is the culminating point. It is the character of this rondo finale itself which proves Beethoven to be following his own judgement and not actually making an unwilling concession to smaller minds. The evidence of his sketch-books shows over and over again how his difficulties of decision lay in finding the appropriate environment for his multiform ideas. What was intended for one work became fitted into another, and the fittings entailed wholesale changes in the design from the first intention. Here was an instance in which the formative process of the sketch-books had not sufficed to solve the greatest of his constructive problems. The "Grosse Fuge" was

after all a self-contained work, and he gallantly accepted the fact and published it separately, even though his action might postpone its performance for nearly a hundred years after his death. The change was an act of courage, not of surrender.

The problem of the finale to a work of symphonic proportions was one first raised and solved by Beethoven and left by him as a challenge to all subsequent composers. His predecessors took it lightheartedly. Haydn was content to send his audiences away feeling happy and comfortable. In the "Jupiter" Symphony, Mozart made them stir their wits to keep pace with his brilliance, but it was in the "Eroica" that Beethoven first threw the emphasis forward, as it were, creating a wholly new design (out of old material, it may be noted) which sums up the whole content of the preceding movements in an unforeseen way. Thenceforward his works show two general directions of movements and illustrate the problem which every composer of sonata or symphony has to face for each individual work. Shall the finale be of the culminating kind or of the balancing kind? In the orchestral symphonies, with the single exception of the "Pastoral", Beethoven elected for culmination. His example no doubt influenced others and accounts for the prevalence of that method; sometimes leading to a laboured tautology, in popular writers of the last century. But the balancing of a finale, by which is meant allowing previous excitation to subside so that the mind of the hearer returns to its equilibrium, is a more subtle method which only the very greatest composers can handle successfully. Beethoven found a new use for the old-fashioned rondo in this connexion. The piano sonata in E minor and major (Op. 90) is an outstanding example where the wistful rondo theme is designed aptly to resolve the questions urgently raised by the first movement. The ultimate finale of the quartet, Op. 130, is of the same order, though widely differing in musical content. The most successful feature of the Busch Quartet's recent performance of it was the deliberateness of *tempo* which restored the balance after the rich romanticism of the "Cavatina".

The only composer since Beethoven who has handled the rondo finale in this way, fulfilling its name literally as a rounding off implying a relaxation of emotional tension, is Brahms. The first sextet for strings and the second piano concerto (both in B flat) are his masterpieces in this kind. Most modern composers have been too fearful of leisure to commit themselves to it, though Elgar both in the Second Symphony and the violoncello concerto showed

susceptibility to the idea of attaining balance by relaxation. It is not, however, a question of whether a work should end *forte* or *piano*, quick or slow; the finale of Op. 130 never relaxes its rhythmic energy and it ends in a *fortissimo* cadence. But the first two bars of the viola's ticking octaves, measuring out the time, set its limitations, just as the tremendous unison of the principal theme at the outset of the "Grosse Fuge" warns us that Beethoven is about to defy all boundaries. In the one he leads us home; in the other we stumble breathlessly after him as he strides into a new and uncharted country. The last piano sonatas and the string quartets show how wide is his resource in the shaping of endings. In them the traditional forms of sonata, rondo, fugue, variation all become completely plastic to his hand. In the sonata Op. 111 he could answer the turbulence of the first movement with a melody able to bear the most sustained contemplation of its beauty, and again in the quartet in F, Op. 135, he could pick up the "Muss es sein" phrase, a thing originally thrown off in jest, and make of it a monument of his whole life's experience. Such contrasts as these justify the attribution to Beethoven of an absolute mastery not to be claimed for any other musician.

The Ninth Symphony

(21 January 1939)

ON the morning after a hearing of the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven it is impossible to think about anything else. That is not because of its beauty, but because of its power. Of all the critical opinions it has aroused none has claimed perfection for it, or, if the claim has been made, it has been quickly disallowed. Nor can it be argued that its bigness makes its faults negligible. It is only too evident that after the sublimity of the Adagio the composer was at a loss what to do next. His mind was left fumbling after the unattainable. He fell back on his old project of setting Schiller's "Ode to Joy", which had haunted him from boyhood. He determined to make it relevant to what was already written by sheer craftsmanship. He invented the elaborate artifice of the instrumental introduction to the choral finale, the clamorous outburst of the wind, the recitatives of the basses, the recollections of the three previous movements, the emergence of the plain tune on which the theme of the Ode was to be built.

All this is quite different from those works by himself or anyone else for which perfection can be claimed—the Seventh Symphony, for example. It was Beethoven himself and no other who had so changed the emphasis of the symphonic form as to create the difficulty which confronted him in his last and greatest specimen of the type. Mozart had hinted at it in the "Jupiter"; Beethoven had made of it a principle which he himself could not ignore. The principle was that of throwing the weight forward, as it were, upon the last movement, making it bear the greatest stress. Haydn could round off a symphony with a lively rondo, but after "Eroica" Beethoven could not revert to the classical ideals of his master.

Outside the orchestral symphony he capitulated in one famous instance, the String Quartet in B flat, Opus 130. There he is known to have replaced the "Grosse Fuge" with a finale on a Haydnesque theme. But that was due to the discovery that the "Alla danza tedesca" and the "Cavatina" had already deflected his course from that on which he had set out in the first movement. He found himself in the region of pleasant music; better, then, end with a pleasantry.

The slow movement of the Ninth Symphony leads him to a height from which there can be no turning back. That of the piano sonata Op. 111 is comparable with it. Both are the apotheosis of the variation form, but the symphonic movement goes farther than the sonata in that it not only says all that there is to be said about one idea, but adds a second and a hint of a third which the composer refuses to discuss at length. In the case of the sonata he could afford to leave the matter where it rested on the mountain top, but not so with the symphony. How to descend from the mount was the embarrassing problem. It delayed the production of the symphony for years.

Yet the ruthlessness with which Beethoven ultimately solved that problem is proof of his greatness. We may feel every time we hear it that the choral movement is an enormity, and that "O Freunde, nicht diese Töne" drags Schiller in by the hair of his head to be brutally sacrificed to Beethoven's necessity. We may revolt against the idea that there is anything "angenehm" in the sound of human voices shouting their heads off in a frenzy of delirious excitement, and declare that a climax reached by triangle, cymbals, and big drum adding their clatter to a theme rendered banal by being hastened to something like four times the pace of its first presentation ("Seid umschlungen, Millionen") is an outrage. And that is what most people do feel in spite of Wagner's hieratical pronouncements on the significance of the Ninth Symphony.

But we are forced to condone it all. We may be sceptical of such a statement as that of Herr Walter Riezler, one of the most able recent writers on Beethoven, that "the work owes its existence not to man's arbitrary will, but to some mysterious inner law," and prefer to say that Beethoven's arbitrary will sweeps away these objections as too trivial to stay his course. He even makes us ashamed of them, though we know them to be true. We are compelled to go with him all the way. We realize that, while other composers have spent their lives in seeking perfection and sometimes finding it, Beethoven is the only one who having found it passed it by. Was he setting his face towards a new perfection, one which beginning by embracing the millions had to accept from them the smutch of what an earlier aristocratic art had refused as common and unclean; in a word, modern music? If so, though in a century we have reaped many of the consequences of his daring, we are still awaiting its consummation in the new perfection.

An American Critic

(12 June 1937)

"REMEMBER," Sibelius is reported to have said, "a statue has never been set up in honour of a critic." One can hear Richard Aldrich's chuckle and the explosive retort. "No," he might have said, "everyone is much too busy trying to persuade critics to set up statues to them." When Harvard University put him on a pedestal by celebrating his seventieth birthday with academic honours he wrote to an English friend: "We have a New England proverb: 'Praise to his face is open disgrace.'" There was no pretence about it. He was much too human not to feel warmed by the expression of an understanding sympathy, but throughout his life of strenuous daily journalism in New York he had steadily refused to think of himself as either conferring or receiving benefits. Nothing was so liable to anger him as the phrase "Thank you for your kind notice." "There is nothing kind about it," he would say to the too grateful young artist. "You played well and I said so. If it was kind, then I must have said too much." In fact he regarded all this business of erecting statues as a tiresome clog, distracting attention from what really mattered, the welfare of the art of music.

That was what gave the necessary detachment to carry him through the first quarter of this century, a seething time in American music. His countrymen had discovered that their wealth could attract all the great artists of Europe, composers, singers, and instrumentalists, across the Atlantic. At the beginning of Aldrich's command of the musical columns of the *New York Times* Conried was opening his operatic campaign at the Metropolitan, setting Bayreuth at defiance by producing *Parsifal*, establishing Caruso as the prime favourite in a brilliant Italian company. Then came Oscar Hammerstein and his rivalry of the Metropolitan at the Manhattan, and, moreover, orchestral music was entering the modern phase of virtuosity with its concentration on the personal readings of "star" conductors. "The trouble," said Aldrich, "is not the amount of their salaries, but that they try to earn them." He had a supreme contempt for all the self-advertising performers and the megalomaniac types of composition manufactured in Europe and imported to

incite the wonder of American audiences, who, coming new to it all, could refer to no existing standards of their own.

Aldrich had his own standards, they were rooted very deeply in his personal experience of the classics, an experience gained not in the concert-room or the opera house so much as through his own hands on the piano, his own reading in the very extensive library he collected round him, and most of all his own thinking about what he played and read. He found his ideal in the symphonic period of German music which ranged from Bach to Brahms, and he viewed it with something of the mind of Schumann, though with a keener critical insight than Schumann displayed in the *Neue Zeitschrift*. There were those who called him old-fashioned, unable to grasp the implications of the new technique, but the fact was that his mind was little occupied with technique. He was quite ready to discover quality wherever it could be found irrespective of technique, new or old. The classics had shown him what to look out for, the sincere expression of feeling (he always insisted on the emotional side of music) conveyed in terms which continue to convince the hearer who has become familiar with the externals of style. It is interesting to know that latterly he found more of what he sought in English music than anywhere else. Dr. E. H. Fellowes introduced him to the Elizabethan madrigals and Mr. Cuthbert Kelly's English Singers heightened his enthusiasm for that genre. Harold Samuel's and Myra Hess's playing of Bach delighted him beyond the performance of more rhetorical pianists, because it went straight to the heart of the matter. He took Toscanini to task for the restricted repertory of his programmes for the New York Philharmonic. Aldrich particularly wanted the works of Vaughan Williams put before the New York audiences as only Toscanini could put them. He had sensed their reality.

A mind never dazzled by fashion, but also uncramped by specialization, disinclined to dogmatize on method but generous towards every kind of excellence and eager to advance it, could exercise the most salutary influence among the hurtling sensations of the New World's new acquisitiveness towards music. Moreover, his clear thinking was joined with clear writing. His pen was as free from the "highbrow" assumptions of superiority which plain people, taking their information from newspapers, are quick to resent as from the vulgar clichés of the Press to which so many journalists fall a victim even while they ridicule them. He said what he meant, using a vocabulary that all could understand. So it came to be

known that what Aldrich said could be accepted as the sane view, and that what he thought would be worth reading even by those who had little previous acquaintance with the subject of his discourse.

Though he retired from the daily round of concert-going fifteen years ago his paper wisely retained him on its editorial staff, and one of his penetrating reviews appeared in it on the Sunday before he died. His occasional contributions to the London *Times* in which he explained American musical politics with justice, relieved by a twinkle of humour, were keenly appreciated. Indeed, his humour ventilated all the life about him. It tempered the most trenchant criticism and added point to his most earnest advocacy. Few men of his calibre have devoted their lives to the criticism of music. New York was happy to have found one just when he was most needed, and he will need no statue for his memorial.

Mozart in Musical Life To-day[1]

ILLUSTRATIONS

From "Six Sonatas for Clavecin or Forte-piano with accompaniment for the Violin":
In A major (K.305) Allegro molto.
In E flat (K.302) Rondo
Sonata in E minor (K. 304).

WE have been reminded lately that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died on 5 December 1791, in his thirty-sixth year. (B. 27 January 1756).

I do not know that there is any real logic behind our habit of dividing time into centuries, half centuries, quarter centuries, and using those periods for special commemoration, but it has the practical advantage that it insures our having special commemorations of great men and their great deeds at stated intervals.

So when I was asked to give three lectures here with the suggestion that perhaps I would like to take Mozart as my subject I jumped at the opportunity.

I remembered that fifty years ago when I was a small boy just beginning to find out some of the wonders of Mozart at the piano my teacher had stimulated my interest by telling me something of the brilliant creature who had died just one hundred years ago and whose body had been thrust into a pauper's grave the next day while the most wonderful of his operas, called *The Magic Flute* (what an enchanting title!) was nightly drawing entranced audiences to the theatre in Vienna.

