EVERYBODY'S GUIDE TO BROADCAST MUSIC

Percy A. Scholes

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THE BROADCAST LIBRARY

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THE AUTHOR.

EVERYBODY'S GUIDE TO BROADCAST MUSIC

INCLUDING A SIMPLE DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS FORMS OF MUSIC, AND OF THE ORCHESTRA, A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY OF MUSIC, SOME ADVICE ON THE ENJOYMENT OF BROADCAST OPERA (WITH A LIST OF PUBLISHED LIBRETTI, ETC.), AND A DISCUSSION OF WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD MUSIC AND GOOD MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

by

PERCY A. SCHOLES

WITH A FOREWORD BY

J. C. W. REITH

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DEDICATED

TO THE MANY

"WIRELESS FRIENDS"

WHO HAVE WRITTEN TO ME

WHETHER

INTERROGATIVELY OR ARGUMENTATIVELY.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I HAVE to thank Messrs. J. Curwen & Sons, Ltd., for permission to use a lengthy extract from Dunstan's *Encyclopædic Dictionary of Music* and a page from the orchestral score of Holst's *Planets* Suite, and Mr. A. C. Praeger, F.R.C.O., and Mr. C. M. Crabtree, B.A., B.Mus., for help in the correction of my proofs and in other matters connected with the preparation of the book.

FOREWORD

AN immense amount has been written about music—its different orders, the avenues of understanding, its applications. The literature of all countries abounds in reference to it. In some form we meet it every day, and in some way and to some extent we all make use of it.

Music has its times of exaltation as of depression. It passes, in imaginative interpretation, through all the phases and moods of running water. It is light and sparkling as a stream on a sunlit height. It flows placidly between grassy banks and under overhanging willows in happy pastureland. Sometimes we hear it thunder among the rocks; but it may please us best when it glances softly in the moonlight.

The ability to hear the message is not possessed by all, and it is the privilege of those so equipped, whether by endowment or endeavour, to lead others to a higher appreciation. Effort is involved before the significance of music is revealed, but the study is not laborious and the reward is ample.

Foreword

Music is universal and transcends all artificial barriers, but broadcasting has given it a new importance and a wider field. For this reason Mr. Scholes has written, and to the end that they who listen may understand. He is our guide, sympathetic and experienced, in the World of Music.

J. C. W. R.

PREFACE

THE introduction of Broadcasting seems to me to be comparable with the introduction of printing.

Less than five hundred years ago the Classics, the Holy Scriptures, the legends and poetry of Europe existed only in manuscript and could be studied only by the tiny class of literate men. There were no novels and no newspapers. Ideas were preached from the pulpit, and news passed from mouth to mouth. Amongst the people at large there was a literary stagnation.

Then came the invention of printing. A great extension of education naturally followed, and nowadays the whole of the world's literature is open to anyone who cares to read it.

In 1450 if a poor man wished to read a great book he had to travel to some monastery or cathedral and get permission to use the chained volumes there. Nowadays such a man can buy the masterpieces of the world's literature in cheap editions, and read and re-read them in his own home.

Preface

To some extent the gramophone has already done for music what printing did for literature. But Broadcasting will do far more, for it makes fine musical performance easier to come by—and dirt cheap.

Some of the readers of this book live on the outskirts of London and find the trouble and expense of getting in to the concert halls too great to be often undertaken. Others live in small provincial towns, where a full Orchestra is never heard, very rarely a String Quartet or a fine Singer, and decidedly never an Opera performance. And still others live in remote country places where no music whatever is to be heard. I congratulate all these people upon the enormous extension of their pleasures that has already been brought about by the British Broadcasting Company, and the further extension of it that is foreshadowed.

Up to the present the music of the world, in its completeness, has been the private preserve of a little band of people who happened to live in the places where it could be heard, and who happened to have money enough to pay to hear it. Henceforth, it belongs to everybody. This means an immense widening of public

interest in music, and, I believe, a great raising of public taste. In five years' time, in my expectation, the general musical public of these islands will be treble or quadruple its present size. And the next generation, instead of regarding a Symphony as a mysterious contrivance of concentrated boredom, will accept the great Symphonies of the world as a part of its regular daily or weekly pleasure.

I am asked to write a book which will help the new musical public. What should such a book contain ?

It should, I think, comprise brief, simple explanations of the " Forms " which music takes (Sonata, Symphony, Quartet, etc.), of the instruments of the Orchestra, and of the history of the art of music. Thousands of intelligent people have the merest vague ideas on these subjects, and, now that they are suddenly presented with the opportunity of hearing so much music, begin to feel that they want those ideas clarified.

Then I feel that an easy-going, undogmatic discussion of " good and bad " in music (both as concerns its composition and its performances) may be of interest. And whilst the line of route just outlined

should be, in the main, followed, a passing visit to any attractive territory lying on one side or the other of it may, perhaps, be permitted. The test of the book's success will be a double one—Does its reader feel that he not only understands music a little better, but feels a little keener about it?

In *The Listener's Guide to Music* and *The Listener's History of Music* I have already attempted to do something for the "plain man," as distinct from the "musician." Here I attempt the task again—but, I hope, in an even simpler way, so that this book, though self-contained, and, so far as it goes, complete, may, by its more interested readers, be treated as an introduction to those other books.

In the effort to provide a real "Beginner's Handbook," I am greatly helped by my position as Music Critic to the British Broadcasting Company. This has brought me hundreds of letters—friendly, inimical, dogmatic, inquiring. I can claim, then, to understand something about the mind of the listener to broadcast music, and if I fail to provide what that mind demands or requires, it will be my own fault.

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS MUSIC?

AS I myself cannot answer this simple, innocent question, I have just turned to a few books on my shelves.

Concise Oxford Dictionary :

Art of combining sounds with a view to beauty of form and expression of emotion.

Petit Larousse Illustré :

Art de combiner les sons d'une manière agréable à l'oreille.

(Art of combining sounds in a way pleasant to the ear.)

Pratt's New Encyclopædia of Music and Musicians :

In general, tonal beauty or tonal forms that cause æsthetic satisfaction through the sense of hearing.

Combarieu—Music : Its Laws and Evolution :

The art of thinking in sounds.

Then, taking down that excellent concise

book of reference, Dunstan's *Cyclopædic Dictionary of Music*,[1] I find the following formidable attempt to grapple with the problem:

The art and science of producing, arranging, and combining sounds. An all-embracing definition of music is impossible. The following quotations exemplify its many-sided character:

"The poetry of sound."—*Ency. Brit.*

"The art of the beautiful and pleasing."—*Quintilian.*

"The artistic union of inarticulate sounds and rhythm."—*Nat. Ency.*

"The universal language which, when all other languages were confounded, the confusion of Babel left unconfounded."—*Prof. Wilson.*

"Miraculous rhetoric! excelling eloquence!"—*Izaak Walton.*

"A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us on to the edge of the infinite."—*Carlyle.*

"All deep thought is music."—*Carlyle.*

"The mysterious language of a remote spiritual realm."—*Hoffmann.*

[1] Curwen, 25*s.*

What is Music?

"The harbinger of eternal melody."—*Mozart.*

"Next to theology."—*Luther.*

"The highest of all science."—*Bach.*

"The fine art which more than any other ministers to human welfare."—*Herbert Spencer.*

"The worth of art appears most eminent in music."—*Goethe.*

"What passion cannot music raise and quell?"—*Dryden.*

"Exalts each joy, allays each grief."—*Armstrong.*

"Thou Queen of Heaven, care-charming spell!"—*Herrick.*

"The medicine of the breaking heart."—*Hunt.*

"The sweet companion of labour."—*Lord Avebury.*

"A genuine and natural source of delight."—*Sir J. Hawkins.*

"The chief recreation of tired humanity."—*Kay.*

"Of all delights the most exquisite."—*Dr. Tulloch.*

"Has the power of making heaven descend to earth."—*Japanese Proverb.*

"The voice of liberty."—*W. S. Walker.*

"The sacred emblem of Peace, Truth, and Order."—*E. Smith*, 1707.

"There is no truer truth obtainable
By man than comes of music."—*Browning.*

"The seed of many virtues is in such hearts as are devoted to music."—*Luther.*

"One of the most forcible instruments for training, for arousing, and for governing the mind and the spirit of man."—*W. E. Gladstone.*

"The voice of prayer."—*Sherer.*

"The handmaid of Religion."

"Rouses the soul to fearless deeds of daring and valour."—*Acton.*

"The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils."
—*Shakespeare.*

Yet, "Nothing that has ever been written of Music has adequately expressed what it has meant to mankind."—*Ency. Brit.*

There is, perhaps, a certain amount of "hot air" in that list, together with a good deal of poetry and a fair amount of common-sense.

I am going to leave most of these

definitions and descriptions of music to the reader's own consideration and to fasten on two of them in particular.

"THE ART OF COMBINING SOUNDS"

The Concise Oxford Dictionary seems to me to come as near as possible to a brief, precise definition—"*The art of combining sounds with a view to beauty of form and expression of emotion.*"

Note that the word "combining" covers various processes.

You may take single sounds, and combine them into a consecutive series—as, for instance, a G and another G and an A and an F sharp and another G and another A, which becomes "MELODY," the first line of *God Save the King.*

Or you may take sounds and combine them simultaneously, as, for instance, a G and a B and a D and another G (one "above" the other), which becomes the first "chord" or first item in the "HARMONY" of *God Save the King.* Or you may take longer sounds and shorter ones, accented sounds and unaccented ones, which may become the "RHYTHM" of *God Save the King.*

Or you may take *God Save the King* itself and some other tune or tunes that you may invent, and out of them make a sort of God-save-the-King piece, such as Weber's *Jubilee Overture*, a piece which we never hear nowadays in this country, but which I always remember with pleasure, because when in my youth I heard it played in the Kursaal of a continental health-resort, it produced such an amusing movement amongst the audience, loyal British subjects scattered here and there feeling it a part of their national duty to rise from their seats every time the God-save-the-King "subject" entered into the music. Now, the way in which *God Save the King* and the other tunes are in that Overture disposed and treated constitutes its "FORM."

Or you may take different "colours" of sound, as, for instance, a body of Strings, with some Oboes, Flutes, Clarinets, Bassoons, Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, Drums and Cymbals, disposed in some particular way, which may constitute the "ORCHESTRATION" of *God Save the King*.

Melody, Harmony, Rhythm, Form, Orchestration—these are the "elements" (or some of them) of Music. Not every

piece of music comprises all these elements, but each of them, in itself, is a sort of "combination," and most often the use of this principle of "combination" goes so far as to bring two or more of these "combinations" together, and so to give us a *combination of combinations*.

Note that the "combination" may be elementary or elaborate, skilful or unskilful, effective or ineffective; but if the combination is there, I suppose what is produced comes within this definition of "Music."

GOOD AND BAD, SIMPLE AND COMPLEX

Read that last sentence again, and realise that music can be "good" or "bad" and "simple" or "complex."

As for this latter classification, a piece of music may be so simple that a child can appreciate it straight away and run off to play humming it, or it may be so complex that a learned and experienced music critic, accustomed to listen to music every day of his life, may have to confess that he requires a further hearing or two before he can feel sure that he has "got the hang" of it.

On both these classifications, (*a*) "good"

and "bad," and (*b*) "simple" and "complex," I shall have something to say in later chapters.

BEAUTY AND EMOTION

Now look at the other clause of this Oxford definition. The object of the "combination" is given as two-fold—"beauty of form" (by which is meant not, merely, "form" in the technical musical sense of the word, but beauty of arrangement—melodic arrangement, rhythmic arrangement, harmonic arrangement, orchestral arrangement, and, in the technical sense, "formal" arrangement) and "expression of emotion."

It is important to realise this two-fold object, for in any particular piece of music the balance may incline more one way than the other, and if one's expectations lie too much on the one side or the other one may at first be disappointed.

A good deal of Mozart's music, for instance, inclines more to the realisation of beauty of arrangement (in these various senses) than to the expression of emotion; and, on the other hand, there are passages in Beethoven which have very little beauty of

arrangement but which do express emotion and express it boldly and decisively.

Taking a piece as a whole, it may fairly be said that both objects must be realised if any public at large is to enjoy the performance of the piece, and the inclusion of this requirement in the Oxford definition gives it a strong claim upon our acceptance as compared with such less comprehensive definitions as those of Larousse or Pratt, also quoted above.

"*MEANING*" *IN MUSIC*

But there is another definition quoted which bears a little consideration—Combarieu's " The art of thinking in sounds."

This is a very " fundamental " definition, and it is a very true one. You will find it really helpful to grasp it. To illustrate what I mean I will quote a letter received from a Broadcasting listener:

" As I listened to-night to Elgar's No. 2 Symphony in E flat, broadcast from the Central Hall, I found myself up against a difficulty which has confronted me before when listening to long Symphonies.

"I wondered what it was all about. What is the Composer trying to get at? Is there an idea running through it all? Is the music conveying something that is beyond me to understand? I like the music for its own sake, but if I could understand what the composer was getting at I think I would enjoy it even more."

You will see at once that what this listener is struggling for is a "meaning" in the music that can be put into so many words. That is to say, he is under the impression that a Symphony is either a *translation* of a poem or piece of prose, or, alternatively, that a poem or a piece of prose could be written which would translate it.

Now, there are pieces of music something of that kind, but, with all due respect to their composers, I suggest that they are not the most *musical* pieces of music.

WHERE WORDS FAIL

As Combarieu puts it, Music is in itself a manner of thought. If words could express what the composer wanted to "say," he would probably use them. It is,

indeed, largely the fact that he is capable of feeling and of expressing something *beyond* words that makes him a musician.

The performance of this Symphony was preceded a day or two earlier by a quarter-of-an-hour's broadcast talk of my own, in which I had tried to prepare those to whom the Symphony was new for an intelligent hearing of it. Naturally, I analysed it to some extent. I extracted its " Main Tunes " (or, to use technical language, " Subjects "), had each played upon the piano and called attention to the emotional quality of each by the use of as apt an adjective as I could find. But in many cases I had to admit that my adjectives were not as apt as I would like, and in a few cases I had to admit myself beaten in the attempt to find any adjective at all. That is to say, this Symphony is genuinely a piece of what Combarieu calls " thinking in sounds," and what is thought in sounds cannot be fully rendered into words.

That is, no doubt, what Carlyle meant when, as quoted above, he called Music " a kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech."

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ARTS

And that is where Music falls below Literature—it cannot express precisely any emotion or any idea.

And that, too, is where Music rises above Literature—it can express emotions and (in a sense) " ideas " that are quite out of the range of literary expression.

Music is one thing, Literature another, and when my correspondent whilst listening to music struggles to re-express it in terms of Literature, he is beating his wings vainly against one of those impalpable but impassable walls which divide the various Arts from one another.

The Art of Painting represents objects, reveals to us their beauty, and, in varying degree, expresses emotions connected with them.

The Art of Prose Literature conveys definite ideas and on occasion awakens emotions also. Poetry does the same, but with an added imaginative power, and a rhythm and sometimes a tonal beauty (assonance, rhyme, alliteration, etc.) borrowed from the sister art of Music.

POET AND MUSICIAN

At the opening of that very Symphony the composer has actually quoted a couple of lines of poetry, Shelley's:

> " Rarely, rarely comest thou,
> Spirit of delight."

But he has not attempted to " translate " them into tone, and indeed, strictly speaking, such a translation is impossible, for a " translation " (as from French into English, or English into French) can be re-translated by any chance comer who knows the two languages, even if he has never seen the original, but the composer has never yet lived who could write a Symphony which could be recognised by any intelligent listener who happened to hear it as expressing the thought of these two lines of Shelley.

Those lines, then, have inspired Elgar to write a Symphony, and have dictated to him something of its general spirit, but that is all. There is " thought " in the Symphony, but it is musical thought, not literary thought.

When that correspondent " liked the music

for its own sake," he was on the right appreciative track; when he began to want to know "what the composer was getting at," he began to want to know the unknowable. I dare say that in watching a dawn or sunset, or a placid sea, or a storm he has felt the same want. But he has, I think, always felt it in vain.

In the poem that begins with those lines, Shelley has been inspired by feelings that we have all dimly felt.

And because he is a poet he has been able, to a certain point, to put these feelings into words.

But even Shelley's poetic art can only travel a certain distance, and then Elgar's musical art steps in and carries the expression still farther (neglecting, however, necessarily, a good deal that Shelley has been able to express). In a sense, then, Elgar has gone beyond Shelley—either that or Elgar has failed. Similarly, he might have been inspired by a picture of Turner—and "gone beyond" that.

This is the triumph of the great composer, not to translate a poem or a picture, but to transcend it.

Considering all this, there is a sense in

which Music is the greatest of all the Arts, as it is, I think, the most universal.

MUSIC A SELF-CONTAINED ART

Have I seemed to labour all this? I hope not; but I can at least claim that the principle discussed is fundamental.

One of the effects of the hearing of so much music, by means of broadcasting, ought to be precisely this—that a great many people who formerly asked of a piece of music "what it meant" will come at last to accept music as *an art in its own right.*

I have even hopes that if this chapter does nothing else it will reduce the number of people who write to ask me if it is true that "The" Prelude by Rachmaninof represents a man coffined alive and struggling to get out.

CHAPTER II

MUSIC—SIMPLE AND LESS SIMPLE

I AM very glad that, as it happened, the idea of *combination* came so early into my book. Let me develop it a little.

SIMPLE MELODIES AND—

When we put notes together in what I may call a simple tune, one resulting combination is MELODY. If the notes used all follow one another in a pretty natural sort of way, then the resulting Melody is a very simple one; and if you are singing it when the groceries come, the errand boy may catch it up at once, go down the street humming it, and before evening (if it is a "sticky" sort of Melody) have communicated it unintentionally, like a pleasant sort of measles, to half the errand boys of the district. The Melodies of some hymn tunes and of many music-hall songs are of that sort. So are some of Beethoven's Melodies. So are the Melodies of Raff's

Cavatina and Mendelssohn's *Spring Song*, and Wagner's Bridal March in *Lohengrin*, and lots of other things.

LESS SIMPLE MELODIES

On the other hand, there are less simple Melodies that do not at once stick like burrs or infect populations like harmless diseases. Many of Wagner's Melodies are of this kind. Some of them seem simple enough to us nowadays, but when they were first written the little extra lack of simplicity in the relation of the notes to one another confused many people, who, indeed, began to cry out and continued crying for some years—"Wagner has no 'Melody.'"

SIMPLE HARMONY AND—

Now take HARMONY, or the simultaneous combination of notes. In *God Save the King* and the *Old Hundredth* the harmonic combinations, or chords, as we call them, are of the simplest and most natural, and the relations of the chords to one another are equally simple and natural. Consequently nobody is puzzled for a moment by these harmonies, and if a melody is harmonised

in what I may call the God-Save-the-King manner, everybody grasps it at once.

LESS SIMPLE HARMONY

On the other hand, there are pieces harmonised in a much less simple way, and these may need several hearings before the chords and their sequence are clear to the subconscious mind of the listener, who is at first, perhaps, inclined to say that this "is not Harmony but Discord"—a very inaccurate use of the terms, by the way, though we know what is meant.

Beethoven, Wagner, and many other great composers were at one time charged with writing "not Harmony but Discord." There are pieces of Wagner's which are to-day popular around every bandstand in every park, yet which, when first composed, were attacked in just these terms—"Not Harmony but Discord."

WHAT IS COUNTERPOINT?

It may be that the Harmony is so devised that it arises out of a combination not of merely notes into chords, but also of several Melodies to be played or sung simultaneously. Many of Handel's choruses, for

instance, are in this style; Sopranos, Contraltos, Tenors, and Basses are all singing genuine Tunes or "Melodies," and the combination of their four Melodies makes good Harmony. Such a combination we call COUNTERPOINT.

Handel is full of Counterpoint, so is Bach, so is Byrd, so is Wagner, and, indeed, every composer, somewhere in almost every piece, uses more or less Counterpoint.

A FEAT IN LISTENING

Now, to many people Counterpoint is a difficulty. To hear one Melody is easy. To hear a Melody clothed with Harmonies is little harder. To hear two, three, four, or more Melodies all going on at the same time is a more difficult thing, and, indeed, in some cases quite a feat in listening. Bach, who writes in counterpoint practically all the time, was, from that very reason, once looked upon as dry. Wagner, in a different way, is also very "contrapuntal," and that was one of the reasons he was not understood. But people have gradually come to follow the Counterpoint of these two composers with greater ease, and nowadays the two certain ways of filling

the Queen's Hall in London are to announce a performance of Bach's Mass in B minor or a complete "Wagner Evening."

THE PRINCIPLE OF FORM

Now as to the element of FORM. This also can be simple or less simple. The principle of musical form is very easy to grasp. It rests on the psychological fact that fatigue comes from overmuch repetition of anything we do—whether it be chopping wood or listening to conversation. Change is a sort of repose, so that some people, exaggerating, of course, declare that "change of work is as good as a holiday."

You cannot listen for ever to music. You want conversation and reading and games and other occupations as your "change."

And when listening to music you cannot listen all the time to the same pieces. You want a varied programme if you are to listen for so long as one whole evening.

And in listening to each piece in that programme, you would soon get tired if it consisted of mere repetitions of the same Tune.

So just as the programme is made up of a number of pieces, each piece is made of two

or more Tunes, generally designed as foils to one another, and repeated at intervals with some sort of intervening matter.

The manner of combination of these Tunes constitutes the "Form" of the piece, and it may be a very simple manner or (as I shall explain, I hope quite clearly, in a later Chapter) it may be a much less simple manner.

FORMS—SIMPLE AND COMPLEX

The history of the development of musical "Form" has, roughly speaking, been the history of the introduction of greater and greater complication. Mankind "grows up," and is able to grasp more and more elaborate arrangements of the musical material. Yet there are always some people who do not grow fast enough, and so there are always a number of protesters, who, finding the Form, or arrangement, of the Tunes and their intervening material a little different from what they have previously been accustomed to, wrestle for a time in a vain attempt to suppress the composers who have dared to introduce such novelties.

And, similarly, there are always a number

of people who, making acquaintance for the first time, or nearly so, with Forms which have for ages been accepted by those who are "in the know" or who have made a bit of a hobby of music, protest against them, and not only refuse to learn to enjoy them themselves, but even cast doubts upon the sincerity of those who dare to profess enjoyment.

PROTEST

Since Broadcasting started, I have myself had hundreds of letters from such people:

"I want something I can hum or whistle," writes one listener, protesting against an extract from a Beethoven Symphony that had been performed.

"I consider Sullivan much the superior of either Beethoven or Mozart, as far as Melody is concerned. Seriously and candidly, you must admit that most of the latter's stuff is horribly monotonous and unmelodious. . . . By the way, Bach is another *bête noir* of mine. Who the hell wants to listen to that d——d fugue stuff?"

"You will have to go a long way to hear navvies or dockers whistling the *Rondo*

Capriccioso or your other favourite, the Grieg Concerto. But you and the other big pots of the B.B.C. can take it from me that the public don't want it. They want something more tuneful and pleasant. They can always go to a funeral and hear your sort of nice music. The only piece that was tuneful last night was the *Spring Song*."

Here is another letter:

"I take the risk of your scathing remarks to voice my disgust with (almost) your entire programmes, which in my simple language are most vile. In the first place, what is music and song? Is it not a series of sounds pleasing and soothing to the ear? Does any of your foreign garbage fulfil this function? No! . . . I would much rather listen to the alarm clock that wakens me in the morning at 5 a.m. for work, but in my miseries I have one blessing for which I am thankful. I can take down my fiddle and ease my tortured brain with one of our grand old Scotch pieces, such as the wild strains of *McGregor's Gathering*, and for a moment fancy I am with him in the flesh successfully driving from our beloved mountains all stains of foreigners and their

music; but unfortunately there are others who cannot play the fiddle, and to these I give my sympathy, which is all I have left me."

