

Reg. 16/7/25

# MUSIC TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

## Two Addresses, Recital, and Concert.

The third day's proceedings in a memorable week's musical conference was signalized by further helpful and interesting addresses by experts. There was again a splendid and widely representative attendance of visiting teachers. In the morning the gathering assembled in the south hall to hear the Rev Brian Wibberley, Mus. Bac., lecture upon "Musical Aesthetics;" and later, went to the Elder Hall, where Miss Hilda Reimann, A.M.U.A., lately returned from studies in Europe, gave a violin recital. In the afternoon Mr. Clive Carey, Mus. Bac., was responsible for a typically charming address dealing with his life study, "Folk Songs." At night the Elder Hall was again requisitioned for a concert, at which the programme was submitted by Miss Hilda Gill, A.M.U.A., and Mr. Harold Parsons, Mus. Bac., and Mr. Harold Wylde, F.R.C.O.

### Aesthetic Values of Music.

One of the finest lectures of the conference was delivered on Wednesday morning by the Rev. Brian Wibberley. Mr. Wibberley has made a profound study of "Aesthetics of Music," and his illuminative address upon this too-little-considered subject was listened to with keen interest. In order to simplify as far as possible such complex matter, it was divided into three groups:—Limitations, general aesthetic laws, and specific aesthetic laws. The groups were subdivided. The limitations were respectively dealt with under the headings of "In Nature" (material and aesthetic) and "In Music." The general aesthetic laws were dealt with as "Fundamental Principles" and "Subjective and Objective Aspects." The specific aesthetic laws received their classification under "Problems of Music" (origin and content of music) and "Qualities of Beauty" (in formal design, characteristic expression, ideal character, and psychological significance).

The authoritative lecturer began by saying that in estimating the aesthetic values of music three fundamental matters must be clearly recognised and duly appreciated; first, the limitations created by the absence of standardization; secondly, the authoritative reign of aesthetic law in general; and, thirdly, the peculiar principles of aesthetic science in music specifically. Upon the just appreciation of the relation subsisting between music and Nature depended the treatment of several difficult subjects and the solution of many debatable points. Art, in general, and considered as passive rather than active, stood in a two-fold relation to Nature: primarily, in respect to the material from which it produced, and then, in respect to the forms of beauty which the external world presented for reproduction in art.

### Rhythm in Nature.

Examining in what sense Nature provided material for music (went on the lecturer) they discovered nothing but the crude elements from which man contrived to elicit sounds—merely the raw material, ore, wood, gut, &c., from which the measurable tone was formed. The combination of these tones so as to produce melody and harmony, the two principal factors in music, was in no way provided by Nature; they were the creations of the mind of music-making man. The systematic succession of tones which constituted melody was nowhere found in Nature; nor was harmony—the simultaneous occurrence of certain combinations of tones. But, though Nature was thus destitute both of melody and harmony, the one remaining factor in music, viz., rhythm, which regulated the two former, and existed prior to man, and was, therefore, not of his creation, was found in Nature. Not all, yet many, sounds in Nature were rhythmic, and in them the principle of double-time rhythm—rise and fall, ebb and flow—was clearly discernible, as, for example, in the lapping of sea waves, the gallop of animals, the creak of mill wheels. Nature had given man only the first faculty and organ of music—at first rudimentary, but ever evolving. Everything in music must be measurable, and inasmuch as the spontaneous sounds of Nature could not be reduced to any definite quantity, it followed that these two categories had no true point of contact.