For fifty years since I have been living with Mozart, getting to know a little bit more of his art with every passing year, playing it, thinking over it, piecing it together, not as a great scholar knows it who tabulates the 600 works in an exhaustive and exhausting catalogue, distinguishing the authentic from the spurious and con-

[1]Three lectures given at the Royal Institution in 1942. See Note on page 8.

tributing his own textual criticism, but as an ordinary lover of music who tries to keep pace at the same time with all the bewildering manifestations of the art which have been produced both before and after Mozart's short life, and who returns to him periodically as the centre of musical experience.

I thought I might very well try to collect together and make a sufficient bundle of my experiences to claim your attention through three afternoons.

Then I found that that is more easily thought than done.

It is told of Pope Pius IX that when as Prisoner of the Vatican he received foreign visitors in private audience he would ask them how long they proposed to stay in Rome. If they said three days his reply was: "Yes, you can see a great deal in three days." If they said three weeks he was less encouraging. "That is a very short time in which to see Rome." If they said three months he would exclaim: "Only three months! How can you hope to know Rome in three months?"

I was reminded of that when a friend said to me: "I can imagine you might give one lecture on Mozart but how can you give three?" At the moment I had got to the stage when I was feeling that I might give one or I might give thirty but three seemed impossible.

However, three, no more and no less, are offered me, and I am hoping to keep your attention through them by the following plan:

I. Mozart in his own day and in ours.
II. The approach to him through the voice.
III. The Instrumental Music.

Here we are looking back at Mozart through the wrong end of the telescope. His figure is perfectly distinct but he looks to be a long way off and a good deal less than life size.

The other day I asked a distinguished teacher of the violin whether a pupil of his could play Mozart. The answer was: "I don't think she has played any Mozart, but she can play anything. She has played Paganini Concertos and she gave a charming performance of César Franck's Sonata lately. She'd get up any work of Mozart in a day, play it at sight if necessary."

You see the point of view. Mozart was easy music; technically easy as compared with Paganini; spiritually easy as compared with César Franck. That, I am afraid, is a very prevalent point of view to-day.

We give children the smaller works of Mozart to play, not

because they will find them an interesting way of learning music but because their fingers can manage them.

Much of the easier Mozart is merely the offshoot of his enormous facility, not the expression of his genius.

Performing music for small orchestras is dull work for conductors. They do as little of it as they need and what they do they play half as fast again as it was meant to go, both to get on to something more interesting and to show how slick and brilliant their players can be.

In short, whether in the schoolroom or the concert room we too easily learnt to patronize Mozart. That will not do if we are to perceive anything of his enormous musical stature.

When Mozart died he was recognized as a brilliant creature who had stamped his personality on every type of music from the opera to music for that new instrument which was known indifferently as the piano-forte or the forte-piano, the latest marvel of solo performance which was making the harpsichord old-fashioned.

With that new instrument something depended on the player's touch. Mozart's touch was perfect in its sensitiveness and he could afford to be critical even of such a master as Clementi whom he said played without "one Kreutzer worth of taste".

He lived in an age when good taste was the aim of every artist because they daily submitted their work to a select public who had a taste and could for the most part support their taste with knowledge.

That is the main difference between the Vienna of the 1780s and the London of the 1940s. To-day a composer labours to create a taste for his own music (often by very eccentric methods); Mozart's contemporaries had to labour to satisfy an existing taste in opera, symphony and sonata.

He easily surpassed every existing expression of the highest taste in every form. The society of the Imperial Court of Vienna constantly demanded new works, not new in the modern sense of being unlike anything on earth, but new expositions of established good taste, which conformed to it but still had something new to say.

The only man who could satisfy the demand as fully as Mozart was Joseph Haydn, but he had been captured and was kept at the country seat of his patron, Prince Esterhazy. Literally hundreds of musicians, composers, players and singers were tumbling over one another to fulfil the demand in Vienna.

When Mozart died in 1791, Antonio Salieri, the Imperial Kapellmeister, said cynically that though it was a great loss it was just as

well that he had gone as there would be soon no room for any other composer if Mozart had lived.[1]

In 1791, at any rate, Mozart was a genius who had just failed to reap the rewards that his world could offer. He never held a lucrative Court appointment or one in a Princely Household after he broke with the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg in whose service he had grown up. True he succeeded Glück as chamber musician and court composer to the Emperor Joseph II in 1787. But the appointment certainly was of little benefit to him. He was as independent as Beethoven but more of a gentleman than Beethoven. He did not alternately fawn upon and bite the hand that fed him.

His friend Michael Kelly, an Irish singer in the Italian opera company at the Imperial Court has left a good picture of Mozart's attitude when three composers and Mozart one of them, were competing to get the next operatic production.

Kelly who wrote and published his Reminiscences years later, after Mozart was dead and he had returned to England to become a favourite actor and singer at Drury Lane (1826), said that he was then the only survivor of the original cast of *Figaro*.

"There were three operas now on the tapis, one by Regini, another by Salieri (*The Grotto of Trophonius*) and one by Mozart, by special command of the Emperor. Mozart chose to have Beaumarchais' French comedy *Le Mariage de Figaro* made into an Italian opera which was done with great ability by Da Ponte. These three pieces were nearly ready for representation at the same time, and each composer claimed the right of producing his opera for the first. The contest raised much discord, and parties were formed. The characters of the three men were all very different. Mozart was as touchy as gunpowder, and swore he would put the score of his opera into the fire if it was not produced first: his claim was backed by a strong party: on the contrary Regini was working like a mole in the dark to get precedence.

"The third candidate was Maestro di Cappella to the Court, a clever, shrewd man, possessed of what Bacon called crooked wisdom: and his claims were backed by three of the principal performers, who formed a cabal not easily put down. Everyone of the

[1]This remark was used to give currency to the rumour that Salieri had poisoned Mozart, a rumour for which musicians must be grateful, since a hundred years later it gave a theme to Rimsky-Korsakov's brilliant little opera which Chaliapin brought to London and gave at the Albert Hall—of all places!

opera company took part in the contest. I alone was a stickler for Mozart, and naturally enough for he had a claim on my warmest wishes, from my adoration of his powerful genius, and the debt of gratitude I owed him for many personal favours.

"The mighty contest was put an end to by His Majesty issuing a mandate for Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* to be instantly put in to rehearsal.

. . . . . .

"I never shall forget his little animated countenance, when lighted up with the glowing lamp of genius: it is as impossible to describe it as it would be to paint sunbeams."

His account of the full rehearsal gives a delightful picture of Mozart at the height of his success.

"I remember at the first rehearsal of the full band Mozart was on the stage with his crimson pelisse and gold-laced cocked hat, giving the time of the music to the orchestra. Figaro's song 'Non pui andrai' Bennuci gave with the greatest animation and power of voice.

"I was standing close to Mozart who, *sotto voce*, was repeating, 'Bravo, bravo, Bennuci,' and when Bennuci came to the fine passage 'Cherubino, alla vittoria, alla gloria militar', which he gave out with stentorian lungs, the effect was electricity itself, for the whole of the performers on the stage, and those in the orchestra, as if actuated by one feeling of delight, vociferated: 'Bravo, bravo! maestro. Viva, viva. Grande Mozart.' Those in the orchestra I thought would never have ceased applauding, by beating the bows of their violins against their music desks. The little man acknowledged, by repeated obeisances, his thanks for the distinguished mark of enthusiastic applause bestowed upon him."

Then and now. We can sum up the position.

1942	1780
1. Specialism. Composer, performer, conductor.	1. The musician was all three.
2. We live on a legacy of 400 years of music.	2. Belief in their own music, careless of all that had gone before.
3. Appeal to a wide and ignorant public.	3. A small society of narrow but clearly defined tastes.
4. All things are possible, hence there are no standards of criticism.	4. Strict standards were not to be transgressed.

1942	1780
5. Eccentricity will always gain a little kudos.	5. Eccentricity was instantly marked down and condemned.

ESTIMATE OF MOZART THROUGH THE AGES

1792. Shortly after Mozart's death, Count Waldstein wrote to the young Beethoven just before the latter went from Bonn to Vienna to study with Haydn: "Receive the Spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn." That was more than a high-flown expression. The spirit of Mozart meant all that is best and noblest in modern music.

1825. A generation later Beethoven's enormous creative power had already begun to overshadow the spirit of Mozart and it must be added that Beethoven's personal eccentricities were beginning to undermine the certainty of taste on which Mozart's reputation had been founded.

1850. Mozart was regarded as the forerunner of the greater Beethoven. Even so sensitive a critic as Robert Schumann rather succumbed to this view in his enthusiasm for the romantic activities of his day.

1875. Mozart had become the prerogative of the prima donna of the opera. For example, people went to the Opera to hear Patti sing Zerlina, not to hear the greatest imaginative opera ever written.

1900. Wagner had routed the prima donna and Mozart's operas were just funny old-fashioned stuff.

1925. The new race of virtuoso conductors had arisen and had taken the place of the prima donna in public esteem. People went to operas and concerts to hear them, irrespective of the music they performed. The public fed out of the conductor's hand. The best thing which came from their hands was a considerable revival of Mozart. For Mozart requires of his interpreters clarity, suppleness and grace and these qualities the virtuoso conductors, like the prima donna before them, love to display, particularly in contrast to the torrential outpourings of nineteenth century orchestral music.

Let it not be forgotten that the composer of *Ein Heldenleben* was also a famous interpreter of the G Minor Symphony.

1942. Now in England when the rich have experienced all the best of Mozart's operas exquisitely produced on the stage of

Glyndebourne and the poor crowd to hear *Figaro* wherever the indomitable Sadler's Wells Company is able to appear; when Promenade and other popular concerts give whole programmes of Haydn and Mozart, and all the eighty-four quartets of the one and all the major chamber works of the other have turned the building on the north of Trafalgar Square from being a National Gallery of painting to one of music, we can really begin to know the works of Mozart.

Have we any re-valuations still to do? I think we have several. We are still rather clogged in our understanding of Mozart by two main errors.

(1) We take him in the mass and are inclined to think that everything bearing his name and displaying the characteristic eighteenth century idiom, is equally valuable and worth reviving.

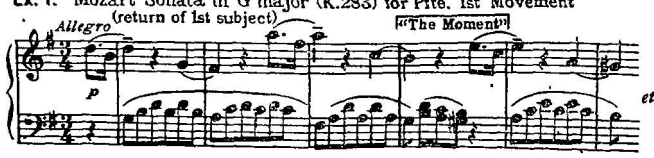
(2) On the other hand we read into him all sorts of experiences and intentions which belong to later phases of the art. In fact we still think of him as the precursor of Beethoven, not realizing that Beethoven in all his glory never re-enacted the miracle of the Finale to the "Jupiter" Symphony.

Moreover, some people look at Mozart's operas through the haze of the Wagnerian music-drama and even see in the Priests of Sarastro's Temple an imperfect prophecy of Parsifal and the Knights of the Grail.

Let us try to look at Mozart as a great artist in his own right.

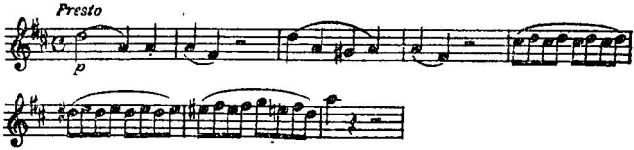
When you hear a great player or a sensitive conductor playing Mozart it is comparatively easy to draw distinctions; to find out what is really Mozart and what is contemporary procedure, e.g. in the little sonata in G. (K. 283) the pianist may just indicate the moment in the first conventional movement, an unexpected modulation at the return of the simple little tune into A minor, which raises it above the ordinary.

Ex. 1. Mozart Sonata in G major (K.283) for Pfte. 1st Movement

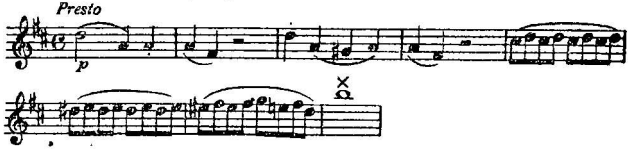


In the Haffner Symphony again, the conductor can make us feel that Mozart has had an inspiration when near the end he raises the waggling little tune by a single note.

Ex. 2. Haffner Symphony (K.385) Opening bars of the Finale.



