MUSICAL criticism in recent years has taken the hyper-
modern or modernistic composers more and more seriously.
Confining itself no longer to an acknowledgement of their
unquestionable ingenuity and their novel contributions to the
technic of composition, it seems to have allowed these technical
matters to mislead its judgment so far as to differentiate no
longer between legitimate modernity and its frenzied caricature—
modernism. Some of the usually serious critics of America and
England—not to mention the French and German who speak,
of course, pro domo—when judging some out-and-out modernistic
work, impress one of late very much like the man who, upon being
told that a live fish was walking in a certain street, laughed very
heartily—at first; but as more and more people rushed by his
window in the direction of that street to see the wonder and some
of them urged him to come along, his laugh gradually abated; he
began to feel uncertain, then shrugged his shoulders, finally put
on his hat and followed the hoaxed throng, saying: “Well—
maybe—who knows?”

This attitude of earnest critics must cause great alarm among
such musicians and music-lovers as demand from the divine art
more than mere “cleverness.” They must needs feel dismayed
by seeing high praise bestowed upon compositions which, tech-
nically clever though they are, lack the very fundamentals of art,
Ethos and Sincerity. In the presence or, as it may be, the absence
of these two elements lies the chiefest difference between art and
artifice—in other words, between modernity and modernism. A
perfect analogy to this distinction can be found by comparing
commerce with commercialism where, as with modernism, it is
the “ism” that changes the good into the bad.
Commerce enriches a nation, and not only materially, for it also brings people and knowledge from other lands; it causes travel, exploration; it broadens a nation’s outlook upon the world; it was traceably, though innocently, the cause of the Renaissance; and it is—or is supposed to be—based upon the principle of “fair exchange.” In one word, commerce is an excellent human institution, while commercialism is a reprehensible, greed-begotten tendency. Too rapacious to be content with the proper returns of legitimate commerce, commercialism tends to sacrifice the principle of fair exchange on the altar of money-getting; it tends to turn every human endeavor into inordinate monetary gain and to sneer at any effort that is prompted by higher, nobler impulses. It readily takes advantage of the unfortunate with a view to enslave him; and, if he be of the type that regards proper monetary returns as a necessary but natural incidental, Heaven help him! The “ism” implies the abuse of the legitimate for monetary gain beyond proper returns; and it is precisely the same with musical modernism, as will presently be seen.

Like the promotores of “get-rich-quick” schemes, the modernists have armed themselves with many arguments which, however, reveal their speciousness upon the slightest scrutiny. Whenever the merit of their work is doubted or denied they say at once that “all innovators were at first antagonized,” and then attempt to support their argument by quoting Palestrina, Monteverdi, Beethoven, Wagner, Liszt and others. They carefully suppress the facts in those cases. They never mention the sober reality—that Palestrina was not a modernist in any sense; he was a purifier of church music, rather the opposite of a modernist. Monteverdi was a contemporary of just such a type of dilettantic modernists as infest our time; he did use some of their “stunts,” but only for artistic purposes, not—as they did—for their own sake. He and Palestrina were men of that soul caliber for which the present musical world waits with fervent hope. The name of Monteverdi’s modernists may be found in books on the history of music; their works, however, are dead, dead forever, while his own Madrigals are, when properly performed, still full of life and show that he was—for his time—very modern, indeed, but not modernistic by any means. True, he used the unprepared dissonances, suspensions and other harmonic innovations of his contemporaries, where they were applicable with good taste; here and there; as spices; but he supplied, first of all, the substantial musical meat to which to apply them. He did not make a meal of the spices. And he was not antagonized by his public. Neither was
Beethoven until he reached—in his latest works—what might be designated as the “period of prophesy.” From the works of this period the public—far from antagonizing him—kept only aloof for a while; which was natural, since prophesies need time for their fulfillment, though the time in his case was not very long. Those “prophetic” works, however, appeared in the last quarter of his life; they were, after all, legitimate extensions of principles under which he had grown up. They were in no sense “departures” from them, while our modernists begin their musical life with departures. Monteverdi, too, did not adopt the modern style until late in life. He wrote his first opera “Ariane” at forty. Verdi changed his style with “Aida” at the age of fifty-seven. That Wagner was antagonized is true, but it was a purely personal antagonism partly called forth by his pugnacious personality and partly by the—more or less secret—orders from the reigning German courts because of his—only too active—participation in the revolution of 1848. The public at large, however, took him to its heart at once, and such musicians as were not directly or indirectly dependent upon the Courts (e.g., Court-conductors) combatted the Court intrigue vigorously, often imperiling their livelihood thereby (the present writer among them). As for Liszt, the most modest and self-effacing of all composers, he was never antagonized by the public; his wider popularity as a symphonist had to wait but a short time until orchestral technic had developed sufficiently to cope with his works.

The argument of antagonism against innovators is cleverly selected to shield any new musical monstrosity and to repel any attack upon it; it might have served this purpose if it did not happen to be the very argument which whilom “Brother Jasper” resorted to. This negro parson preached that “the earth am standin’ still, yeth, stockstill and the sun is movin’ roun’ an’ roun’ it.” When he was told that he was being laughed at he consoled his flock and himself by saying: “Tha’s all right! Galileo was laughed at, too, an’ he was to’tured to boot; yeth, my brethren, to’tured!” Galileo and—Brother Jasper! Monteverdi, Beethoven, Wagner and—the little modernists! What a parallel! Would any sincere man take refuge behind such an argument as that of antagonism?

Our modernists claim that every composer has a right to have his own style, and the claim is quite just; but there is a world of difference between style and mannerism and of this difference they seem to be quite unaware. “Style” is a personal, characteristic way of expressing a thought, and it demands dignity and
distinction. It applies, not to the thought, but to its expression. It is one feature in the physiognomy of a work, not the work itself. It is a trait which adapts itself to any thought. Beethoven’s E flat Concerto differs so entirely from the Chopinesque one in G major that, were it not for the style, one could scarcely believe them to have come from the same mind. The same diversity of thought, unharmed by the sameness of style, prevails in his Symphonies, Quartets, Sonatas, etc. With our modernists matters are reversed: instead of dressing their thoughtlets in their favorite manner, they handle only such little ideas as will fit their stereotype manner of dressing.

