

A Plea for the Flute

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE ORGAN IN THE ORCHESTRA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I thank Mr. Helsing for supplementing, by his note in this month's paper, my remarks on Haydn's use of the organ. I have never seen a score of Haydn's 12th Mass, but in the late Mr. Edward Holmes's analysis of the work, which appeared in *THE MUSICAL TIMES* for August 1, 1858, mention is made of the organ obbligato, and a bar from the "Benedictus" of the Mass in question is quoted to show the manner in which it is combined with the orchestra.

Since writing my article I have met with two interesting examples of independent organ parts, in the new edition of Mozart's Masses, just issued in full score by Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel. In the Mass in C, No. 11 of this edition (which, by the way, is also No. 11 in Novello's edition), the "Benedictus" is accompanied by two violins, basses, and organ. The part for this last instrument is obbligato throughout, and is fully written out. Sometimes combined and sometimes alternated with the strings, it is mostly treated in a rather florid style, with passages of triplet quavers in rapid *tempo*, suggestive rather of the piano than of the organ. An interesting point occurs near the close of the movement, the quartet of solo voices being supported by a dominant pedal of nine bars for the organ, without chords, full harmony being only added at the cadence.

An even more curious instance of the employment of the organ may be seen in the Mass in C, No. 15 of the same edition (No. 14 of Novello's edition). This work was the last of Mozart's Salzburg Masses, and was written in 1780, shortly before "Idomeneo," which appeared in the following year. It is, as regards orchestration, one of the most interesting of all Mozart's Masses. Mr. Edward Holmes appears for his analysis of the Mass (*MUSICAL TIMES*, April 15, 1855) to have got hold of a curiously incorrect score, because he speaks of there being parts for clarinets and for four trumpets. There are only two trumpets and no clarinets, but on the other hand there are three trombones, which Mr. Holmes does not mention. This digression from my subject is only apparent; I have referred to Mr. Holmes's article, because in it he speaks of the "Agnus Dei" as being "a soprano solo, with obbligato accompaniment for an oboe, clarinet, and bassoon." The part which in Mr. Holmes's score was doubtless given to the clarinet is in reality an organ part. The instrument is employed here in a way which, so far as I know, is absolutely unique—as a solo wind instrument, combined with the oboe and bassoon, just as Mozart would probably have used the clarinet had there been any in the Salzburg orchestra, which it is known there were not. The right-hand part for the organ, evidently intended to be played on some soft eight-feet flue-stop, is in single notes all through the movement, sometimes playing a florid passage in thirds with the oboe, or in sixths with the bassoon, while the left hand has passages such as this—



of a kind that Mozart in concerted music often gives to a solo horn. Mozart is evidently employing his organ in this movement as a substitute for the obbligato wind instruments that were not at his disposal.

Since my article appeared in print I have received a note from the Rev. H. A. Walker, reminding me of a fact which I had forgotten—that in Schumann's Mass in C minor (which was produced by Mr. Walker at St. Alban's, Holborn, at the time when he was Precentor in that church) there is a fully-written-out organ part, the instrument being treated as an integral part of the orchestra. I may also, for the sake of completeness, add that Schubert's "Salve Regina" (Op. 47) for soprano solo, orchestra, and organ, contains a part for the last instrument which in two passages, each fifteen bars in length, is written out in full, while through all the rest of the piece there is only a fully figured bass. A more recent

instance of a fully-written-out organ part may also be seen in the score of Gounod's "Cecilian Mass."

Yours very faithfully,

April 23, 1879.

EBENEZER PROUT.

A PLEA FOR THE FLUTE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In the March number of *THE MUSICAL TIMES* I was glad to see a "Plea for the Flute" by so eminent a musical writer as Mr. Lunn. I waited for the April number to see if any professors or amateurs would come forward and second Mr. Lunn's endeavours to raise an always favourite, and now perfect, instrument to its rightful position in the concert-room. As none have appeared, may I add my testimony as an amateur flautist to the value of this instrument in its modern and perfected state.

There are three chief qualities in flutes: (1) tone; (2) intonation; and (3) fingering. The two former have been vastly improved by Boehm; the latter by many eminent manufacturers, chiefly by Carte. And it is not too much to say that as a result of the improvements by the two, and now combined in a double patent, the Boehm and Carte flute is the most perfect of wind instruments. Every note is equally full, free, and in perfect tune according to the equal temperament. This flute presents no difficulties in remotest scales, which can be fingered with ease; and, in fact, all sorts of passages are practicable on the instrument. The blowing is "as easy as a glove," and the faintest sigh breathed over the embouchure will awaken a vibration; while a powerful crescendo may be obtained *without in any way affecting the pitch*.

Having tried various flutes by various makers, and made in various materials, such as silver, wood, &c., I have found that the richest and softest tones are produced by those constructed of vulcanite. The quality of tone is pure, rich, and "velvety" in the lowest octave, and clear and sweet in two upper octaves.

In comparing orchestral instruments, strings will always take the front rank. Among wind instruments the great range of the clarinet will always cause it to be regarded as the most useful. But there is a richness and exquisite sweetness, a peculiar charm, in the tone of the modern flute, which I look for in vain even in the violin: while the perfect intonation and facility of fingering, extending to remotest keys, raise its usefulness in the orchestra to the highest rank. The power also obtainable from the lowest octave, which owing to the weakness and imperfection of the old flute has been seldom used in the orchestra, will now enable it to compete favourably in this respect with the clarinet and oboe.

Can I say more to induce amateurs to take to the study of my favourite instrument? I quite agree with Mr. Lunn's remarks as to shallow, showy solos for the flute, in which the ear is tortured with the musical imitation of the motions and sounds, real or supposed, of butterflies, swallows, &c. Let us hope that an improved taste will lead amateurs to study the master-pieces of Kuhlau and others; and that our best composers will favour us, as Dr. Macfarren has done, with music of a classical form for one of the most beautiful instruments which modern ingenuity has placed in our hands.

I remain, Sir, yours obediently,

H. J. POOLE.

Stowell Rectory, Sherborne, April 9, 1879.

NATIONAL MUSIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Permit me to hope that you will favour me by inserting these lines, though imperfectly written by a foreigner to your language, but a great admirer of national music.

The knowledge of national tunes was formerly considered an insignificant matter, and it was thought that any one was able to collect such pearls of art—memory of a gone musical age. To what extent the art itself has suffered by ignorant and incapable collectors, it is scarcely possible to conceive, still less to describe.

In "The Songs of Scotland," by G. F. Graham, London, 1857, vol. ii., p. 137, he says: "The musical competency of the collector is of much more consequence than is