Ex. 2a. Haffner Symphony (K.385) Near the end of the Finale



These are things which we can all find for ourselves, but we often miss them in the eagerness of listening unless the artist points them out to us. I don't mean by this that the artist should be a lecturer pointing out details to the audience as I have pointed out these to you, but an artist who feels the real importance of a phrase will make the listener feel it too in his interpretation of it.

Such things stamp Mozart's personality on a large number of his works which are not in themselves the greatest of their kind.

At the beginning of 1778 Mozart, still under parental leading strings (aged twenty-two) was in Mannheim with his mother writing arias for Mlle Aloysia Weber (which his father thought a dangerous occupation) and flute concertos (K. 313. 314) for M. De Jean which was to be a lucrative one. He loved the former and hated the latter! On 14 February 1778, he wrote to his father in Salzburg about the Concertos (Letter 286, p. 711):

Mannheim, 14 February 1778.

. . . It is not surprising that I have not been able to finish them, for I never have a single quiet hour here. I can only compose at night, so that I can't get up early as well; besides, one is not always in the mood for working. I could, to be sure, scribble off

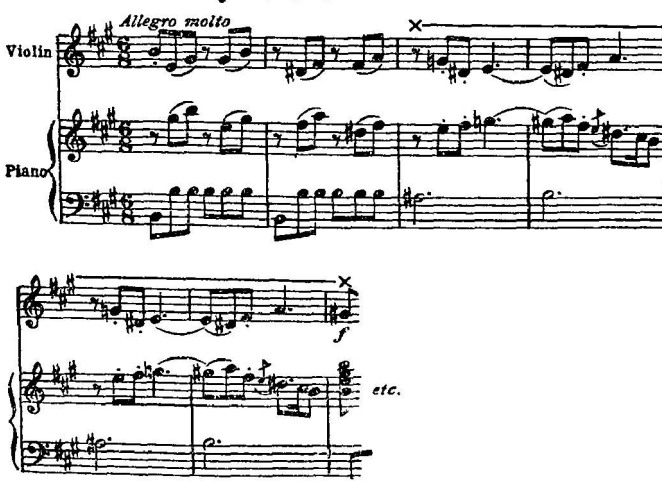
things the whole day long, but a composition of this kind goes out into the world, and naturally I do not want to have cause to be ashamed of my name on the title-page. Moreover, you know that I become quite powerless whenever I am obliged to write for an instrument I cannot bear. Hence as a diversion I compose something else, such as duets for clavier and violin, or I work at my Mass. Now I am settling down seriously to the clavier duets, as I want to have them engraved. If only the Elector were here, I should very quickly finish the Mass. But what can't be, can't be....

A fortnight later he referred again to the piano sonatas, as he calls them, and said he had still more to do to make the set of six (K. 301-6) and intended to publish them in Paris.

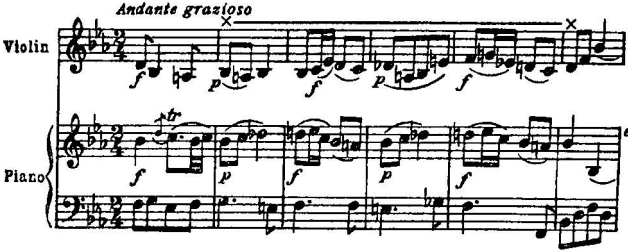
This he ultimately did under the title: "Six Sonatas for clavecin or forte-piano with accompaniment for the violin," dedicating them to the wife of the Prince Palatine (Karl Theodore) whose favour he had secured at Mannheim.

These Sonatas then are the simple outpouring of a lad of twenty-two, irked both by parental restraint and also by the need for accept-

Ex. 3. Sonata in A major (K. 305)



Ex. 3a. Sonata in E♭ (K. 302) Rondo



ing orders for compositions like any tradesman, and incidentally seriously in love for the first time (with Aloysia Weber).

There is nothing profound about them; it is their frankness, spontaneity and charm which makes them imperishable. (K. 305) in A major. Allegro Molto shows his high spirits. No. 2 (K. 302) in E. flat, Rondo, Andante Grazioso, is serenely reflective with one of the most beautiful tunes that even he ever wrote.

It is sheer coincidence that both contain in very different contexts a characteristic cadence.

I want to end with a complete sonata. Out of this group of six, the sonata in E Minor is remarkable for its homogenity; the two movements Allegro and Tempo di menuetto are joined, not by any common stock of material, but by a single mood, a lyrical sense largely pensive which pervades both.

Ex. 3b. Sonata in E minor (K.304) Trio

That Mozart quite forgets that this is a piano sonata with violin accompaniment is shown by the way he treats the lyrical opening theme. It is given out first in unison but afterwards the violin claims it and it remains the violin's property in its subsequent repetitions. There is one place where the piano gets a little impatient and strikes in against it with reverberating harmonies.

Also there is a place in the trio (E major) of the Tempo di Menuetto where Mozart plays a little rhythmic trick on you. The whole shape of the trio is a balance of smooth eight bar phrases. He feels that is getting a little too smooth and hymn-tuney so just for fun he suddenly lengthens one of them as you may see by looking at this E minor sonata.

Mozart in Musical Life To-day

II

ILLUSTRATIONS

Symphony in E flat (K.543) Slow movement.
Symphony in E flat (K.16) Slow movement.
3 Arias from Figaro "Non so Piu."
"Voi che Sapete"
"Dove Sono?"
Song "Das Veilchen."

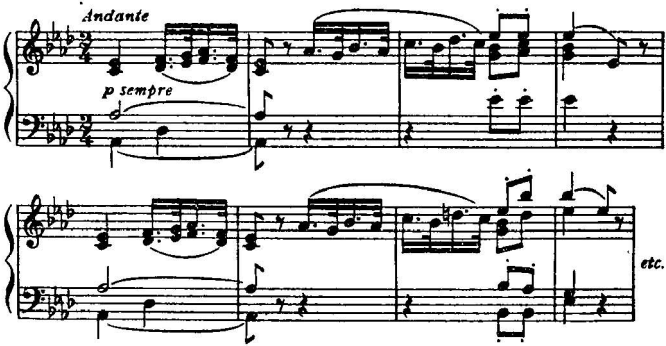
TO-DAY (27 January) is Mozart's birthday, the 186th anniversary of his birth (1756). We can wish him many happy returns of the day with a certainty that we cannot feel as we hand out that wish to our friends around us. Mozart lives amongst us to-day in an atmosphere of ever-growing understanding of himself, and his genius and love of his music in its own right.

I explained what I meant by that last week. Not Mozart as a classic to be respected because he is a classic; nor Mozart as a forerunner of Beethoven, nor Mozart seen through the wrong end of the telescope, but Mozart who has created imperishable works of art in every form available to him during his short life of thirty-five years. On the 150th anniversary of his death (5 December 1941) Prof. Alfred Einstein, one of the greatest living scholars of Mozart's works, wrote: "At last we shall persuade people that Mozart was a man." These words were printed on the National Gallery programme throughout the week.

Some of you will know the tall house in the narrow Getreide Strasse of Salzburg where Mozart was born, and all know something of his early life there as son of the worthy Court Violinist, Leopold Mozart and Anna Maria his wife. Not so many perhaps can say, as I can, that they have played Mozart on his own piano in the house where he was born. We, my wife and I, were there in a quiet moment some years ago, with no one but the custodian about, whom we approached. He assured us that to touch the instruments was "Strengst Verboten", but being an Austrian and not a German, he indicated that what the eye does not see and the ear does not hear

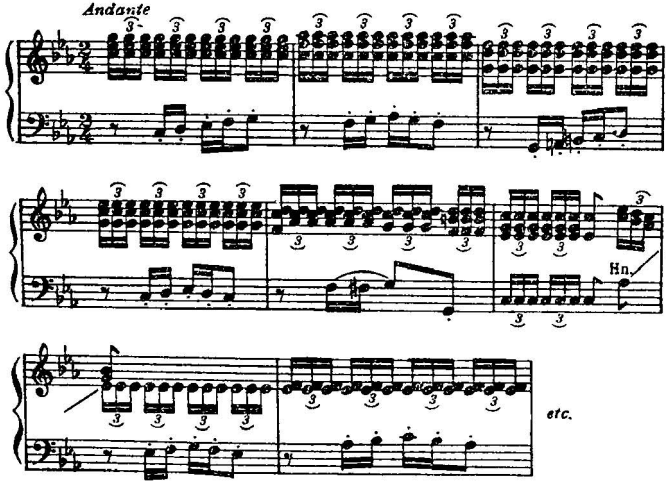
the heart does not grieve over. Then he promptly left the room. So I said my prayers to Mozart with a fragment from his own Liturgy, the slow movement of his loveliest Symphony in E flat (K. 543).

Ex. 1. Symphony in Eb (K. 543)



Compare this with the slow movement of the 1st Symphony (K. 16) written at Chelsea[1] at the age of nine years.

Ex. 2. Symphony in Eb (K.16)



[1]Written in the house of Dr. Randall in "Fivefields" near Chelsea during his father's illness (182 Ebury Street).

This slow movement is clearly a childish copy of what was considered the best symphonic style of the time. It is an extraordinarily good copy and the pattern is carried out with remarkable faithfulness.

If you saw that passage in the works of Stamitz or Wagenseil or Abel you would not say that it was unworthy of them. Such was Mozart's technical competence at nine. But it lacks tune. Not because Mozart could not make up a tune (he was turning out tunes by the dozen) but because these worthies whom he copied in writing his first symphony either could not or did not want to. Tune was out of place in a symphony, because tune was song and a symphony was undertaken to let people hear a number of distinguished players perform together.

Hence the solemn tunelessness of many symphonic slow movements of the mid-eighteenth century. The most distinctive feature of Mozart's contribution to the growth of the symphony (twenty-four years 1764-1788) was his impregnation of the symphony with song melody.

Song in Mozart's days meant primarily the opera aria. Claudio Monteverdi the pioneer of the Italian Opera had shown at Mantua (1607) what the aria (air) was for in opera. Early in his *Orfeo* he wants to show Orpheus happy amongst his friends, delighting them with his song in the beauty of the countryside, when suddenly his happiness is dashed to the ground by the woeful sound of the messenger's voice who comes to announce the death of Euridice.

The operatic Aria became from that time forward the vehicle for "registering" (as the film producer would say to-day) an emotion, a sort of musical "close up" of a character on the stage.

Action is suspended for the moment while that character reveals his feelings in song. Orpheus's aria is ideally placed in the action of the play because of the way it heightens the tragedy to come with its contrast of carefree happiness.

As time passed, aria became the chief means of developing the personality of a character through music on the stage. What is this person like? Is he heroic or mean-spirited? Is he a lover or a hater? Triumphant or dejected? It was the aria that gave the emotional character while the matter of fact details of the story were told in conversational recitative.

The majority of the operas which Handel poured out, first at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, then at Covent Garden, are

contrasted arias for each character in turn, strung together with recitative to tell the story.

A great deal has been said from Addison in the *Spectator* onward to the late Sir Walford Davies speaking in this room, about the artificiality of this kind of opera and the formality of its arias; about the variety of singers showing off their elaborate airs and graces by means of the operatic aria; of the absurdity of a man dying with a sword in his lungs or a phthisical woman in the last stages of disease sitting up and singing an aria.

No doubt opera has deserved much of the ridicule poured on it, but the principle is none the less sound. It is through song that the character is shown.

Mozart began writing opera arias and whole operas at a very early age. His instinct for handling all the conventions of the stage was uncanny. He was already composing arias of a dramatic kind during that childish visit to London, and the earliest of his operas which is even now sometimes put on the stage, *Bastien et Bastienne*, a one-act operetta for three characters which contains ten arias (for the three), four duets and a trio, was written four years later (1768).

Mitridate (three acts), his first great success at Milan when he was fourteen, consists of a long succession of arias in the approved grand opera fashion of the day.

It was only with *Idomeneo* (Salzburg 1781) that he began to break the line of arias with concerted movements and choruses, and it was after that (in the last ten years of his life) that all his great comedies, both Italian and German, were composed, in which the aria falls into its place as representing the individual's character (the soliloquy), in contrast to the clash and interplay of characters exhibited in the highly developed concerted numbers. The principal operas are:

Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail, Singspiel 3 acts, Vienna 1782.
Le Nozze di Figaro (Beaumarchais—Da Ponte) Opera Buffa 4 acts, Vienna, 1786.
Don Giovanni. Opera Buffa 2 acts, Prague, 1787.
Cosí fan tutte. Opera Buffa 2 acts, Vienna, 1790.
Die Zauberflöte (Schikaneder). German Opera in 2 acts, Vienna, 1791.