“Eulenspiegel, Don Quixote, Salome, Electra”—are they images of normal humans swayed by some great passion? Are they not, musically, grotesque caricatures, and have their literary originators not intended some of them to be caricatures? There is, of course, no reason why a musician should not occasionally indulge in caricature; Wagner did it in the “Meistersinger”; but—is caricature a musical life-pursuit? The mannerism of Richard Strauss makes one suspect that he aims at the questionable honor of being called a “musical Hogarth.”

Another one of our modernists pussyfoots, like a cat in a china closet, over all sorts of possible and impossible discords; of course, pianissimo, feeling quite rightly that, after all, there are some things which should not be said “right out loud.” He has discovered the venerable hexatonic scale—(pereant quae ante nos)—and with it a . . . the everlasting chords of the ninth and eleventh he succeeded in producing what may cheerfully be granted to be a new “color”; but since it blinded him to all other colors his compositions sound all alike. This is sheer, unmitigated mannerism, not style. He, like all the modernists, does not fit the clothes to the children of his brain; he selects the children to fit the clothes.

It might be said that without intrinsic merit the works of the modernists could not have acquired the vogue which the public accords to them. Vogue? Indeed? Vogue, that French euphemism for “Fad!” Whatever the cause or causes may be, one cannot help noticing that the restlessness and superficiality of modern life has grown to a degree so alarming as to make “vogue” a totally untrustworthy criterion. What dominates our musical time is, unfortunately, no longer artistic merit; it still finds its appreciators, no doubt, in the executive field of music, but in the creative field it is mere sensational novelty that attracts the public. And as sensationalism (another “ism”) is by
its very nature of but short-lived attractiveness, the public change their fads almost as often as they do their garments. They are either mentally unequipped or too frivolous to take the time and interest to satisfy themselves as to the depth or shallowness of a composition. And, really, why should they? A kind, fatherly government tells them what to eat and, especially, what to drink; the papers tell them what to wear, what to think, what to hate, what to like; and the public's unwavering obedience to these dictates has almost the dignity of military discipline. Hence, as long as a composition is new—new, above all, pleasantly or painfully new—makes enough unnecessary noise (we love noise, don't we?), employs a needlessly huge apparatus, and is much spoken of in the papers, the public will toy with it for a while, in utter disregard of the fact that the things in art which were only new never lived long enough to grow old. Thus to the public—taking them by and large—all music is but a moment musical, a trifle, soon to be forgotten for the next one.

To prevent this forgetting as long as possible the modernistic sensation manufacturers employ, beside their specious arguments, all the brazen methods of commercialism. Not only do they engage propagandists (some of whom are holding rather high artistic positions), but they also have their press agents. Many papers, daily and weekly, keep public attention alive by the sort of personal gossip which has nothing whatever to do with art; they tell the public "what the great A is going to write, when";—"what the equally great B thinks of writing, some day, possibly, perhaps";—"what prices they get for their manuscripts; what private quarrels they have with one another." The pictures of these musical chevaliers d'industrie are shown in the papers as they look on board ship, in a canoe, at the tennis court, at breakfast, playing with children, sitting in their library with scholarly pose, in their studio where a photographer caught them—purely by chance, of course—brooding over some deeply problematic piece of music; on horseback, swimming in the sea or, in fact, in any attitude which the late Anthony Comstock or the police would not have objected to.

Our modernists do not stand aside of the whirl and turmoil of the frivolous world, devoting themselves to their ideals and letting the passing show wend its silly way—(shade of Brahms!)—oh, no! They go right into the very thickest of it, straining every nerve to catch the slangy, "jazzy" slogan of the day and, having caught it, they turn not away from it with a pitiful smile, but they chime lustily in.
“Sensations, is it?” they say, “why, you shall have them! Just listen, friends, brothers, fellow citizens! Here are sensations for you that will make your blood curdle and give you the creeps! Here’s an Opera, a drama without action; ‘Mealy-Ass and Pale-and-Sandy,’ seen through a gauze curtain as in a haze. Everything in it is nebulous: scenery, costumes, characters, music—everything! The whole thing as morbid as a morphine dream, as nerveless as a cocaine victim. You need not understand it—it must be ‘sensed!’ And the music: every harmony an unprepared ninth-chord, every change a jolt to decent ears. Methodically mad. Come one, come all! It’s the ‘thing!’ All the ladies that go to Paris for their gowns say so. They ought to know!”

Here’s another sensation: “The Bible dramatized! Ruth? Magdalene? Deborah? Not much!—Salome! Perverseness glorified! You’ll shudder physically and morally—but morals be hanged, we give you sensations! Isn’t that what you want? The old masters gave you what you needed; they lifted you to their height, but nous avons changé tout cela. We come nicely down to you and give you, not what you need, but what your esthetic demoralization and morbidity craves!”

Nice ethics, that! And why all this to-do? What for? Only and exclusively for the laus dives plebei in terms of coin which the late Vespasian regarded as “odorless.” Modernism—commercialism!

In the opening paragraph of this discussion will be found an unstinted acknowledgement of the modernists’ ingenuity. Their orchestral “effects,” though mostly without “cause”; their harmonic twists and kindred hocus pocus tricks, are certainly ingenious; but the first syllable of “ingenuous” declares the absence of genius. Ingenuity provides new means—genius has new purposes. Ingenuity does clever things—genius does great things. Ingenuity contrives—genius creates. Ingenuity—and this is an essential point—acts consciously, genius acts unconsciously. No fair-minded critic can dispute the modernists’ ingenuity, for they do some remarkably crafty things. They must have brooded over them like Mime over the broken sword, and over their—often cacophonous—harmonies they must have worked very hard; so hard, indeed, that—from too much sedentary work—they all contracted the musical asthma. They seem to be no longer able to think a melodic thought out to its natural, logical ending; they start it, one measure or two, maybe three, and then—phft—the breath gives out; they have to take a fresh breath and—start something else. Their works—like Kipling’s “Bandarlog”—seem
all the time on the verge of achieving something, but—again like the Bandarlog—they never come to anything more substantial than noise. There is never any real development, no real flow—only broken scraps of sentences, a starveling dribble of ideas.