### Instrumental and Vocal Music.

Passing now from the material to the aesthetic aspect of Nature's relation to music, they approached a much more complex and debatable problem (continued Mr. Wibberley). The long and hotly disputed Aristotelian proposition that the function of art was to imitate Nature, and the philosopher's further contention that music was the most imitative of all the arts—were now generally acceptable, it being commonly conceded that by the term "imitative" was meant "representative." But even that modified meaning was stoutly resisted by the Formalists, who declared in Hansliok dictum that "there is nothing beautiful in Nature as far as concerned." That

Nature did supply the representative arts with models was strikingly obvious. The sculptor, painter, and poet especially, found their originals largely in the external world. But while Nature presented her figures, landscapes and tragedies, she offered no fugue, overture, or sonata. Nature provided no copy or model for the musician; he must create everything "ab initio." Nevertheless, in that creative effort Nature might lend the artist an aid of infinitely greater aesthetic value than that offered in any mere external model. There was a sense in which Nature presented to all the arts the self-same gifts of impression, suggestion, and inspiration—in which sense Emerson rightly construed all art as "Nature passed through the alembic of man." The degree of such impression, suggestion, and inspiration supplied by Nature to the musician would depend upon his artistic purpose, and the appropriate form, style, and character of his work in achieving that end. Music was the purest and also the most embracing form of art. Being intangible, indefinite, and indefinable, it suggested to different minds different trains of thought; its appeal was universal and inherently illimitable.

### A Profound Problem.

Continuing, the speaker observed that programme music was really the incursion of music proper into the realm of the drama, and in the strictest analysis, legitimate only when its aesthetic appeal was of the nature of absolute music. Specially since Beethoven's time, the tendency had been to use the art more and more for characteristic expression, and to identify the work with some definite idea or subject. The Eroica Symphony was undoubtedly intended for Beethoven's ideal of Napoleon; the "Lebewohl" sonata likewise embodied his ideal musical sense of "parting, absence, and return." The aesthetic values of the art of music could only be appreciated truly, according as the various factors constituting the phenomena of music were realized as having an assured foundation in scientific demonstrations and an indisputable formulation in philosophic generalization. Consequently, a complete and final system of the aesthetic of music must await the fuller investigation and solution of several problems as yet unsettled. In this respect music was differentiated from the sister arts. They had had, for example, a philosophy of poetry since Aristotle, but only in recent years had any philosophy of music been attempted. The immaturity of the art had precluded the possibility of such a consummation. Concerning the origin of music serious discussion has revolved chiefly around three hypotheses, which might be denominated the sex, the speech, and the rhythm theories respectively. The lecturer then elaborated his views upon these theories. In briefly summarising the mental significance of the aesthetic elements of music, it might be pointed out that in formal design the intellect was principally interested; in characteristic expression the emotions were mainly concerned; and in ideal beauty the whole totality of man's spiritual powers were involved. Beethoven's works might be instanced as typical of ideal beauty; the special domain in which his music lived, moved, and had its being was the ideal; and the glories of a supersensible world were everywhere reflected in his creations. Well might he have said—"Music is the medium between the spiritual and the realistic life."

### VIOLIN RECITAL.

Miss Hilda Reimann, at a previous recital, has already indicated the advancement made in her art as a violinist through recent studies abroad. On Wednesday morning this unassuming artist delighted her audience with a programme that was largely devoted to modern works. Each of the numbers was treated with thoughtfulness, insight, and restraint,

and revealed the excellent technique of the artist. In the opening concerto of Bruch, Miss Meita Riedel, Mus. Bac., added her share to the excellent rendition achieved. Miss Riedel also accompanied Miss Reimann throughout the recital. The programme was as follows:—Concerto in D minor, Op. 44 (first movement), adagio ma non troppo (Bruch); "La precieuse" (Couperin-Kreisler), Slavonic dance in E minor (Dvorak-Kreisler), Viennese Volk-song, "Thou old tower of St. Stephens" (Brankl-Kreisler), "La Gitana," Arabic-Spanish gipsy song (Kreisler); Meditation from "Thais" (Massenet), Spanish dance, "Habanera" (Sarasate).

