

'The English Litany of 1544-60'

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Letters to the Editor

'THE ENGLISH LITANY OF 1544-60'

SIR,—I thought that Dr. Grattan Flood's object in his article was to give your readers sound information, and I therefore imagined that he might welcome my letter; but it now appears that his chief concern is to uphold his own infallibility, and that he thinks that a mere repetition of his statements is sufficient to prove this. Of course, if he cannot understand Cranmer's plain English I cannot make him do so, but at least he might give a reference to Duchesne's writings, where he states that the 'Processioner' was synonymous with the 'Litany.' Dr. Flood again repeats his assertion about St. Augustine and his companions. Here is what Bede says (Plummer's Edition, Book I, chap. 25): 'Fertur autem, quia adpropinquantes civitati . . . hanc lætāniam consona voce modularentur: *Deprecamur te*, &c.' What grounds has Dr. Flood for translating this 'the Litany and the Antiphon, *Deprecamur te*'? It is quite clear that poor, ignorant Bede thought the Antiphon, *Deprecamur te*, was the Litany which they sang, and the fact that Sir H. Howorth records that this anthem occurred in a Rogation Litany in use *long after* at Vienne has nothing to do with the point.

As to the melody of the 1544 Litany, Dr. Flood says that his point was that 'Stone did not *compose* music for the Litany at that time, but that the compilers *adapted* the ancient plainchant.' But his original statement was 'that the newly-translated English Litany was roughly adapted to the old plainchant melody,' which must mean the old plainchant melody of the Litany—and this is untrue.—Yours, &c.,

E. G. P. WYATT.

RESTIVE UNDER CRITICISM

SIR,—I have always felt that to cavil at a journalistic critique of one's work is an unsportsmanlike proceeding, and I am loth to do so now. But 'B. V.'s' criticism in your May number, of my Carnegie String Quartet, compels me thereto, since, in my opinion, he goes beyond the *ne plus ultra* of legitimate criticism in this particular case.

Arthur Bliss has also criticised this work rather adversely. But I have no quarrel with him, since his expression of opinion was concerned solely with æsthetics. Indeed, I should have been surprised had he admired my work. But 'B. V.' devotes almost half a column to a lecture upon my faults of technique. As I happen to be one of the 'academic crew' (to use 'R. L.'s' famous term), I am sure that Sir Hugh Allen and others, when they read 'B. V.'s' article, will bitterly regret having given me that Degree which is looked upon as, at least, the hall-mark of technical efficiency. Seriously does not 'B. V.' rather gratuitously arrogate to himself that infallibility against which he warns me, when he speaks of 'errors of judgment' and 'flaws' in regard to a work which, at any rate, bears the *imprimatur* of the Carnegie adjudicators? How sad were I, how chastened, how full of despair for the future, had I not their Report upon my work as a crumb of consolation in this dark hour!

By the way, who is 'B. V.'? And why does he thus blush unseen, when his proper sphere is that of Papal dictator to the Carnegie Trust?—Yours, &c.,

E. N. HAY.

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Coleraine, Ireland, N.

[Dr. Hay is too sensitive. Composers who cannot face adverse criticism so temperately expressed as was that of 'B. V.' should keep their music in the sheltered security of manuscript. There will be an end to helpful criticism if reviewers are to accept a work as technically infallible merely because it is written by a Doctor of Music and has been blessed by the Carnegie Trust. The 'almost half a column lecture' on Dr. Hay's 'faults of technique' is really only a few lines dealing with a passage in which the balance struck 'B. V.' as miscalculated. Dr. Hay will not expect us to answer his question, 'Who is "B. V."?' But we don't mind saying *what* 'B. V.' is—a reviewer doubly qualified to deal with chamber works, being a musical critic of eminence and a violinist who has had long experience in orchestral and chamber music. Dr. Hay's opening sentence is so true that it is a pity his letter did not end at that point.—Ed., *M.T.*]

PIZZETTI AND BEETHOVEN

SIR,—As I was lately the author of an attack upon Pizzetti as a composer, to which you have alluded in the *Musical Times*, am I not the proper person to defend him against aspersions made on him by others? There is an implied reflection on him on the part of your reviewer, 'F. B.,' in your last month's issue. It amounts to nothing more than a little slip, perhaps, but nevertheless it may have given a wrong impression to any of your readers who are interested in the views of the very active group of modern Italian composers.

In discussing the report of the recent Congress of Italian musicians at Turin, your reviewer says:

'The discussion on the reform of musical colleges and of education threw a curious sidelight on the opinions of a composer already well-known here, Ildebrando Pizzetti. Signor Pizzetti was, and, perhaps, still occupies the post of, professor of composition at the Bologna Conservatoire. He apparently does not believe that there is anything to be learnt from Beethoven, for Signor Giacomo Orefice told the Congress that, as external examiner, he found that the score of the *Eroica* was suggested as a test for sight-reading. He, of course, pointed out that the test was futile, as the *Eroica* must be known to all students of composition. He was assured, however, that Signor Pizzetti's students knew neither the score nor the work.'

If your reviewer will look again he will see that Orefice was not 'assured that Signor Pizzetti's students knew neither the score nor the work,' but only that an individual student, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, did not know them. This is, if true, sufficiently remarkable, for Castelnuovo-Tedesco (now a well-known composer) had taken his pianoforte diploma at the Institution in 1914, and had spent the remaining four years in study culminating at this (1918) examination in the gaining of his diploma in composition. That any student should spend eight or ten years in a school of music and never come to know the *Eroica* is almost incredible; but we must not deduce from the incident (as your reviewer does, and, possibly, as Orefice might wish us to do) that Pizzetti 'does not believe that there is anything to be learned from Beethoven,' for in the preface of his *Musicisti Contemporanei* we have abundant record of his admiration for that composer. He describes (in terms, perhaps, warmer than an Englishman could bring himself to use of anyone or anything) his reverent feelings and those of d'Annunzio, as musician and poet went through some of Beethoven's works together.

Incidentally, it is incorrect to say 'Pizzetti was, and, perhaps, still occupies, the post of professor of composition at the Bologna Conservatoire' (though from the puzzling wording of the report your reviewer was justified in his mistake). The incident occurred at the Royal Musical Institution of Florence, of which Pizzetti is director, and of which Castelnuovo-Tedesco was a student. Neither Pizzetti nor Castelnuovo-Tedesco was, I think, ever at Bologna.

In the interests of accuracy, will you pardon these slight emendations of your contributor's interesting review of a publication that one is glad to see noticed in the British musical Press.—Yours, &c.,

PERCY A. SCHOLES.

May 18, 1922.

THOSE 'BEST SELLERS'

SIR,—I have searched in vain in this month's issue for a reply from 'A. K.' to my letter which you courteously published in your April issue. Is it because 'A. K.' cannot defend his sweeping (and anonymous) assertions, or because he thinks his article was after all of so little importance?

I once more invite 'A. K.' to come out into the open and 'face the music' (even that of 'best-sellers'!) or for ever hold his peace.—Yours, &c.,

ALBERT W. KETÉLBEY.

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Hampstead, N.W.3.

May 4, 1922.