Nevertheless it may be cheerfully granted that some—or even many—of their innovations are well worth preserving until—well—until some real master, some genius appears who will—to speak with Handel—“know vat to do mit 'em;” who will use them à la Monteverdi, for purposes beyond themselves; who will handle them with sovereign mastery, as an architect may employ some new building material. Until this master appears, the modernists can be regarded only as purveyors or furnishers of just such material; technical material of which the ethical value in the field of composition is not much higher than—mutatis mutandum—that of Czerny's studies in the field of piano playing. The industriousness of the modernists deserves credit, no doubt (so did Czerny's and Clementi's); but when their doings begin to affect young students, causing them to neglect the great masters, as so many of them do; when these students go into raptures over a little detail like a new chord-succession and lose the solid ground on which the marvelous edifice of music is built, until they get lost in a mire of cacophony—the time has come for a word of serious warning.

Our ear is a defenseless and, therefore, a very complaisant organ. It is in one respect like the stomach. As the latter can become accustomed to poisons like arsenic or cocaine, so can the ear (only too easily) become accustomed to any sound, from an alarm clock to a distonating vocalist. This complaisance of the ear, due principally to its defenselessness, should neither be abused nor speculated upon; on the contrary, the ear should be kept so keenly sensitive as to reject any cacophony that is not justified by musico-dramatic necessity and sparingly, judiciously used. As the medical effect of poisonous drugs depends entirely upon the dosage and becomes injurious by over-prolonged use, so do musical discords lose their dramatic effects altogether when through their over-frequency our ear becomes accustomed to them.

As for the plea that our modernists have a new “message to the world,” the reply to it was furnished long ago by a very wise man who said:

I hear the message well enough—
—alas, I don’t believe it.
CHAMBER-MUSIC : ITS PAST AND FUTURE

By CYRIL I. SCOTT

I

N the days of "good old father Haydn" as he is often sentimentally called—though why not equally "good old father Handel or Bach"; for, if anybody is entitled to the name of father, certainly the latter is, considering he had twenty-three children—in the days of "good old father Haydn," I repeat, the writing of chamber-music was not the brain-taxing affair it at present is. If we judge from this old master's idea of writing a trio, which was only trio-esque in the sense of having three instruments, but resembled more a duet as far as part-writing was concerned, and if we then compare it to the Trio of Ravel, we shall see what tremendous possibilities were latent in that simple form, and what great strides music has made within the last hundred years or so. Indeed, it seems that in those days Haydn considered he had adequately done his duty by that particular form when he contrived that his 'cello should proceed in unison with, and so reinforce, his pianoforte bass, whereas nowadays this very indolent simplicity certainly does not satisfy our moderns, who are not content to write a trio by name but must needs also write a trio by nature.

But to the subject of trios we shall return anon, for we shall be landed in difficulties if we do not, at the outset of our enterprise, make some clear definition as to what has been meant, is meant and may be meant in the future by the term chamber-music. It is in fact evident that the designation is not a very happy one, being used far too loosely and in a most arbitrary manner. Nor can we fail to see that much which really is chamber-music is not so termed: for what could be more suited to a room and less suited to a hall than a violin solo, yet how often do we hear, for instance, the Chaconne of Bach, or some unaccompanied piece for 'cello, in a big hall instead of in its proper place? Thus one would almost like to raise a plea for keeping types of music (like children) in their proper places—and demand that what really is chamber-music be termed and treated as such without any attempt to stretch it beyond its inherent capacities. In my country (England), for instance, a singer will
appear in the middle of an orchestral concert and sing several songs with pianoforte accompaniment, the anti-climax—after the performance of large orchestral works—being deplorable. But the fact is that for some perverse and unaccountable reason, voice and pianoforte in conjunction do not fall into the category of chamber-music; the result being that such a conjunction finds performance anywhere from the small dimensions of a duchess’ boudoir to the colossal and ill-sounding dimensions of the Albert Hall. And yet if this inartistic procedure obtains in connection with singers, it also obtains with a violinist or 'cellist—who likewise in the middle of a large orchestral concert (where usually he has played a concerto) comes forward with an accompanist and unblushingly plays a morceau de salon to the tinkling of a pianoforte. This is in fact a convention, and one which has developed largely from mercenary reasons—i.e., the soloist has been engaged, and therefore the audience must have its money's worth, however inartistic and unesthetic that money's worth may be.

Now there is no gainsaying that a solo-violin or solo-'cello sounds in itself very thin in a large hall, but when it immediately follows upon the enormous volume of sound produced by a large orchestra, the effect is highly detrimental to the very greatest and most accomplished artists. 'Cello-solos and violin-solos—in fact all solos excepting those which never take place in serious concerts (I allude to trombone, cornet or bass-tuba solos)—belong to the domain of chamber-music and only to that, and the sooner this is realized the more artistic and esthetic will our concerts become. I grant that, as regards the voice, there does exist a certain difference, in that the vocal cords of a singer like Madame Clara Butt (who possesses what is termed “a magnificent organ”) are capable of producing more actual noise, or I ought more politely to say, a greater volume of sound, than the catgut cords of a violin or 'cello. But strictly speaking (for Madame Butt is an exception), all songs without orchestral accompaniment are exclusively chamber-music, and even more so than compositions which demand a greater number of instruments, and which being termed such, are never introduced into orchestral concerts. Nay, who has heard of, let us say, a pianoforte-quintet or a string-sextet being introduced between two choral works or two symphonies by way of an interlude?

I shall, of course, be saying the obvious when I remark that six instruments produce more sound than one, just as two pigs under a gate (to quote the old riddle) produce more squeals than one; yet why, as already inferred, music which is more of the chamber order is not regarded as such, while music which is less so is hardly termed chamber-music at all, is a question I leave open for those “learned
idlers” who are fond of engaging in controversy. However, if this article succeeds in calling attention to the necessity and esthetic value of proper categorization, it will not have been written altogether in vain.