### "FOLK SONGS."

The very happiest conditions prevailed at the afternoon lecture on "Folk songs," given by Mr. Clive Carey. In addition to the address, many vocal illustrations were interspersed. The folk song was described as being the composition of the unlettered people, and was not a conscious art production. It was the production of a great many minds, in that it came down to them entirely by ear, and was handed on from mouth to mouth. In that course, it became altered, and received the stamp of different individual singers, thus making it tremendously characteristic of the people who sang it. At the time when the folk song was really alive, music was not a universal art, it did not enter into the lives of the people, but was rather considered as a cultured luxury. In Elizabeth's time it was the hallmark of a well-educated man. Later, it became the pas-

time of the educated classes. But the country folk were isolated, and as this music could not reach them, they made their own. Few could read or write, so this was their mode of self-expression, and it was of tremendous value on account of its spontaneity, for the folk song was never sung unless the people felt impelled so to do. Gradually education brought a certain amount of facility and outside forms of entertainment, and the result was that either the power of the desire was lost to create folk songs. In certain Continental countries, such as Bohemia, Russia, and Hungary, the folk song was more alive now than in England. Unison singing gradually gave place to regularly balanced tunes, no doubt owing to voices of different ranges finding it more convenient to the pitch, and thus harmony was originated. Intervals became almost impossible under the old scale form, hence our modern scale was devised to bridge the difficulty. Mr. Carey then made a pause in his discourse, to sing such appealing numbers as the lusty "John Barleycorn," the lilting, rhythmic "Seventeen, come Sunday," and the exquisite "Springtime of the year." He then remarked that the interesting thing about folk songs was that every vocalist sang them differently, save, perhaps, in a family. More than 3,000 valuable airs had been collected by Mr. Sharpe; and Mr. Carey had himself garnered some, in spite of the difficulties of so doing. Reference was made to the types of words—the ballad, of narrative form, and the song, more of a personal thing. The great antiquity of ballads was variously illustrated. In concluding, Mr. Carey stressed the educational value of folk songs, as indicated in the English schools. He urged the teachers present to do all they could to help to similarly introduce them into Australian schools. (Applause.)

### EVENING CONCERT.

There was another large attendance at the Elder Hall last night when a concert was given that comprised vocal and instrumental items. The performers were Miss Hilda Gill, A.M.U.A., Mr. Harold Parsons, Mus. Bac., and Mr. Harold Wylde, F.R.C.O. Every number elicited enthusiastic applause. Beethoven's "Sonata in A Major" for 'cello and piano (first movement), was the introductory number, Mr. Parsons supplying the 'cello part, and Mr. Wylde presiding at the keyboard. A thoughtful and satisfying reading was given of this well-known excerpt. Miss Hilda Gill then made an appearance to sing a group of Schubert, "To music," "Thou bringest peace," and "The young nun." Each of these beautiful songs the gifted contralto interpreted with her usual charm and insight. Later in the evening Miss Gill was again heard, this time in a modern bracket that comprised:—"Linden Lea," a Dorset folk song (Vaughan Williams), "O my dear heart," cradle song (Herbert Howells); "The great child" (Janet Hamilton), "The fuchsia tree," old Manx ballad (Roger Quilter), and "Arietta" (Cyril Scott). In response to the ovation that followed, Miss Gill gave an additional song. Mr. Parsons is always a popular soloist, and his selections, "Minuet and variations" (Locatelli-Piatti) and Caesar Cui's lovely "Audente Cantabile," with organ accompaniment, were played with musicianly feeling. Mr. Wylde's organ solos were equally enjoyable, and included "Tocatta and Fugue in C Major" (Bach), "Fantasie Rustique" (Walshenholme), "Marche heroique" (Lemaro), and an encore item. Mr. Wylde was also accompanist throughout the evening, a task that further revealed the sympathy and beauty of his touch.

### TO-DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

The programme for to-day's sessions is as follows:—Morning, address, "Form in music," by Dr. Harold Davies; noon, vocal recital, Miss Ada Wordie, A.M.U.A.; afternoon, 2.30, address, "Orchestral instruments," by Mr. W. H. Foote, A.R.C.M.; and at four, piano and violin recital by Miss Maudie Puddy, Mus. Bac., and Mr. Charles Schilsky. Only members of the conference may attend the lectures and discussions, but the public are cordially invited to all concerts and recitals.