The old opera aria of the kind which we knew so well in Handel, and on which Mozart was brought up, was based on contrast of two ideas with a return to the first one (A.B.A.) This was the

conventional type established in Italian opera by Alessandro Scarlatti (1659-1725) on a principle which runs through the whole of musical form.

Statement—contrast—restatement. *Genius might vary it in innumerable ways but the general principle remained* (N.B.—*Messiah*). The most potent source of contrast in B. was one not only of melody (rhythm) but of key. Change the key gently and *the sense of contrast is diminished; change it abruptly and the sense* is enormously heightened. How well Mozart knew this and how adroitly he used the device, is most subtly shown in his two arias for Cherubino in *Figaro*. "Cherubino" is, I think, Mozart's memory of himself, his caricature of his own youth. He comes dashing in on Susanna with a new song just composed. He is in love with love (calf love in fact), a love ready to be poured out on anything in petticoats, on the padrona or the gardener's daughter or the old hag Marcellina or Susanna herself. It doesn't matter. He is all hot and bothered, excited and blushful. What he sings to show his character is not the newly composed song but an aria ("Non so piu") into which he rushes without any preliminary instrumental prelude. It is all of a piece, continuous throughout, there are no strong modulations of key anywhere.

Compare with this the newly composed song which comes later, when Cherubino is introduced into the Countess's apartment and he is cajoled into singing his composition to her to the accompaniment of Susanna's guitar (strings pizzicato). The silly boy has put all his heart into the composition of this song and all his knowledge of how an aria should be written.

It begins with a formal ritornello for the orchestra.

It has a well defined principal theme in B flat.

A modulation to the dominant.

A central modulation into A flat.

Then goes back through G minor to a half close on the dominant.

A restatement of the first theme in the principal key. It is all in the most approved manner, but whoever made the approved manner such a vehicle for spontaneous beauty as Mozart does here?

In "Voi che sapete", Mozart's subtle use of the aria for characterization is illustrated all along the tune in a thousand ways. It varies with each character and each situation in which the character is placed..

Occasionally he may produce an aria just because one seems due

to a singer or due to the audience. He does this with Don Ottavio's arias in *Don Giovanni*, because Don Ottavio is just a tenor and nothing more, and a tenor must have songs to sing. Don Ottavio's sole function is to play the devout lover to the self-absorbed Donna Anna and dance attendance on her. Sometimes he has to be rewarded by being allowed to sing an aria.

But there are no lay-figures in *Figaro*. Every one of the dozen characters is tingling with vitality and every one of the arias shows it. The Countess is a disillusioned woman. Mozart gave her two arias "Porgi amor" and "Dove sono", which show her disappointment with life, her sad reflections among the brilliance and glitter of the sham court life.

In "Dove sono" she is waiting for the coming of her maid Susanna to tell her of the plot laid to dupe the faithless Count. She is disgusted to think that she has to stoop to employ her maid to beguile her husband. She displays her tangled emotions in the recitative before the song. (N.B.—It is accompanied by orchestra, because it is a soliloquy not a conversation). The recitative passes straight into the aria "Dove sono" in which she mourns over her tragedy of past happiness and lost love.

This theme is developed in strict form (A.B.A.) but the final section is suddenly interrupted with a new resolution. She pulls herself together; she will not give way. She has been constant to him and perhaps her constancy may yet win him back. "Ah! se almen la mia costanze." She will try it anyway. There can be no victory without a struggle, and her resolution is taken in the brilliant coda to the song which obliterates the resigned mood in which it began with the words "Dove sono".

You must be given one more example of Mozart's suppleness in song.

A song which stands quite by itself written in the year before *Figaro* (1785). It has nothing to do with the opera, nothing to do with the aria: just a fugitive setting for voice with piano accompaniment of Goethe's lyric: "Das Veilchen auf der Wiese stand." The modest violet in the grass aspires to love. A girl passes, all bedecked for a meeting with her lover. She does not see the violet. All unconscious she treads on it. It is crushed; it droops; it dies.

The poor violet! It was a lovely violet! "Das arme Veilchen! Es war ein herzig's Veilchen." That is what Goethe's lyric says; no more. What a distance lies between this and the opera song! The aria as we have seen is always planned on broad lines, in large scale

panels as it were, to express a human emotion or succession of emotions.

Anything like aria treatment of so diminutive a thing as the fate of the poor violet would be banal to the last degree, and no composer before Mozart could possibly have fined his art down to the scale required. Very few since have done anything approaching it. Schubert occasionally achieved it, and Hugo Wolf frequently tried to. The careful listener will note that every point in the poem is clearly mirrored in the most exquisite of melodies. To analyze it, pull it to pieces, would be to trample on the violet.

III

ILLUSTRATIONS

Quartet in G. (1782. K. 387).
Quartet in C. (1785. K. 465).

I HAVE given some hint of the tradition of the orchestral symphony which the infant Mozart imbibed with his mother's milk. If you want to realize how numerous were its composers and how ubiquitous were its orchestras I would refer you to Mr. Adam Carse's admirable little book *The Orchestra in the XVIIIth Century*, published from Cambridge two years ago. He gives tables showing the constitution of upwards of 100 orchestras, Court orchestras and Opera orchestras, from Paris to Vienna, and from Copenhagen to Naples, not forgetting the King's Band in London. Most of them retained composers whose business it was to compose symphonies, concertos and overtures for their orchestras to play. Their name is legion and like other legionaries they have passed into the condition of unknown warriors. Their music was not futile because it all helped to establish a style based on the taste of their patrons. They did not pander to the worst tastes of a vulgar public, but they competed to satisfy and improve on the best taste of a cultivated society. Therefore Mozart started with good models to copy and very soon to surpass.

They all used a great many figures of musical speech in common, and in particular there were recognized ways of beginning such a formal thing as a symphony. That was good manners.

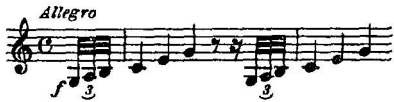
In the modern concert room we put all our formality into that which is not music, perhaps because twentieth century music has forgotten its manners. The conductor enters to a round of applause not because he has done anything yet to deserve it but because it is polite to assume that he will do so presently. The orchestra stands up at his entrance not because they respect him but because not to would be definitely disrespectful.

Eighteenth century good manners were preserved by the composer towards his audience in his music.

If you look through the Thematic Catalogue of Mozart's works (2-bars scraps of rhythm) you will find that in his symphonies most of these scraps are in certain well defined shapes. You will not find the same in his chamber music where most of these scraps are the beginning of a tune.

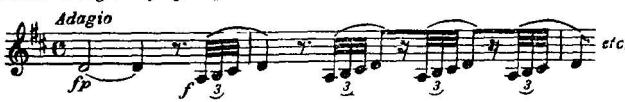
A common one is some form of the arpeggio of the key chord preceded by a little upward figure to give emphasis to the Key note.

Ex. 1. Symphony (K.96) 1770

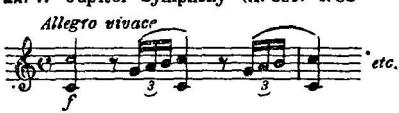


Ex. 2. Symphony (K.338) 1780

Ex. 3. Prague Symphony (K.504) 1786



Ex. 4. Jupiter Symphony (K. 551) 1788



These are so alike (only just not identical), that they seem to justify the schoolboy who said to his master: "Don't you think, sir, that all classical music is very much alike." Mozart uses this figure all over the place wherever he wants an arresting beginning, as indeed did all his contemporaries and predecessors; and note that he uses it not only in his boyish years, but in the last and greatest of his symphonies universally known for its greatness by the title of "The Jupiter"

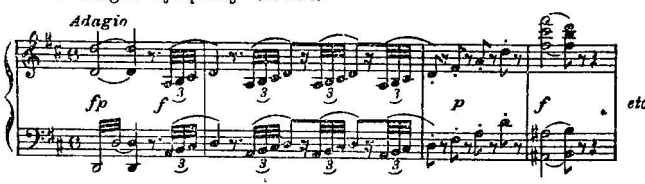
But we all know that the first words of a conversation are not likely to be the most eloquent.

The young gallant of the eighteenth century on meeting the lady of his desire would remove his hat and address her with a sweeping bow: "Good morrow, Madam. I hope I find you well." The young man of to-day does not remove his hat because generally he hasn't got one, but with his hands in his trousers' pocket (an attitude which she has learnt to adopt) he addresses his girl friend with "Hullo! Old Thing." The subsequent conversation may be just as important to them both and indeed lead to very similar results, as that of the eighteenth century.

The moral of that is that we must look beyond the first two bars of a Mozart symphony if we want to enjoy what he has to say. Mozart's predecessors had used these symphonic gambits over and over again and then gone on to something quite different and sometimes more interesting.

Mozart, as soon as he outgrew his boyish shyness (which was fairly soon), began to use the gambit not as a way of getting over the awkwardness of starting (for he felt no awkwardness) but as a way of rushing straight at something which he very much wanted to say.

Ex. 5. Prague Symphony (K. 504)



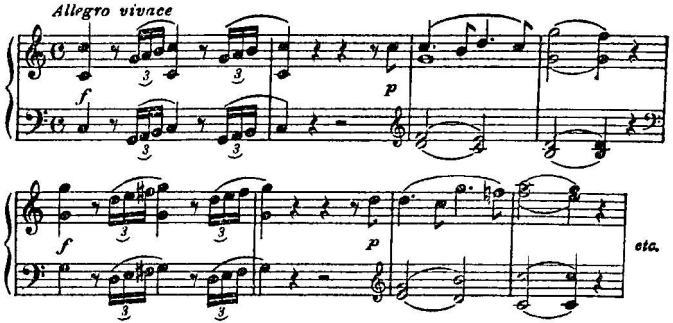
In the "Jupiter" his method is different. The gambit is downright statement of fact which gets a gentle answer in the opening and the restatement. In the restatement you get the conversation developed with ever increasing interest.

These gambits naturally only affected the first movements of Mozart's symphonies.

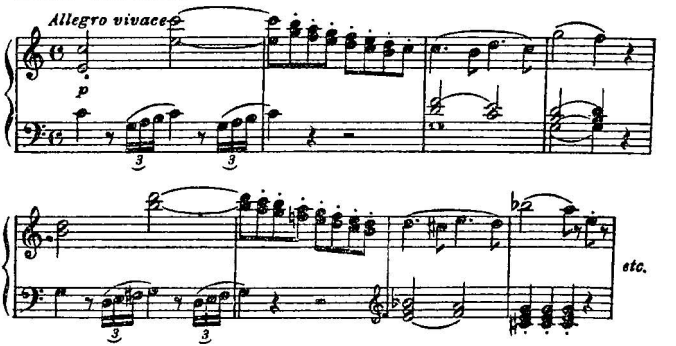
The slow movements were, as I have suggested, suffused with the lyrical emotion of the opera aria.

The Minuets were impelled by the spirit of the dance and Mozart delighted in dancing and once declared that he loved it more than music itself. He didn't mean that, but everyone of his Minuets is a fantasy on that most favoured dance form of his day.

Ex. 6. Jupiter Symphony (K. 551) Opening bars



Ex. 6a. Restatement



As to his finales it was in these that he let himself go most freely, launching a merry tune for two violins only, in the E flat Symphony, and playing off every prank of modulation that occurs to him till it ends suddenly and as abruptly as it began; in the "Jupiter" building his tunes into a complicated fugue till one's brain reels as they tumble over one another. There has been only one composer (J. S. Bach) who could rival Mozart at that game and even he never juggled with half a dozen tunes at once with the exquisite lightness of hand that Mozart displayed in the finale to the "Jupiter" Symphony.

I may safely assume that some of you know these major miracles

of Mozart and hope that you may hear them many times again in the concert-room.

One does not find the conventional gambits of symphony in the Thematic Catalogue of Mozart's chamber music works. As the very name Chamber Music implies it is a more intimate and friendly affair than the occasion which produces the full orchestra. The opportunity was rather the small house-party than the Court reception. Formality of manners was relaxed and the composer took his audience more readily into his confidence.

Joseph Haydn living in the country house of Prince Esterhazy had made the string quartet (two violins, viola, violoncello) into the perfect vehicle for these homely occasions, and many of his works had been published in parts and so had gone abroad in the world.

It was soon after Mozart's marriage (4 August 1782), that in the difficult days when he was struggling to keep his precarious foothold in Viennese society, he turned seriously to quartet writing and produced six which were presently published together with a dedication to Haydn, as the great exemplar of the style. Mozart may have wished to demonstrate his fitness for such a domestic post as Haydn held.