II

I was about to state that at one time nearly all music was chamber-music, but on prompt reflection—for certainly the music which brought down the Walls of Jericho was not chamber-music—I must amend the statement and be content to point out that a large percentage of what we now have as symphonic music was performed in rooms of varying sizes, and seldom in a hall bigger than one we should regard as suitable for our present-day chamber concerts. I am reminded of this, in fact, by certain pictures portraying a musical evening in the time of Frederick the Great, in which half of the room is taken up by the musicians (and the chandeliers) and less than half by the courtiers. As to the instruments, I see a certain number of strings, wood-wind and a harpsichord, and perhaps a harp—which after all, is a very tidy little orchestra. But even this melodious picture portrays comparatively modern times, and if we go back further to the days of Shakespeare, it becomes almost as strangely out of place to imagine people attending a set concert as to imagine them attending a motor race. Indeed, leaving purely instrumental music aside, we can only consider madrigals, rounds and glee-singing as chamber-music in one sense, even though these did often take place in the more poetical atmosphere of a garden, or perhaps a village green, or in the snow-clad street outside “my lady’s window.” Yes, well might we say, in those days music was small and choice, whereas nowadays, music is largely the opposite; we have gone to the other extreme, and but a few years ago the acme of a musical treat (to some people which I personally should be impolite enough to consider unmusical) was to hear Handel’s “Messiah” with a chorus of three thousand, if not more, and an orchestra, or let us rather say a band, of two hundred and fifty performers. Really it almost suggests Rabelais in its enormity—or was it a forerunner of “Big Bertha,” the gun that shot seventy-two (or was it one hundred and twenty?) miles?

All the same, in considering the probabilities and possibilities of our subject, it is fairly obvious that in this connection, at any rate, the reaction has already set in, and one thing strikes us very forcibly: in chamber-music we are not increasing our number of instruments, but rather utilizing their fullest capacities instead. Indeed, if you will have it phrased in a homely way, we are economizing in players
but making them work the harder. . . . And yet, let it not be thought we moderns are the first to have done this; for I remember hearing an anecdote about Beethoven, who, after writing a certain passage and confronting the players with it, discovered they rebelled and declared the passage impossible of execution:—whereupon they were simply told to go home and practise it, which they did, with the desired result.

At this juncture we may review the past and certain of its forms—those forms of chamber-music which, although penned by great masters, have, for reasons which this article may attempt to explain, not stood the so-called test of time, but have been banished to that semi-oblivion which constitutes them as of mere historical interest and nothing more. And I allude to such forms as trios for strings only; that simplest of all forms which come under the arbitrary heading of chamber-music. Now, I am inclined to think there are two reasons why certain types of music become so soon antiquated, the first and obvious that in our modern days of polyphony, they sound too thin and are too easily understandable, like a Wordsworth poem about a toy boat and a beggar boy. But if that is the first reason, there is yet a subtler and more psychological one which has every bit as much, if not more, to do with the matter. I allude to the fact of the novelty having worn off—novelty being a far more important sustainer of interest than people are apt to suppose. As I have pointed out in my book called the Philosophy of Modernism, however much we may revere John Keats, and however often the first line of Endymion may have been on our grandfather’s lips, the fact remains that “a thing of beauty is” not always “a joy forever.”

To apply the adjusted adage to the case in point, the beauty of thin music may fade as a once beautiful photograph may fade, and for that matter become thinner and more bilious-looking until there is nothing left. But the question arises, is all “thin” music doomed to oblivion, both of the past and the present? The answer leads one to reflect, and is instructive. It brings, in fact, to our notice that if the “thin” music is sufficiently ancient, it pleases us exceedingly. And why? Because the very quaintness of its harmonies and other devices falls upon our ears as novel once again. How delightful are some very old madrigals, and how delightful again some old folk-songs with their original accompaniments—and not the ones superadded by a later composer (Beethoven, for instance, who set accompaniments suited to his own day

1Kegan Paul.
to many of these old airs). And yet, was not Beethoven a greater master of music than these old madrigal composers? This admitted, why have his particular accompaniments failed to reach a satisfying immortality, and still more, why have his string-trios failed to do so? Because, as we pointed out, some things of beauty are not always joys forever.

There enters into this whole question what we may term the element of *musical suitability*, or, perhaps better said, *poetical suitability*. To illustrate my point, I may mention, that one day long ago when I attended a performance of one of Shakespeare's plays in the theatre at Frankfort-on-the-Main, at a certain juncture of the play, there struck up the strains of a few mandolins and violas, a piece of incidental music so poetically *suitable* and so novel in sound, that both the composer with whom I was at the time and I were fascinated and charmed. Here was a little "fantasia" of "chamber-music" or garden music (yes, why not garden music?) which appealed to us as the very essence of appropriateness, not only in connection with the play we were witnessing, but in connection with the actual musical content to which those few violas and mandolins gave expression. And yet, charming though this was, who could conceive of a lengthy and pretentious chamber work composed in sonata form, and containing four movements, and lasting half an hour, written if you please, for three mandolins and two violas? (I hear a voice within me saying, Beware! one of your best friends may be doing this very thing ere long—you never can tell. True, but nevertheless I will not retract my question.)

It is just this lack of poetical appropriateness which I feel to be responsible for the bad wearing qualities of the string-trio of the Beethovenian and pre-Beethovenian epoch. To be appealing nowadays, it is not harmonically subtle enough, not poetically picturesque enough, not melodically quaint enough. I am, of course, aware that this statement may shock certain chamber-music enthusiasts. This I cannot help; besides, the capacity to be shocked is not a quality to be encouraged, being rather a decadent quality than otherwise. After all, someone must do this dirty work of thinking and saying for the first time (aye, is it for the first time?) what hundreds of people are dying to think and say, if the phrase be not too paradoxical. When will people have the initiative, for instance, to put their feet down and say: "We heartily dislike the sound produced by violin unaccompanied?" The argument is that if such a genius as Bach thought it beautiful, that is good enough for "us." But wait a minute: would not Bach be soulfully distressed if he heard his chords arpeggiated in that highly disconcerting manner
which the modern violin bow forces its handlers to adopt? For I wonder how many people—indeed, how many violin virtuosos—are aware that the old bow was made in such a way (curved and with a possibility of slackening the hairs) that the chords did not need to be broken? Alas, change is not always progress, and when we talk of “all modern conveniences,” we forget to include several modern inconveniences.