HALF GROWTH AND FULL GROWTH

And so on! I could quote dozens of letters like this. What is wrong with their writers? Simply that, so far as the appreciation of music is concerned, they are not fully grown. But with daily Broadcast programmes they have the chance to increase their stature, and they will probably do so. One of them has realised the charm of Sullivan (Sullivan's Melody, Harmony, Form, and Orchestration are all essentially simple). Another has already found a piece of Mendelssohn that he likes. This latter objects to the Grieg Concerto, but is counterbalanced by several other listeners, who say that they have come to love it by hearing it at the Cinema.

Just possibly one or two of my correspondents will never grow up. We all remain children on some side of us, and music may happen to be the side upon which they are least capable of development. But as adults in other ways they must admit that growth

is a necessity to full appreciation. They may look around them and see a clever business man who has retained a childish view of humour, or a man of learning and deep thought who has remained a child in business. In such cases there has been a failure to develop "all-round," and the failure may be no discredit to the individual, for we cannot all be first-rate at everything!

LET US ALL BE TOLERANT!

I should not like it to be thought that I quote such writers as these unsympathetically. I am, indeed, writing this very book out of sympathy with them and people like them, and I urge them to try gradually to develop an appreciation of the less simple kinds of music, and if, owing to some natural disability, they fail, to refrain from unkind criticism of those more fortunate and of the Company that is, as far as I can see, trying honestly to provide for all classes of the community—certainly including themselves in their undeveloped state.

And I would like to add that, if I get many letters of that sort,[1] I get still more

[1] They are now dropping off very noticeably; the last six months have seen a difference (March 1925).

of another sort. Here are extracts from three communications:

(1) "The B.B.C. is teaching us all music. My household are beginning to appreciate good-class music in a way that, speaking for myself, I certainly never did."

(2) "I enjoyed the Overture to the *Nutcracker* Suite, so I suppose I'm improving, for Tchaikovsky used generally to beat me, and often to annoy me."

(3) "The B.B.C. has been responsible for the expansion of my musical taste. I have learnt to listen patiently to things that once seemed to me only 'musical gymnastics.'"

THE RIGHT SPIRIT

I would like to say that the capacity to enjoy the less simple music is, I believe, in most people, and that whether it is ever developed or not, in any particular case, usually depends very much upon the spirit of the listener. The following are examples (two out of many) of listeners with the right spirit:

(1) "I always envy people who really

enjoy classical music, but to me personally it is boring. I know there are many people in the same category as myself, so that if you could put us on the right tack I am sure it would be greatly appreciated."

(2) "I have made the acquaintance of music for player-piano during the last two years, and have from the first obtained from the library the music I *ought* to like, and have stuck to it until I *did* like it."

A CONFESSION

I hope I may be pardoned if I draw upon my own recollections. I can remember when a String Quartet bored me. I was young. I had enjoyed few opportunities of hearing String Quartets. I knew little of their construction, and in them I missed *colour*. In this last respect I was like a child, drawn to the bright and glowing, and preferring the local grocer's almanack to the finest of Whistler's etchings.

Nowadays I prefer a good String Quartet to any other form of music. So do hundreds of other people who began as badly as I. There can be no question that a refinement in our taste has occurred. By

dint of hearing (and, let me add, of *trying*), we have become cognisant of a thousand subtleties which formerly escaped us altogether.

Formerly we heard the String Quartet and we did not hear it. The man in Scripture, half healed of his blindness, saw "men as trees walking," and that sort of dim perception was ours. Details were merged in the mass. The blind man was cured, and so are we—not as he was, by miracle, but by our own steady perseverance.

"*WHAT MAN HAS DONE, MAN CAN DO*"

What we have accomplished, others can accomplish. We have added to our lives a new pleasure with which we would not part.

And let me add that we are still ever increasing the volume of that pleasure. The more we hear, the more we learn to hear, and until age begins to deaden our senses this will surely continue.

There are thousands of us who can talk in this way, and there is no cause but the natural human inertia why there should not be millions.

CHAPTER III

THE "FORM" OF MUSIC

A VERY few years ago people either appreciated music or failed to appreciate it, and there was no idea that one could teach them to appreciate; now, however, as I have hinted, it is realised that there are thousands of people naturally capable of appreciating music (and the best music), yet failing to do so merely for want of a little guidance from somebody who knows more than they do, and a little perseverance upon their own part in the application of what that somebody can tell them.

Of course, if you can catch these people young you have a much better chance of training them, and so in hundreds of schools there are now "Musical Appreciation Classes." But the adult, too, can enormously increase his appreciative power if he will but take the trouble to do so—trouble that will surely be well repaid, for the addition of another pleasure to life

(and a pleasure of the most refined character) is no mean gain.

In case there should be some reader who doubts the possibility of acquiring or increasing the appreciation of music by any kind of training, I will (somewhat repeating myself), before I go further, put things this way :

MUSIC EPHEMERAL AND MUSIC ETERNAL

That reader must have noticed that there are certain pieces of music to which he is attracted the very first time he hears them, but of which he quickly tires. These are the simple but superficially attractive pieces, of which every year sees the birth of a great many and the death of a great many others. Much of the music heard in cafés and cinemas is of this character, and so, alas ! is much of the music of our drawing-rooms—and even, alas ! of our churches.

Then there are other pieces to which that reader is at once attracted, but which he continues to love for ever after. These are the simple but sound pieces, of which there are abundant examples, such as the first movement of Beethoven's (so-called) *Moonlight Sonata*, Grieg's *Peer Gynt* music,

Schumann's *Träumerei* (*Dreaming*), Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, and the like.

Finally, there are the pieces to which, at a first hearing, he has felt comparatively little attracted, but which, by the accident of repeated hearing, he has learnt to enjoy. These are the sound but less simple pieces, and they may, in his particular experience, have included some later Sonata or some Symphony of Beethoven, some Fugue of Bach, or even some piece of definitely "modern" music, such as one of the movements of Holst's *Planets*, a work which is now becoming attractive to hundreds of people who at first found it (or much of it) very inaccessible.

MUSIC'S THREEFOLD APPEAL

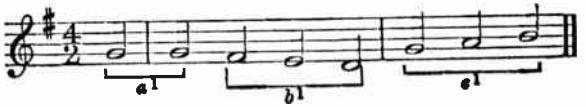
To the appreciation of the music in categories one and two, obviously no help from me is necessary; it is in the appreciation of that in category three that the listener needs a little help, and the sort of help that he needs will be seen in a moment.

The best definition of Music quoted in Chapter I spoke of the appeal of music as twofold. It is, I think, really threefold. In the first place, perhaps, it appeals to our

Emotions. We feel that a particular piece is cheerful and inspires us with its cheerfulness ; or it is sad or passionate and inspires us with its sadness or passion.

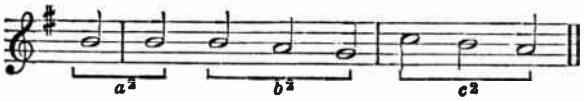
In the second place, music appeals to our sense of *Beauty*. In a piece that attracts us we feel that, apart from the emotional appeal, the curve of the melody is beautiful, or the succession of chords (i.e. the " harmony ") is beautiful, or, in an orchestral piece, the tone colourings, as we may call them (e.g. the alternations of wind-instrument tone and stringed-instrument tone, and so forth), are also beautiful.

Finally (and this is the important point, so far as the present chapter is concerned, because it is usually the forgotten point), music appeals to our sense of *Logic*. Even in a simple tune there is an underlying logic. The second line of the " Old Hundredth " follows the first line in a way that we instinctively feel to be logical. Look at that first line :



You note that it is made out of three

little groups of notes. Now look at the second line:



You note at once that this is made out of the same three groups of notes, the first two merely changed in pitch, and the last made to run downhill where formerly it ran uphill. The man who made that tune (believed to be Claude Goudimel, in the sixteenth century), in all probability never consciously realised the "logic" of what he was writing. Nor, to confess the truth, did I myself until, as I came to this point in my chapter, I resolved to take the first tune that entered my head and use it as an example of musical logic. Yet the instinctive logical working of that composer's mind is one of the qualities that has enabled his tune to live three centuries and more, and, indeed, probably endowed it with eternal life.

ORGANIC GROWTH

Now, this Logic, or, if you prefer so to call it, this element of *organic growth*, which is so simple an element in a short tune that we all

enjoy it without realising its existence, is in a long Symphony or Sonata movement so developed that unless we have had much experience of listening to Sonata and Symphony, we are in danger of missing it altogether.

It must have been the experience of every reader that in hearing, for the first time, some movement of a Sonata or Symphony or "Tone Poem" he has felt that his ears were involved in a mere jumble of sounds. The reason for that might be that the piece *was* actually, to some extent, a jumble, i.e. that the composer's capacity for logical construction had been too limited for him to express himself clearly. Or, on the other hand, it might be that the "logic" was all there, but that the ears of the listener were too untrained to perceive it. In such a case a second or third or fourth hearing might possibly largely clear up the difficulty, and it is this growing subconscious grasp of the logic of a piece that accounts for our so often learning to like a piece simply by dint of repeated hearings.

LEARNING TO APPRECIATE

Here, then, is where "appreciation" can be "learnt." If one knows in advance

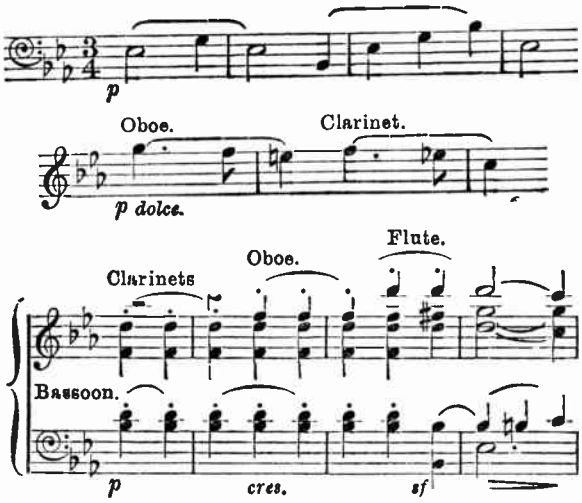
something of the logical processes through which a piece of music is likely to pass, one is, at a first hearing, in much the same happy position as one would otherwise be at (say) a third or fourth hearing. What these logical processes are cannot be fully explained here, nor is a very full explanation necessary, since, once one has learnt to be on the look-out, one notices pretty well what is going on without necessarily being able to put it all into a verbal description.

THE FIRST STEP

The first great point to grasp is that any formidable-looking and confused-sounding lengthy piece of music is almost certainly in reality a pretty simple logical treatment of two or three short Tunes or "Subjects." A pianist reader might take a movement of some Beethoven Sonata and test this assertion, and if he or she has never previously studied what we call "Form" in music, it will probably be the cause of a little surprise to find how economical Beethoven, like every great composer, has been.

I will take my example of the "economy" of musical composition not from a Beethoven Sonata but from a well-known

Beethoven Symphony. The first Movement or section of the *Eroica* Symphony occupies, I find, in my copy of the orchestral score, eighty pages, consisting of no less than 695 bars. Yet when I come to look closely at this rather unusually long Movement (which was by far the longest Symphony movement anyone had ever written up to the date of its composition), I find that the whole thing is constructed out of very little more than these brief snatches of material:



HOW A PIECE OF MUSIC GROWS

The general principle of construction of the Movement is that out of these "germs," or "Motifs," as we call them, grow larger organisms, which we call "Subjects." Then out of these "Subjects" grows the whole Movement, which will be found to fall into three portions:

1. A portion in which these "Subjects" are given out (for the most part this portion keeps in one or two main keys).

2. A portion in which these "Subjects" are, as we say, "developed," i.e. divided up again into "Motifs," which are treated in various ways, harmonised differently, given to various instruments in succession (and made to pass through many keys, some of them remote and unexpected).

3. A portion which is almost a repetition of 1 (but with a certain change of key, which has its effect upon the mind of the listener, but which it is not at all necessary that he should consciously follow, and which, therefore, need not be explained here). This portion merges into what we call a "Coda," i.e. a passage that makes

upon: Firstly (in an orchestral piece), the ability to recognise the tone qualities of the different Instruments when played singly or in combination, and, secondly, knowledge of the different Composers, the Periods of musical art in which they worked, and the Styles which characterise their compositions.

But the recognition of the principle of what we call "Form" in music is, after all, the most fundamental requirement. It is, indeed, doubtful whether, in the absence of this, there can (except in the case of short and simple works) be anything like a full enjoyment.

A KNACK TO ACQUIRE

Fortunately the knack of following the logical development of a piece is not difficult to acquire, even to those who do not understand the notation of music. Perhaps the best way of acquiring it is to put on to one's Gramophone the record of a Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven String Quartet or Symphony "Movement," and to repeat it over and over again, determined on every repetition to notice more of how it is made.

Not that listening to music is always to be a grim detective effort. Far from it! The

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a dignified and effective end to the whole movement.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE "SUBJECT"

From the listener's standpoint the great thing is to be well acquainted with the "Subject" matter, as given above, and if he is so acquainted before the Movement begins he is likely to enjoy it very much more actively than he otherwise would, because, though he may not consciously follow every process with which the composer treats his "Subject" matter, he will at any rate not lose the thread of the piece.

The importance of getting a grasp of the "Subject" matter of a piece is usually acknowledged in what are called "Annotated programmes," for these generally reproduce in music type the chief "Subjects" of the piece. If one can "read" music, to hum over these "Subjects" and get them well into one's head before the music begins is a great help to one; if not, one should try, in listening, to note and remember the chief Tunes that appear in the early portion of the piece and to recognise them as they recur.

THE BEAUTY OF ECONOMY

It will be realised that this "economical" construction of a long piece of music is a great help to its understanding. To listen to a quarter-of-an-hour-long piece which gave us something different all the time would prove an almost impossible tax upon everyone's attention, which is the very reason that no composer has ever attempted such a thing! Such a composition would, in fact, be like a conversation consisting of nonsense, in which nothing "followed" from that which preceded it.

But the very practical composing device of making a large piece out of small material is of little advantage to a listener who through ignorance or inertia fails to grasp the material, and after what has been said the importance of some mental alertness in listening will have been thoroughly realised. Unfortunately, a good many people let their minds fall asleep during a piece of music. They would not treat a play of Shakespeare in this way!

In later chapters two further aids to the "appreciation" of music will be dwelt

upon: Firstly (in an orchestral piece), the ability to recognise the tone qualities of the different Instruments when played singly or in combination, and, secondly, knowledge of the different Composers, the Periods of musical art in which they worked, and the Styles which characterise their compositions.

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Not that listening to music is always to be a grim detective effort. Far from it! The

ideal is that, just as in reading English one progresses from the conscious spelling out of words to the almost subconscious grasp of whole sentences, so in musical appreciation one should progress from the conscious recognition of small details to a subconscious grasp of the logical development of long passages.

WORTH THE TROUBLE!

And, after all, the pleasure of keen listening is so great that the labour of acquiring the small ability involved is as nothing beside it.

As for the *beauty* and the *emotion* in music, so far from a grasp of musical "logic" obscuring these, it reveals them the more clearly.

CHAPTER IV

ON SONATAS OF VARIOUS KINDS

I ADD a few words about what we call "Cyclic Forms," i.e. Forms such as those of the Suite, the Sonata, the Symphony, the Concerto, and most String Quartets, etc., which consist of a series of three or four pieces, contrasting with one another, yet making up a well-grouped whole.

The SUITE is a mere set of pieces (in the early Suites they were often dance pieces). Its Movements may be of any number. Some of Bach's Suites were called "Partitas," some of Handel's "Lessons." Well-known examples of modern Suites are Grieg's *Peer Gynt* Suite (which is made up of music he wrote for a play of Ibsen's, re-arranged in concert form), and Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* Suite, sometimes called by the French title, "Casse Noisette" (a similar concert arrangement of certain music originally written for a Ballet).

On Sonatas of Various Kinds

The SONATA is a kind of Suite of a somewhat more serious type. It has usually four sections, or "Movements":

1. A pretty long and well-developed one.
2. A slow, expressive one.
3. A light Menuet or gay Scherzo (this last word is Italian for "joke").
4. Another long and well-developed one, usually not so serious as the first one.

Sonatas are written for a single instrument (as Piano), or for two instruments (as Piano and Violin). For the TRIO, the QUARTET, etc., see the Chapter on *Chamber Music*.

The SYMPHONY is merely a Sonata for Orchestra.

In modern times Sonatas, Trios, Quartets, etc., have often been written in one Movement, or at any rate with the Movements so linked that the passing from one to another is not prominent.

In the older Sonatas not only were the Movements distinct, but their musical Subjects (their "Tunes") were different. In the modern Sonata, even where the various Movements are distinct, there is often some community of Subject-matter, so binding the whole work into one.

On Sonatas of Various Kinds

The CONCERTO is a Sonata for one Solo Instrument playing a sort of duet with the Full Orchestra. It has usually three Movements—not four, as the Symphony.

Occasionally we meet with "Double Concertos," for two Solo Instruments with Orchestra.

Remember that the ancient *Melodic* type of music still persists, even in civilised Europe. The Plain Song of the Churches is one example of it. Here choir and congregation all join in the same melody, and though the organist may add an accompaniment in chords, this is a mere modern concession to the expectations of our harmony-accustomed ears, and has no sanction beyond that.

Similarly the Folk Songs of our countryside are purely melodic. Recent musical fashion has brought them out of the bar-parlour into the concert-room, and has added harmonic "accompaniments"; but here again is a concession. These Folk Songs were composed (if the word may be used) as purely Melodic music.

The practice of Harmony seems to have grown up in the Church, and the sort of Harmony used was for long that sort which we call COUNTERPOINT; that is, as I have already said, the sort of music in which every voice has a good tune, one which it can enjoy singing. The distinction between Harmony and Counterpoint may be again explained by an illustration. An ordinary hymn tune is in Harmony. A *Messiah*

chorus is in Harmony, too, but is also in Counterpoint. In the Hymn Tune the four voices produce suitable chords, but, as a rule, only one of them (the Soprano) has a real *tune* to sing. In the Handel chorus the voices also produce chords, but each voice has an interesting tune to sing.

Thus Counterpoint is always Harmony, but Harmony is not always Counterpoint.

MADRIGALS AND MASSES

The first great period of modern music is that in which the early experiments in Counterpoint had been brought to perfection. It was, in this country, the age of Queen Elizabeth and James I; and our own writers, such as Byrd, and Weelkes, and Morley, and Wilbye, and Gibbons, wrote beautiful MADRIGALS (the secular part-songs of the day) and beautiful Church Music, all in the contrapuntal style.

Abroad, there were also famous composers of this music, such as Palestrina in Italy, and Vittoria in Spain.

SOLO SONG

Whilst the art of unaccompanied choral song was thus brought to perfection, the

art of Solo Song was also highly cultivated, and such composers as Dowland, in this country, wrote beautiful SONGS with accompaniment for the Lute (an instrument something like the Mandoline in shape, the strings of which were plucked).

And at the same time the art of writing KEYBOARD MUSIC was growing up. The Keyboard instruments of the day were the Virginals (an early form of Harpsichord, the precursor of the modern Pianoforte) and, of course, the Organ.

The first composers to write artistic music for these instruments were the English Elizabethans, such as some of those already mentioned, and others, like Dr. John Bull and Giles Farnaby.

OPERAS AND ORATORIOS

Before the Madrigal period was ended, there arose, in Italy, a school of composers who wanted to use a more dramatic style. They brought into existence plays set to music, called OPERAS, and quasi-dramatic works for use in church, called ORATORIOS.

A great deal of the work they did was not in Counterpoint, for they set their dialogue for single voices, supported by chords on

some instrument or instruments, i.e. a Melody (one very much in a *speaking* style of music) was accompanied by instrumental Harmony. This style is called RECITATIVE. Take the date 1600 as approximately that of the beginning of this style.

FUGUES AND SUITES

The next great period is that of Purcell and (a little later) Bach and Handel. Purcell and Handel wrote Operas, but, though the Recitative style was continued and developed, the choruses of the works were now written in a very elaborate Counterpoint, forming, at the same time, a somewhat different kind of Harmony from that of the last period, since, in writing the accompaniments of the Recitative, composers had made a fresh study of chords, *as* chords, and so come to take a different view of Harmony.

Many of these choruses were more or less closely in the form of the FUGUE, i.e. (*a*) they were highly "contrapuntal," each voice having its own beautiful line of melody, and (*b*), in addition, they were developed out of some tiny germ of tune (called, like the main Tunes of a Sonata or

Symphony, a "Subject") which was given out first by one voice and then by all the others, in turn.

A great many Fugues were also written for the domestic keyboard instruments, the Harpsichord and the Clavichord, and for the ecclesiastical keyboard instrument, the Organ. To this day Bach's Fugues remain the greatest ever written.

In addition to Fugues, a great deal of instrumental music was written in the form of SUITES, i.e. strings of pieces so designed as to succeed one another acceptably. These pieces were mostly in the style of various dances, such as the stately Sarabande, the courtly Minuet, or the lively Jig or Gigue.

The Suites of Purcell, of Handel, and (especially) of Bach are a great deal played to-day. Indeed, they have lately entered upon a fresh period of popularity.

SONATAS AND SYMPHONIES

The next great period is that of the SONATA. A Sonata is merely an outgrowth of the Suite, in which the dance style is almost abandoned (except for the frequent retention of the Minuet as one of the sections, or "Movements" as they are called).

Most String Trios and Quartets, etc., are merely Sonatas for three or four Stringed Instruments, as the case may be.

A SYMPHONY is a Sonata for full orchestra. One of Bach's sons, Emanuel Bach, did a great deal to develop all these forms of the Sonata, and, following him, Haydn, Mozart, and, greatest of all, Beethoven, whose nine Symphonies are famous.

Note these dates. Roughly speaking, Bach and Handel were active from 1700 to 1750. Roughly speaking, Haydn, Mozart, and, after them, Beethoven were active from 1750 to 1825.

The ORCHESTRA, which was a mere chance collection of instruments in the days of Byrd and Palestrina, and which, therefore, interested them hardly at all, had by the days of Handel and Bach been greatly improved, but only reached anything like its modern standard of variety and efficiency with Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. These three composers also wrote much fine Chamber Music (i.e. String Quartets, etc.). Mozart and Gluck carried Opera much further than the composers of the previous period.

THE ROMANTIC COMPOSERS

In Beethoven's music was to be observed a good deal of what is called "Romanticism," an emphasis not so much upon beauty of form as upon warmth of emotion.

Schubert (contemporary with Beethoven), in his Symphonies and Piano Works, Chamber Music, etc., carried this further, and so did Weber in his Operas. Then came Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin (all born about 1810). Schumann and Chopin, especially, were thorough romantics. With them depth of *feeling* became much more important than beauty of *form*, though, of course, their music had this, too.

Play on the piano, or get a friend to play, a piano-piece of Mozart and one of Schumann or Chopin, and you will realise at once what the words "Classic" and "Romantic" mean.

WAGNER

Wagner was born about the same date as the three composers just mentioned (in 1813, to be exact), but lived longer than they.

I have put him into a "period" to himself, because he wrote, for the most part, not Instrumental Music or Solo Songs or Chamber Music, as they did, but Opera, now developed by him into something more elaborate and more definitely dramatic, which he, therefore, called by a new name—MUSIC DRAMA.

His aims were to make this not merely a setting to music of a play, but a combination upon more or less equal terms of all the Arts—Poetry, Music, Design, Colour, Acting, and so forth.

He tended, as he developed, to discard set Songs, Choruses, etc., and to make an Act a continuous thing, unbroken in its movement from beginning to end.