Curiously enough, these quartets were the only works of Mozart which brought him serious adverse criticism. He was often slighted, ignored, pushed aside; we saw in Kelly's description of him how, "touchy as gunpowder", he was prepared to resent these slights. But here and here alone he was accused of having offended against that propriety which governed the good taste of the day. Mr. Hussey in his life of Mozart tells us that the peculiarities of these quartets "caused one princely amateur to tear up the parts in a fury at the outrage committed upon his ears". Poor man! Mozart appeared to him as the wicked modernist who glories in wrong notes. (I hope you will be able to detect them presently and will not ascribe them to my friends the players. These players are going to play certain selected movements from Mozart's six quartets dedicated to Haydn, not only for your musical pleasure but to help to establish in practice certain points which I have hinted at in the course of these lectures.)

First let me say generally that a string quartet of the period has the same kind of outline as a symphony. Each contains a first allegro, a slow movement, a minuet with trio (i.e. a contrast) and a vivid, lively finale.

The quartet in G (No. 1) places the minuet and trio immediately after the first allegro and before the slow movement.

The first allegro sweeps straight away without preamble (or gambit) into a beautiful tune which dominates the whole movement.

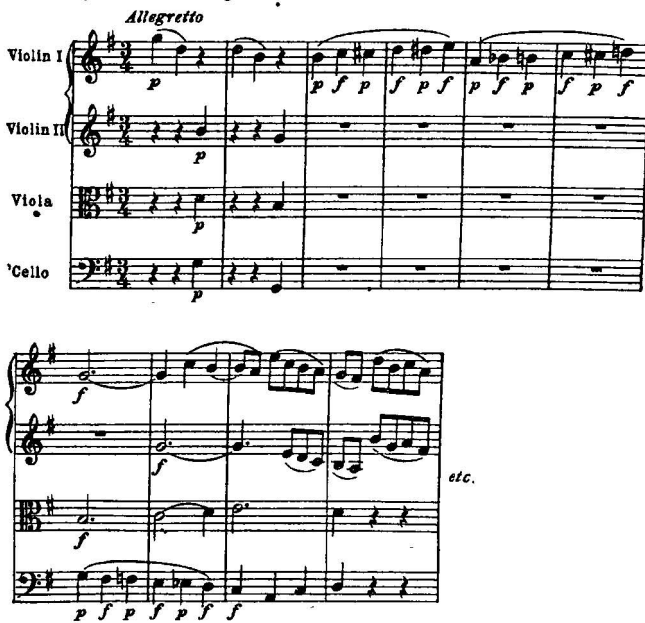
There are indeed contrasting tunes which set it off and vie with it, but it is this that matters most.

The two motives, diatonic and chromatic, do not seem very striking at first but notice how they grow later:

e.g. The dialogue is in the middle.

The minuet is a subtle little miniature in sonata form. It illustrates exactly what I meant when I spoke just now of Mozart creating a fantasy of the dance in his symphonic minuets. You could not dance to it, for almost at once after the first two bars Mozart disguises the dance rhythm with cross accents in a chromatic

Ex. 7. Quartet in G major (K. 387) Minuet



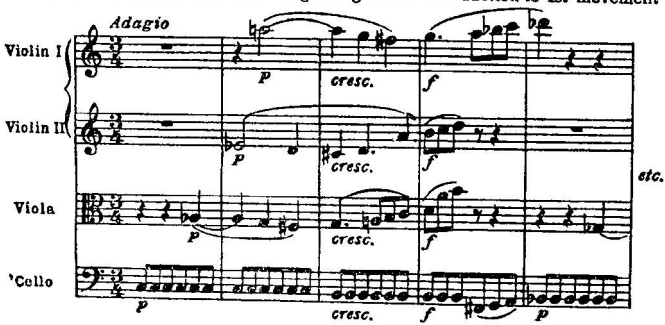
passage which practically turns it from three time into two time. But the minuet-time measure is soon restored, and all the varying elements get moulded into a perfectly balanced design.

Beside that I want to place the first two movements of the Quartet in C (No. 6). Here there is a direct contrast at the outset with the Quartet in G.

Mozart does precede the allegro with a slow preamble (not a gambit); indeed it was certainly one of the things which infuriated the princely amateur.

Look at the first phrase and ask yourself what key it is in!

Ex. 8. Quartet in C (K. 465) Beginning of the introduction to 1st movement



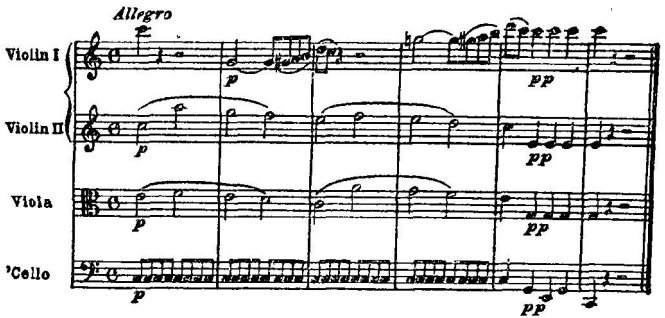
The viola plays A flat and the first violin strikes in with A natural and, before the key of C has been more than hinted at, the phrase has slipped away to the key of B flat minor. Shocking! There are some people whose ears are still outraged by Mozart's bad manners here. I'm not quite sure myself whether I really like it.

But I like to think that Mozart had here a vision, just a glimpse of what would happen to music in days to come in a world which he was never to see, and perhaps was glad that he would not see it. At any rate he turned away from it, to revel in the world which he knew and loved, in the subsequent allegro.

Notice that his revels end in an exquisite diminuendo and *pp.* chords which prepare the way for the solemn slow movement.

Perhaps in his C major Quartet Mozart himself is found at his highest and best; it is a work which seems to sum up our line of thought about him, and needs no words of explanation.

Ex. 8a. Quartet in C (K. 465) End of 1st movement



In one of the Collects of the Daily Office of the Church of England there is a phrase which addresses God "whose service is perfect freedom". I understand that phrase the better when I think of Mozart. Music in his day was an art hedged round with the strictest limitations: limitations of form, and style and manner, of the structure of instruments and the technique of playing them. The artist's personal life was restricted by social conditions with which he must comply. These things, whether good or evil, were immutable and I do not know that Mozart even wanted to change them. He was a man of his time; he accepted its conditions, he worked within its limitations. He used its tools better than any of his contemporaries and for infinitely higher ends. He attained his mastery with astonishing rapidity and used his mastery to serve his art. In that service he found perfect freedom.

A Postscript—Mozart's Tunes

(26 February 1943)

"I LIKE Mozart—at any rate his tunes," remarked a novice.

"Why his tunes specially?" asked his elder.

"I should be more inclined to say that I should like him if it wasn't for his tunes," put in the third party to the conversation, a clever young music student.

"O well, I can't argue with you highbrows; you're beyond me anyway. I only meant that I like the bits of Mozart which aren't beyond me, the bits that go straight on, and that I call 'tunes'."

"I don't," said the music student. "What I dislike about Mozart's tunes is the fact that they don't go straight on. They stop at every station and at crossroads and level crossings as well."

The three were walking across country, and the elder noted that the talk seemed likely to outlast the walk if only he could prevent the novice from dropping out of it. The worst of our musical novices is their humility before the experts. It is they who refuse to talk and who put the closure on a promising discussion with the meaningless epithet "highbrow". The elder determined to fan the flickering flame. "You must give an instance of what you mean about stopping," he said to the music student.

STUDENT: Well, take the beginning of the G minor String Quintet. I suppose you call the first eight bars the tune. It goes up in arpeggio; it comes down chromatically; it goes on a bit and stops on the dominant. Then it starts again with the arpeggio downward and answers that with one going up and finishes off with a passage that ends on the tonic. I just feel that Mozart has not got going yet. He has to make a fresh start, and it is only when he has got away from this set pattern and the parts tumble over one another that his music becomes exciting.

NOVICE: Now that is just like you highbrows. You trot out your arpeggios and chromatics and dominants and tonics, and think you have proved something.

STUDENT: But I was asked for an instance of what I called the stopping places, and these terms, about which there is nothing very highbrow, surely help to give it.

NOVICE: I do not know the Quintet very well, though I remember its beginning. It was not that sort of tune that I meant when I said I liked Mozart's tunes.

ELDER: Then it is your turn to give an instance.

NOVICE: There's a Symphony; I don't know its number, but I believe it is in E flat. It begins with a certain amount of what I call the rum-tum-ti-tum business, but clears away into one of Mozart's best, a tune like a tree swaying in the wind and changing its shape as it sways: It goes straight on for a time. The only trouble for me is that Mozart seems to have had enough of it before I have. He goes off to running passages and only comes back to my tune after a long time of doing things which I care about less.

ELDER: Don't you pick up any hints of your tune before Mozart gives it to you again in its entirety?

NOVICE: Not much that I can recall. He does a lot of other rather jolly things, by the way, but all the time I am waiting to hear that tune again.

STUDENT: That seems to me the fault of that particular symphony. He makes too definite a point of his first subject and then has to break away from it violently to say something else and scarcely dares return to it. Now Sibelius's symphonic form——

ELDER: Never mind Sibelius for the moment. This man has told us of a Mozart tune which is his ideal; you have told us of one which is not your ideal. Do you think he has justified his taste?

STUDENT: In itself, yes. I think the E flat tune is one of the most beautiful ever written. But it is not seminal; it never grows into anything bigger or better.

NOVICE: But why should it grow if it is perfect in itself?

STUDENT: Because that is the justification of a symphony. Unless there is something more to it than what is recognizable at once there is no point in writing a lot of other music round the main tune and calling the result a symphony.

ELDER: If the other music were really irrelevant I should agree, but I suggest that it has a subtle relevance which may escape the novice's ear but which he will find all right if he does not pin his mind down to the tune which has first attracted him.

A child walking here may not notice the contours of the country, but will rush to pick the first primrose and then look about for another. I enjoy the primrose but I do not want to pick it, because it belongs to that sheltered nook at the bend of the stream. On the other hand I think you are a different sort of child. You pick the

tune of the G minor Quintet to pieces and are dissatisfied with it. Perhaps it is only a dandelion, but the dandelions of music are the most prolific of tunes. They float away presently on their little parachutes to fill the countryside with gold. They are, as you say, "seminal", sometimes rather too much so. Have you ever realized how many of Mozart's initial ideas are just the commonplace weeds of music; the rum-tum-ti-tum, or the common chord in arpeggio up or down the scale, the things with which literally thousands of concertos and symphonies by minor composers announce themselves. Take a glance through Koechel's catalogue and you say that anyone might have done that. But sooner or later you come on what nobody but Mozart could have done; perhaps it is the perfect tune or perhaps it is some new blossoming in harmony or colour found in the combination of tunes. It is by that we recognize his master hand.

H.C.C.

A Memoir

H. C. C. left his testament in his writings; had he lived to attain leisure, he might have added to these an autobiography in which the art he served would have glowed against the quiet background of his other personal experiences in many fields.

No such attempt can now be made, but this short sketch dwells rather upon those other experiences than upon his special work and learning, because they too were an essential part of him to his friends for whom it is written.

HENRY COPE COLLES did not set forth to be a writer on music; in his childhood he dreamed of composing and of performing, and was industrious in all the first steps towards these ends. As he left childhood, and his artistic experience widened, he saw his goal recede. By that time, however, he was grounded in musical theory, in the outlines of music history, in the practice of choral singing, and of fiddle, pianoforte and organ playing. The two latter instruments he was to play all his life, often much to the content of his hearers, though never to his own.

H. C. C. was born in 1879 and was the third child and elder son of Abraham and Emily A. G. Colles. His parents were unworldly even by the standards of their generation in which idealism sought many new expressions. His father had graduated brilliantly in medicine and surgery from Trinity College, Dublin, where his grandfather, the great surgeon, had added lustre to their name. The Colles family, originally landowners in Worcestershire, had crossed over to Ireland in the reign of James I and had maintained there an unbroken and honourable tradition.