But we have digressed for a moment during our little causerie. To return and add just a few words more anent the string-trio, the question is, will there come a day when we shall listen to those old trios with a renewed pleasure? And why not—since may not the day come when they, too, will sound so old as to sound new again? After all, it seems to be with music as it is with pictures; for I hear that in The London National Gallery, certain pictures are put away in the cellars for a time and then resuscitated. Thus, what is not appreciated in one age is appreciated in another; for the prerequisite to the awakening of appreciation towards a work is, that it must be very new—or very old. I know of a great painter, for instance, who loves Cimabue but heartily dislikes Raphael: the latter, forsooth, is not quaint enough!

III

I alluded erewhile to the Haydn type of pianoforte-trio as a form of duet, even though it entailed three instruments; a fact which every observant student must have noticed for himself. He will equally have noticed that Beethoven considerably improved on this, as did also his successor Franz Schubert. But was Haydn merely careless in his treatment of this form or did he know no better? It is hard to say; but apropos of carelessness, there is an anecdote which runs that Beethoven, who was Haydn’s pupil, chided the latter with some asperity for having left a mistake in his (Beethoven’s) harmony exercise. Did the latter also chide him for not writing true trios? History does not relate. I think, however, a good many modern musicians chide him by not playing his works; preferring the trio by nature and not only by name. And yet one wonders why these ineffective trios exist, when his quartets were up to his prevailing standard of excellence; so “all that they should be,” indeed, that they leave us nothing to say on the matter. Nor would it profit us materially in connection with this causerie to scrutinize his followers along this line, the masterpieces of Beethoven and Schubert; all one might say of the latter in the shape of friendly criticism is that he failed to recognize at times that brevity which “is the soul of wit.” As to the quartets of the still later composer
Robert Schumann, it is curious to note that although he was a poor hand at writing intrinsically orchestral music, his chamber-works were singularly effective, and full of a dulcet charm. Strangely so, because as a rule the composer who has little sense for orchestral color, fails to produce the most effective chamber-music, as may be seen by a close and critical scrutiny of the works of Brahms. That Brahms wrote beautiful and meritful music as such, few will deny, but that he always contrived to produce beautiful sounds is another matter. It is all too obvious that at times he wrote what has been not ill-described as *paper-music*—that is, music which when read by our mental ear looks beautiful of content, but when it comes to be played sounds hideous. Indeed, could there exist a more ill-sounding work than the last movement of the Sonata for 'cello and piano in E minor? Not altogether without reason have I heard this movement irreverently described as "cats' music" on account of the grunting and scratching produced by the quick, but ineffective writing for the 'cello in a totally unsuitable register. Read this work on paper, however, and musically it will be enjoyable. But, after all, as music is intended for performance and not for mere perusal, we must regard Brahms as being lacking in a very essential part of technique, or in a quality which is highly valuable to the tone-poet. It is true, I have picked out the worst example to be found among his many works; nevertheless, there is no denying that even when writing solely for the piano, Brahms indulged in thick bass-chords which sound far from esthetic. I have also heard it said by string-players engaged in rendering his quartets, quintets, etc., that it is only with the greatest difficulty they can make these works "come off." And I think the secret of his deficiency lay in the fact that his imagination was of that order which rendered him inadequately able to picture reality—he thought in music but not in pure sounds. It is, in fact, curious that one or two Germans have manifested this same deficiency, whereas to my knowledge *never* has a Frenchman. Bizet was an exquisite instrumentalist, or, shall I say, sound-colourist; the works of Ambroise Thomas and Gounod invariably "come off," such as they are; and Berlioz and César Franck, whether strictly French or not, may be added to the list, while the colour-talents of Chausson and Debussy are too well known for mention. The Russians and the immortal Pole, Chopin, had this same capacity, for even though the latter confined himself almost exclusively to piano writing, he used that instrument in the most well-sounding manner imaginable, and one previously unknown. To this list we may add Dvořák and Smetana, who also undoubtedly possessed a tone-colour sense in varying degrees.
Chamber-Music: Its Past and Future

We have now mentioned a fair number of deceased celebrities who have been drawn to the chamber-music form, but the list were not entirely complete without Felix Mendelssohn, for I, as probably many others, had almost forgotten his several works of this order. Still, in the days of my youth they were occasionally performed at the Frankfort Conservatoire concerts; those terrifying ordeals modestly termed "Übungs-Abende," which means Exercise Evenings, Practice-Evenings, or however one would most euphoniously translate it. Yes, terrifying ordeals, I repeat; for woe unto the student who really did practice on such an evening, and breaking down had to start again. Never has the "complete and turned out goods" in the shape of the fully equipped musician suffered from such nervousness, I warrant, as he or she did at those old Practice-Evenings. And what an audience for an as yet unripe executant to have to play before; comprising such celebrities as Madam Schumann, Hugo Becker, Hugo Heermann, Professor Stockhausen, and on one occasion even Anton Rubinstein.