As a help towards this he used "Leading Motifs," i.e. short phrases of music, attached to particular persons of the plot (a *Siegfried motif*, etc.), or to particular ideas (a *Fire motif*, etc.). These he wove and re-wove into a musical fabric.

He also added new instruments to the Orchestra, and used the old instruments in greater numbers, and thus developed a more powerful and more varied use of Orchestral Colour.

BRAHMS AND LISZT

The work of Brahms was very distinct from that of Wagner. He wrote not Operas, but Piano Music, Chamber Music, Symphonies, and Songs. And in them he continued the work of Beethoven and Schumann, uninfluenced by his great contemporary, Wagner.

Thus, in their own day, Wagner and Brahms were made (against their wish) into the leaders of rival schools, and Wagnerites and Brahmsians were, for a time, the Montagues and Capulets of the realm of music.

Liszt belongs also to this period. He developed the Tone Poem, a type of orchestral piece in which some literary idea is worked out, or the emotions of some actual word-poem expressed in terms of music.

THE YOUNGER ART

There for the present I will leave my story. You have, from my brief summary, realised, I am sure, that the history of the Art of Music is the history of a course of Evolution, one thing growing out of another, and still another out of that.

The curious thing is that our Art of Music as we know it to-day is so *young*. We read books that were written thousands of years ago, and feel quite at home with them. And we look at Architecture which was designed, say, a couple of thousand years ago, or which is modelled upon the Architecture of so long ago as that, and find in it nothing strange. Literature and Architecture, much as we have them to-day, are ancient Arts. So is Sculpture. But Music (our modern "Harmonic" music, that is) is a mere stripling. Apart from a little Plain Song in our churches, and some of the Folk Song in our schools and concerts, we hear and perform to-day practically no music that is older than the days of Shakespeare and Drake.

There are trees still growing in every part of the country that are more ancient than the Art of Music, as we understand that Art to-day.

SOME SIMPLE BOOKS ON THE FORM AND HISTORY OF MUSIC

The following may be of interest to readers wishing to carry further their study of the

subjects treated in this and the preceding chapters. Only rather simply written books are mentioned, advanced and highly technical books being, it is thought, out of place in such a list as the present.

Colles: *The Growth of Music* (527 pages, Oxford University Press, 3 vols. each 3*s.* 6*d.*, or 1 vol. complete 10*s.* 6*d.*).

This is an exceedingly interesting book by the Music Critic of *The Times*. It is fairly solid reading for any beginners in the subject, but " repays."

Hadow: *Music* (256 pages, Williams & Norgate, 2*s.* 6*d.*).

For the reader with some present knowledge of the history of music, this is a very interesting summary of the whole subject.

Parry: *Studies of Great Composers* (376 pages, Kegan Paul, 6*s.*).

A very interesting combination of biography and history. It is only brought down to 1886, but for the lives and work of Palestrina, Handel, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Wagner is excellent.

Scholes: *The Listener's Guide to Music, with a Concert-goer's Glossary* (106 pages, Oxford University Press, seventh edition, 1925, paper boards 3*s.* 6*d.*, cloth 4*s.*).

This is intended to be understood by readers who possess no knowledge of musical notation.

Scholes: *The Listener's History of Music.* Vol. I—To Beethoven (Oxford University Press, second edition, 1925, 6*s.*).

This is a slightly more advanced book than the preceding, and for its full understanding requires an ordinary knowledge of musical notation.

Scholes: *The Complete Book of the Great Musicians* (332 pages, 53 illustrations, Oxford University Press, 12*s.* 6*d.*; also published in 3 vols. at 4*s.* 6*d.* in cloth and 5*s.* cloth gilt).

This is quite simple—really a children's book.

CHAPTER VI

HOW TO LISTEN TO AN ORCHESTRA

IN my capacity of Music Critic of the British Broadcasting Company, I get a good many letters like the following :

(1) " We at this house are confronted with a difficulty which you may be kind enough to help us to overcome.

" We can distinguish most of the more familiar instruments, such as the 'Cello, Harp, Flute, etc., but what is an Oboe like, and how does it sound, also a Glockenspiel and a Snare Drum ? "

(2) " If you consider the subject of sufficient general interest, I should very much like you to take a little time for a talk about the Orchestra, dealing chiefly with the individual instruments with illustrations. There may be people who, like myself, scarcely know Trumpets from Cornets, and do not know the Horns, Tubas, etc."

Now, as a matter of fact, it is quite possible to get enjoyment from the hearing of an orchestra without understanding anything about it; but, as a rule, the enjoyment is increased in proportion to the understanding.

"Form" in music (which was discussed in the previous chapter) corresponds to shape in a picture; Orchestration corresponds to colour. To see all the colour in a picture requires a trained eye; go round a picture gallery with an artist, and you will be astonished to find what you have previously missed. To hear all the orchestral colour in an Overture, Symphony, or Tone Poem requires a trained ear; go through the score with a composer, and you will again be astonished.

COLLABORATION

Real appreciation of a musical work is the result of the collaboration of an artist and an auditor. The artist says, "I'll put my best into it"; the auditor replies, "I'll try to find all that you have put there." This promise can only be fulfilled with a little trouble, but it is trouble well rewarded.

In what follows I shall assume the pos-

session of very little knowledge, but of some eagerness to gain a greater degree of musical enjoyment. Everyone nowadays can hear an Orchestra 365 days in the year by spending a few pounds upon a Gramophone and some Records, and almost as often by buying a cheap Broadcasting set and paying the Postmaster-General ten shillings. So everything that I relate can be tested and applied, even by a reader in the heart of the country.

AT AN ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

For the moment I am going to put the Gramophone and Wireless Set on one side and assume that we are at a concert. We will consider that we are in the Queen's Hall on the occasion of one of the concerts of the famous century-old Royal Philharmonic Society. The Orchestra we see before us may vary a little, according to the programme, but on a normal occasion it will be something like this :

STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

16 First Violins	10 Violoncellos
14 Second Violins	8 Double Basses
10 Violas	

"Wood Wind" Instruments

3 Flutes	3 Clarinets
1 Piccolo	1 Bass Clarinet
3 Oboes	3 Bassoons
1 Cor Anglais	1 Double Bassoon

Brass Instruments

4 Horns	3 Trombones
3 Trumpets	1 Tuba

Percussion Instruments

Kettledrums	Triangle
Big Drum	Tambourine
Side (or Military) Drums	Glockenspiel
Cymbals	Tubular Bells

(One to four players are allotted to the whole of the percussion instruments, as they are rarely used all together.)

Other Instruments

2 Harps	Organ (possibly)
Celesta	Piano (possibly)

In all, about ninety players of about twenty-five different instruments, of different qualities of tone, incessantly combining and recombining in all manners, and producing different colour-blends and contrasts, as though the composer were turning a kaleidoscope.

FAMILY LIFE IN THE ORCHESTRA

The first thing to notice about these instruments is that they are not a heterogeneous mob, but fall into families, as shown in the headings above. Next time you see an Orchestra, try to spot where each family is placed. Conductors vary a little in this matter, but the usual arrangement is something very roughly like this:

Percussion — Brass
Horns and Wood Wind
Strings
Strings — Strings
Conductor

The general principle, as you will notice, is to place the loudest instruments at the back.

THE INSTRUMENTS DESCRIBED

It is now desirable to describe the various instruments, so that they may be recognised when seen and heard.

The Strings

The Strings are the most important members of the Orchestra. Their capabilities are very wide and their tone does

not pall; hence they are in almost constant use throughout a piece.

First Violins and Second Violins.—Everybody knows these, and all that it is necessary to say is that as instruments they are precisely the same, their parts corresponding, however, somewhat to those of Sopranos and Altos in a choir.

Violas.—Like the Violins, but a trifle bigger, and therefore rather deeper in tone. They play, as it were, the Tenor in the stringed choir.

Violoncellos.—Still larger Violins, so large that the players rest them on the floor between their knees. They correspond to the Bass in a choir.

Double Basses.—Still larger, so that the players stand behind them or sit on very high stools. They often duplicate the Violoncello part an octave lower.

The Wood Wind

Piccolo.—A tiny, shrill Flute.

Flutes.—Everybody knows these, so they do not call for description.

Oboes, Cor Anglais, Bassoons, Double Bassoon.—A family of "reed instruments," the mouthpiece consisting of a "double

reed," i.e. two small pieces of thin wood which give out a rather acid but pleasant tone. The Oboes are treble instruments, the Cor Anglais is a sort of alto Oboe, the Bassoon a sort of bass Oboe, and the Double Bassoon a gruffer instrument, corresponding to the Double Bass of the Strings.

Clarinets, Bass Clarinet.—These are again "reed instruments," trebles and a bass, but their mouthpiece contains only a single reed, and their tone is smoother than that of the Oboe family.[1]

The Brass

Horns.—The curly instruments, very sweet-toned in their softer moments, quite thrilling in their louder.

Trumpets.—Need no description (in a quite small orchestra sometimes replaced by Cornets).

Trombones.—The push-in and pull-out instruments, lower in the pitch of their notes than the Horns and Trumpets.

[1] A listener writes: "*Oboe*—someone with rather a husky throat. *Clarinet*—same person with a soothing throat-lozenge." That would be very apt if it did not appear to cast an unmerited reflection upon the voice of the Oboe.

Tuba.—Like a big, clumsy Trumpet played in a different position by means of a mouthpiece at the side. Often used as a sort of "Double Bass" to the Trombones.

Percussion

Kettledrums.—Also called Timpani. Metal bowls covered with parchment—at least two (played by one man), often three.

Big Drum or *Bass Drum.*—(Salvation Army pattern.)

Side (or *Military*) *Drums.*—The smaller drum, often seen in the hands of Boy Scouts.

Cymbals.—Round brass plates to be clanged together or tapped with a drumstick.

Triangle and Tambourine.—Too well known to need description.

Glockenspiel.—Small metal bars in a frame, struck with hammers. Sounds like small, clear bells.

Tubular Bells.—Their name describes them; also struck with hammers.

Other Instruments

Harps.—Everybody knows them.

Celesta.—A kind of small piano (generally near the conductor), with metal plates instead of strings, and a liquid, silvery tone.

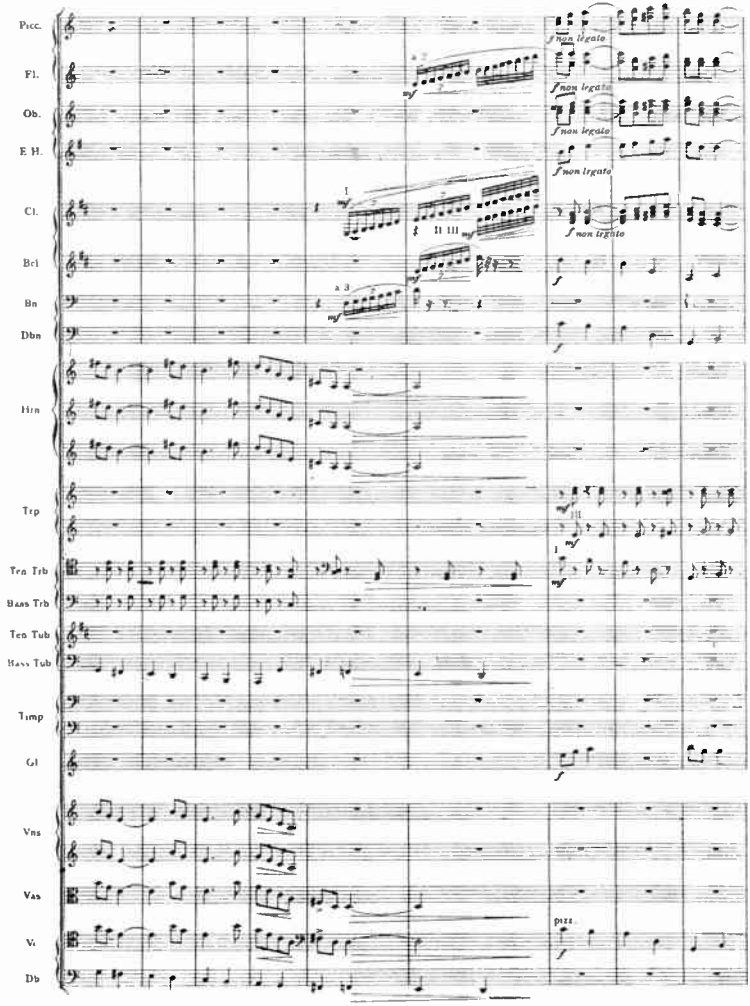
HOW TO LEARN THE TONES

The instruments being now recognised (and the plates provided in this book should be of some service towards this), the next thing is to learn their tones. Here the best-written book in the world can help you little. Go to a concert, sit near the orchestra, keep your eye upon particular instruments until you find them playing alone or prominently, and then note their tone qualities. Or, better, get the gramophone records which have been issued especially to help you in this matter, either:

(*a*) The two large double-sided "His Master's Voice" Records, Nos. 555-6 (which do not announce the names) or 557-8 (the same records with the name of each instrument announced before it plays), or

(*b*) The three small double-sided "Columbia" Records, Nos. 3198-3200 (names not announced).

(The principle in making the "H.M.V." records has been to choose short passages specially suited to the genius of each instrument, in the "Columbia" records to let all the instruments play the same


Picc.
Fl.
Ob.
E.H.
Cl.
Bcl
Bn
Dbn
Hrn
Trp
Ten Trb
Bass Trb
Ten Tub
Bass Tub
Timp
Gl
Vns
Vas
Vc
Db
f non legato
a 3
pizz.

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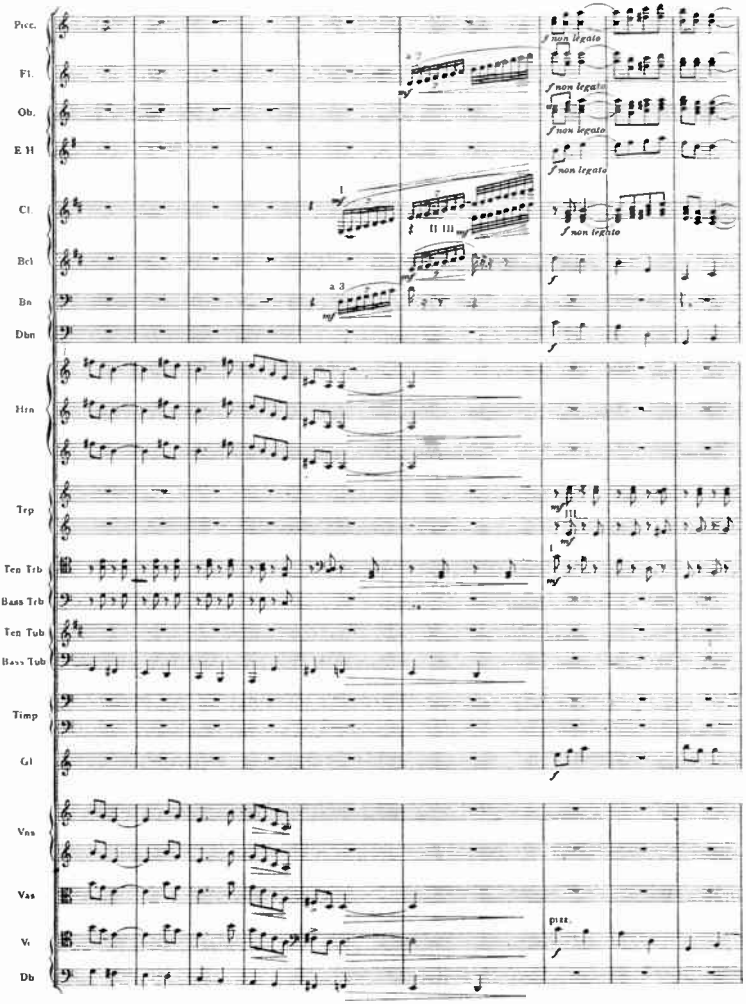
passage, for easy comparison. There is something to be said for each principle.)

THE USE OF A SCORE

Almost all that can be taught in writing has now been covered in this chapter, and it remains for the reader to apply it. If he is fairly well acquainted with musical notation (possibly as a pianist), he will like to obtain the cheap Miniature Scores of works that he is about to hear either by wireless, at a concert, or on the Gramophone. It is especially useful to follow a Gramophone performance with the score, as it can be stopped at any moment for the repetition of any passage; eye and ear assist one another, and progress is rapid.

In the score, note first where the parts for the various groups are placed, and keep these in mind *as groups*, and not as a mere collection of individuals. When you find the parts for certain instruments are printed in the wrong key, do not let this worry you; these are what we call "transposing instruments," and they will duly put the music back into the right key in performance. So far as your study is concerned, the detail matters little, for you are not so


Picc.
Fl.
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E H
Cl.
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Bn
Dbn
Hrn
Trp
Ten Trb
Bass Trb
Ten Tub
Bass Tub
Timp
Gl
Vns
Vas
Vc
Db
f non legato
a 3
mf
pizz.

much reading notes as observing which instrument is playing.

AN EXAMPLE FROM HOLST

A page from a modern orchestral score may fitly complete this chapter. It is from *Jupiter*, in Holst's *Planets* Suite—a piece which can be obtained on a gramophone Record ("Columbia," No. L1459; double-sided large Record).

At the beginning of the page Strings and Horns are found to be playing a little tune, with the Double Bass duplicated by the Bass Tuba (the Double Bass notes, as always for convenience, written an octave higher than they sound).

Then the Bassoon, Bass Clarinet, Clarinet and Flute rush upstairs rapidly, and a very happy song begins, sung by a choir consisting of Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Cor Anglais (called in the score "E. H." = "English Horn"), Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, and Double Bassoon, with an accompaniment on the Trumpets and Tenor Trombone, with some pleasant touches by the Glockenspiel, and the bass part of the choir duplicated by the Violoncellos, "pizzicato" (= plucked instead of bowed).

The whole of the *Planets* Suite can be obtained as a miniature score (10*s*.) of Messrs. J. Curwen & Sons, Ltd., 24, Berners Street, W., who have very kindly given permission for this reproduction.

The work is also available in the form of Gramophone Records. At first, however, the reader may do better to confine himself to something a little simpler, e.g. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (H.M.V., miniature score, Goodwin & Tabb, 3*s*.; Philharmonia Edition, Hawkes & Son, 3*s*. 6*d*.). An enormous amount of Wagner's music is now to be had for the gramophone, and most of it exists also in the shape of cheap miniature scores.

But whether the reader undertakes the definite course of recreative study here suggested or not, it is hoped that he has in this chapter found some general information and direction which will add to his interest next time he listens to a broadcast Symphony Concert.

A simple book upon the subject of this chapter is:

Montagu-Nathan: *The Orchestra, and How to Listen to It* (130 pages, Kegan Paul, 4*s*. 6*d*.).

CHAPTER VII

BROADCAST OPERA

THE other day I noticed with astonishment in a musical journal the following strange paragraph:

"One may surely hope—very fervently—that the wireless craze will pass. It can no longer be considered, as it was when Melba first broadcast, good propaganda for Opera. Operatic broadcasting may have appealed as a novelty, but the reaction has been intense. The mere idea that Opera, which depends to the extent of 75 per cent. on personality, colour, and movement, can ever be successfully transmitted by wireless infuriates me."

That was written by a journalist who calls himself "Figaro." He may hope as fervently as he likes, but the "wireless craze" will never pass. A "craze" which brings music at the cost of next-to-nothing into thousands of homes cannot be stopped!

Broadcast Opera

At one time stage-coach proprietors tried to "stop" railways. At another handloom weavers tried to "stop" the spinning jenny. Within my own memory, and that of many of my readers, motor-cars were considered so dangerous that the law required a man with a red flag to walk in front of each.

You can no more "stop" any invention or activity that is to the convenience and comfort of the public than you can stop a force of nature, so why try?

Curiously, on the same day as I read "Figaro's" contemptuous "the mere idea!" it became my duty to write an article which should help the readers of *The Radio Times* to enjoy the very opera from which this "Figaro" has taken his name. Before this book appears in print a performance of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* will have been heard by many thousands of people who had never heard it before, and, but for Broadcasting, would never have heard it in the whole course of their lives.

When "Figaro" puts the appeal of opera at 75 per cent. "personality, colour, and movement," of course he exaggerates. In any case, a good deal of "personality" can be carried on the Hertzian waves. Colour

and movement cannot be so carried—as yet; but the time will come, and when it does "Figaro" will not have a leg to stand upon.

CONCERT PERFORMANCE OF OPERA

Meantime, I think our friend might consider that Wagner's Music Dramas, which, of all forms of Opera, were supposed to embody a combination of the arts (Poetry—Music—Colour—Movement, merged, instead of merely added to one another, approaches a close description of what Wagner intended), have been found to be quite effective in concert performance. It would not surprise me a bit to hear that "Figaro" is some figure well known to me from his regular attendance at the annual Queen's Hall "Prom" performances of some of these works, when they are given intact (or almost so) as to their music and their poetry, but without Colour and Movement.

Consider "Figaro's" own namesake opera. I think the unseen and unseeing audience will enjoy *Porgi amor*, and *Voi, che sapete*, and *Dove sono*, and *Deh vieni* (if it does not enjoy them it does not know a good

on the part of the conductor and orchestra) are hardly sufficient, and a previous and detailed acquaintance with the poem is essential for complete appreciation.

AN EXAMPLE FROM AMERICA

As for Broadcasting not being good propaganda for Opera—I do not see how it can fail to be this. I take an example from an account of something that has happened in America, described in two New York papers, *Popular Radio* and *The Literary Digest*.

It appears that in the spring of 1923 the Manhattan Opera House announced a "Wagnerian Opera Festival." This was well attended by keen Wagnerites, but the general public took little interest in it, and it looked as though the Festival would become a disastrous failure. Then a sudden change occurred:

"On Monday morning of the second week, there was a riot round the box-office. Thousands of people crowded in to buy seats. The management, entirely unprepared for such a state of affairs, had to summon the police to keep order. From then on 'standing-room only' signs were

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tune when it hears it), and with the help of a preliminary account of the plot in *The Radio Times* and the dialogue in the Opera itself, it ought to enjoy those the more for understanding their significances. The method is not ideal, but—*Half a loaf*, "Figaro," *half a loaf!*

HEARING THE WORDS

Studio performances of Opera, heard by wireless, have, by the way, one advantage over theatre performances. Freed from the necessity to move about the stage and to combine action with song, the performers can make their words much more audible. I have no patience with people who maintain that in Opera the words do not greatly matter. Listeners sometimes write to me and tell me that they have been engaged in argument with musical friends who have defended this view, and I have known professional music critics who have condoned the lack of enunciation of singers of Wagner, on both stage and concert platforms, on the ground that "the music's the thing"!

Now, one thing is certain—that Wagner himself would never have excused such a

slight to the author of his libretti as is involved in the mumbling of the words—for the very good reason that he himself was that author.

As mentioned elsewhere in this book, it was part of Wagner's theory that poem, music, scenery, dressing, and action were of almost equal importance, that, indeed, all these were to melt together to produce one composite effect. In this last suggestion he went, perhaps, beyond the bounds of possibility, but at all events that was his aim. And the very term " Music Drama " which he introduced as a description of his own works is a clear enough indication that with him the plot and its details are to be taken seriously.

As a matter of fact, Wagner's works offer an extreme instance of the importance of a clear understanding of the words. There are a thousand details in the music that are perfectly meaningless to any member of the audience who does not grasp what is supposed to be going on in the mind of the character who is at the moment singing. So much is this so that even the clearest enunciation on the part of the singers (and it may be added, the most perfect self-renunciation

on the part of the conductor and orchestra) are hardly sufficient, and a previous and detailed acquaintance with the poem is essential for complete appreciation.

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hung out for each performance. The season, which was originally planned to cover only three weeks, was extended to seven weeks. A large proportion of the audiences consisted of those who were not familiar with Wagner, as was shown by their questions at the box-office; while mail orders for seats poured in from points at long distances from New York.