So H. C. C.'s father seemed "set fair" for a life of great interest and usefulness; he had carried off many prizes, had many friends, was a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, before he was twenty-eight. Perhaps it seemed too easy; it certainly seemed too conventional a life to please him. On his marriage to Emily A. G. Dallas, who shared and encouraged his views, he settled in England and in the country, where he worked very hard; first in Shropshire where H. C. C. was born, then at Wellington in Somer-

set where he and his family spent happy years. All his life H.C.C. thought of the quiet hills and valleys and streams of Somerset as home, and saw them in that clear light which springs up before the inward eye when one hears the words "West country". And though some of his happiest times in boyhood were spent in Ireland and though he travelled far in later life, no scenes ever challenged these in his allegiance. The Colles's home was a roomy Georgian country-town house with an ample garden fading into orchard and lane. And here the children, of whom in time there were seven, spent an uneventful and united childhood, in which the influences of their parents, their aunt and their nannie were all, in different ways, potent. The carefree and ardent nature of their mother was the core of the children's lives, but the friendship of their aunt, Helen Dallas, and the sturdy goodness and intelligence of "Nan" made a scarcely less deep imprint on those early days. Abraham Colles was a reserved and busy man and at that time H.C.C., with five sisters and an only invalid brother, was undoubtedly "by female usurpation swayed". Many years later in writing of Christmas carols he said of "Good King Wenceslaus": "How many have acted in it as children! how many younger brothers have resented being thrust into the minor part of the poor man gathering winter fuel while elder sisters flaunted it bravely as king and page." But in out-of-doors games he was their happy equal.

H. C. C. was often ill, and for this and other reasons he never had the usual public-school life—to his lasting regret. But what he missed there he gained in the time given him for musical study. He began his music lessons at eight with an enthusiastic musician who poured out on his small and sensitive pupil all the stored knowledge at his command. Mr. Toms, indeed, was the very teacher for the boy because he had a rare artistic balance and an historic sense. He quickened the boy's intelligence at the piano (and the organ later) by his own absorption in the different aspects of whatever music was going forward. Did the teacher make a rare pilgrimage to London to St. James's Hall, the Crystal Palace or elsewhere, he brought every concert programme and every criticism to his impatient disciple, and hours were well spent in talking over the music heard, the composer who made it, the performances themselves. Mr. Toms lived to be a very old man; they kept their friendship in repair, though as years passed it was the pupil who brought his musical adventures to the master.

On his rare visits H. C. C. delighted to make his old friend play

the mellow chamber organ in his music room; one day the old man sat with hands poised, after playing a prelude and fugue of Bach, and said: "Ah! how sad that these sounds of delight should ever cease!"

H. C. C. had a good grounding in fiddle playing, especially during several prolonged visits to his family in Ireland. Perhaps these musical experiments were not the discipline for one who was ambitious to be an executant, but as a preparatory school for the work which he afterwards undertook they were invaluable. His general education at this time was on a more pedestrian level, though he was encouraged to read more widely than many children. It was only later when he went up to Oxford that the zest of studentship invaded his being, a zest which increased thereafter with every year of his life and gave to his own teaching in his mature years clarity and sympathy.

When H. C. C. was sixteen, the Colles family came to London, and he and his second sister both began to work seriously at the Royal College of Music.

That was a stirring period in the life of the institution: Sir George Grove had shaped it into being and guided it through its difficult childhood. Now, in 1895, Sir Hubert Parry had succeeded him as Director: and his splendid gifts and the whole glow of his character were to give it a brilliant adolescence. The teaching staff was of great distinction; among the students and especially among the scholars were many young men and women who helped later to shape the whole musical life of this country. It was indeed "a lot fallen in a fair ground" to such as H. C. C., who learnt there so much and said so little that few of his fellows later remembered him as he then was. He was again happy in his teachers; among them Walter Alcock, Walter Parratt and above all the Director, whose lectures in Musical History and whose addresses to the students shed enlightenment. Sir Hubert Parry's approach to his pupils was another source of enlightenment—his astonishment in the face of priggery and conceit, his sympathy with their reverse, his wish to kindle an adventurous habit of mind (on hearing of a debating society he asked hopefully "And *do* some of you young fellows talk wild?"), the generosity of his knowledge; to this whole noble personality H. C. C. gave his allegiance, and as years passed this grew into an equal friendship between them which was life-long. It was there too that his affection for Walford Davies was cemented to withstand any later passing divergences of musical outlook.

With his own contemporaries he was still reticent, largely from a shyness accentuated by his upbringing at home. But when he went up to Worcester College, Oxford, as organ scholar in 1899, he found his footing with his own generation, and shared to the full the pleasure of expanding human interests. A friend looking back on that time said later, "for me H. C. C. was Oxford".

Henry Hadow was then Dean of the College, and the play of his mind and the perfection of his lectures (only those who heard W. H. Hadow lecture can really believe in such perfection) though dazzling at first, shed radiance on whatever was learnt from him. His discernment in music and his personal friendship were to be an aid to H. C. C. at many turns in his work.

It was difficult for H. C. C. to carry on the duties of his scholarship and to work for his degree, for he had lee-way to make up, and was far from strong. To his distress he was not able to stay a fourth year, as he had hoped to do. Many years later this disappointment was redeemed to him when in 1935 the University conferred on him a Mus. Doc. Honoris Causa and in 1936 Worcester College made him an honorary fellow, two distinctions which gave him peculiar pleasure.

During these years he took instinctively every opportunity to use his pen, and his essays were observed by his tutor and the Dean; the latter, indeed, gave him what he most lacked—a spark of confidence in his power to write. Then and later W. H. Hadow's criticism and friendship, as Parry's, was a constant spur to him to do his utmost and his best.

After leaving Oxford H. C. C. settled to varied tasks in London; he studied informally and very practically under Walford Davies at the Temple Church, he became organist of a church in Hampstead, read musical history and took every chance of listening to music wherever it was to be heard in London and elsewhere.

In 1905, H. C. C. began his regular writing work when Harold Child asked him to contribute a weekly article on music to *The Academy*. H. H. C. and H. C. C. were friends at sight, and the latter owed to his first editor a debt which he was glad to feel could never be paid. In 1906, Bruce L. Richmond, then one of the Editors of *The Times*, asked him to write occasionally for that newspaper. This was all quite casually reinforced by a two-minute interview with G. E. Buckle and Moberly Bell at Printing House Square, but there was no formality then or ever: he simply served the paper from that day, first as assistant to J. A. Fuller-

Maitland and then, on his retirement, as music critic-in-chief until the day he died thirty-seven years later. The value of those services both to *The Times* and to musical thought in England need not be assessed here. The work was arduous, often exhausting; its unwritten conditions debarred him from outlets in many directions and anonymity was at times a "hair shirt". But, as with his teachers so with his Editors and colleagues of the newspaper, H. C. C. lived in unbroken friendship: he sought to fulfil what he believed to be his duties to his paper, his Editors and his public by putting them first on every occasion. His Editors, on their side, gave him liberty to carry out his work without restriction. In those far-off days, with the exception of Bruce Richmond whose musicianship and experience were a constant help, the Olympians of Printing House Square regarded music as akin to witchcraft; they did not venture themselves too near the bubbling brew, but to the man who did they gave their surprised support.

Of his craft as a journalist H. C. C. had most to learn. He never forgot the advice of John B. Capper, given after some early overemphasis had brought misunderstanding, "In writing for *The Times* you must always remember that most people are rather muddle-headed on most subjects."

H. C. C. learnt in time to make his meaning unmistakeable. In the years between 1906, when he married and settled into the main work of his life, and 1914, when the world as known to his generation ended with the first war, every sort of artistic activity seemed to be in life in England and the fruits of the musical renaissance of the late nineteenth century to be ripening. In London, concerts of both orchestral and chamber music, good, mediocre and poor, numbered usually six or more a day throughout the early summer and late autumn months. Covent Garden still had its high seasons of German and Italian Opera with singers whose voices yet linger in the ear. Drury Lane countered by staging the great Russian Operas (1913) and (1911) the Russian Imperial Ballet took the imagination by storm. Outside London, the provincial festivals both in cathedrals and in town halls, were each autumn centres of music: the Competitive Festivals and Eisteddfods held enormous audiences; there were good touring opera companies; and many regular series of provincial concerts given both by orchestras and chamber music parties. In all these manifold activities there was the usual clash and clatter of contending policies when "those behind cried Forward, and those before cried Back"; the usual

wounded feelings strewed the field; the usual inconclusive nature of all artistic combats was made apparent.

But, above this clamour, the great sounds of great music soared direct from the minds of their creators through the voices, bows and fingers of great interpreters into the air, which was not yet taking second place to the ether, direct to the ears of audiences.

To this period belong Elgar's two symphonies, the later works of Parry, the earlier of Vaughan Williams and the major works of Frederick Delius, and the chamber music of a whole group of younger men, many of whom died so soon after in the war. And in other countries there were the productions of Richard Strauss, Puccini's operas, the symphonies of Sibelius; the uprising of the new atonal music in Germany and Austria and innumerable other evidences of experiment or achievement.

Of all this new creative force H. C. C. in his quiet way made a deep study. His own mind, established upon the classical traditions of the arts of music, painting and literature was perceptive of any insincerity in experiment but quick to appreciate the pioneers, even when he could not blaze the same trail.

The standards of individual performance he judged by a like measure—and here again of insincerity and carelessness he had small tolerance. Indeed his frankness was sometimes much resented; but he himself was always ready to stand by his conviction. He dwelt as a rule on construction not destruction in his words and his writing:

> By criticism I mean the capacity to form a judgement and the attempt to come to a right judgement.
>
> That is the object of intelligent listening to music.
>
> We are all inherently critical and we must try to be reasonably good critics.
>
> It is not easy, in fact it is likely to take more than a lifetime of experience. Because it is difficult it is entrancingly interesting.
>
> Written criticism is an art in itself, part of the literary art. But I have known excellent critical minds who were terrified at the suggestion of writing an article.

It was an over-busy and often a difficult life, but one which offered constant food for an ardent learner.

With the retirement of J. A. Fuller-Maitland in 1911, H. C. C.'s apprenticeship came to an end and the musical columns of *The*

Times began to take a rather different shape. He began his regular Saturday articles in which many subjects arising from current events could be treated at leisure. These articles now form a chain of comment upon almost every side of musical life from 1911 until 1943 when he laid down his pen. Of course there were other contributors, his colleagues Laurence Haward, G. S. Robertson and Nicholas Gatty, to name only three, in those earlier years. But, in the main, H. C. C. held himself responsible for the articles as he did for the policy of music generally in the paper.

He also began then to travel for *The Times*, going to Stuttgart, to Bayreuth, to Paris and other continental centres of music, and constantly to festivals in all parts of England.

At the same time, his *Growth of Music* appeared first in 1912—and he began Vol. VII of the *Oxford History of Music* in 1912, though this was destined to be very long on the way. All these studies kept him alert and increasingly in touch with musical minds of many nationalities. It was a happy period of life: at home H. C. C. was content with quiet pleasures, and with those friendships which "run deep". His childhood in the country had quickened for always his love of landscape, birds and flowers; his mother, whose ready brush was in delicate use until after she was eighty, encouraged his sketching. Holidays were spent for the most part in the West Country, or Ireland or on the continent and always among friends. With no children of his own, he was a friend to many.

As one of these wrote after his death "all our lives he has been our friend, but so much more than a friend that there seems nothing to add!"

Perhaps the tranquillity of this personal background gave him the reserve strength to undertake all that he did, for the constant work at late hours in hot air was a trial to him.

Then in 1914 came the war, and with the rest of his "generation between" H. C. C. went with those of a younger to the defence of his heritage.

It was some time before he succeeded in passing into the Army, but in that waiting time he started with the late Mr. W. W. Cobbett and one or two other friends a society for the furtherance of concerts which grew speedily into The Committee for Music in War-time. This did an invaluable work in keeping concerts going in likely and unlikely places and thereby employing regularly numbers of hard-hit artists and it led to the foundation by his friend Miss Mary

Paget of the concerts in rural areas which continued far into the peace.

In August 1914, *The Times* sponsored the public fund of the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society and day by day devoted much space to a chronicle of the activities of the joint Societies. H. C. C. acted as liaison officer between Pall Mall and Printing House Square (following his friend H. H. Child there). Then he was accepted for the Army and in due course received a Commission in the Royal Artillery, and after the usual period of training went overseas and found himself in the arid foothills of Macedonia, at the most arid time of the year. During his training in England, H. C. C. had found a refuge in his music, and in an odd way it even helped him with his military lessons: he was amused that his instructor could not believe in his previous ignorance of Morse—he learnt it so quickly by correlating its dashes and dots with tunes!