But I have wandered again far afield, and now, after all this prelude to a few remarks on Mendelssohn as a chamber-music writer, there is very little to be said. I remember, however, that our professors, when they wished to favour me with a special confidence on the subject, used to allude to his mannerisms, especially certain writing of piano-passages of an arpeggio type, from which he was unable to free himself. Nevertheless, the Mendelssohn chamber-works were not deficient in sounding propensities, although, in these works, he never seems to have invented a novel effect, as he did in orchestral writing (though with the dust of years, so to speak, even his orchestral effects do not strike us as such nowadays). As to why one hears so little of Mendelssohn's chamber-music at the present time—well, the secret may lie in the ephemeral results of facility. Mendelssohn was a most facile writer. I have heard it said somewhere that he could get a whole work into his head before he wrote a single note down, and that, while he was actually engaged in writing it down, he could carry on a conversation. I admit, this story sounds a little "steep" and hardly credible, but, as there are Indian pundits or mental gymnasts who can actually think of twenty-eight different things at once, perhaps Mendelssohn had also been a bit of a pundit in a previous incarnation! Be that as it may, at any rate the result of such facility is that nowadays one hears (in my country), save for the "Elijah" and the ever-charming and delightful violin-concerto, very little of Mendelssohn, and personally I have not heard a single chamber-music work of his since those old days in the Conservatoire.
One is apt to imagine that the Russians, including Tchaikovsky, were the first to introduce "effects in chamber-music," but let us beware of this notion, since it may be entirely false. The truth is, as I already hinted, that an "effect" is only perceptible (with few exceptions) in the periods in which it is written. When the dust of years has dimmed its varnish, so to speak, it ceases to appeal to the listener as an effect at all; in other words, it has become embodied in the musical content. One hears, for instance, a great deal about the "effects" of the moderns and hyper-moderns, and when a critically minded person is itching to pick holes in works, as he invariably is (strange, how some people like to perform the office of worms), then he talks of So and so's incorrigible fondness for "effects," forgetting that every novel-sounding tone-colour cannot be anything else. It is in fact just this capacity to create new sound combinations in addition to new matter, which indicates the difference between the very greatest musical composers and the less great: the very great invents in all directions, the less great does not. It is true that a man may have a talent for sound-combinations alone, without the adjunct of true musical inspiration, and I am inclined to think that Berlioz furnishes us with an illustration of this sort, though one feels about his music at times, as if he had deliberately set about to think out new effects, irrespective of whether they were beautiful or not. Thus he gives us the impression of being too much of an experimentalist. However, let us be grateful to him. We owe him much; we indirectly owe to him some of the Wagnerian sublimities. And evidently Wagner in his day must have sounded full of effects, though nobody talks of his effect-production nowadays, for the reason already pointed out.

In a word then, we must go warily when we allude to the tone-colour of the modern and comparatively modern in contradistinction to that of the ancients. How can we be certain that the Mozart and Haydn quartets did not appeal to their listeners as equally novel in actual tone-colour as in musical content? Nay, who indeed shall say, since we can now only regard them with ears incapable of accurate retrospect?—"perverted ears," the old fogies would say, though as to that there are slight differences of opinion. We may safely state this much, however, that whereas each musical epoch has had its special characteristics—polyphony, melody, structure and so on—the characteristic of the present age is tone-colour, what has been termed by Frenchmen the musique de sonorité. Perhaps we may also say that as far as chamber-music goes, the Russians were...
the first to embark on this colouristic adventure. Is there not a whole scherzo written in harmonics, by Borodin? And as to the Trios by Arensky and Tchaikovsky, are they not richer in sound than anything invented before them? I think the answer is certainly in the affirmative. These indeed were epoch-making trios, after which came an interval, until the record was again broken (to use a sporting term à la Percy Grainger) by that highly inventive Frenchman, Maurice Ravel.

With the mention of this remarkable man, we come to the chamber-music of the present day. Firstly, I do not hesitate to say that the Ravel Trio is a most astoundingly novel work of art in more directions than one—nay, in all directions. No more does he subscribe to the old trio form, but presents us respectively with a nameless prelude, a pantoum, a passacaglia and then a finale. Thus, to begin with, the form is novel; in addition, the harmony and polyphony are novel, while most novel of all is the sound-colouring: with the result that this work is very difficult; I recently heard an admirable performance of it in London by Miss May and Beatrice Harrison and Mr. Hamilton Harty. That Ravel must have a very intimate knowledge of stringed instruments is obvious, for it would almost seem as if he had drained them of all their possibilities.

If Ravel has proved himself a master of effects in this Trio, his string-quartet is equally rich in novel colour. It goes even Debussy one better in this direction. Indeed, I unhesitatingly say that the Ravel quartet sounds more remarkable than any hitherto penned, with the Debussy quartet not far behind in the running. And yet both these Frenchmen showed themselves latterly not content with the usual chamber-music combinations, and before his death, Debussy had conceived a scheme to write chamber-works of an entirely new nature. We have also Ravel's Septet for strings, wind, and harp, a most effective work.

Thus, finally, we come to what may be the future of chamber-music, and its latent possibilities for divers kinds of combinations. How charming, for instance, would a piece for flute, viola and harp be, or oboe, viola and harp. The harp, in fact, is not used enough in chamber-music, partly because of its incapacity for quick modulation, and, though this has now been overcome by the introduction of the chromatic harp, partly because a certain conservatism prevents people from using the chromatic harp, their excuse being that its tone is not as rich as that of the diatonic harp. Still, a very sonorous tone is not so necessary for chamber purposes, and I, for one, shall gladly see the day when other composers besides Debussy employ
this valuable new instrument. The clarionet is another instrument far too little used in chamber-music, even though Brahms tried to set the fashion. Our present-day music is highly suited to its employment, especially if harp be used instead of piano. Nor must we forget the horn, which likewise Brahms employed without finding many followers, in spite of all the great possibilities that offer themselves.