"What caused the change?

"Simply this. On Saturday night of the first week, broadcasting station WJZ of Newark broadcast the performance by means of telegraph wire between the auditorium and the station, and continued to do so once a week thereafter as long as the season lasted. No better proof of the cultural value of broadcasting is possible. People not only enjoyed this superlatively good music as they heard it by radio, but they spent their money to hear more of it.

"Those of the radio audience who could attend the operas in person, did so; those who could not, wrote to WJZ. Tho' the daily mail of this station is always large, it doubled and trebled during the Opera season. The most interesting of the letters came from the Wagnerites who lived in

remote places and had picked up the Operas unexpectedly. Such an event to these people was a far more joyful surprise than the plowing up of a pot of gold would be.[1]

" ' As I was idly playing with my receiver last night,' wrote a Canadian, ' I tuned in a very fine soprano voice singing *Elsa's Dream* from *Lohengrin*. Good, I thought, I wish they would give us more of that kind of music. Suddenly something happened that made me jump to my feet. I heard Trumpets in the accompaniment! Was it possible that I was listening in to an actual performance of the Opera? I held my breath in expectation until the chorus that followed confirmed my hopes. I called my wife. She listened for a moment, and then 'phoned excitedly to two musical friends. For the rest of the evening we four sat drinking in the superb music we had all heard so often years ago, but hardly expected ever to hear again. Yet it came to us in these Canadian wilds, every note and every word of it. And the Announcer tells us we are to hear more! How Wagner

[1] I wonder? This is putting it rather high, isn't it?—P. A. S.

lovers all over the country must be thanking you!'

"But many who had never heard Wagner before were hardly less enthusiastic. 'I am an opera goer,' wrote one, '*but I have always intentionally dodged Wagner. Too highbrow for me! But from now on, it's Wagner for me!*'"

That last paragraph, I think, offers a very good example of what Broadcasting can do for good music. It can bring the best to thousands of people who previously were satisfied with less than the best, and when they get it they will find they like it.

HOW TO APPRECIATE WAGNER

I pursue this subject of Wagner. Of the many listeners whose interest in Wagner has been awakened or increased by the recent broadcasting of Acts from his Music Dramas from Covent Garden, there must be some who wish to follow up their listening by a little easy-going study, and so to be better prepared to understand Wagner next time they hear him.

Fortunately such preparation need not nowadays be laborious. The first thing, I

think, is to get an idea of Wagner's life and aims. Every public library in the country contains a life of Wagner, and you should go through it, and so get an idea of what sort of a man Wagner was, what he was driving at, and what sort of a process of general mental and artistic development is represented by his succession of works, from *The Flying Dutchman*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tannhäuser* (which are the earliest operas of his we very commonly hear in this country) to the four music dramas of *The Ring*, to *The Mastersingers*, to *Tristan*, and to *Parsifal*.

You will soon grasp the idea that Wagner was shouldering, as his life task, the stage-musical setting of some of the great national legends of his race, and that, in doing so, he was getting more and more away from the conventional idea of Opera and striving more and more, as I have hinted above, after an *ideal combination of all the arts* (music, literature, the pictorial art, etc.), in a new form which he preferred to call not "Opera," but "Music Drama."

If you want to get the hang of this subject without unnecessary loss of time, you might do worse than read the Wagner article in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, or

that in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (I mention these because they are pretty clear and are certainly in every public library).

WAGNER'S PLOTS

The next thing is to make yourself acquainted with the legends which Wagner set, so that whenever you hear a Wagner music drama, or any extract from one, whether in the opera-house, or by Wireless, or by Gramophone, you will be able to realise just what is going forward.

For this purpose there exist a number of quite useful books under such titles as *The Wagner Stories*, and the like. I shall give particulars of some in a moment.

Then, when you are going to hear any particular Wagner Music Drama, it is an excellent thing to read the actual libretto, which any music seller can get for you, in either German or English as you prefer, for a small sum.

The main thing in hearing Wagner is, then, to have a thorough understanding of his plots. If you wish to study the music, too, there are several little books that will greatly help you, but even without any actual study of the music you can increase

your appreciation of Wagner tenfold by getting a real grasp of the stories he is telling, and in any case this is the first thing for the listener to do, just as the choice of his subject and the writing of his libretto was the first thing the Composer took in hand. For Wagner, as you know, is almost unique amongst stage composers in that he was his own librettist.

THE GRAMOPHONE AS A HELP

I asked a big man in the Gramophone trade the other day whether he thought Broadcasting would injure him, and he said—No; on the contrary it was helping him. Gramophones and Broadcasting are, I think, bound to help one another, and in the case of Wagner they can certainly do so. There must be many people whose recent experiences in listening to Wagner by wireless have led them to welcome the wonderful new Gramophone Records of *The Ring* prepared by Albert Coates and various members of the British National Opera Company. These Records are almost a new thing in the history of the Gramophone, for they do not give you merely set songs

from the Music Dramas, but actual long sections of the music, chosen for their musical and dramatic interest, and they do not give you a loud Vocal Part timidly supported by a faint Orchestral Accompaniment (as has been usual in the Gramophone Records of the past), but allow you to hear Voice and Orchestra in their proper proportions, as you do in the opera-house itself.

Since Wagner began to compose there has never been such an opportunity of studying and enjoying his work as there is now, with (*a*) the British National Opera Company touring the country with some of his greatest works, (*b*) The British Broadcasting Company making chosen Acts from these dramas available for people who are out of reach of the performances themselves, (*c*) Albert Coates and the Gramophone Company producing the magnificent Records I have mentioned.

opera book, but this contains particulars of 200 Operas, including most that are likely to be heard at the present time and a good many others.

Krehbiel: *A Book of Operas, their Histories, their Plots, and their Music.* (587 pages, Macmillan's, 12*s*.)

This gives very interesting, lengthy chapters upon a good selection of operas, as follows: *Barber of Seville*, *Figaro*, *Magic Flute*, *Don Giovanni*, *Fidelio*, Gounod's *Faust*, Berlioz's *Faust*, *Mephistofeles*, *Traviata*, *Aida*, *Freischütz*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan*, *Parsifal*, *Mastersingers*, *Lohengrin*, *Hänsel and Gretel*, *Samson and Delilah*, *The Queen of Sheba*, *Hérodiad*, *Lakmé*, *Pagliacci*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Iris*, *Butterfly*, *Rosenkavalier*, *Königskinder*, *Boris*, *Madame Sans-Gêne* and other operas by Giordano, *Susanna's Secret*, and *The Jewels of the Madonna*. Further, it has chapters on "Biblical Operas," "Bible in Opera and Oratorio," Rubinstein and his "Geistliche Oper," and "The Career of Mascagni." There are 16 Illustrations.

McSpadden: *Opera Synopses: A Guide to the Plots and Characters of the Standard*

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CHAPTER VIII

HELPFUL PUBLICATIONS FOR OPERA LOVERS

AS with Wagner, so (to an extent) with other Opera composers. Get to know the plot; listen, if you can, with the actual libretto before you, and, gradually, other things will be added unto you. I know that many readers will confirm this assertion, because instinct and experience have already taught them the principle. I receive literally dozens of letters like the following:

"Is there any book which gives the words of the Standard Operas, so that in listening to a Broadcast Opera one could have the Libretto before one's eyes?"

Now, unfortunately, there is no such book. The different Operas are the copyright of different publishers, and consequently it is impossible for any one publisher to collect all the Libretti into one volume.

Publications for Opera Lovers

But most of the Opera Libretti are separately published, both in the original language and in an English translation, and if you are very keen on following Opera in an intelligent way, the moment you see in *The Radio Times* the announcement of a coming broadcast opera performance, you should write to a good music-seller and tell him to order you the Libretto without delay. If you can gradually accumulate a little library of the Libretti of the favourite Operas, you will add greatly to the resources of your musical enjoyment.

But though there is no one book providing all the Libretti, there are a good many books which give all (or nearly all) the plots which you are likely to require. The following are the most useful known to me:

Kobbé: *The Complete Opera Book: The Stories of the Operas, together with* 410 *of the Leading Airs and Motives in Musical Notation; Illustrated with* 64 *Portraits of Costumes and Scenes from Opera.* (925 pages, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 15*s*.)

As a matter of fact, nobody has ever published or could publish a "complete"

opera book, but this contains particulars of 200 Operas, including most that are likely to be heard at the present time and a good many others.

Krehbiel: *A Book of Operas, their Histories, their Plots, and their Music.* (587 pages, Macmillan's, 12*s*.)

This gives very interesting, lengthy chapters upon a good selection of operas, as follows: *Barber of Seville*, *Figaro*, *Magic Flute*, *Don Giovanni*, *Fidelio*, Gounod's *Faust*, Berlioz's *Faust*, *Mephistofeles*, *Traviata*, *Aida*, *Freischütz*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan*, *Parsifal*, *Mastersingers*, *Lohengrin*, *Hänsel and Gretel*, *Samson and Delilah*, *The Queen of Sheba*, *Hérodiad*, *Lakmé*, *Pagliacci*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Iris*, *Butterfly*, *Rosenkavalier*, *Königskinder*, *Boris*, *Madame Sans-Gêne* and other operas by Giordano, *Susanna's Secret*, and *The Jewels of the Madonna*. Further, it has chapters on "Biblical Operas," "Bible in Opera and Oratorio," Rubinstein and his "Geistliche Oper," and "The Career of Mascagni." There are 16 Illustrations.

McSpadden: *Opera Synopses: A Guide to the Plots and Characters of the Standard*

Operas. (336 pages, Harrap, 5*s*., antique leather 7*s*. 6*d*.)

This book lives up to its name. It is concise and pithy. The plots of no fewer than sixty-four Operas are given, but the music is not touched upon.

Opera at Home. (377 pages, The Gramophone Co. Ltd., 5*s*.)

This is really a guide to operatic Gramophone Records published by the H.M.V. Company, but it contains general information about the operas concerned, and very brief plots.

On Wagner there is, of course, an abundant special literature. I will mention here one or two of the simpler books which I feel I can recommend:

Gertrude Hall: *The Wagnerian Romances*. (414 pages, John Lane; out of print, but may be seen in libraries.)

This gives the Stories of the Operas, fully set out in good literary style.

cast in the near future, and in it to incorporate particulars of Libretti, Piano-Vocal Scores, and Orchestral Scores (where such are obtainable).

Such information as I am now about to give is strangely difficult to come by, there being no one source to which one can refer. This list as I give it is the outcome of days of hard work on the part of myself and my assistants, of the consulting of innumerable catalogues, of visits to many publishers. I think the list to be accurate, but its facts may not be complete. Publishers themselves, though very willing to help, I find, do not always know their own publications, and in some cases I have been told that an English translation of a libretto did not exist, although I had the very thing upon my own shelves.

In fact the whole subject is in a muddle. I have tried to clear it up, and I shall be grateful to be told of any useful publications which I have failed to mention, so that in any later edition they may be incorporated in the list. Meantime the list, as I give it, ought to be of assistance to many of the keener Broadcasting Listeners.

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Hadden: *The Operas of Wagner, their Plots, Music, and History.* (247 pages, Nelson, 6*s.* cloth, 12*s.* leather.)

This is not nearly so large a book as the last. The type is much larger, so that the disparity of size is greater even than the relative numbers of pages suggests. On the other hand, it includes an elementary discussion of the music, whereas Gertrude Hall's book does not touch on this. Also there are twenty-four plates in colours, showing scenes out of the operas.

Cleather and Crump: *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas. Interpretations, embodying Wagner's own Explanations.* (Methuen, 4*s.* net each, four separate books as follows: (1) *The Ring of the Nibelung*, (2) *Parsifal* and *Lohengrin*, (3) *Tristan*, (4) *Tannhäuser* and *Mastersingers.*)

On Mozart's Operas we have in English an excellent monograph:

Dent: *Mozart's Operas: a Critical Study.* (430 pages, Chatto & Windus, 12*s.* 6*d.*)

This is not a book for the very beginner, but for a musical person accustomed to read critical and historical discussion it

is excellent. The plots of the Operas are given, but that is only a small part of the work. This book was published in 1914, and at the time of writing the first edition is not yet sold out. In 1924 a German edition was published, and more copies were sold in advance of publication than had been sold of the English edition in the whole of the eleven years of its existence. Our small public for works of learning upon musical subjects is a disgrace to us; but with the enormous increase in musically-interested people which is resulting from broadcasting we shall soon do better!

Of the Russian Operas the plots will be found in:

Montagu-Nathan's *A History of Russian Music, being an Account of the Rise and Progress of the Russian School of Composers, with a Survey of their Lives and a Description of their Works.* (346 pages, William Reeves, 7*s.* 6*d.*)

And also in:

Rosa Newmarch: *The Russian Opera.* (396 pages, Herbert Jenkins, 6*s.*)

I propose now to give a list of such Operas as I think at all likely to be broad-

cast in the near future, and in it to incorporate particulars of Libretti, Piano-Vocal Scores, and Orchestral Scores (where such are obtainable).

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My experience is that it is no good giving

particulars of books or music if one omits mention of prices. If there is a proverbial objection to buying a pig in a poke, there is an actual one, equally strong, to buying a pig without a price. So I have given prices throughout. But bear in mind that in many cases these are dependent upon the rate of exchange with some foreign country, and are thus liable to slight fluctuation.

BEETHOVEN (1770–1827). *Fidelio.*

Finished 1806. Original German. (Full title, *Fidelio oder die eheliche Liebe* = "Fidelio, or Married Love.") Pronounce "Fee-*day*-lee-oh." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, Ricordi or Novello, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, Ricordi or Novello, 5*s.* 6*d.* ORCHESTRAL SCORE, (Peters) Augener, 24*s.*

"BEGGAR'S OPERA." See Gay and Pepusch.

BERLIOZ (1803–1869). *Faust.*

Written 1846. In French, *La Damnation de Faust*; not really intended for stage performance, and more likely to be broadcast as a Cantata than as an Opera. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, Chappell, 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO

SCORE, Chappell, 6*s*. Novello edition: VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 4*s*.; LIBRETTO, 6*d*.; ORCHESTRAL SCORE, £5. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, Costellat, Paris; can be obtained through Chester, 22*s*. 6*d*.

BIZET (1838–1875). *Carmen.*

Written 1875. Pronounce name of Composer "*Bee*-zay." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, two translations, by Hersee and by Klein, both Metzler, and each 1*s*. FRENCH LIBRETTO, Ricordi, 1*s*. 6*d*. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, Metzler, 8*s*.; also a "concert edition" of this last, Metzler, 6*s*. ORCHESTRAL SCORE, not published (!) The plot is based (with some important variations) upon Merimée's novel *Carmen*, which any dealer in foreign books can easily supply in a cheap edition.

BIZET. *The Pearl Fishers.*

Written 1863. In French, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*. LIBRETTO only published in French, Calmann-Levy, Paris; can be obtained through Chester or Ricordi, 1*s*. 6*d*. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, Ascherberg or Ricordi, 15*s*. ORCHESTRAL SCORE not published.

BIZET. *Djamileh.*

Written 1872. Original French. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* 6*d.* Both Ascherberg. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

BORODIN (1834–1887). *Prince Igor.*

Completed after Borodin's death by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazounov, 1891. Original Russian. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (in Russian-French-German), original edition, 50*s.*; popular edition, 40*s.* All obtainable of Hawkes.

BOUGHTON (b. 1878). *Alkestis.*

LIBRETTO: this is a compilation from Gilbert Murray's translation of Euripides' *Alkestis*, published by George Allen, paper 2*s.*, cloth 3*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, Curwen, 12*s.* 6*d.* ORCHESTRAL SCORE not published.

BOUGHTON. *The Immortal Hour.*

LIBRETTO, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 15*s.* ORCHESTRAL SCORE, 63*s.* All Stainer & Bell.

CHARPENTIER (b. 1860). *Louise.*

Written in 1900. Original French.

ENGLISH LIBRETTO, Chester, 1*s.* FRENCH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (English and French words), 20*s.* All obtainable of Chester. ORCHESTRAL SCORE, not published.

DEBUSSY (1862–1918). *Pelléas and Mélisande.*

First performed in 1902. Maeterlinck's play, which, with omissions, constitutes the Libretto, can be obtained in the original French (with some other plays), published by the Bibliothèque Charpentier, and obtainable through any dealer in foreign books at about 3*s.*, or in Lawrence Alma Tadema's English translation, published by Simpkin, Marshall, 1*s.* 6*d.* Messrs. Chester also supply an English translation by Henry G. Chapman, 2*s.* The Edwin Evans translation, used by the British National Opera Company, is unpublished. Gilman's *Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande, a Guide to the Opera* is useful (Schirmer, New York). VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (English and French words), 20*s.*, Chester. MINIATURE FULL SCORE, 50*s.*, obtainable of Chester.

GAY and PEPUSCH. *The Beggar's Opera.*

Written 1727–8. Libretto by John Gay;

music largely popular tunes collected by Dr. Pepusch. Revived at intervals, the last revival being in 1920, when the LIBRETTO was republished (Martin Secker, 2*s.* 6*d.*), and the music somewhat rearranged by Frederick Austin. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, Chappell, 7*s.* 6*d.*

GAY and PEPUSCH. *Polly.*

Written 1729. A sequel to *The Beggar's Opera.* Revived in 1923, in an adaptation by Clifford Bax. LIBRETTO, Chapman & Hall, 2*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, Chappell, 7*s.* 6*d.*

GLUCK (1714–1787). *Orpheus.*

Written 1762. Pronounce name of Composer "Glook." Originally in Italian, *Orfeo ed Euridice.* ENGLISH LIBRETTO, Novello, 1*s.*; ITALIAN LIBRETTO, Ricordi, 1*s.* VOCAL AND PIANO SCORE, Ricordi or Novello, 5*s.* 6*d.* ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 35*s.*, Novello.

GOUNOD (1818–1893). *Faust.*

Written 1859. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, Chappell, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, Chappell, 7*s.* ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

GOUNOD. *Romeo and Juliet.*

Written 1867. Original French. ENGLISH LIBRETTO unobtainable. FRENCH LIBRETTO, Ricordi, 1*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, Chappell, 7*s.* ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

HOLST (b. 1874). *Savitri.*

Written 1916. LIBRETTO, 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* ORCHESTRAL SCORE, 42*s.* All Curwen.

HOLST. *The Perfect Fool.*

Written 1923. LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 8*s.* ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable. All Novello.

HOLST. *At the Boar's Head.*

First performed 1925. LIBRETTO (from Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, with a few additions), 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 6*s.* Both Novello. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

HUMPERDINCK (1854–1921). *Hänsel and Gretel.*

Written 1893. Original German. Pronounce name of Composer "*Hoomp*-erdink," name of Opera "Henzel and Gray-

tel." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 15*s.* MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, 40*s.* All Schott.

LEONCAVALLO (1858–1919). *I Pagliacci.*

Written 1892. Original Italian. Pronounce name of Composer "Lay-on-cav-*al*-oh, name of Opera "Ee Pal-ee-*a(r)ch*-ee. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* 6*d.* Both Ascherberg. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

MASCAGNI (b. 1863). *Cavalleria Rusticana.*

Written 1890. Original Italian. Pronounce name of Composer "Mass-*cah*-nyee," name of Opera "Cav-al-er-*ee*-a Rus-ti-*cah*-na" = "Rustic Chivalry." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* 6*d.* Both Ascherberg. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

MASSENET (1842–1912). *Thaïs.*

Written 1894. Original French. Pronounce name of Composer "*Mass*enay," name of Opera "*Tah*-eess." Founded on Anatole France's novel of the same name. English translation published by John Lane.

ENGLISH LIBRETTO unobtainable. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 20*s*. Schott. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

MASSENET. *Manon.*

Written 1894. Original French. ENGLISH LIBRETTO unobtainable. FRENCH LIBRETTO, 2*s*. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 20*s*., Ricordi; with English words, 8*s*., Novello. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

MOUSSORGSKY (1835–1881). *Boris Godounov.*

Written 1874. Original Russian. ENGLISH LIBRETTO (translation by Rosa Newmarch), 1*s*., Chester. An English translation in verse of Poushkin's play of the same name, on which the Opera is founded, has been made by Mr. Alfred Hayes (Kegan Paul, 2*s*. 6*d*.). VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 20*s*., Chester.

MOZART (1756–1791). *The Seraglio* (or *The Harem*).

Written 1782. Pronounce name of Composer "Mote-sart," name of Opera "*Ser-ah*-lee-o." Original German, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* = "The Escape from

the Seraglio." ENGLISH LIBRETTO unobtainable. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, English words, 5*s.* 6*d.*, Boosey or Novello. ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 45*s.*, Novello.

MOZART. *The Marriage of Figaro.*

Written 1786. Pronounce "*Feeg*-arr-oh." Original Italian, *Le Nozze di Figaro.* English Libretto, 1*s.* 6*d.*, Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s* 6*d.*, Boosey or Novello. ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s.*, obtainable of Novello.

MOZART. *Don Giovanni.*

Written in 1787. Original Italian. Pronounce (as near as can be indicated) "Jo-*vah*-nee." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.*, Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s.* 6*d.*, Boosey or Novello. ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s.*, obtainable of Novello.

MOZART. *Così fan Tutte.*

Written 1790. Original Italian. Pronounce "Co-*see* fan *toot*-ay" = "Everybody does it." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 6*d.*, Novello. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 7*s.* 6*d.*, Ricordi or Novello. ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s.*, obtainable of Novello.

MOZART. *The Magic Flute.*

Written 1791. Original German, *Die Zauberflöte*. Pronounce "Dee *Tsow*-ber-fle(r)-te(r). ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s*. 6*d*., Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s*. 6*d*., Ricordi or Novello. Edward J. Dent's excellent translation of the Libretto, made for the Cambridge performances of 1911, is published by Heffer, Cambridge (obtainable also of Harold Reeves, London), 1*s*. ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s*., obtainable of Novello.

OFFENBACH (1819–1880). *Tales of Hoffmann.*

Written 1880. Original French, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s*. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 12*s*. Both Cramer. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

"POLLY." See Gay and Pepusch.

PUCCINI (1858–1924). *Manon Lescaut.*

Written 1893. Pronounce name of composer "Poo-*chee*-nee," name of Opera (as near as can be indicated), "Man-on Less-coh." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s* 6*d*. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s*. Both Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

PUCCINI. *La Bohème.*

Written 1896. Pronounce "Lah Boh-aym." Name means "Bohemia" in the sense of unconventional artist life in Paris. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (Italian and English words), 10*s.* Both Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

PUCCINI. *La Tosca.*

Written 1900. Original Italian. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* Both Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

PUCCINI. *Madame Butterfly.*

Produced 1904. Original Italian. Founded on the drama by David Belasco, which in its turn was founded on a novel by John L. Long. ENGLISH AND ITALIAN LIBRETTO combined, 1*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE. 10*s.* All Ricordi.

PUCCINI. *Gianni Schicchi.*

Written 1918. Original Italian. Pronounce (as near as can be indicated) "Jah-nee Skeek-kee." ENGLISH LIBRETTO (with Italian also, and including the sister operas

Il Tabarro and *Suor Angelica*), 2*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 6*s.* Both Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

PURCELL (1658–1695). *Dido and Æneas.*

Written about 1688. Libretto, 4*d.*, Novello. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 4*s.*, Novello. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE (orchestration modernised) in Philharmonia Edition, 5*s.*, Hawkes.