The journey eastwards began in those days with a ten days' trundle in ancient rolling stock across France or Italy to Taranto and then through the submarine-infested seas to Greece. Of a welcome moment of liberation from the train he wrote:

> A broad grass platform lit by many oil lamps, wood fires in troughs laid crosswise in which dixies were already boiling for our tea, tanks of drinking water, rows of pails for washing and, discreetly in the background, rows of *demoiselles* letting off magnesium flares that we might see their pretty white dresses. Such was our "Halte-repas". It was just the place for music, and when the tea and washing pails had been properly dealt with, it was just the moment. The girls began it by singing the "Marseillaise", but it was jolly to hear our fellows take up the tune, with a fair knowledge of the words; give it a rough but strong harmony and fairly beat their feminine allies on their own ground. Something had to follow. Somebody started "Take me back to dear old Blighty" and we jigged through its inanities with vigour but without conviction. Then, someone else had an inspiration: he led off with "The Farmer's Boy", chorus every two lines, followed by a similar effort about a "Soldier's life from dawn to death", a song in which each line of the chanter was followed by a rousing response from all. Rag-time songs were prominent but did not go really well. The ragged rhythms always baulk the British chorus. But "The long long trail a-winding" would

have raised the roof if there had been one lower than the stars; after all it is a straight tune and we know something about "the long trail": so song after song was raised, with the "Marseillaise" a second time, and the Russian National Anthem in rich and sonorous harmony to follow it. Of course the British soldier never starts his own national anthem. It means "the End" and it means standing at attention: thus ceremony ruins spontaneity.

At another halt in Italy he accompanied the Signorina from the cash desk and a young English singer, who was also a gunner, in the well known duet from *Il Trovatore* sung in Italian and English —(for which there was precedent on more than one occasion at Covent Garden!) and was amused to find that the population was packed in the town square outside the windows and applauding loudly.

H. C. C. was posted to a battery of 60-pounder guns in the mountains and in his observation posts took stock, like many another unaccustomed soldier, of everything that could make life bearable. His men and horses were a great help, for both always needed something and he was good at perceiving those needs. Up there they were holding the approach to those passes down which twenty-four years later the barbarians succeeded in pouring their hordes upon Greece. Accurate gunnery was essential and, much to his own surprise, H. C. C. proved to be a very accurate gunner. It was a sterile country—there was fever, loneliness and little cover. But this threw into relief, between the beauty of dawn and dusk, the steadfastness of the men, the intelligence of his horse, the pleasant eccentricities of his Commanding Officer.

"I'm not a soldier," he wrote, "and I don't understand soldiering but, thank God, I *am* a gunner and I love the men." And after describing the brief flowering of the slopes, usually so arid, he turned as his companions did to the familiar thoughts of their own countryside.

> Do you know why I always *print* England on your envelopes? It is not really to help the Post Office to read, but simply that I love to linger over the word and see it grow up letter by letter. And somewhere in the middle of me I know that it is not the cause of humanity, or of the Allies, or of the British Empire or the British Isles that I'm here to help in my small trifling way, but just ENGLAND.

Later H. C. C. was recalled to base to take part in instructing Greek officers in British gunnery, a change which he felt placed him in an unfairly safe position. But he soon became too strenuously busy to regret. In addition to his pupils, with whom he achieved success and among whom he made friends, he began, at the suggestion of his Commanding Officer to form a small orchestra. The first efforts were primitive, parts scored from memory on any bits of paper: shaky instruments, shakier players. In time, however, with the help of some real talent and with music sent from home and finally of a noble present of instruments from Woolwich, H. C. C.'s band became efficient, and its weekly concerts were packed by men who often tramped for miles to sit so wedged into their seats that they could not lift their hands to applaud. He always remembered those audiences and the music prepared for them with so great an effort by the tired and all too often malaria-stricken players. He himself suffered from a severe infection and the last months in 1918 were a frequent struggle to remain on duty: his fellow officers nursed him when he was sick as best they might, since he refused to be transferred to hospital. It was, as always, a surprise to him to be the object of such affectionate care, and it was a lasting grief that so many of these friends died in the next ten or twelve years as a result of their war service.

The Armistice came in the Balkans on 11 October 1918, following a gallant attack by the combined Allied forces in which the British troops advanced up an alpine slope without cover and under withering fire, and suffered very heavily. H. C. C.'s C.O., himself pushing forward, found time to send him a message to collect his players if possible to play to the wearied men just below the mountain side.

That was the end of his active soldiering. He had a brief leave in Athens; he made a brief farewell to his friends:

> 'Crowds came to our Symphony Concert,' he wrote on 24 November, 'including Generals and others but what impressed me most was the wonderful listening of the men. How I wish I could do more for them! Sad farewells. It was all I could do to shake hands and get away decently when they cheered me at the end. I don't deserve such kindness. Wanting to go home does not make it any easier to say good-bye to them.'

Then began the "long trail" homewards: "So at last we leave Grecian soil and unlike almost everyone else I do so with great reluctance," he wrote.

After some months of ill health he took up, all too soon, the increasing claims of his London work.

Very much has been written about musical life in London and elsewhere during the years between 1919 and 1939; their impact on a life such as H. C. C.'s is best seen in his writing. He was forty in 1919, and his experiences gave weight to his scholarship: but he was still young at heart and incurably diffident behind what someone a little acidly described as his "urbane" manner.

Two facts stand out in musical memory in the first years after 1919—the genuine longing of a great public for music in all forms: those who wished for distraction and adventure found an outlet in the manifestations of what was called the "new" music; the plainer folk found rest in pursuing or discovering for themselves the beauties of the "old".

Concerts, both orchestral and of chamber music, again took the field. Ballet became and has remained one of the most popular forms of entertainment; the politics of opera were almost as vital, it seemed to opera-goers, as the operas themselves.

The Royal Schools of Music were crowded with students. The same epoch saw the sudden expansion of music by gramophone and by wireless. A floodgate of sound and reproduction was opened with the swiftness of a thunderclap. It almost seemed as if what lay on the hither side of the dividing torrent of war had been submerged. Alas! many of the most promising younger musicians had been lost. Older musicians too had gone. Sir Hubert Parry had died in the autumn of 1918. Among other friends he had lost, too, one much younger whom he had hoped would be his colleague when war was over. But there were great men at work again. Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst and younger men were in full tide of creative work. And in the sphere of performance English conductors and players were setting a high standard.

In *The Times*, Arthur Fox-Strangways had carried on the musical work during H. C. C.'s absence and on his return remained for some strenuous years as his colleague.

At the Royal College of Music, Sir Hugh Allen succeeded Sir Hubert Parry, and very soon invited H. C. C. to join the staff as lecturer in Musical History and Appreciation. It was a work which

deeply interested him, and his care for his students was lively: he found an especial interest in his "Critics' Class", several of which have become well-known musical writers.

Sir Hugh Allen had the arduous work of reconstituting the Royal College of Music after the years of war. Under his forcible and far-seeing leadership it was indeed a comprehensive School of Music. H. C. C. rejoiced in all these activities and seconded them in many ways. Many of his students, writing about him years afterwards, spoke of the happiness which their work under him had been; in the Critics' Class, the history and appreciation lectures and the teachers' training courses. At that time the attitude of many music students towards the art as a part of human development was a rudimentary one. It was a constant preoccupation with H. C. C. and others how best to help them to study and to listen. "It is impossible to insist too strongly upon the importance of studying musical history through the hearing of music itself," he wrote. And again: "Most of the artistic insincerity of the present day comes from the ability to talk about things without actually hearing their effect."

In a way, as he recognized, the superficial and tolerant attitude towards their art was excusable in young people of eighteen whose facility for singing or playing had not been stabilized by a solid general education. "The young people were piteously tolerant. They wrapped themselves in their tolerance to hide their nakedness of soul. They were all perfectly ready to 'cast away the works of darkness', indeed they seemed to have done so already, but they were quite unable to find 'any armour of light' that would fit them comfortably'."

To enlarge and yet to focus their view and to simplify to them the integral part of creative art in history H. C. C. turned his mind, and in all the years of his classes and lectures at the Royal College of Music he kept himself fresh for their needs.

This effort helped him, perhaps, in his own work to a precision and clearness both in writing and speaking which grew with the years.

In 1933 the Royal College of Music celebrated its Jubilee—and in the short biography of it which he wrote H. C. C. summed up both its history and that of the personalities who had fashioned it. Unfortunately both this book and the earlier *College Addresses* of Sir Hubert Parry (both published by Macmillan & Co.) have now been long out of print. Taken together they make a record of

the most interesting and vital years in the life of a young and vigorous institution; a sort of ship's log by one of the senior officers who began as a midshipman and who had served in varied capacities: as student, editor of the Royal College Magazine, professor and historian.

"Sir George Grove," he wrote, "were he to enter the College to-day would be surprised by its multifarious activities, perhaps be a little shocked by the freedom of its manners.

"But after diving into the theatre and mounting to the library and after paying some calls (how welcome he would be) on professors at work in their classrooms, Sir George would discover that it is essentially the College he knew. He would find that within the walls of the R.C.M. music is the thing which matters most, and that the ideal of music upheld there, however variously it may be expressed in modern terms, is identical with that which inspired him through life. He would find that on the whole the members of his College are not greatly swayed by passing fashions. They do not sneer at Beethoven because they have discovered Stravinsky; nor, on the other hand, do they shut their ears to what is new because of their grounding in the classics. He would find the place seething with a young and ardent life which may at times give a superficial impression of confusion, but he would quietly recognize that its members are imbued with aims as real and hopes as high as those with which his own little band of workers began work in the building over the way."

H. C. C. also became Director of Music at Cheltenham Ladies' College for some years, a post in which he followed Sir Hugh Allen. Here his work was that of an occasional inspector and referee rather than that of a regular staff officer, but again he enlarged his "terms of reference" and such episodes as the performances by the girls of Henry Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* under him repaid him in pleasure for all his more official duties.

In 1922 H. C. C. was asked by Messrs. Macmillan to prepare the third edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, then due. This was a task, daunting in its immensity to an already very busy man, but he always answered the call of work when it was demanded of him. His principle was that his existing commitments should not suffer.

It is impossible here to discuss the work which went to the building up of the 3rd Edition of "Grove": it was exacting, wide-

reaching and lasted for five and a half years. In the result, the major articles of former editions were, almost without exception, left intact though in every case the results of research in the years between were incorporated. A vast amount of new material was added by writers of many nationalities. H. C. C. gathered round him a body of experts; he had the help of his sister, Eileen Colles as secretary; his own house—never too large even for his usual work—became an office and whilst he was in it he never demanded a free hour. When the work was finished and the 3rd Edition published in 1927, and the approval and disapproval of reviewers and scholars had been assimilated, he was able to feel that those years had made a sum of musical knowledge more accessible to students all over the world. For that reason and that reason only he had undertaken the task.

One break of some months in 1923, when the plan of the Dictionary had been laid and nets cast in Europe for new contributions, took H. C. C. by urgent request of the owner to New York as "guest critic" to the *New York Times*. It was to H. C. C. a surprising and welcome invitation, all the more so because it gave him just the opportunity he sought in the interests of "Grove" for firsthand contacts with American musicians and for a discussion of various problems with that wisest of musical counsellors and friends, Richard Aldrich.

In the all too short time which he could spare from his work in London, H. C. C. wrote a series of articles for the *New York Times*, strengthened old friendships and made new ones, and gained by unforgettable experiences. These were indeed varied; ranging from the concert rooms and opera of New York, Boston and Philadelphia and Rochester, to the mountains of New Hampshire or the lovely windings of the Potomac River in winter; from the quiet pleasure of visiting friends up the Hudson River or in the Pennsylvania Woods at the scarlet fall of leaf to the White House at Washington, or a party in any place! At a large and over complimentary party "I began a flirtation with an adorable person of three, who sat in an armchair eating a ginger biscuit. We shared the biscuit. She said: 'Do you know my name, it is Anne Simpson.' I told her that mine was Harry and had just asked her to call me by it when I was reft from her by my tiresome hostess in order to be introduced to some dull female who did not really want to know me any more than I wanted to know her. From the other end of the room I heard a cry and was told that Anne Simpson had fallen

from her chair and been carried away roaring. I never saw her again and left broken-hearted." The "Anne Simpsons" were often his relief from compliments!

The brew of music was bubbling more strongly than ever; new experiments, new works, a mass of critical studies were appearing all the time. It needed level heads to help direct the course of listeners, especially towards the new music.

"What I chiefly think of 'this modern music' is that there is no need to get in a fuss about it. Gamaliel was a wise man and what he said of subversive tenets in religion is equally true of art. The experiments which are no good will drop off quickly enough. It is not true as far as the arts are concerned that 'the evil that men do lives after them'. The evil is certain to find its way to the rubbish heap. The one danger is lest the good should be buried there too, and we English-speaking people have special cause to fear that, because we have allowed it to happen in the past."