I am aware, of course, that there are certain practical reasons why it will be difficult to "popularize" unusual combinations, although there be quartet-parties who make a habit of practising together year in and year out; as soon as a great variety of instruments are required, difficulties immediately arise of a purely practical kind. An oboist or harpist considers himself an orchestral player, and at any rate in this country (England) is seldom available for any other purpose. Thus, when a chamber-work of an unsterotyped order is produced, it is invariably inadequately rehearsed. Therefore, what we shall require in the future, are wind players who make a point of being chamber-music performers before everything else; we need, in fact, more players after the type of Louis Fleury (flute), who never plays in orchestras at all. And I believe it must come to that eventually with the drift that chamber-music is taking in the hand of the moderns. For instance, I am glad to see that in America there is the New York Chamber Music Society embodying a number of wind instruments, though, as far as I know, no harp is added. I hope that there will be more such societies as time goes on to fulfill one of the demands of the coming age, for, although I do not contend that the string-quartet is "played out," and likely to be laid aside in the future, from a purely phonetic point of view it is by no means the most perfect combination. Looking at it with the most critical scrutiny, the volume of sound produced by the 'cello is "out of proportion" to that produced by the violin, with the result that unless very carefully manipulated it invariably comes too much to the fore. I have also noticed that when string-quartet players become very enthusiastic and passionate and "lay in for all they are worth," the result is apt to cease to be unadulterated music, and becomes more than tainted with an admixture of sheer noise. There is likely to be a scratching and a grunting of vehemently chastised strings which is anything but pleasant to the ear, and hence exceedingly disconcerting to all, except to the players themselves, who seem to be thoroughly enjoying the effects of their exertions. I am also constrained to add, that on these occasions the tonality becomes very dubious; which does not add to the beauty of the general effect. Some may regard what I here say as hypercriticism, especially
string-players themselves, but my honesty compels me to say it nevertheless.

As to using the voice in, or with, chamber-music, we have some excellent examples from the pen of Dr. Vaughan Williams, string-quartet and voice being, indeed, a charming combination. Also, such a device as voice and flute alone, has most poetical possibilities, if the music written be consistent, that is to say, sufficiently atmospheric. In fine, we are confronted with a whole new field of effects wholly or only very partially explored as yet, and well may we cry: “Composers, be daring, go in and win, explore the new regions; manifest the divine discontent which, though revering the old, ever seeks the new!”
ERNEST BLOCH

By GUIDO M. GATTI

Le temps de la douceur et du dilettantisme est passé. Maintenant il faut des barbares.—Ch.-Louis Philippe.

FROM far-away America there reaches us the voice of a musician who is virtually unknown to the public of the old continent; it is a hale and hardy voice, prominent amid the multitude that swell the contemporaneous musical chorus—the voice of a man who cannot be classified as belonging to any given school or any given tendency; who stands by himself in splendid isolation; whom we feel to be a-quiver with our own agitation, and who at the same time is not a product of modern environment; who is both traditional and venturesome, primitive and modern. In a word, he is some one with something to say.

This man, who engages the attention of everybody in the transoceanic world, is a European; he was born in the heart of Europe and lived there until some four years past, ignored by the great majority, esteemed by a few artists and a few students. His musical output, abundant and estimable remained unpublished until yesterday, when a courageous and high-souled North American publisher brought it to public attention, and also assumed the initiative for its general introduction.

Ernest Bloch, a French Swiss, an exile from his country, is about to return to us after a long silence; but none of his pages has lost aught of its fascination during the time of expectancy. Whether to-day, or yesterday, or to-morrow, the art of Bloch lays hold on our feelings and insistentily claims our attention; neither a product of fashion nor linked to the destinies of any faction, representing as it does a man and a race, it has not suffered in consequence of changes of taste. When listening to Bloch's music one seems to hear old echoes from eternity, from something within us that is revived only with the creation of a favorable atmosphere of exaltation and sincerity. Visions of majestic colonnades with statues gigantic and severe, of marble temples overlaid with fine gilding and tapestries, of fabulous processions worthy of the Queen of Sheba, of all the biblical splendors; records

1By courtesy of the author reprinted from *La Critica Musicale*, April-May, 1920.
of sacred tomes and of vanished wisdoms; heartache for times past; a rapt contemplation of elusive creatures resplendent as the sun and disdainful as the Sphynx; echoes of sacred dances, slow and voluptuous, within precincts saturated with the fumes of incense, of myrrh and cinnamon; fleeting sensations that leave, none the less, a deep trace and make themselves felt again, after the sound has died away, with tenacious obsession.

Of course, not all of Bloch's compositions with which we are acquainted are significant and valuable in the same degree; on the contrary, we can affirm without reserve that the works by which he ought to be known begin with the three Hebrew Poems, written in 1913—if we make an exception of Macbeth, certainly more interesting as a specimen of the music-drama than for maturity of intrinsically musical expression. (All of which was noted with particularity by Pizzetti in the first—and until now unique—study dedicated by Italian critics to the Genevese musician. But we shall return to Macbeth.) It might be affirmed, besides, that as Bloch’s experience of life went on gathering new stores of sorrowful impressions, his musical expressiveness gathered substance and grew more and more robust, and asserted his rough and impetuous personality against every external influence. The years of more onerous physical toil, from 1906 to 1913, were practically void of creative effort; it was as though all impressions received from the exterior world were continually accumulating and condensing in the artist's mind. Years of harrowing crises, soul-searching and cleansing, in whose course there were doubtless many attempts at self-expression, though not one gave full vent to the tempest agitating the musician's spiritual life. There are certain characteristics of his maturity which are traceable in the earlier works as well; but these are scattered and inorganic, not integrated to constitute that positive esthetic figure which is manifested in full in the works of the Hebrew Cycle. Who cannot readily recognize, in Schelomo, melodic traits in common with the culminating scenes of the Shakespearian drama? Who would not identify, in the instrumentation of the Psalms or of Schelomo, the author of the instrumentation in the poems Hiver and Prin temps, and in the first symphony? At present, surveying the road along which Bloch’s compositions stand to mark the several stations in the development of his aisthesis, there is revealed to us the process (if we may so express it) by which this latter, while divesting itself little by little of the traces of foreign influence, raised to the highest potency and possibly aggravated the individual and
germinal notes. After successive clarifications, growing more and more refractory to extraneous elements, the personality of Bloch—constricted, as it were, with regard to the many-faceted manifestation of sensations and impressions—has formed itself compact and unmistakable, homogeneous and substantial. In the works of the Hebrew Cycle there is naught else than Bloch; in passing judgment one may admire or not, but one is constrained to recognize that these pages owe nothing to anybody. Like their author, they present a unified and provocative type.