RAVEL (b. 1875). *L'Heure Espagnole.*

Written 1911. Original French. Pronounce (as near as can be indicated) "Leurr Es-pan-yol" = "The Spanish Hour." ENGLISH LIBRETTO unobtainable. FRENCH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 12*s.* Both obtainable through Novello. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (1844–1908). *The Golden Cockerel.*

Written 1910. Original Russian. Often called by French name "Le Coq d'Or." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, by Timotheief and Hayne, 1*s.* 6*d.*, Chester. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (with English translation by Agate, as used by B.N.O.C.), 21*s.*, Goodwin & Tabb. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

ROSSINI (1792–1868). *The Barber of Seville.*

Written 1816. Original Italian, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* Pronounce "Eel Bar-bee-*ay*-ree dee Seev-*ee*-lee-ah." ENGLISH LIBRETTO (with Italian also), 1*s.* 6*d.*, Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s.* 6*d.*, Boosey or Novello. ORCHESTRAL SCORE, apparently unobtainable.

SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921). *Samson and Delilah.*

Written 1877. Original French. ENGLISH LIBRETTO (with French also), 1*s.* 6*d.* VOCAL PIANO-SCORE, 20*s.* Schott, Chester, or Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

SMYTH (b. 1858). *The Boatswain's Mate.*

First performance, 1917. LIBRETTO, 1*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* Both Curwen. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

SMYTH. *Fêtes Galantes.*

First performance, 1923. LIBRETTO, 6*d.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s.* Both Curwen. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

VERDI (1813–1901). *Rigoletto.*

Written 1851. Original Italian. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* ITALIAN LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s.* 6*d.*, Boosey, Novello, or Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

VERDI. *Il Trovatore.*

Written 1853. Original Italian. Pronounce "Eel Trov-a-*tor*-ay" = "The Troubadour." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.*, Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s.* 6*d.*, Novello, Boosey, or Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

VERDI. *La Traviata.*

Written 1853. Original Italian. Pronounce "Lah Trav-ee-*ah*-tah." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* ITALIAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s.* 6*d.*, Novello, Boosey, or Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

VERDI. *Aida.*

Written 1871. Original Italian. Pronounce "Ah-*ee*-dah." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* ITALIAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* All Ricordi.

LIBRETTO, 1*s*. 6*d*. GERMAN LIBRETTO, 1*s*. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 30*s*. All published by Fürstner of Berlin and obtainable through Chappell. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

STRAUSS. *Ariadne on Naxos.*

Written 1912–16. Original German. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s*. GERMAN LIBRETTO, 2*s*. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (German words only), 30*s*. All published by Fürstner of Berlin, and obtainable of Chester and others.

THOMAS, AMBROISE (1811–1896). *Mignon.*

Written 1866. Original French. Pronounce approximately "Meen-yon." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s*., Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 15*s*., Schott. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (*b*. 1872). *Hugh the Drover, or Love in the Stocks.*

Written about 1912; first performed 1924. LIBRETTO, 1*s*. 6*d*. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 15*s*. Both Curwen. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

VERDI (1813–1901). *Rigoletto.*

Written 1851. Original Italian. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* ITALIAN LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 5*s.* 6*d.*, Boosey, Novello, or Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

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VERDI. *Aida.*

Written 1871. Original Italian. Pronounce "Ah-*ee*-dah." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* ITALIAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* All Ricordi.

VERDI. *Othello.*

Written 1887. Original Italian (*Otello*). ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* ITALIAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 10*s.* (English and Italian words). All Ricordi.

VERDI. *Falstaff.*

Written 1893. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* ITALIAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (Italian and English words), 10*s.* All Ricordi. ORCHESTRAL SCORE unobtainable.

WAGNER (1813–1883). *The Flying Dutchman.*

Written 1843. Original German, *Der fliegende Holländer.* Pronounce "Dare fleegen-de(r) Holl-en-der." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.*, Ricordi. GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.*, Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (English words), 7*s.*, Schott; (German and English words), 5*s.* 6*d.*, Novello. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s.*, Chester.

WAGNER. *Rhine Gold.*

Written 1869. Original German, *Das Rheingold.* Pronounce "Dass Rhine-golt."

ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 12*s.* All Schott. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s.*, Chester.

WAGNER. *The Valkyrie.*

Written 1870. Original German, *Die Walküre.* Pronounce approximately "Dee Val-kee-ree." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 12*s.*, Schott. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s.*, Chester.

WAGNER. *Siegfried.*

Written 1875. Original German. Pronounce "*Seeg*-freed." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 12*s.*, Schott. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s.*, Chester.

WAGNER. *The Dusk of the Gods.*

Written 1876. Original German, *Die Götterdämmerung.* Pronounce "Dee Gu(r)t-er-*day*-mer-oong." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s.* 6*d.* GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s.* Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO

SCORE, 12*s*., Schott. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s*., Chester.

Note.—These four Music Dramas, *Rhine Gold*, *The Valkyrie*, *Siegfried*, and *The Dusk of the Gods*, constitute the "Cycle," *The Nibelung's Ring* (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Pronounce "Dare Ring dess Nee-bel-*oong*-en.")

WAGNER. *Parsifal.*

Written 1882. Original German. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s*. 6*d*., Ricordi. VOCAL PIANO SCORE, 12*s*., Schott. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s*., Chester.

WAGNER. *Tannhäuser.*

Written 1845. Original German. Pronounce "Tan-hoy-zer." Full title is *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg* = "Tannhäuser and the Song Competition on the Wartburg." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s*. 6*d*. GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s*. Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (English words), 7*s*., Schott, (German and English words), 5*s*. 6*d*., Novello. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s*., Chester.

WAGNER. *Lohengrin.*

Written 1850. Original German. Pro-

nounce "*Lo*-hen-grin." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s*. 6*d*. GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s*. Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE (English words), 7*s*., Schott, (German and English words), 5*s*. 6*d*., Novello. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 22*s*., Chester.

WAGNER. *Tristan and Isolde*.

Written 1865. Pronounce "Ee-sol-de(r)." Original German. ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 1*s*. 6*d*. GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s*. Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 12*s*., Schott. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 22*s*., Chester.

WAGNER. *The Mastersingers*.

Written 1868. Original German, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Pronounce "Dee My-ster-sing-er fon Newrn-bayrg" = "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg." ENGLISH LIBRETTO, 2*s*. GERMAN LIBRETTO, about 2*s*. 6*d*. Both Ricordi. VOCAL-PIANO SCORE, 12*s*., Schott. MINIATURE ORCHESTRAL SCORE, about 25*s*., Chester.

WILLIAMS, VAUGHAN. See Vaughan Williams.

CHAPTER IX

ABOUT CHAMBER MUSIC

OF all classes of music, Chamber Music is the last to win the appreciation of the novice. There is a very natural reason for this. It lacks vivid "colour," and it lacks display. Properly understood, it may be as expressive as orchestral music, but to the unaccustomed it seems to be very reticent.

First as to the name. Properly this should cover all music which can be performed in the home as distinct from music requiring resources so great as to demand for its performance a Concert Hall or Opera House. Actually it is used in a more restricted way, excluding:

SOLOS AND DUETS OF ALL KINDS FOR PIANO,
The lighter type of DUETS FOR PIANO AND VIOLIN.
The lighter type of DUETS FOR PIANO AND VIOLONCELLO.
SONGS,
and a few other things,

but including :

PIANO AND VIOLIN SONATAS,
PIANO AND VIOLONCELLO SONATAS, etc.
INSTRUMENTAL TRIOS, QUARTETS, QUINTETS, SEXTETS, etc., of all kinds.

The terminology of the subject is confusing in certain of its details, but the following will make things pretty clear :

A "STRING TRIO" = a piece for three Stringed Instruments, normally Violin, Viola, and 'Cello.

A "STRING QUARTET" = a piece for four Stringed Instruments, i.e. two Violins, Viola, and 'Cello.

A "STRING QUINTET" = a piece for five Stringed Instruments, usually 2 Violins, 2 Violas, and 'Cello, but sometimes 2 Violins, Viola, and 2 'Cellos.

Now comes an anomaly. Inasmuch as a String Trio is a piece for three Stringed Instruments, one would expect a Piano Trio to be a piece for three Pianos—from which the Lord defend us ! As a matter of fact :

A PIANO TRIO is a piece for Violin, 'Cello, and Piano,

FLUTE. OBOE.

BASSOON. CLARINET.

A PIANO QUINTET = a piece for the usual String Quartet, plus Piano,
and so on.

Normally all these things, Trios, Quartets, Quintets, etc., are "Sonatas" for their various combinations, i.e. they are, in their varying degrees, serious efforts musically to express some of the deeper emotions, by means of several "Movements," of which one or more are in what is called "Sonata" Form, i.e. the contrast and then the development and finally the repetition of two or more "Main Tunes" (or "Themes" or "Subjects"). But, especially of late years, both Solo and Duet Sonatas and Trios, Quartets, etc., have frequently been written continuously, i.e. not definitely divided into Movements.

I have spoken above of the reticence and lack of vivid "colour" in Chamber Music. A rough comparison would be:

Orchestral Music = Oil or Water-colour Painting.
Chamber Music = Etching or Engraving.[1]

[1] The friend who is reading the proofs of this book says: "Isn't this rather unfair on Chamber Music? I suggest Mezzotint or something like that."

The range of " colours " possible when you have a full Orchestra, with its Strings, its Wood Wind, its Brass, and its Percussion, is obviously greater than that possible when you have only Strings (as in the String Quartet).

Naturally, Piano Trios and Piano Quartets have more variety of " colour " than the purely String Trio and Quartet, and for this reason they are usually found to be more attractive to the 'prentice listener. Let us be candid and admit that at the opening of our career as listeners we are all like children who prefer the " twopenny coloured " to the " penny plain." But the children grow up, and so do we!

Of course there is much more " colour " in Chamber Music than we at first realise. There is even colour in mere Piano tone—a great variety of it if the player is competent. And this our ears in time come to recognise.

And in spite of all I have said about lack of " colour," it must be admitted that to those who have ears to hear, the String Quartet is the most genuinely *expressive* musical medium yet discovered.

But speaking in a rough-and-ready way,

the interest of Chamber Music lies not in "colour" but in "line" and "shade." Turning to another metaphor, it is dialogue. Note how the First Violin (it may be) introduces a subject of conversation which is commented upon by the Second Violin, the Viola, and the 'Cello. Unfortunately for ease in listening, they are often all speaking at once, so learn to recognise the Voices. Those of the two Violins are identical in pitch and colour (but, as a general rule, the First Violin has more of the high-lying and the Second Violin more of the low-lying melody). The Viola and 'Cello have their own very characteristic tone-qualities, and soon become recognisable.

The literature of Chamber Music is not large, and there is in it practically nothing for the 'prentice listener I have postulated. The following short list is all I can offer:

Kilburn: *The Story of Chamber Music* (250 pages, 1904, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 4*s.* 6*d.*).

A chatty, pleasant book with chapters on The Beginning of Chamber Music; Chamber Music Institutions and Concerts; Haydn, C. P. E. Bach, Handel, Mozart,

Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Spohr, Brahms and Dvořák; The Russian Composers; Strauss and Bruckner; Chamber Music of Recent Times. There is a "Chronological and Biographical" Appendix, giving brief particulars of Chamber Music Composers, etc.

Walthew: *The Development of Chamber Music.* (48 pages, Boosey, 1*s*.)

This is a reprint of three lectures given in 1909 at the South Place Institution, a great haunt of lovers of Chamber Music. It is readable and informative.

Dunhill: *Chamber Music: a Treatise for Students.* (310 pages, Stainer & Bell, and Macmillan, 12*s*. 6*d*., 1913.)

This is intended for the young composer, but has a great deal of matter that is of enormous interest to any listener who is sufficiently advanced to profit by it.

CHAPTER X

A CHAPTER ON SONGS

HAVING now discussed in a very general way the principles of construction in instrumental music, I turn for a moment to Songs. I think I know the public mind on Songs pretty accurately, since I get a good many letters on the subject addressed to me on the supposition that broadcast programmes are to some extent in my control, or at least under my influence—which, I may say, is not so. Here is one such letter:

"Could I ask as a special favour, on behalf of my friends and myself, if you could give us in the near future some of the '*good old-time songs.*'" The songs suggested are as follows:

"The Diver.
Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep.
The Village Blacksmith.
Let me like a Soldier fall.

The Old Folks at Home.
Thora.
In Happy Moments Day by Day.
She Wore a Wreath of Roses.
The Garden of my Heart.
My Old Shako."

Now, I have no doubt that a programme made up of just the songs in that list would give a great deal of pleasure. But I suggest that the listeners to whom it would give the pleasure would almost all be over middle age, and, whether they realised it or not, the pleasure would largely be the pleasure of memory rather than the pleasure of music.

PASSING TASTES IN SONGS

Almost every one of those songs is dead except in the memory of its contemporaries. The composers of those songs accurately gauged the taste of a period, and, that period past, their work became of little account. The period happened to be a somewhat sentimental period, and the words and music are therefore sentimental. They have been enjoyed by thousands in their time, and I do not wish to scorn them. They are quite as good as a great proportion of the popular songs of the present day, which

will appear just as faded to our grandsons as those do to us.

Most of us to-day cannot help smiling when we read such a would-be pathetic verse as that in the *Wreath of Roses* :

> She weeps in silent solitude,
> And there is no one near
> To press her hand within his own
> And wipe away the tear.

And our grandsons will smile when they come across :

> Passions white, passions dark, Desirée,
> Crush me 'neath their madd'ning weight, Desirée ;
> Thy lips a draught I may not drink,
> Nor even sip at their sweet brink, Desirée,

which aroused applause at the Queen's Hall during the last "Prom." season.

WHY DO SONGS DIE?

The fact is that no song takes a permanent place in the concert repertory unless its words are poetry and its music is music,[1]

[1] There are perhaps just a few exceptions from this rule—songs in which the words are of slight value, but the music so beautiful that it lives by that beauty, almost as if it were an instrumental piece and had no words at all.

your enjoyment of the song is worthy. If they cannot be so answered, put down the headphones and grumble that the singer should think you such a fool as to believe that you can be entertained with the second-rate—or the fifth-rate.

DO COMPOSERS LOVE POETRY?

I return for a moment to the subject of the words of songs. One question I have often asked myself—Do composers love poetry? To judge from the words they often set, many of them do not even know what poetry is. They have about as much appreciation of poetry as the undertakers in the days of our great-grandfathers, who supplied the tombstones of their patrons with verses of the *Affliction sore, long time I bore*, standard.

As a matter of fact, the song composers of to-day are the supporters of a new or newish profession that exists solely to supply them. In almost every musical journal you may find the advertisements of what are called "Lyric Writers." These gentlemen (and ladies) study the taste of the moment. At one time it is Gardens, and lyrics about Gardens pour out by the dozen.

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and if concert-goers would just put themselves, as they listen, in the place of their grandchildren they would find themselves in a much better position to measure their applause. Nine-tenths of the songs that are published to-day are very cheap appeals to our weaknesses. They lack any *sturdy* quality.

Mr. Charles Volkert, head (since 1873) of the publishing firm of Messrs. Schott & Co., and now, in addition, of the firm of Messrs. Lengnick & Co., and a director also of the firm of Augener, has lately, in a music trade journal, made this statement:

"The average of successful works by most composers is one to twenty. . . . In songs hardly one in fifty outlives five years, or gets home at all, and still composers offer them in shoals. Serious, real music takes longer to get known, but it lasts longest."

"NEW" SONGS

One curious point about the new songs that are published in such profusion is that ninety-nine out of a hundred of them are not new at all. If you take any chance dozen of them and lay them out on the

table, you will find the same vocal phrases, the same accompanimental harmonies, the same composing dodges, all arranged just a little differently. So unoriginal are these songs that if the law knew anything about music it would hesitate to admit them to copyright.

Of course these "shop ballads," as musicians call them, are not the only bad songs in existence. Most of these are written by pot-boiling composers with their tongues in their cheeks, but there are others, written by serious composers, that are just as little likely to live, for a dull respectability is in the long run as blighting as a cheap sentimentality.

WHAT IS A GOOD SONG?

What then constitutes a good song? It is difficult to say. I think I know one when I hear it, but to define its qualities is a different matter.

To begin with, are the words sensible?

Secondly, are they poetical?

Thirdly, has the composer set them in a way that enhances their beauty?

If these three questions can be answered in the affirmative, then you can feel that

your enjoyment of the song is worthy. If they cannot be so answered, put down the headphones and grumble that the singer should think you such a fool as to believe that you can be entertained with the second-rate—or the fifth-rate.

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At another time it is Roses, and Roses blossom on every bush. At another time a song about Picardy has a success, and rival lyric writers at once enter the field with songs about Brittany and Normandy. Then some lyricist makes a hit with a song called *Because!* so ingenious colleagues supply the market with *Wherefore?* and *Perhaps!* and *If!* and *Though!* and *May be!* and *Why not?*

A BRANCH OF COMMERCE

The whole activity is frankly a branch of commerce initially promoted by lyric writers: "Terms—a third of the purchase price, should the collaboration be sold outright by the composer to a publisher, or one-third of the royalties (including mechanical reproductions) should the agreement between a composer and publisher be on a royalty basis."

Those are the Lyric Writer's terms to the Ballad Composer, and, the song once on the market, the Publisher, in order to popularise the product, pays any well-known singers he can secure a fixed sum for every inclusion of it in a programme. This is

good business, but artistically highly immoral. For obviously the singer should sing what he loves, and not what some publisher wishes him to push, and the audience, having paid to hear him, should not be used as a public for advertisement.

Need it be said that great poetry is little likely to come into existence and be wedded to great music under this entirely commercial system? The "collaboration" thus brought into existence and into notoriety may have a passing success, yet the life of such a "collaboration" is a short one.

"WORDS"

How little composers in general think of the poems they set may be discovered from the usual wording of the title-page of a song: "Words by Dash, Music by Dot." Such is the force of custom that I have, I believe, even fallen into the absurd expression myself, possibly even in this chapter. What is wrong will be realised by everyone after a moment's reflection.

A certain poet put the case neatly. He found himself thus described as the provider, not of a poem, but of mere "words," mere dictionary-dust, so to speak, and

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politely suggested that the whole description of the joint authorship should read: "Words by ——; Crotchets and Quavers by ——."

THE QUESTION OF COLORATURA

I now turn to the question of what are called *coloratura* songs—the type of thing that is very common in the old Italian operas, where the voice is often used instrumentally, rather than vocally, executing the most amazingly difficult runs and shakes, and displaying the whole range of its compass by rapid progressions from the heights to the depths and the depths to the heights.

Listeners sometimes write to me about this type of song, assuming that I, as a professional music critic, am opposed to it, and asking me why. The one I am going to quote bases her questions upon what she believed to be my attitude towards a singer who has achieved ill-deserved popularity in this country at the moment she is writing.

"Whilst I do not profess to admire the colourless voice of the lady in question, may

I ask why *good* 'coloratura' singing is supposed to be such bad form nowadays?

"Why should the human voice be the only musical instrument debarred from brilliant technical display? All other instrumental players (pianists, violinists, 'cellists, etc.) are allowed to do the most wonderful *bravura* work, and nobody ever sneers at them, provided they do not descend to 'cheap' music.

"I am not asking the question out of curiosity. I honestly would like to have the reason of the distinction explained.

"Melba, Patti, Jenny Lind, were all 'coloratura' singers, and it was the rigorous, intellectual training that made their voices so capable of expressing musical feeling as they approached maturity.

"Could any pianist possibly play (shall we say) the highly cultivated music of Arnold Bax without a thorough groundwork of technique in all its forms? and yet poor singers are beginning to be resolutely debarred from anything but most sustained and, nine times out of ten, dreary music, with the result that lovely young voices are not being allowed to go their natural course and gain the suppleness without

which musical 'interpretation' is quite impossible."

PRACTISING IN PUBLIC

Now, that is a long letter, and there is a lot in it. But its main point, I think, is the one that the scales and arpeggios and shakes of *coloratura* singing are a necessary part of a singer's training Admit this, and it yet takes my fair correspondent a very little way on the road of her argument. That is where the reference to piano playing is so weak. Miss Harriet Cohen is the best exponent of the piano works of Bax; to play these works one requires a fully developed technique; therefore Miss Cohen must keep up her scales and exercises.

Granted! But to complete the line of this argument we should have to be shown some reason why Miss Cohen should play her scales and exercises *before her audiences!* And that, I think my correspondent will not contend.

GOOD AND BAD COLORATURA

No! If *coloratura* singing on the concert platform is to be accepted, it must be on

other grounds than those of its being useful practice.

And it can be so justified—to an extent.

There is a certain pleasure to all of us in seeing or hearing a difficult thing well done—and if a particular vocalist's *coloratura* is done well, there is a beginning of a justification.

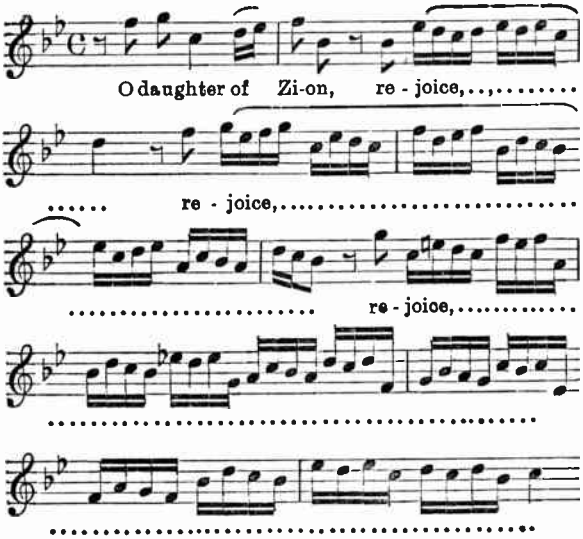
But only a beginning, for the enjoyment of a thing merely because it is done well, without consideration as to whether it is worth doing at all, is not a very high form of artistic pleasure.

What, then, is the further justification required? The same as that required of any form of composition or performance. It must be either beautiful or expressive—and preferably both.

On the opposite page is a passage which everyone knows and loves, from Handel's *Messiah*.

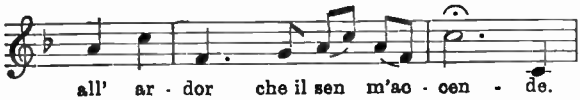
That, I think, well sung, becomes both beautiful and expressive. You could, indeed, hardly imagine the idea of rejoicing more beautifully and expressively treated.

So (here, at least) Handel is justified of his *coloratura*.

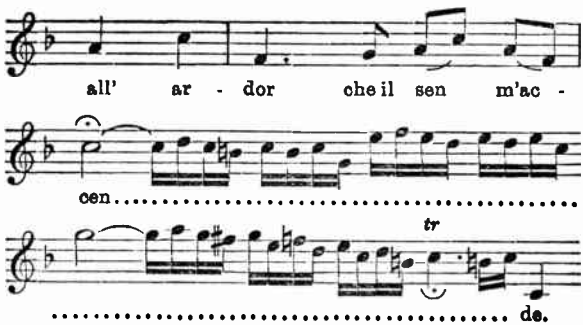


Mozart was a famous *coloratura* writer and often his coloratura is extremely effective. He had a wife and sister-in-law who were notable *coloratura* singers, and for the former he wrote a little *Cadenza* to be inserted at a certain place in a certain air in the Opera, *The Marriage of Figaro*. It is to be found written in his hand in a pianoforte score now in the British Museum, from which it is said he used himself to accompany his

wife when she sang the song. The passage immediately preceding is as follows:



The pause at the end of that passage is the sign usual in those days that the accompanist was to be silent until further notice, so that the singer might show off by inserting a *Cadenza*, and the *Cadenza* Mozart himself suggested is added below:



I put it to my readers that this little bit of run-about stuff is stuck in here apropos of nothing at all, is quite meaningless, has

no beauty, expresses nothing, and is, in fact, only a concession to vocal vanity.

I must not spend more space upon *coloratura*. I trust that I have shown that the principles governing its use are just the eternal principles governing everything in musical composition and performance.

There is nothing that voice or instrument can perform or composer invent which may not on occasion be legitimate. But to be legitimate it must either justify itself as beauty or as emotional expression.