It was necessary to enlarge the music staff of *The Times* to meet the many claims made upon it, and from 1922 onwards H. C. C. had as his assistants, Frank Howes and Dyneley Hussey with, in later years, considerable help from younger men especially Philip Hope-Wallace.

There was also an increase in musical events in other countries; in Germany, Austria and Italy especially. Festivals or first performances drew H. C. C. to Dresden, Prague, Amsterdam, Vienna, Florence, Salzburg, Paris, Milan and other places. He greatly enjoyed his travels. It is true that there was always anxiety over the accurate transmission of his script. He had learnt a scrupulous care in the details of his craft, but never relaxed an anxious attention to these things. It was a constant pleasure to see new places, or hear music in fresh conditions, especially when the music belonged by right to its environment as Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms did to Vienna, Verdi and Puccini to Milan or Verona, Dvořák and Smetana to Prague, Mozart to Salzburg.

H. C. C. deeply appreciated the chance to widen his knowledge of painting, architecture and sculpture and however brief his time or circumscribed the holidays which were but the pendants of his work, he took every opportunity to enjoy "the other arts". Repeated visits to Italy were an especial joy: he came to know the upper reaches of the Lake of Como and the foothills behind Alassio almost as well as he once knew the hills above Taunton Vale.

Inseparably bound up with these interludes were the pleasures of friendship; indeed to count these would be like counting the fruit on a fine apple tree, for he was happy to an extraordinary degree with his friends. His affection for them seemed to him a matter of course: theirs for him took him always by surprise. With friends he climbed the thyme-clad slopes above Alassio, or drove through the Sabine hills, or sat through interminable pantomimes in long-ago Dublin: it was with friends that he enjoyed Vienna; bought a bullfinch in Florence; played patience in a sleeping car, or the harmonium in the tiny Kirk at the far end of Glen Clova; or played and replayed the violin and piano sonatas of Mozart and Brahms in a beloved house in Gloucestershire, or wandered in the remote villages and churches of the Truro diocese.

Still are thy pleasant voices
Thy nightingales awake.

The *Oxford History of Music*, Vol. VII was published at last in 1934; this book gave H. C. C. more anxiety than any other which he wrote, and the constant obstacles which prevented him from finishing it added to his depression. The period, the second half of the nineteenth century, was of absorbing interest to him; this interest rather than the depression is reflected in its pages. It was with thankfulness that he carried his manuscript to his friend and old tutor Sir Henry Hadow, who was the general editor, and with trepidation that he awaited the verdict. "All cordial congratulations," Hadow wrote, "on a really fine piece of work. I am particularly struck with the excellence of the proportions; it was not an easy matter to get all that canvas into one frame. The most illuminating chapter to me (probably because I knew least about it) was your comparison of Brahms and Wolf. I have always had a feeling that I wasn't doing Wolf justice, that I was shying away from his work instead of tackling it intelligently. You hold the balance and make the contrast with a skill which I wish I could emulate." The book appeared finally in 1934, and is dedicated characteristically to all who helped to retard its progress 1911 to 1932.

A book with which H. C. C. felt himself less dissatisfied, however, was a small volume published earlier (in 1928), *Voice and Verse* which contained the substance of ten lectures (the Cramb Lectures) delivered at Glasgow University in January-February 1927. Here he was expounding a favourite theme, the English

language in its relation to music. Really, the whole of the lectures centre round a study of the work of Henry Purcell. He always hoped that he would have time to write a much more comprehensive book on Purcell, and though that time never came, he tried in *Voice and Verse* to make at least a beginning, and his own researches never ceased towards the end which he could not attain. Among his latest pleasures was the arrangement which he made of a rare Purcell song set to George Herbert's beautiful words, "Longing".

There was in those busy years between wars, one would think, little time for yet more work. But H. C. C. had in his bones the desire to give without thought of return. And when the practice of music in the Church of England was in many places (as alas, it still is) in jeopardy he, as a loyal servant of the Church, was among those who gave all their powers to help.

The School of English Church Music, founded by his friend, Sir Sydney Nicholson, had his help from its very beginning; and no one, least of all H. C. C. or the founder, could count the hours he spent in its service. He became Chairman of the much older Church Music Society, whose work and advice, quietly carried on, has been a steady support to very many Church musicians throughout the country. Under the Chairmanship of his friend Bishop Frere of Truro he was one of the most active of a small band of hymnologists. This last work, entailing a great deal of editing, he felt to be an especial responsibility.

He was invited, too, to join the Hon. Fellows of St. Michael's College, Tenbury, the foundation of Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley, and his membership of the Governing Body of the College and School was a work of pleasure. His latest bit of editing, published after his death, in conjunction with Canon M. F. Alderson of Bemerton, was a history of the College,[1] for which he wrote a biography of the Founder.

All these efforts were to H. C. C. a matter of course; he was by inheritance and from earliest teaching a son of the Church of England: as he grew, so grew his conviction that the Christian Faith that was given to him was the living centre of his life—to be sought after silently, always humbly in whatever experiences came to him: his reticence left no doubt in the minds of his friends, whatever their own faith or foibles, as to the strength of his

[1] *History of St. Michael's College, Tenbury*, edited by M. F. Alderson and H. C. Colles. (S.P.C.K. 1943).

devotion. That strength gave him, perhaps, an added sympathy, almost an affectionate tenderness, for the experiences of other minds, especially young minds apt to be overcome by complexity; only with the levity of the insincere he had little patience.

The formation of the British Council was of great interest to H. C. C.; even before it was in being he visited Scandinavia to lecture on English Music and to encourage the presentation of it there in every possible way, and thenceforward the Music Committee of the Council was among his regular commitments, and he did a great deal to mould and further its work.

The brews of opera were always in need of having their lids lifted to let out the steam—the contents of the pots were mixed, but these ingredients grown at the Old Vic and later Sadler's Wells, under the Patrons' Fund of Lord Palmer at the Royal College of Music; at Glastonbury, at Bristol under P. Napier Miles, or at Glyndebourne found a sympathetic stirrer in H. C. C.

Indeed, he added his own flavouring, as those who came to him with operatic problems well knew. Difficult as the problems were he ended always with a hope "that the generation which recreates opera in London will be cleverer than the ones which let it run to seed".

H. C. C. was among those who never had any doubts of the evils of the Fascist regime in Italy and even more of the Nazi one in Germany. With his passionate love of freedom and equity, the racial distinctions and cruelties which both brought into active being in different ways were horrible to him. With the fall of Austria in 1937, he found that many of his friends, especially learned men who had been contributors to *Grove's Dictionary* or otherwise in touch with him were in jeopardy. One man can do so little where nations are falling, but by steadfast work on their behalf H. C. C. did have the comfort of helping to save a group of musicians whose work since in different spheres of their art both here and in America has given proof, if such were needed, of the rightness of his efforts for them. Some there were who could not be extricated; music and scholarship are the poorer.

The preparation of a Supplementary Volume of *Grove's Dictionary* together with a reprint of the 3rd Edition occupied H. C. C. fully in 1937 and 1938. By the summer of 1939 this task was completed and he had the great satisfaction of seeing the fourth edition and the supplementary volume published without delay and with-

out a hint of later war-time restrictions, in the spring of 1940. It set the seal, he felt, on all that he had striven for in his editorship. Characteristically, he could not leave it, however, and continued to make notes with scrupulous care for a future edition which he knew would be in younger hands.

At the outbreak of this war H. C. C. was just setting foot in Australia, where he went for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, not only as an examiner, but as a member of the Governing Body, in order to hold a conference with the representatives of musical education in that Dominion. Immediate conditions added anxieties to the fulfilment of his work there and in New Zealand. But he carried out all that he had planned; visited a great number of centres, held conferences, encouraged innumerable lonely musicians and best of all made many friends. The feeling of isolation which seems to beset many modest musicians in far-off places impressed him greatly: the lack of public support except for a few of the more spectacular efforts, and the lack, too, of good standard performance with which to compare local effort all called for some reconstitution in musical life. He was very interested in and sympathetic with many small groups of teachers and musicians who, in spite of such material discouragement, carried on the musical life of their localities with single-hearted artistic sincerity. For them, on his way home across the Pacific H. C. C. wrote a little war-time book *On Learning Music and Other Essays*.[1] "These seven short essays," he said, "are a souvenir of my visit to Australia and New Zealand in the autumn of 1939. I offer them to the friends who received my wife and myself with cordiality and kindliness. Those friends are many and we are grateful. They made their homes ours because they already feel our home to be theirs.

"I do not ask or expect my friends to agree with all that I have written, but I ask them to accept my small contribution towards the solution of problems which confront them in their daily lives of music making and music teaching."

And in a last paragraph, "The art world of Europe now lies open to these Dominions. They have only to take what they can assimilate of it to build a new, perhaps a better, art world of their own. They may add it to 'the contentment of their peoples, the freedom of their institutions', and the other amenities in which already they are able to take a just pride."

[1]Oxford University Press 1940.

H. C. C. had few free days in Australia and New Zealand, but whenever he had he delighted in the beauty of many new scenes; of the early spring flowers in Western Australia, of the arum-choked streams beneath Mt. Lofty near Adelaide, of the wide pastures of Menangle and Camden in New South Wales and the long stretches of the coast near Brisbane. Most of all, perhaps, he enjoyed the lakes and mountains of the South Island of New Zealand, and some brief chances of sketching which seemed to bring him nearer home.

The journey across the world in war-time was full of incidents, the quiet and sunshine of the Pacific in strange contrast to the tension and bitter cold of the North Atlantic in winter, unconvoyed and heavily laden with war materials. He took it all quietly, intent upon doing what he could to make difficulties easier for others and proud to see the Merchant Navy fulfilling in war-time conditions their almost legendary part as guardians of their country's lifelines.

In New York, there was a short pause before a passage was allowed: quite characteristically H. C. C. spent every spare moment in trying to arrange for the possible future of some of his exiled friends to whom England in war-time no longer offered daily bread. He saw old friends too and was heartened to the core to find that the *New York Times*, was fulfilling its rôle of the loyal friend of Britain at a most difficult period in American public opinion.

So he came back to London once more at war; to the dreadful spring of 1940; the fall of one country after another, the fall of France—to Dunkirk—to the bombing of Britain. He could not be a gunner again: his strength did not allow him to take up Civil Defence work: he saw, like many another, the generation he would have died to save go out to battle, and the art he loved threatened with eclipse. If H. C. C. bowed under the load like others of his own generation the event always found him, like them, standing at attention. He took up his work on *The Times* almost single-handed; only those who lived in London can guess how closely knit became the staff left at Printing House Square during the bombardments; he himself was not in the office on the night it was hit, his solicitude for those who were, if possible, was heightened.

In his writing from 1940–1943 it is noticeable that H. C. C. maintained the even tenour of his way. His weekly articles had to be compressed into the smallest possible space; but in them there was always room for confidence and humour; and the impulse to hit out,

to rebel against complacency was still always getting up in him. He sought and found hope for music in many directions, he was thankful for such an achievement as the National Gallery Concerts; for Mr. Gerald Cooper's Chamber Concerts and for the variety of good books on music which continued to appear, to name but a few of the solid activities of music in London at that time.

Successive blasting made a move from the river front in Chelsea necessary in the summer of 1941. H. C. C. had loved for years the pageant of the river below his windows, first at More's Garden and later at Carlyle Mansions. Happily, he had not to go far, just "inland" as he said, to the haven of a friend's flat left vacant by absence in the country. And here a wide sky and sunshine gave him still a feeling of space.

In 1941 and the following year there were many deaths among his friends which hurt him deeply. First among them that of Walford Davies, whose biography he wrote.

In 1942 his health failed seriously; there was no break in his work: his friends were not aware of his weariness and, as winter came, indeed, he was more vigorous again. He fulfilled that year every engagement, lectured at the Royal Institution in spring—at the R.C.M. throughout the year: attended his various committees and was constantly at the service of *The Times*; and often at the Athenæum, of which he was a very attached member, serving on the committee at the time of his death.

H. C. C. had always been happiest at home, or among a few people: his pleasures like himself were simple; masses of people or things had little meaning for him, indeed he found them distressing—a large party or an over-large orchestra or a too elaborate meal all alike made him quail! But his gaiety of heart, especially with children, and his sympathies were still all alert and he did not at any time hesitate in his work.

He gave his last lecture at the Royal College of Music on 3 March 1943. His last article, on the Donald Tovey Memorial Fund, appeared in *The Times* on 5 March; but on the day between, 4 March, he had gone, turning with serenity to death as one does who answers the summons of a friend.

H. J. C.

Chelsea S.W.
4 March 1944

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