CHAPTER XI

WHAT IS GOOD SINGING?

I RECEIVE a large number of letters discussing Singers and their ways. Before I proceed to quote one or two of them, I think it will be well for me to lay down, categorically, some views as to what constitutes good Singing.

A THREE-FOLD FUNCTION

First of all, let me say that a good singer is three good things at one time—a good musical instrument, a good performer on that instrument, and a good elocutionist.

Herein is seen the large demand which the profession of vocalist makes. A violinist or 'cellist or pianist employs an instrument outside himself. Money can buy or hire it. Once it is provided, there it is—in good order for performance. But the vocalist's instrument is a part of himself; it is partly a gift of nature, and partly a result of wisely

directed training and persevering practice. Moreover, his instrument is not only a means of giving forth tones, but also one of uttering words, and in its use he has to be skilful in two ways at one time.

Now, this double duty of giving forth beautiful tone in a thoroughly musical manner and of uttering words in an intelligible and significant manner creates a difficulty. It is so easy to neglect one side of the duty in favour of the other!

SPEECH RHYTHM AND MUSICAL RHYTHM

Consider rhythm, for instance. There are certain vocal passages (we call them Recitatives) in which the rhythm is practically that of speech. There is little tune, and the singer's main business is to get the words said clearly and dramatically.

But apart from this one special style of singing (which is found mainly in Opera and Oratorio, and then only here and there in a passing way), the singer has the embarrassing task of keeping in mind the rhythm of a tune, whilst at the same time presenting words with as nearly as possible the emphasis and force and articulateness that he would use in a recitation.

EVERY SONG A COMPROMISE

In fact the ordinary song is a combination of the two arts of reciting and musical performance, and to accomplish such a combination the singer has to accept a compromise.

In such a song as I have in mind (say, for example, one of Purcell or Mozart), the melody is as definite as if it were that of an instrumental solo, and the singer has to perform it as nearly as possible as a violinist or 'cellist would play it (i.e. as *musically* as possible) and at the same time give us as much of the poetical beauty and the meaning of the words as can be compassed.

There are two excesses, either of which is fatal. I am going to illustrate one of them by repeating here an account of a Song Recital which a little time since I broadcast during one of my musical criticisms, for I think I can make my point clearer by taking a specific instance of the fault in question.

"On Tuesday night I went to the —— Hall to hear a recital of Schubert's songs, by a singer who used to be very well known in England, but has, I think, not appeared here much of late years.

"Mr. —— has a big, fine voice, and he had chosen an excellent programme, his words were clearly enunciated (and you know the store I set by *that* quality in a singer!).

"Yet, I did not enjoy his recital! . . . Why?

"Because he was so tremendously expressive!

"But isn't it right to be expressive?

"Of course it is! I dare say you have sometimes heard me complain of some singer that he or she made no effect for lack of being expressive.

"Then what was wrong?

"Well, so far as I am concerned, you may be as expressive as you like in a song, and I shall not grumble, *provided the song remains a song.*

"You mustn't get the dramatic quality at the expense of the musical.

"In most of these songs of Schubert's that Mr. —— had so carefully studied, and that he so thoughtfully sang, the composer had provided a clear and beautiful tune running right along, and the words and the tune were, in the composer's intention, mated on pretty equal terms. But Mr. ——

so much emphasised the importance of every *word* that he continually broke the swing of the *tune*.

"Now, a song is not merely an agglomeration of details. It is also a whole. And if in emphasising the details you destroy the all-throughness of the music, you have carried a good principle too far.

"You have all heard some singer who, when he came to a high note upon which his voice would tell, would linger on that note as long as his breath lasted.

"Mr. —— has far too much artistic feeling to break the swing like that, for a bit of vulgar personal display. But he does the same thing from another motive.

"Singers should remember that almost every song is a compromise. It is a combination of *words and music*, of sense and sound. A true performance is a delicately poised balance between literary expression and musical beauty. Talk this over with your vocalist friends."

HOW IT STRIKES LISTENERS

I get occasional complaints from Broadcasting listeners about this fault. Here is one:

" I object to the habit which many singers have of being unable to sustain the *rhythmical continuity* of even a simple folk melody from start to finish. Several of the worst offenders in this have been principal members of some of the leading Opera companies. Without the glow and breadth of orchestral accompaniment, which hides deficiencies which the ' acid ' test of a light pianoforte accompaniment reveals, their rhythmical shortcomings have been very apparent. It is not a question of rubato, but a downright chopping of what is a whole into several bits.

" The explanation perhaps is an obsession with interpretative detail.

" Is it possible that the Opera singer, who sings night after night ' dramatically ' (and usually ' melodramatically ') has his sense of healthy rhythm poisoned ?

" Away from the glamour of the stage and its trappings, many of these artists remind one in a musical sense of the nakedness of Ludovicus in Thackeray's sketch, *Ludovicus Rex*."

And here is another letter on the same subject :

THE SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES

Now, in reply to that letter there is one important thing to be said. The writer appears to assume that it is just as easy to make the words clear in singing as in speaking.

This is, of course, far from being so.

There are several additional factors to be taken into account in singing.

POETRY AND PROSE

When I was a boy it was something of a fashion for preachers to end an eloquent sermon with a poetical quotation. They imagined that this *clinched* the thought of the sermon in a specially effective way, but my experience was that unless the passage quoted was already well known, it often brought the peroration to an anti-climax.

The reason for this was that the sense of the passage remained obscure, through the use of unusual words and phrases and the inversion of words necessitated by the poet's use of metre.

Take a rather extreme case—Browning. It really needs very excellent elocution to

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And here is another letter on the same subject :

"I wish you would allude to the deplorable way in which singers drag their songs. Sometimes it is so painful that one almost loses the thread of the melody, and I should think the accompanist must get quite weary of waiting for the next note. Expression and feeling can be given to a ballad or any other vocal solo without dragging it out to all eternity. Madame Antoinette Sterling had a wholesome horror of a song being dragged out. Also Mr. Edward Lloyd, and having been acquainted with these two great artists I have heard their views on that point rather strongly pronounced."

I think that both these Listeners are perfectly in the right. They are entitled to expect to hear a song performed as *a piece of music*, and not merely as a dramatic recitation.

MUSIC FIRST—
WORDS NOWHERE!

The opposite fault, of course, also occurs. You sometimes hear a singer whose whole effort is concentrated upon the performance of the music, and whose disregard of the words is such that he does not even trouble

to tell you what they are. For all practical purposes he might as well be singing his song on *Ah* and *Oh*; it would mean quite as much to you.

Once in my broadcast Question Time, I disposed very quickly of a letter on this subject:

Question: "Why is it that even first-class singers do not make clear the words of their songs?"

Answer: "Because they are *not* first-class singers."

Here is another letter, which I am not going to dispose of quite so summarily:

"The B.N.O.C. singers appear to be no better and no worse than 99 per cent. of singers in this matter. *Il Seraglio*[1] is now coming through very well indeed. The *spoken* lines are word-perfect, and yet when the speakers *sing* one does not catch one word in twenty. This does not surprise me, because it is what I almost invariably find when listening to the actual performance, and it is not confined to operatic singing."

[1] Mozart's Opera in which there is both spoken dialogue and song; hence the comparison this correspondent makes.

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Take a rather extreme case—Browning. It really needs very excellent elocution to

recite a passage from some less obvious poem of Browning in such a way that the audience may completely grasp the sense.

Some time since I sat beside John Masefield (who is, as you know, carrying out a great campaign for the better speaking of verse) as he adjudicated at a competition of reciters.

They all recited the same piece—a poem by Walter de la Mare that I had not previously heard, and it was not until I had heard five or six of them that I really got the hang of the poem.

So that is one difficulty in singing, and our friend whose letter has just been read is in error if he thinks that the spoken prose of that opera of Mozart and the sung verse of it are equally easy to give out.

Then again, in a song, the rhythm of the words is a good deal affected by the musical setting. Some syllables that would be fairly quickly *said* are given to long notes and slowly *sung*. Or a single syllable may be given to several notes. In Handel I have no doubt you can find cases where fifty notes of the music are given to one syllable of the words (see the example on page 145). This constitutes another difficulty for the singer

who is trying to make the words intelligible to the audience.

THE CAMOUFLAGE OF ACCOMPANIMENT

A third difficulty is the presence of accompaniment. So far as the singer's line of notes is concerned, the accompaniment is supporting him; so far as the words are concerned, it is obscuring him.

There is no getting over this—be the accompaniment never so beautiful, the fact that you have to listen to it *and* to the singer makes the hearing of the latter's words more difficult than it would otherwise be.

Especially is this so in the case of an orchestral accompaniment. Some conductors are unwise. In approaching a climax they feel the need for a lot of tone, and give the Brass so much liberty that the singer has hard work to make his *notes* heard—let alone his words.

Then, of course, some composers are unwise and do not give the singer and conductor a fair chance to keep off one another's grass.

But be the composer and conductor as fair to the singer as they will, the very fact than an orchestral noise is proceeding means

that the words of the singer are in danger of being lost, and I will even say that the more charming this orchestral noise is, the more danger there is of a part of the attention of the listeners being diverted to it, to the detriment of the interests of the singer.

LET US BE FAIR!

Am I apologising for the singers? Not at all!

I am only in fairness to them setting forth some of their difficulties.

But those difficulties are made to be overcome. The elocutionist needs to distinguish one vowel from another very clearly, and to sound his consonants very plainly, and the singer needs to do this still more emphatically.

The comic singers attend to this requirement, because they know that their words are more important than their music. Hence they often sacrifice the music to some extent, and adopt something like a speaking tone and a speaking manner—which of course the operatic singer or the Lieder singer cannot do.

The demands we make upon our singers

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The demands we make upon our singers

are very great, but it is their business to meet them. Nobody has a right to take the words of a poet and publicly mangle them. But in honesty, let us admit frankly that the perfect singing of a song with equal justice to composer and to poet is a very high achievement.

WHERE THE BEST FAIL

Even the greatest singers sometimes fail. Some time ago I was writing a book about the Gramophone, and whenever I had occasion to mention a song Record, I gave the words of the song. There was a Bach song sung by the late Gervase Elwes. I could not find in any edition the particular translation he had used, and in trying to take down the words from the Record, I failed repeatedly in one line, and had in the end to print this line with a dash in a certain place, instead of a word.

I have just been trying in the same way to take down the translation of Schumann's *Two Grenadiers,* as sung by the great American singer Clarence Whitehill, and in several places I have completely failed.

This ought not to be so, but if it is so with

BASS CLARINET. COR ANGLAIS.

DOUBLE BASSOON. HORN.

Elwes and Whitehill, much more will it be so with lesser singers.

A GREAT BOOK ON SINGING

I want to urge the amateur and the professional singers to study the very best book upon singing ever written—the best and the most amusing—Plunket Greene's *Interpretation in Song* (Macmillan, and Stainer & Bell, 7*s.* 6*d.*). The author of this book, almost more than any singer of our time, has known how *to get his words over* to his audience, and in his book, which is crammed with common sense, he tells us how to do it. Every singer ought to possess *Interpretation in Song* and read and re-read it, and so ought every Broadcasting Listener who sets up as an amateur critic of singing.

Some musicians and music lovers cannot afford money for books. They can afford money for cigars and chocolates, and good dinners and dresses, but not for books.

Well, in that case they are sure to find it in the nearest library.

I have dwelt upon this subject because of its importance. I know that there is not one person who will read this chapter who

is not interested in the widespread public demand (of which my correspondence is evidence) for CLEAR WORDS.

I have said nothing in this chapter about singing in tune. Is it necessary to say anything on a subject the importance of which is so obvious to everyone with ears?

But there is one particular additional point connected with Singing which requires a short chapter to itself.

CHAPTER XII

A FEW NOTES ON TREMOLO

NO subject has brought me anything like so many letters from listeners to Broadcast Music as that of Tremolo singing. And certainly none has brought me letters so violently expressed. Here are just a few taken at random.

Letter 1 says:

"I shall be glad if you will, on your next visit to 2LO, give a few words of advice to vocalists on their ridiculous habit of shaking their voice when singing. It is a perfect disease with nearly all of them; not one in fifty sings in a natural manner, and this absurd tremolo takes away all pleasure in listening to them. As a rule, down go the headphones when they commence, and how this habit ever came into being I cannot conceive. I believe it is all what is vulgarly known as 'swank.'"

Letter 2 says :

" As we are continually being asked to criticise things given us by the B.B.C., I now make one criticism, with which I feel very many of your ' listeners ' will agree. It is that the singing of many of the ladies (chiefly Sopranos) is entirely spoilt by their tremulo, which possibly may be exaggerated by being broadcasted, but which is certainly very unattractive."

Letter 3 says :

" What is the artistic justification of the use of tremolo in singing ? For myself, I loathe it, for it seems a deliberate distortion and degradation of what should be pure and true melody."

Letter 4 says :

" I am in hearty agreement with you in condemning Vibratory Singing. The pity of it all is the singers do not seem to listen in, but carry on business as usual."

Letter 5 says :

" Don't you think the tremando business is rather overdone with the modern singer ?

Personally, I love to hear a good clear straight note."

It is rather amusing to note the different names these five listeners have found for this one fault. One calls it *shaking the voice*, another *vibratory singing*, another *tremando* (which, by the way, is not incorrect), and another *tremulo*.

The usual technical term is *tremolo* or *vibrato*. Properly *tremolo* is an alternation of the note with one a fraction of a semitone higher or lower, and *vibrato* a rapid repetition of the note all on one pitch.

WHERE ARE THE NON-TREMOLISTS?

There is no justification for the present-day over-use of these devices. It is not my business to offer any apology for the B.B.C., but if it were, I should simply say that this fault is so common nowadays that one can hardly avoid engaging vocalists who have it.

Every vocalist should have the power to sing in a clean straight line when he or she wants.

And he or she should want so to sing,

the room. As in the room you don't hear an echoey smoothed sound, so in the loud speaker you will not hear the same effect.

"It is asked, therefore, by many of our correspondents, why we cannot give the nice echo, why we should take the trouble to pad our rooms whence broadcasting emanates, and why our average concert should be so much dryer and harder on account of the lack of echo, when we can give so much better shows, so they say, from places like the Institution for the Blind, or Covent Garden, or the Savoy.

"The reason is not far to seek. All the places mentioned above are very large rooms, and large rooms produce the sweet blending echo. Similar rooms of the size of our studio, however, if left undraped, give a very painful kind of echo, and for a room of universal use for broadcasting it would be folly to give this kind of echo, which would not only mar reproductions of orchestral and vocal items, but would also render speech far less intelligible.

"The solution, of course, is that our studios should be as large as Covent Garden, but this solution will perhaps only be obtainable when everyone who listens to

tone will be reproduced to the listener as was present in the studio. There can also be not the slightest doubt that with an oscillating or badly tuned receiver, all sorts of distortions may occur, and do occur, I think, in a great many cases. But, as I say, with a decent receiver there is no question at all about it—a pure voice gives a pure tone in the loud speaker or 'phones.

"You ask me next, if a singer has a slight Tremolo, is there any danger of any broadcasting apparatus exaggerating the effect? If you include the studio, there is such a danger.

"In an echoey room a Tremolo gets smoother, as it were, and the variation of frequency is not so noticeable, the upper and lower ranges of the frequencies blending into a composite sort of sound, which to me is rather pretty, if not overdone.

"In an echoless room like our top studio at the London Station, or in a nearly echoless room like our bottom studio, there is no doubt that this blending effect of the Tremolo does not take place, and the microphone, which cannot lie, picks up the Tremolo to its fullest extent and gives to the loud speaker exactly what you hear in

the room. As in the room you don't hear an echoey smoothed sound, so in the loud speaker you will not hear the same effect.

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"The solution, of course, is that our studios should be as large as Covent Garden, but this solution will perhaps only be obtainable when everyone who listens to

wireless pays his licence, and when every house has an aerial."

A RIDDLE

Once, after a *whole evening* spent in listening at Covent Garden to a Tremolo opera, I asked my wireless listeners a riddle.

Question: "Which is the longest note in music?"

Answer: "The Quaver. It sometimes lasts a whole evening."

The smart retort soon reached me (from a singer?):

"No! The longest note in music is the Crotchet. It sometimes lasts a lifetime."

And that particular crotchet of mine *will*, I am sure, so last.

CHAPTER XIII

WHAT IS GOOD PLAYING?

I AM going to take piano playing as my example. Practically everything I shall say about it can be applied also to the playing of Stringed Instruments and to Orchestral Conducting.

We have very many pianists who can run about the keyboard with great agility, and indeed in an ordinary concert-room audience there are always a number of people who seem to be quite satisfied if that is all they get. There are, indeed, some people who go to Queen's Hall not so much to *listen to* a Pianoforte Concerto as to *look at* it. They are careful to book seats at the left-hand side, where they can see the player's hands, and I have noticed them sometimes passing a pair of opera glasses from hand to hand, as though it were a prize fight they were watching and they didn't want to lose a single punch.

But the display element in a Concerto,

though in many cases composers have unfortunately given it a little too much recognition in the type of music they have written, is only one, and a minor element. What we want to hear is :

(*a*) Good pianoforte tone, well graded as to intensity and well varied as to colour. (It is curious that some people do not seem to recognise any variation in piano tone except in the direction of louder or softer. But, as a matter of fact, a good piano, well played, though, naturally, it has nothing like the rainbow variety of the orchestra, has quite a lot of shades and hues.)

(*b*) Well-shaped phrases, for all music falls into short passages, divided as it were by punctuation marks, and each phrase has its point of highest interest and its points of lower interest, constituting a sort of curve.

(*c*) Real feeling—" expression," as people call it. And this implies a man or woman playing, not an automaton.

(*d*) A feeling of progression—" right-throughness " as we may call it, a going on and on from beginning to end, so that every phrase leads on to the next phrase, instead of being performed as a separate thing in itself.

And there are other things " too numerous to mention." But one which must be mentioned is a proper conception of *Rubato.*

Now, *Rubato* does not mean, as some pianists seem to think, breaking the time of a piece by arbitrary slackenings and hastenings. It means a sort of natural " give and take," such as a good speaker instinctively makes—a momentarily increased speed here, and a momentarily decreased speed there, with no actual loss or gain of time on the whole.

This *Rubato* must be felt before it can be expressed. If it be arbitrarily imposed instead of being felt, the effect is distortion.

A very long chapter could be written upon the subject of "What is good playing?" but I think that this one, well pondered, will be found sufficient.

The best books upon piano playing are those of Mr. Matthay, and I particularly recommend *Musical Interpretation* (Joseph Williams, paper 7*s.* 6*d.*, cloth 10*s.* 6*d.*). This is not an easy book to read, but it goes to the very root of the matter.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TWO QUALITIES OF MUSIC—GOOD AND BAD

I THINK that it is important that all wireless listeners should consider for themselves the subject of *kind and quality* in Music.

When I say "kind and quality," I am making a distinction for the purposes of discussion. I consider that there are *two kinds* of music—simple and complex; and there are *two qualities*—good and bad.

A Music-hall Song is, necessarily, always simple.

A Symphony is generally relatively difficult, i.e. it is of some length and complexity.

If the Music-hall Song and the Symphony are both *good*, then I am in favour of both.

But if they're both *bad*, then I am against them both.

The Music-hall Song may have a clear, pleasant melody, and words that are at the same time humorous, sensible, and, possibly,

good taste and bad taste in dress and jewellery and pictures and novels, and in the same way there is good taste and bad taste in music.

WHO IS TO JUDGE?

The same listener continues :

" To illustrate my meaning. A few days ago two old songs, *In the Gloaming* and *The Song that Reached my Heart*, were broadcast from this station. The following morning a gardener asked me if I had heard the previous day's concert. I said, ' Yes ; did you ? ' ' Yes, sir ; and if they would give us more of the Old Songs, like we had yesterday, it would be lovely.' "

Well, there are plenty of worse songs than *In the Gloaming* and *The Song that Reached my Heart*, but I don't quite see why a gardener should be taken as an infallible critic of songs.

If I went to that gardener and said that the sort of garden bed I liked was one with scarlet geraniums in the middle, a circle of yellow calceolarias round them, and a circle of bright blue lobelias round these, he would probably say, " My dear Sir, you can't help

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The Music-hall Song may have a clear, pleasant melody, and words that are at the same time humorous, sensible, and, possibly,

even poetical. If so, it's a *good Song*, whatever the Highbrows may say.

Or it may have a commonplace, unoriginal melody, and silly words, and then it's a *bad Song*, whatever the Lowbrows may say.

The Symphony may have strong, original music in it, effectively put together, and really expressing some emotion that was in the composer's mind, in which case it's *good*. Or it may be merely an academic exercise written by a dull, unimaginative, routine-minded musician, in which case it's *bad*.

I should hate to hear a Highbrow condemn a Music-hall Song because it was simple. It might be simple, and yet be a fine little piece of music.

And just as much I hate to hear a Lowbrow sneer at Symphonies because, since they take a little effort to follow them, they are over his head. If they are good Symphonies, they are worth the effort of raising his head a little higher.

A MUDDLED PUBLIC

I hope I may be forgiven for thus repeating, in other words, what I have already

said a good many times from the B.B.C. London Studio. I do so because so many people (both Highbrows and Lowbrows) send me letters, which show that the principle of the criticism of music is not understood, and that the public mind is in a bit of a muddle.

The point is—Is what we hear good or bad? And so many people never stop to consider that.

One listener writes to me:

"Your views on Highbrows and Lowbrows are interesting, but not quite convincing. Must we assume that because the musical education of a big majority who listen to Broadcast Music has been neglected, or that opportunity has been lacking, they are altogether without wit enough to understand what they like?"

In reply, of course people understand "what they like." But that is not to say that they always like the right thing. Many people like ugly, vulgar dress, and make themselves hideous therewith. Others like nasty, pinchbeck jewellery on their bodies, and sentimental pictures on their walls, and shallow novels on their tables. There is

good taste and bad taste in dress and jewellery and pictures and novels, and in the same way there is good taste and bad taste in music.

WHO IS TO JUDGE?

The same listener continues :

" To illustrate my meaning. A few days ago two old songs, *In the Gloaming* and *The Song that Reached my Heart*, were broadcast from this station. The following morning a gardener asked me if I had heard the previous day's concert. I said, ' Yes ; did you ? ' ' Yes, sir ; and if they would give us more of the Old Songs, like we had yesterday, it would be lovely.' "

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it, I know, and I forgive you. But you were evidently brought up in a period of bad taste in gardening, when people's eyes had unfortunately become accustomed to these harsh and glaring contrasts. You are afflicted with the very worst sort of eighteen-eighty and eighteen-ninety suburban villa taste in gardening. Just come and look round *my* garden, and see if I can't show you something better."

And so when the gardener is put forward as a judge of songs, I reply to him, "You have been brought up in a bad period of sentimental English songs, and your taste is spoiled."

A gardener may be a very good judge of music or he may be a very bad one, just as a music critic may be a good judge of gardens or a very bad one.

THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE

If I, a mere music critic, found that all the gardeners of Britain were against my taste in gardening, I should suspect that I needed to look carefully at a lot of first-rate gardens and see if that would improve my taste.

And if our friend the gardener finds that

all the music critics of Britain are against his taste in music (as they undoubtedly are), then, if he is a sensible man, he will draw the inference that he needs to listen to a lot of the best music and improve his taste in music.

If he would take a little trouble in the matter he would by and by find out that there are other songs just as attractive as those mentioned, and songs that *ring true*, as those do not.

And also that there are Sonatas and Symphonies that are, at first hearing, nothing like so simple as those Songs, but that when one has learnt to follow them give quite as much pleasure in the hearing.

AN IMPORTANT MATTER

Broadcasting is giving everybody a marvellous opportunity of listening to quantities of music—good, bad, and indifferent—and in listening to it they should, if they are intelligent people, not seek simply to be amused, but also to distinguish between what is good and true and beautiful on the one hand, and what is merely ear-tickling and sentiment-moving on the other.

The future of Music in this country is in the hands, not of the small number of people who attend concerts in central London, but of the immense army of "Broadcatchers" all over the country, and that is why I look upon the subject I have discussed as enormously important.

Surely we want the *best* of everything! And ought to want the whole nation to want it too!

I am now going to consider two or three out of the hundreds of letters I have received upon the subject of Good and Bad in Music. It would be a strange thing if everyone agreed about music, and, indeed, if that came about, it would be the only subject in the world about which people *did* agree! I value letters from people who differ from me, and wish I got more of these, as well as of the others, because, being human, I am probably sometimes in danger of overlooking points on the other side of the argument.

MEMORIES AND MUSIC

Now, here is a listener, and he is one with whom I have much sympathy, who hits a nail on the head. He says:

"The writer is just an old man, retired, living in an old country town, out of things, who delights when some old song or a familar piece of music reaches us. My wife and I take our nightly dose of wireless. It is December with us; we are long past the 'Fox Trot' stage. 'Memories' are our stand-by.

"I feel sure that the B.B.C. will consider (and will continue to consider) us old folks, to whom wireless has made life a little brighter."

I can quite understand that attitude of mind. You will note that our friend is enjoying music not so much as music as for what it recalls. There are some pretty bad tunes that I heard in my childhood, some of them at my mother's knee, that touch me very much if by chance I hear them again; but the fact that they so *touch* me is no argument for or against their value *as music*. I find that other musicians have the same experience. As an instance, here is something by Dr. Percy Buck (Director of Music at Harrow School, and formerly Professor of Music at Trinity College, Dublin):

"Certain music works on our feelings through the memories it awakens, and in these cases we should not 'stick up' for the music, but recognise that our delight in it is entirely non-musical, and that the only part the music plays in the experience is that it acts as the stimulus to our memories. One of the worst hymn-tunes ever written awakens the tenderest memories of my childhood, and a critical attitude towards it is for me impossible. But I avoid it when I can, I keep it out of my own family circle, and I feel a perpetual sense of shame that such a stimulus should work on me."[1]

MUSIC AND MORALS

I have no doubt that some readers will condemn Dr. Buck for his "sense of shame." Very well! Let them condemn him—provided they condemn him as an insufficient sentimentalist, not as an over-scrupulous musician. A trivial thing has become charged with memories, and it is a question for nice moralists whether the memories are to be allowed to outweigh the triviality.

[1] *The Scope of Music*, a very interesting and informing little book, of which particulars will be found at the end of this chapter.

that makes an immediate appeal. What a lot of fine literature we should miss if we only read *Tit Bits* and *Answers*, good as they may be!

This writer continues:

"So long as the world exists, popular music will always hold sway. It is not a case of being educated up to these classic pieces, but it rests very largely on the types of *temperament* in the human race. Please do not consider I am writing this letter in a spirit of ill-feeling—far from it; but I am stating my opinion, as the defence for the Lowbrow."

TEMPERAMENT AND EDUCATION

I admit that temperament *is* a factor, and that is one reason why there are plenty of Lowbrows both in Mile End and in Mayfair. But "education" is a still bigger factor. Nine out of ten people in this country have, in the past, had the very slightest opportunity of listening to good music. *Now* Broadcasting offers them an opportunity, if they will but take advantage of it.

There is nothing necessarily unpopular in

"Certain music works on our feelings through the memories it awakens, and in these cases we should not 'stick up' for the music, but recognise that our delight in it is entirely non-musical, and that the only part the music plays in the experience is that it acts as the stimulus to our memories. One of the worst hymn-tunes ever written awakens the tenderest memories of my childhood, and a critical attitude towards it is for me impossible. But I avoid it when I can, I keep it out of my own family circle, and I feel a perpetual sense of shame that such a stimulus should work on me."[1]

MUSIC AND MORALS

I have no doubt that some readers will condemn Dr. Buck for his "sense of shame." Very well! Let them condemn him—provided they condemn him as an insufficient sentimentalist, not as an over-scrupulous musician. A trivial thing has become charged with memories, and it is a question for nice moralists whether the memories are to be allowed to outweigh the triviality.

[1] *The Scope of Music*, a very interesting and informing little book, of which particulars will be found at the end of this chapter.

Perhaps they are; I am not dogmatising on a moral subject, but merely pointing out the distinction between values in music and values in memory, a distinction which, obvious as it surely is, thousands of people quite fail to observe.

The main conclusion to be drawn from what has just been written is one for parents. Willy-nilly you are building up for your children a structure of memories of literature, art, music. Let them be memories of beauty!

DEAD SONGS

Another listener says:

"How is it that *In the Gloaming* has lasted such a great many years, and looks like lasting as many more?"

The reply is that *In the Gloaming* is practically dead, but, like all old music that has just had a vogue, can be resurrected for an odd performance now and again, purely on its memory value. And this possibility of resurrection will continue so long as there are sufficient people alive who knew the song in its heyday. When they are dead, it

will be dead too, since it represented but a passing fashion. But Schubert's *To Sylvia* and Purcell's *Nymphs and Shepherds* will probably live for ever.

"CATCHY" MUSIC

This same listener says:

"The suggestion you once made for an ideal programme to prove that the simple music of 'men whose names will go down through the ages' is all that one can wish for, does not hold water. *Some* of their music *is* 'popular,' but there are not sufficient *light pieces* of their work to go round, therefore the new composers must come to the rescue. It would be very monotonous to keep on hearing time after time the 'catchy' pieces (if I may term them such) of great men."

To that I would reply that there are certainly a great many more pieces of light "catchy" music by the great composers of the past and the good composers of to-day than people generally realise, but that, in any case, reasonable, intelligent people do not want nothing but the "catchy" piece

that makes an immediate appeal. What a lot of fine literature we should miss if we only read *Tit Bits* and *Answers*, good as they may be!

This writer continues:

"So long as the world exists, popular music will always hold sway. It is not a case of being educated up to these classic pieces, but it rests very largely on the types of *temperament* in the human race. Please do not consider I am writing this letter in a spirit of ill-feeling—far from it; but I am stating my opinion, as the defence for the Lowbrow."

TEMPERAMENT AND EDUCATION

I admit that temperament *is* a factor, and that is one reason why there are plenty of Lowbrows both in Mile End and in Mayfair. But "education" is a still bigger factor. Nine out of ten people in this country have, in the past, had the very slightest opportunity of listening to good music. *Now* Broadcasting offers them an opportunity, if they will but take advantage of it.

There is nothing necessarily unpopular in

good music, *as* good music. Some particular pieces may need a little patience before they can be understood, but that is not because they are "*good*," but because these particular pieces are too *complex* to be taken in by every casual listener at a first hearing, possibly, even, too complex to be thoroughly taken in *at once* by the expert.

A good deal of discussion bearing directly or indirectly upon the subject of this Chapter will be found in :

Buck : *The Scope of Music.* (135 pages, Oxford University Press, 6*s*.)

This is a simply written book upon fundamental questions concerning the art. Its chapter headings are :

I. The Raw Material of Music. II. The Origin of Music as an Art. III. The Nature of Beauty. IV. What is Musical Criticism ? V. The Meaning of Appreciation. VI. Some Common Fallacies about Art. VII. The Place of Music amongst the Arts. VIII. Melody. IX. On Form. X. Music and Psychology.

people, and it is difficult to induce them to listen in at all."

Though temperamentally, and by training and experience, I am naturally inclined to sympathise more with the latter writer than the former, yet I am compelled to say that I think that both are to be credited with really masterly exaggeration.

UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

There seems to be a certain number of listeners who expect that every item of the 15,000 to 20,000 broadcast in a year shall be exactly suited to their personal tastes—and all for 10*s*., or rather over a farthing a day!

We do not expect that every article in every issue of our daily paper shall interest *us*, personally. Some articles interest one reader, and some another, and probably there is nobody in the country who reads the *Times* or *Daily Telegraph* or *Manchester Guardian* or *Birmingham Post* or *Yorkshire Post* or *Glasgow Herald* or *Scotsman* right through—leading articles, special articles, law reports, general news, financial reports, sporting news, etc.

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CHAPTER XV

ON TRYING TO PLEASE EVERYBODY

A FRIENDLY opponent writes :

" Your defence of the present undue infliction of highbrow music on a wireless audience is—in my opinion, backed by 90 per cent. of my friends—entirely fallacious, and mischievous. Your forcible feeding of the masses with heavy Wagnerian storm-music is a huge mistake, and will drive the inarticulate ' ninety-percenters ' into aggressive *hostility* against ALL highbrow music—heavy or light."

The allusion here to " heavy Wagnerian storm-music " is, of course, magnificently rhetorical, but the references to an " undue infliction of highbrow music " and " forcible feeding of the masses " were astonishing to those of us who, at the time that letter was received, were trying to be content with a proportion of perhaps 1 : 10 " highbrow "

music to 9 : 10 "lowbrow," in the sure and certain hope that the public taste would gradually rise, as broadcasting continued, and the programmes change for the better with it.

THE OTHER EXTREME

I feel that I must put that letter into the same pigeon-hole as the strongly contrasting one from a brother Highbrow, who at the same date wrote:

"If the B.B.C. is asked to perform the frightful trash which has been the main feature of the musical part of the programme lately, it is very obvious that the B.B.C. should take not the slightest notice of such requests. People asking for such are not the people to have any say whatever in the musical programmes. They know nothing of music, neither do they know what is good for themselves, and to pander to them is to throw away a glorious opportunity of giving real enjoyment and edification to millions.

"This opportunity is fast disappearing, as the B.B.C. programmes have already become the laughing-stock of all musical

people, and it is difficult to induce them to listen in at all."

Though temperamentally, and by training and experience, I am naturally inclined to sympathise more with the latter writer than the former, yet I am compelled to say that I think that both are to be credited with really masterly exaggeration.

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On Trying to Please Everybody

The competent Editor tries so to make up his paper that everybody shall have something for their money; but never for a moment does he hope to make it up so that everybody shall like everything!

And just as, when we take up our newspaper, we look over it and note those features that interest us, and that we intend to read, so when the week's Broadcast Programme is announced in the *Radio Times*, we should make a mark against those items to which we think we shall enjoy listening, and neglect a good many of the rest.

Of course, if we find a preponderance of items that we like, we write to the Company and tell them so, and if we find a preponderance that we dislike, we do the same, and the letters that the Company receives are necessarily a valuable guide to it, corresponding to the applause or lack of it in a concert-room, which, to some extent, directs the concert-giver in drafting the programmes for future concerts.

But to expect any station of the B.B.C. to provide a flow of entertainment, practically continuous from 3.30 in the afternoon to 11 at night, of such a character as to interest, throughout, every member of the

population of the British Isles who cares to take up the headphones, is to be sanguine beyond hope of realisation, and the man who could do that is the man who would go for a six weeks' stay in Manchester without an umbrella, or to Aberdeen without a penny in his pocket.

CHAPTER XVI

THAT TIRED MAN!

I HAVE many letters from this individual, and I wish to devote a special chapter to answering them. Two or three will do as samples:

(1) "In my opinion, the primary object of broadcasting is to *amuse* listeners. After a day's work, spent generally amongst drab and not too interesting conditions, one reaches home about 6 o'clock, usually tired and requiring to be 'brightened up.' One of the finest tonics that can be obtained for this purpose is suitable music, but this music should have as its main characteristics 'brightness' and 'lightness.' . . . What we want is Brighter Broadcasting."

(2) "Most listeners in the evening are people who have been working all day, and in the evening they want to be amused and made to laugh. As the technical interest in the wonders of wireless wears off with time,

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people will get impatient of classical programmes when they are no longer interesting as 'signals' to test receptions from different stations. Don't you think that after spending twenty to forty pounds on a receiving set, it is rather hard to be expected to spend twelve months' apprenticeship learning to find pleasure in the great bulk of the programmes?"

Those extracts illustrate one type of letter that reaches me. The following illustrates another type:

(3) "My father happens to be a tired business man, and does not listen every evening, but when he does he always prefers the classical programmes. He will even stay in when he has really arranged to go out. Furthermore, he considers 'classical' music more restful and refreshing than the popular music."

DIFFERENCES OF TASTE AND DIFFERENCES OF TRAINING

What is the difference between the listeners represented by the first and second letters, on the one hand, and the listener represented by the third, on the other hand?

TROMBONE. TRUMPET.

TUBA. KETTLEDRUMS, ETC.

All of them come home tired; two find "classical" music tires them still more, whilst the third finds it relieves his tiredness.

Well, "taste" may have something to do with it. We cannot all like the same things in the same degree. But training probably has more to do with it than taste. The third man has (consciously or subconsciously) trained himself to understand; the first and second have not troubled to do this.

WORK THAT RESTS

It is quite a mistake to think that mental effort is the enemy of pleasure. Look at the man in the tube, going home after a hard day's work and studying the sporting page of the evening paper. His mind is concentrated upon the subject, and yet he is resting. Look at the crowd watching a cricket or football match, and noting every fine point in the skilful action of the players. Their brains are intensely active, and yet they will go home refreshed.

Continuing the personal revelations made elsewhere in this book, I will admit that I myself never so much as glance at the sports page of the paper, and have not

been present at a football or cricket match for years.

To watch a game of any sort bores me heavily—just as at one time it did to listen to a String Quartet. I have now trained myself to enjoy the Quartet, but (having been weakly in youth, and hence cut off from games) I am quite incapable of the enjoyment of any form of sport. I have the greatest admiration for people who can talk learnedly about cup ties, and who know by heart the records of all the clubs and the careers of all the players, and what astonishes me most about these people is the fact that they do not realise what quantities of technical fact they have absorbed, and what masses of technical understanding they have come to possess—all entirely in the way of recreation.

You never hear one of these people say, "My brain is so tired, I must give up going to football matches for a time and drop reading the football news"; and, in the same way, you never hear a musical enthusiast say, "My brain is so tired, I shall stop going to classical concerts for the rest of the season!"

Each of these people has come to the

point where what to the other might be labour has to him become play.

Each of them is the richer, in that each of them has added a pleasure to life.

ARNOLD BENNETT ON "CLASSICAL MUSIC"

I quote from Arnold Bennett[1]:

"There are no pleasures (save those clustering round the affair of love) superior to the pleasure of listening to music—I mean good music, well rendered. There is no music less 'dull' than classical music, despite all popular prejudices to the contrary. Bach, for example, is generally supposed to be the most austere and difficult of all composers. Yet I defy anybody, with any ear for music at all, to listen to Bach a dozen times without succumbing to his spell and asking for more. As with pictures, so with music, you have to acquire a certain familiarity as a necessary preliminary to enjoyment. But once the familiarity is obtained, the enjoyment is inevitable.

"The mischief is that most of us, for lack of taking sufficient trouble to stimulate and

[1] Series of articles on *Pictures and Music* in the *Royal Magazine*, 1924.

feed the curiosity, fall short of complete enjoyment."

It is often an astonishment to me to find how many people there are ("one half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives") who are quite unaware of the existence of the large body of enthusiasts who, having acquired the "certain familiarity" of which Mr. Bennett speaks, are able to revel in fine music.

CHEERING AN AUDIENCE

One listener writes to me:

"When one seeks a little recreation after a hard day's work, is it not better to have lively music, which acts as a tonic? *I have never heard of the classics cheering an audience*, or even moving them to sentiment."

To that I reply that in my experience (and it is necessary that this thought should find a place in this chapter), the people who demand the "lively music" are by no means always those who have "done a hard day's work." Hundreds of them are people who have never done a "hard day's work" in their lives; in London, for instance,

they are to be found in the West End, not merely in the industrial districts and the bus-and-tube bed-suburbs.

As for the impossibility of "*classics cheering an audience*," all that I can say is that I have often heard *audiences cheering the classics*, and so can this correspondent, if he will go to the Queen's Hall "Proms" any evening next autumn and mingle with the young business men and women who are willing after a "hard day's work" to stand on their feet a couple of hours, revelling in their Wagner or Bach or Beethoven programme.

CHAPTER XVII

IS MODERN MUSIC ANY GOOD?

I RECEIVE a good many letters like the following:

"I have been trying to find out what the modern composers are 'getting at,' and up to the present I must confess that I am as much in the dark as ever, or more so. Probably I have no modern musical soul. Can't help it if it is so. I hate jazz *music(?)* and can't say I like the modern stuff much better. It seems to be mechanically clever, and that is all. Yet I am very fond of Wagner's music and don't care for what is usually termed popular music. No doubt there are many others in similar case. Could you manage to allude to this matter?"

Now, I hold no brief for the modern composers. My idea is that some of their work is very good and some of it very bad, and that until we get used to their style (or

rather their many different styles) it remains very difficult to judge of their value.

PATIENT LISTENING

I recommend to my correspondent my own plan—Listen patiently, and listen to as much modern music as you can, and be sure that time will sift the good from the bad.

This correspondent, you note, says, "*I am very fond of Wagner's music.*"

He will recall that when Wagner first began to depart from the old paths, people invented the term "Music of the Future," and used it in opprobrium, just as to-day they use the word "*Futurist.*"

Remember that Music has never stood still, and be sure that it never will stand still. But remember also (what some of the composers perhaps forget) that it does not follow that because a man is moving rapidly he is going in the right direction. Incidentally, when you hear a piece of modern music, give your whole thought to it. Put yourself in a receptive state of mind. *Try* to understand what is being played or sung.

IS MR. ——
ANY GOOD?

Here is another letter:

"In one of your talks on the music of the week you advised us to be patient in listening to the new music, and appreciation and understanding would follow in time. One night we listened to an hour of Mr. ——'s compositions, who, as the Announcer said, was one of the most gifted and popular of the younger musicians, and I can but ask, Is what we heard *real* music at all? Is it truly music that will live, or is it a fashion, a passing phase, a desire to be original at the expense of all tune?

"Surely harmony is the soul of music, and *is* there any real harmony in the *Prelude*, *Pastorale*, *Scherzo*, *Elegy*, and *Rondo*, played by the String Quartet, or in the strange accompaniment to the fine old song *Cherry Ripe*, or in the *Scotch Pastoral?* The effect produced was that the performers were playing different music from each other.

"Is not real music to charm the ear, to give delight, as does the music of Gluck, Purcell, Arne, and the modern Elgar? Will patience tune our ears to love the music of Mr. ——, as we love that of such com-

posers? And given such patience, is the result, if arrived at, worth the pain endured?"

As it happens, I, personally, have very little faith in the permanence of Mr. ——'s music as a whole, although a few things are delicate and pleasant, and will probably last.

I think it quite likely that even if this listener heard a great deal of Mr. ——'s music he might remain of his present opinion. But that is not to say that all music which at first distresses us will continue to do so. The fact is that the human ear has to adapt itself to any new combination of sounds, and, of course, the speed with which it adapts itself varies very much with different individuals.

Remember that nearly every new composer has at first been attacked in practically the very terms this listener uses about Mr. ——, so he should be patient with him until, like myself, he feels that he has really heard enough to form a reliable opinion. Of course, I may be wrong about the value of Mr. ——'s music. Time is the only reliable critic. Even Time may conceivably

go wrong sometimes, but I think that on the whole he makes few mistakes.

"THUS FAR AND NO FARTHER"

Here is another letter:

"I am forty years of age. Have no knowledge of music, and cannot play an instrument of any kind. I never tried. Yet I have worshipped at the shrine for over twenty years.

"During that time I have heard all the great works of the Old Masters, whom I simply adore. I am so well acquainted with the Symphonies of the various schools that, in my own way, I can hum or whistle part of almost any Movements of these great works. I should also include in this exposition of myself my great admiration for the great Sonatas.

"Now to my point. *My adoration for these great pieces ceases when I reach the late Wagner period. I can enjoy Wagner as a whole up to, but not including, 'Tristan.'* Just the other evening I heard the Scottish Orchestra, under the baton of Koussevitski, play the 'Prelude' and 'Liebestod' parts of *Tristan*, which I have heard very often. I don't like them.

"Some parts of *The Ring* and *Parsifal* I do like, but not to the extent of the great adoration I feel for the older school. The same thing applies to the modern English school, including Elgar.

"There is one notable exception among the moderns: with my unfading love for the Old Masters, I should like to bracket the name of Tchaikovsky. His Symphonies, Suites, etc., hold me in a spell.

"Now for the query: What is wrong with me? Have I reached the zenith of my musical evolution in regard to my appreciatory powers to enjoy the beauties of that heavenly art? If I have, I am still quite satisfied, for I have drunk deep from the ever-refreshing stream of the old dearly beloved Masters of long ago.

"I have tried hard, and without prejudice, to appreciate the Moderns, but have persistently failed."

WHAT IS WRONG?

"What is wrong" with this listener, as he himself asks? Nothing much, I think!

To begin with, he is evidently really trying to give music a chance.

And he has already been well rewarded, for he has been able to add to his life the pleasures of appreciation of the Symphonies and Sonatas of Mozart, Beethoven, and others, and also of a good deal of the music of Wagner.

There is nothing remarkable in his not caring greatly for *Tristan* and *Parsifal*. I myself (though many will differ from me) am inclined to rank these works below *The Mastersingers*, which is, to me, Wagner's great masterpiece.[1] In both *Tristan* and *Parsifal*, wonderful as is much of their music, there is a distinct vein of passionate excess, which is entirely lacking in the straightforward, open-air-like *Mastersingers*.

This is probably a matter of temperament. I myself happen to be a rough North-countryman, preferring directness of speech to

[1] Nearly everybody who has ever heard it loves *The Mastersingers*. Nowadays it is as clear as crystal—full of lovely melody, rich bold harmony, and brilliant orchestration. Yet when it first appeared it was a good deal criticised in some quarters, and one Berlin critic asserted that "if all the organ grinders in Berlin were shut in a circus and started grinding, each a different tune, the result would be less horrible than *Die Meistersinger*." (See Dunstan's Dictionary; article *Wagner*).

" beating about the bush," tolerant of sentiment but not of sentimentality, and in a drama of love (e.g. *Tristan*) or of religion (e.g. *Parsifal*) rather inclined to despise the " heart on the sleeve," and to become bored by long-drawn protestations. Further I suffer in much of Wagner from the lack of any touch of humour—a quality which, however, abounds in my favourite amongst his Music Dramas, *The Mastersingers*. That is merely my own attempt to diagnose my preferences and reach down to their causes. Possibly, though I think not, the diagnosis is all wrong, and my preferences due to some pigheadedness of which I cannot be expected to be conscious. But, in any case, such preferences are undoubtedly partly a matter of temperament.

You may say a critic should be above the influences of his own temperament, that he should be an accurate and smooth-working, critical machine, registering impersonal truth as to the art whose products he criticises. Perhaps this is so, but such a critic's writings would, I fear, be very dull and lacking in all human interest. The writer of that letter, then, shares common ground with myself, with every profes-

sional music critic, and with every reader of this book, in that he cannot altogether exclude personal feeling. And if his personal feeling happens to turn him rather against two accepted masterpieces, *Tristan* and *Parsifal*, that does not matter enormously —provided he is not blinded to the fact that they are masterpieces, though not *his* masterpieces.

And so one might discuss Wagner's works, one by one, showing how it is quite reasonable to expect that some people should prefer certain of them and other people others.

I personally do not agree that Tchaikovsky is quite the genius that our friend probably takes him to be. In some of his works he, like Wagner in *Tristan*, also shows what I have called " passionate excess," but, since many people enjoy Wagner's *Tristan* who do not enjoy Tchaikovsky's *Pathetic Symphony*, it is only to be expected that others should enjoy the *Pathetic Symphony* who do not enjoy *Tristan*.

You cannot rule out personal taste in music any more than you can rule it out in anything in life. Our friend is entitled to his preferences.

THE YEARS BRING CHANGE OF MIND

But these preferences he will find change as time goes on. He has been listening twenty years, and we may hope that he will be listening for another twenty or forty. It is quite certain that during that period he will, to some extent, change his political views, and perhaps his religious views. He will learn to think more of certain authors and painters of whom he does not yet think much, and to think less of certain other authors and painters of whom he now thinks a good deal. And the same thing will happen with his musical appreciation. Probably Elgar, for whom he now cares little, will become one of his favourites. How much Elgar has he yet heard? The two Symphonies are unfortunately so rarely done, that if he has heard each of them (say) four times that is probably the extent of his acquaintance with their style and contents. And his hearings of them have certainly been separated by long periods, so that each occasion has been almost a starting-afresh. When the time comes (as it probably will) when one of the Elgar Symphonies is broadcast every month, he will have a better

chance, and then his judgment of Elgar, favourable or unfavourable, will be more trustworthy—i.e. it will, at last, become a "considered judgment."

As for Elgar's contemporary, Strauss, the same thing will happen. Those of us who have had the opportunity of hearing much Strauss have come to consider certain works as head and shoulders above the rest, and we nearly all agree as to which works deserve this honour, thinking, too, as time goes on, less and less of the other works.

AN EXAMPLE OF HASTY JUDGMENT

Solid judgments and lasting appreciation are not always to be arrived at overnight! The London *Musical World*, in 1856, demolished three contemporary composers in one devastating paragraph—Wagner, Schumann, and Brahms:

"*Lohengrin* is a bad thing, *Paradise and the Peri* is a bad thing, and the Sonata of Brahms is a very bad thing; but . . . they have nothing in common but this badness."

Five years had then elapsed since the first performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin* (nine-

teen more were to elapse before its first British performance!); thirteen had elapsed since the production of Schumann's *Paradise and the Peri*, but it had in that very year, 1856, had its first hearing in London; which of the Sonatas of Brahms is referred to, I do not know, but none of them had been very long before the public. Here, then, is an example of hasty judgment, and one which, were the writer now living, he would probably unreservedly retract; indeed he might easily turn himself into a defender of the very three composers mentioned against the attacks of the wild young men of to-day, who condemn them as out-of-date.

Some pieces of music can, it is true, be judged at once—but these are generally the unoriginal ones. Every ounce of originality in a work is an ounce of extra difficulty for the listener who wishes to appraise it. We professional music critics, with our constant opportunities of gaining experience, have the best chance—yet (whisper it!) we sometimes go wrong, the more liberal-minded of us tending to welcome every novel work as a great work, and the more conservative of us to damn

those very works for their very novelty. Stravinsky is probably a case in point. His "idiom" was, in many respects, novel, and as the later works appeared it has become increasingly so. Hence it is probable that some of us, dazzled by this, have over-praised him, and others, blinded by it, have underrated him.

EVERY MAN HIS OWN CRITIC

All this explains why no sensible critic, however dogmatic his utterance, expects or wishes everybody to accept his every word as gospel truth. Indeed, the principle is pretty generally recognised amongst us that the best critic is the one who most stirs people to think for themselves. "Every Man his own Music Critic" is the ideal! We professional critics of the country should merely be the leaders amongst a host of amateur critics, each of these using a pretty independent mind of his own.

DAYS OF CHANGE

In music, as in every branch of human activity, great changes are now in progress. And a time of change, political or musical,

is not, on the whole, a comfortable time. Listeners who look upon music as merely an amusement (the counterpart of the people who look upon a book as merely "a bit of good reading") cannot be expected to listen patiently to music that is new in its manner of expression. But more adventurous listeners, those who have realised the pleasures of exploration, will welcome opportunities of hearing the most modern music, and even where they fail to enjoy will at least applaud the spirit of enterprise of the man who made it.

Surely that is the right attitude!

And it is one that has this great merit—it gives youth a chance!

IS ART ALIVE?

There was a certain British Prime Minister who, in 1924, at the opening of an exhibition of pictures, uttered these words:

"I am not sure that, either publicly or privately, we give enough recognition to the contemporary artists. The Old Masters were very fine, but we cannot live on the Old Masters alone. If the generations, as

they come, cannot produce works that will in due time pass into the accepted galleries of the Old Masters, then art is dead."

Good for Mr. Macdonald! All parties can applaud that utterance.

CHAPTER XVIII

ON PREJUDICE

WE are all prejudiced—present company included.

Some of us are prejudiced in favour of Beethoven and Brahms. Now, these two very great men sometimes wrote dull music. But because *they* wrote it no distinction is made between one piece and another. It is, by some of us, *all* considered good.

Others of us are prejudiced against Beethoven and Brahms, with the result that when anything of theirs is played we do not really listen, and so, not understanding what we are hearing, have our prejudice confirmed.

It is the same thing in literature. There are many people who treat everything of Shakespeare's as a work of genius, whereas some things of his (or things bearing his name) are trivial and even foolish. On the other hand, there are thousands of people

who, although they have not the courage to admit it, think Shakespeare dull, and therefore never read or go to see a play of his, and thus never find out what he really is like.

AN EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC PREJUDICE

I am going to give here, in full, a letter of Mr. C. B. Cochran's, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* in, I think, 1923. I feel that this letter should be put on record, should, in fact, obtain recognition as a classic in the literature of anti-prejudice. One paragraph I am going to have set in italics, and I hope that everyone will read that particular paragraph twice.

" I have fulfilled what I have been told is a long-felt want—I have brought a Shakespeare repertoire company to the West-end at popular prices. At the New Oxford, the 'Old Vic' company commenced a season on Monday with *The Taming of the Shrew*. Those who saw it state that the performance was admirable; it was not a performance which necessitated allowances on the part of the critic. It was a first-class all-round

performance, more than adequately dressed and mounted. Some of the individual performances are of exceptional merit.

"The prices I am charging are: for the upper circle 1*s*., plus 3*d*. tax, and for the best seat in the house 7*s*. 6*d*., including tax. There are several hundred bookable stalls at 2*s*. 6*d*., plus 6*d*. tax. The prices could not be lower in a West-end theatre, with heavy overhead charges, such as the New Oxford. They are considerably lower than any other West-end theatres where Shakespeare is not being played. Thanks to the pilgrimage of 'Old Vic' enthusiasts from over the water, we played to £87 on Monday night. Last night, relying on the West-end, we played to £36. I believe *The Rat* played to £200 or more, last night. I have never played to so small a figure as £36 in a West-end theatre with any theatrical production in the whole course of my experience.

"*It is perfectly obvious to me that the name of Shakespeare terrifies the British play-going public. Were 'The Taming of the Shrew' given another title, and announced as an adaptation of a farce from the Italian, I should not be playing to less than £200 at the New Oxford. I would*

like the public to find out for themselves that Shakespeare's play can be really amusing. Incidentally, I can assure playgoers that on Monday night when I saw 'The Taming of the Shrew' it went with roars of laughter. The programme girls and commissionaires told me that they liked it better than 'Little Nellie Kelly.'

"I am prepared to make this offer to playgoers. Those who buy seats and do not enjoy *The Taming of the Shrew* may have their money back, but they must understand that I cannot refund them the amusement tax. All they need do is to write me a letter requesting the return of their money, stating frankly their reasons for not liking the play."

You notice Mr. Cochran's suggestion that if *The Taming of the Shrew* were announced as "a farce from the Italian" (which of course it partly is, for there is an element in it that derives from Ariosto's *I Suppositi*) it would draw crowds. A large section of the public is half-paralysed by the word "Shakespeare"; when it sees that word its good sense at once ceases to function, and instead of entering the theatre it flees to the cinema—or *The Rat*.

A MUSICAL EXPERIMENT

So it is with music. A military bandmaster told me the other day that some time ago he introduced a certain song of Brahms into his programme as a Cornet Solo. I do not think he should treat a song of Brahms in this way, but he did, and, at any rate, the Brahms melody being left intact and being a very lovely one, audiences that do not share my own "prejudice" against Cornet Solo arrangements ought to have been delighted.

But were they? Not a bit of it! The name "Brahms" on the programme killed the thing.

So an experiment was tried. The name was left off the programme and the song played as an encore, the Cornetist being placed out of sight, so as to give the charming illusion of a tune coming from nowhere. (It is surprising what infantile devices will please some members of the public!)

Now, obviously nothing whatever had been done that affected the musical value of the piece, but in these changed circumstances it made a "hit." And now the performance of the Brahms *Lullaby* as a

Cornet Solo coming from nowhere is an always popular feature in the programme of the Band of the —— Guards !

MYSTERY PROGRAMMES

Here, in closing this little discussion of " Prejudice," is a paragraph from an article in *Musical News* by Mr. Joseph Lewis, Musical Director of the Birmingham B.B.C. Station :

" The Mystery Programmes which have been broadcast have proved a great source of amusement, going a long way to prove that one of the reasons why classical music is not more popular is because it is labelled ' classical.'

" In our Mystery Programmes we do not announce a title, but listeners send in a list, giving names of pieces if possible, if not, the category it comes under, such as Overture, March, etc.

" Imagine one's delight, then, when a Beethoven Scherzo was called a March, a Fox-Trot, and a One-Step ! There were numerous examples of this kind, but I think that in order to prove to many people that they *really* are fond of the best, I shall

deliberately attempt to make them think a classical piece is from a Musical Comedy and *vice versa*, just to see if we can arrive at the opinion of the man-in-the-street without bias or prejudice!"

DO YOU LIKE SPINACH?

I hope that this chapter will convince some and offend none. There are, of course, a few people who do not wish to be convinced.

"There was once a lady who said, 'I am glad I do not like spinach, because if I did, I should be always having it, and I can't bear it!"[1]

A POSTSCRIPT

As an appendix to this chapter I wish to add a note upon the proper general attitude of mind for the listener to broadcast music, and I find that I can do this best by stealing one of the many passages of sound sense from Mr. J. C. W. Reith's *Broadcast Over Britain*:

"There is a matter . . . which I be-

[1] Ernest Bell, *In a Nutshell—Cons and Pros of a Meatless Diet.*

lieve exercises a somewhat unfortunate effect on the popularity of broadcasting. I refer to the psychological distractions of the receiving apparatus itself, however efficient it may be. Many an excellent cause is handicapped by the agents selected to espouse it or the methods which they adopt. We frequently have neither the will nor the skill to form judgments unbiassed by accidental irrelevancies of presentation. The power to dissociate fundamentals from accidentals is all too rare. Appearances instead of realities are often the deciding factor. I believe that the acceptability of wireless programmes is often materially prejudiced by the attention which is paid to the accidentals, to the necessary preliminaries, and to the technicalities —in general, to the means by which reception is achieved. I believe that the greater the extent to which it is possible to forget all these details, the greater will be the degree of realism conveyed by the transmission, and the greater the ultimate satisfaction.

"It is quite natural, and even desirable, that people should be interested in the technicalities of wireless, and that they

should wish to understand how they hear what they do hear. Curiosity, and the desire to learn, are common and commendable characteristics; but there is far too much of the 'Come and listen to my wireless set' atmosphere about it."

I do not think I need add anything to that!

CHAPTER XIX

WHAT WILL BROADCASTING DO FOR MUSIC?

YOU may have noticed a curious thing about musicians—they are not content with enjoying good music themselves, but want others, too, to enjoy it.

They are not altogether peculiar in this. If you who are, some of you perhaps, not musicians, come across a new novel or play that interests you, or a new restaurant where they serve a good meal cheaply, or a new weed-killer for your garden, or a new medicine for some common ailment, or a new car that runs more smoothly and costs half the price, you like to tell others of it.

WE ARE ALL UNSELFISH!

Indeed, we are all of us more unselfish than we sometimes think, but the musician is, perhaps, particularly so, and he cannot bear to think that thousands of people are

enjoying inferior music from Charing Cross Road whilst all the time he enjoys the superior music from Berners Street, that they are satisfied with Ragtime, when in his company they might enjoy Bach and Beethoven and Wagner, Debussy, Stravinsky, Holst, Vaughan Williams and Bax.

Put this down, then, to his credit, and think less hardly of him for the future. You may even learn to think kindly of the music critic of your daily paper when he condemns some composer of whom you are fond or some piece that has given you pleasure. The good fellow, as you must realise, feels as you would if you saw a man picking toadstools when there were mushrooms in the next field, or, shall we say, picking daisies when there were roses all around, or sending out for a twopenny cigar when you had opened for him a box of choice Havanas. He feels that in music, as in everything else, there is bad, good, better, and best, and he cannot bear to see people content with the bad when the good, better, and best are waiting for him to enjoy.

Thus there have come into existence a great number of societies which we may call the Missionary Societies of Music. There

used to be in this country a Wagner Society to make Wagner known and loved, and there are still a Bach Society and a Handel Society. There are also a British Music Society, to make the British people more musical, and a People's Concert Society, to take good music to poor districts, and there used, I think, to be a "Courts and Alleys Music Society," to give open-air performances of the best music in the slums.

WHAT THE GRAMOPHONE HAS DONE

All this is very right and proper, since if you have a good thing, it is but Christian to want others to share it.

But all the Musical Societies that ever existed since the world began have never done so much for music as the Gramophone has done in the last ten years. For the Gramophone has taken music into thousands of homes where formerly they had none, beyond the youngest boy's pianistic attempts at the scale of C major and the eldest girl's inartistic warblings of the last song she had heard at the Ballad Concerts. Rich and poor, young and old, one with another, people have had more music in

their homes during the last ten years than they could have had in the whole of a lifetime in the period immediately preceding. They have had good Records of bad music and bad Records of good music, and bad Records of bad music and good Records of good music, and—what is the result of it all?

The result is that the country is steadily becoming more musical. Ask any Gramophone dealer, and he will tell you that better and better Records are being sold every year. My friend the music critic of the *Times*, in a recent article, expressed the view that neither the Gramophone nor Broadcasting would ever do much for music, because they reproduced all kinds of music, and, as he thought, tended to popularise what he and I would call "poor" stuff as well as what he and I would call the "good."

But the facts are against him, for one of the chief officials of one of the leading Gramophone recording companies the other day, after giving me some figures as to the number of thousands of Records now manufactured annually, told me this: Whereas five or six years ago the proportion of Records of *bad* and *good* music sold was

as 80 to 20, it is now changed to 20 to 80.[1] According to him, 80 per cent. of the Gramophone Records sold are Records of music that I, as music critic of the *Observer*, or my friend as music critic of the *Times*, with all our "highbrow" leanings, would thoroughly approve.

"I TOLD YOU SO!"

Now, that is a wonderful thing, yet some, at least, of my fellow-Highbrows who are reading this chapter will say at once—"I told you so!"

For what some of us despised "Highbrows" have always contended was that if people only had the chance of hearing plenty of the music we like, they would come to like it too.

There is a certain kind of toffee which is announced all along the chief railway-lines with this slogan—"THE MORE YOU HAVE THE MORE YOU WANT." And this is the case with good music—soundly constructed

[1] Records of music intended for dancing are not included on either side of either balance sheet, which only takes account of music intended to be enjoyed *as* music—songs, piano pieces, orchestral pieces, etc.

music as compared with flimsy stuff, music that meant something to its composer as against music that was made to sell. Once a man, woman, or child gets the taste for good music, it never leaves him, her, or it.

There are a few people so remarkably catholic in their tastes that they can enjoy pretty well all music, good, bad, and indifferent, just as there are a few people who can enjoy novels by such different writers as Thackeray, Balzac, Ethel Dell, and Charles Garvice. But these people are not numerous. With most people there is a definite taste either for good or for bad, and the curious thing is that whereas you can train a person's taste up from bad to good, it seems to be impossible to train it down again from good to bad! I would almost defy the readers of this book to tell me of one man of their acquaintance who used to like to play or hear John Sebastian Bach, and now takes pleasure in nothing but jazz! It is a curious thing that though a once sober man may "take to drink," a lover of good music never takes to "cheap" music.

Experience shows that if people once have a sufficient chance of hearing both good music and less good, they will, in

most cases, come to discriminate and to prefer the good, and once having done so there will be no backsliding.

HOW THE MIND DEVELOPS

Now let us see how all this argument affects Broadcasting.

There are some reading this chapter who at present like all kinds of music. Listening nightly to very varied kinds of programmes, they will soon begin to find their taste rising, and to prefer the better to the worse. There are other people who at present like only the cheaper kinds of music, but by and by they will begin to realise that the better music has also its attractions for them. And there are some who have always liked good music, but have never been able to have enough of it, and as the taste of the other two classes rises, they will find that the British Broadcasting Company, which after all exists, like any other business body, to meet demand with supply, will give more and more of the good, and so please them better and better.

Mr. J. C. W. Reith, in his *Broadcast Over Britain*, has this passage :

What Will Broadcasting Do?

"It is an accepted fact that Broadcasting has been the means of educating musically large numbers of people. Music, unknown or unpopular before, is appreciated and understood to-day. It appears that the taste of the average listener has improved in this respect. It is of necessity a slow process, as for years the man in the street has been content to be pleased with music which is easily and quickly assimilated, and therefore not always of the best—the sort which can be heard at night and whistled in the morning. This may seem to belittle the musical taste of the country, but it is still musical at heart. There has not been much demand for music of the better type for the simple reason that the opportunity for the average man to hear it rarely arises."

CHAPTER XX

ARE THE BRITISH MUSICAL?

HERE is a very decided negative from a Broadcast listener:

"English people are *not* musical. I mean this not as a disparaging remark, but as being, in my opinion, well founded on long experience of this country, the truth. Everything is against it, and no amount of education will ever alter things. The work the British nation has been assigned to do in the world by Providence has nothing whatever to do with the arts in general, least of all with the sublimest of all arts, music; in these activities England has played a secondary part, and unimportant, if one excepts literature and science, in which England, without claiming undisputed supremacy, takes rank with other nations. England *had*, *has*, and *will have* other work to do. Your remark on the wireless that England is as musical as any

other nation has prompted these brief observations, by an Italian."

And here is a letter from another listener who has lived in smaller towns in Italy:

"I heard *La Vie de Bohème* about twenty-two times successively in Italy. This appears to be the idea of an opera season there. One opera only. Towards the end of the season—I forget how many nights per week—two or three performances of *La Traviata*. This was at San Remo. The chorus was furnished by the townspeople. Though I saw nothing wrong with him, the Italians would not listen to the tenor, and a fresh one was wired for, who sang from the second night onwards, though I could not find he was one whit better than No. 1. I had to furnish my own box. The work is heard to far greater advantage in that small theatre than at Covent Garden. At the former the duet and the address to the old coat were always encored; at Covent Garden—No. Either for the above reason or because the audience does not know what they are singing about. Though I have heard it in English too, with Rosina Buckman and Alice Nielsen—never an encore; and Italy

every place large enough to possess an Opera House.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH NATION

Now as to what our friend, quoted above, calls "the work the British nation has been assigned to do in the world by Providence"—either music has been included amongst that work or the British nation has done it without any Providential instructions, and nevertheless done it very well.

Here are a few items from our national record:

1. From the beginning of the world up to the eighth century or so, music was a purely *melodic* art, i.e. if a number of the people were singing together they would all sing *the same tune*. Then musicians began to realise that something beyond this was possible, and for several centuries more they went on making crude experiments towards an art of "Counterpoint" (see page 34), i.e. a combination of melodies. The first piece of music that came anywhere near meeting the artistic requirements of the style was an

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And the Church Music (both as to standard of choice and standard of performance) is far, far below ours here. I have heard in St. Peter's in Rome, St. Mark's, Venice, Milan Cathedral, and other great churches, performances which would certainly not satisfy the congregation of any British Cathedral—Roman Catholic or Anglican.

But, admittedly, in Opera, Italy is far ahead of us. Italy is an Opera-loving, Opera-cultivating, and *Opera-paying* nation. It is the complaint of most of the younger Italian composers to-day that Italy is too exclusively occupied with Opera, and that the composer of a Symphony or String Quartet is given very little chance. We do not give that composer much chance here, but we do better than Italy.

And so with other countries. In every case the so-called musical country, when you come to live in it, is found to be far less musical than you have been told. France is certainly no more musical than Britain. Something may be said for Germany and Austria, but again, Opera is the great stand-by, State- and Municipal-supported Opera, however, providing, incidentally, a permanent Orchestra for Symphony Concerts in

used to make them sing the end of Act III four, five, and six times over, *never* Act IV—far too artistic.

"The same system prevailed at Varese. In *Aida*, at the end of Act III, night after night they made Amonasro sing his F sharp and throw Aida down till he was voiceless and she——? Frenetic applause always followed Aida's high C before she had finished her phrase. A very good singer."

ITALY AN OPERA COUNTRY

And so on! Of course this describes conditions in the small towns, and, possibly, as they were some little time ago. In the large ones things are enormously better. But the point is that in Italy, Music = Opera, and an Italian coming to this country (where there is no such thing as Municipal or State support for Opera), and finding in the whole length and breadth of it not one Opera House open for more than occasional "seasons," imagines that we are not a musical people.

There are good Orchestras in Italy: I have heard them. But if there is any good Choral Music I have missed hearing it.

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English piece, *Sumer is i-cumen in*, written (probably) by a monk of Reading Abbey, John of Fornsete, about 1230.

2. Still the technique of composers remained very crude, but in the fifteenth century an English composer, John of Dunstable, a man of keen harmonic and contrapuntal perceptions, introduced so many and such great improvements that earlier music, all over Europe, was very largely discarded, and his music and other music written upon the lines he had laid down alone held the field.

3. In the sixteenth century this art of weaving melodies into a beautiful choral web was, in Italy, Spain, and elsewhere, brought to perfection. Note that English composers (many of them employed in and about the court of Queen Elizabeth) fully held their own. Byrd is one example of many.

4. At the same period, Keyboard Instruments having been brought to a considerable pitch of perfection, composers began to make serious attempts to write music really suitable for them. The English composers *led the way* in this, and the keyboard music of Bach, Mozart and

may therefore prove reassuring to any of my readers who have had their faith in our national "musicality" shaken by expressions of honest ignorance, such as those with which this chapter opened.

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Beethoven, Chopin and others, is thus built upon an English foundation.

5. At the end of the seventeenth century Henry Purcell occupied a high place as a composer of very delightful music of a distinctive English tinge.

6. In the early nineteenth century, when a "romantic" movement in music was taking place, Chopin wrote his beautiful Nocturnes, entirely upon the model of those of the Irishman, John Field.

There was a decline in British music in the eighteenth century, when in Germany Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven (who lived well into the nineteenth century) were doing great things. And until near the end of the nineteenth century, musical England slept. The causes of the "slump" cannot be gone into here, and, indeed, they are, in any case, rather debatable.

At the present moment much music is being composed all over Europe and America, and to say the least, the work of the British composers appears to be as likely to live as that of any in the world.

Choral music remains a strong feature in our artistic social life. The general level

of Piano Playing is enormously higher than it was in our parents' time. British Orchestral players are admitted by foreign conductors to be the equal of any. British Chamber Music players tour the world.

Best of all, the popular appreciation of music grows apace. The Competition Festival movement (a purely British movement) has done much to spread a knowledge of good music and to raise the general level of performance.

And do not let us forget that Broadcasting is in this country, by the wise action of our Government, controlled in the interests of the public at large, and not allowed to degenerate into an advertising medium as in certain other countries, and that British Broadcast performances are the best in the world.

I who write these words am considered by many people to be a rather severe (if not harsh!) critic, and one who is very ready to point out the abuses and defects in our national life. I trust that this reputation for plain speaking may give a little greater weight to any words of approval that I may from time to time utter, and that my defence of Britain as a musical country

may therefore prove reassuring to any of my readers who have had their faith in our national "musicality" shaken by expressions of honest ignorance, such as those with which this chapter opened.

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