The symphony in C sharp minor is the earliest work of Bloch’s with which we are familiar (it was preceded by a symphonic poem, Vivre--Aimer, and a forgotten Sinfonia orientale); he wrote it at Munich between his twenty-first and twenty-second birthdays. Two movements of it were performed in the year following its composition at Basel, and later the entire work was brought out at Geneva by Stavenhagen. But the first real performance was that which took place in 1915, conducted by the author. Romain Rolland, who was present, wrote to Bloch:

Your symphony is one of the most important creations of the modern school. I do not know any other work in which is revealed a more opulent, a more vigorous, a more impassioned temperament. It is marvellous to think that one has to do with a first work. Had I known you at that time, I should have said: ‘Pay no attention to the faultfinding and the praises and the opinions of others. You are your own master. Do not let yourself be turned aside or thrown off the track by anything. Go on expressing yourself in the same way, freely and fully; I guarantee that you will become one of the masters of our time.’

And, knowing neither the Psalms nor Schelomo, he was a true prophet, even though his cordial enthusiasm suggested the language of a friend rather than of a critic. This symphony of Bloch’s really shows the qualities and defects of the youthful works—among these latter in particular a tendency to discursiveness, besides echoes of other personalities. “At that time (Bloch told us) I was neither completely myself nor completely independent”; and this may be excused in an artist hardly over twenty years of age. Thus the beauty of the work resides rather in the moving power of the formal construction, and in the ardent force of conviction that guides the composer to an unerring truthfulness of expression, than in the originality and lucidity of the musical ideas.

According to the author’s intention, the symphony aims to delineate his life as a youth, with its struggles and hopes, its
joys and disappointments. The first movement, beginning lento, poi agitato, represents the tragedy of life—doubts, labors, hopes; the second, happiness and faith; the third, vivacissimo, and of a dolorous restlessness, portrays the ironies and sarcasms of mankind; the last interprets the triumph of the will and final serenity of mood.

Analogy of sentiment led the musician involuntarily to appropriate here and there celebrated passages of kindred inspiration; as when the orchestra is at times attracted by the fascination of Strauss's instrumentation. But even then the symphony was far more than a promise; the first movement, more particularly, is worthy of a place beside the most dramatic pages of Brahms, Mahler, and Bruckner.

The conception of Macbeth antedates the first representation of Pelléas et Mélisande, and the work was finished the following year. These chronological details are not given to forestall a possible question with regard to derivation—anyone who has heard or read the Macbeth of Bloch knows what a disparity of conception sunders the two works—but to establish the almost contemporaneous appearance of two musico-dramatic compositions which I do not hesitate to coördinate, together with Fedra by Pizzetti, as assertions of a will to innovation in the contemporary music-drama. I hasten to explain my idea. Pelléas is, for me, a perfect work in every respect—in its total conception as a drama or as a musical realization of characters, of sentiments, and of scenes. Debussy labored for ten years on this masterwork, and attained maturity of expression after a long series of experiments. Contrariwise, neither Macbeth nor Fedra is a perfect work. Debussy finished his composition at forty; Bloch wrote the Shakesperian drama at the age of twenty-three; and Pizzetti began the creation of his work at twenty-nine and ended it three years later. Neither the one nor the other was then capable of giving us what they gave us in the sequel, especially in these latest years and in other fields; and what they assuredly will still give us to-morrow, the former with Jezebel, the latter with Deborah.

Macbeth ought, therefore, in our opinion, to be considered as a not wholly successful attempt in the field of musical drama, but nevertheless one which will always hold our interest and win a frequent hearing through the perfection of its dramatic expression. The work has compelled our consideration since our reading of it some years ago. Accustomed as we were to all the conventional melodramatism of the end of the nineteenth century; nauseated by the everlasting repetition of the forms and formulas
from which were constructed, after the fashion of a mechanical toy, the musical works of the ultimate Verdiophiles, of the veristi and the Puccini-Massenet following; irritated by the indolence of the younger generation, who were incapable of facing—and still more so of solving—the dramatically-musical problems, while making instead a great show of chasing after success with an exploitation of every artistic and inartistic means;—then, after reading through Bloch's *Macbeth*, one felt oneself in the presence of something new and beautiful. And one had a feeling of keen delight, as on finally meeting a beloved and cherished friend after long and wearisome wandering among unprofitable and unsympathetic folk. In *Macbeth* we have, first and foremost, a musical drama; all is subordinated to that; we do not find—with one or two exceptions—musical episodes, that is to say, fragments, *hors-d'oeuvres* which have a life of their own and, in consequence, possess a ponderable value when detached from the scene or the act; there are no compositorial self-indulgences to cause stagnation or deviation, and to distract attention from the development of the plot. Bloch follows the dramatic design with his every musical faculty; he is in the centre of the action and moulds the characters, and moves them, and endows them with sentient life, bearing in mind at every moment the necessities of the drama, leading up to its climax and dénouement with ever-increasing intensity.

The musical speech of *Macbeth* is of a fascinating simplicity. If we make exception of the two grand choral scenes which close, respectively, the first and last acts,—and in which Bloch discovers in full his wonderful skill as a contrapuntist and constructor—there is not a page which has not an appearance of leanness, beneath which, however, there lies an unsuspected emotional potency. A rhythmic figuration which repeats itself measure after measure like an inexorable fate; a harsh chord that gathers and spreads abroad like a presentiment; and, above them, a grave, sustained melodic declamation which seems disdainfully void of acoustic suavity, yet is incisive and expressive, and truly sympathetic to the word. Through these means Bloch creates atmospheres pregnant with meaning, comparable to those investing the drama of the two lovers in Debussy's opera, but with this difference (which, for the moment, is of chief importance): that within this atmosphere the personages lead a radically human life, and comport themselves under the influence of passion in a manner for which we find a parallel in certain conjunctures of our own lives, graving themselves in a plastic relief which
Ernest Bloch

renders them powerfully expressive of their soul-life. Whereas, with Debussy, the figures sometimes fade away, dissolving in the atmosphere and appearing, so to speak, like vague phantoms created by the very movement and color thereof, in Bloch’s opera the dramatis personae—and here I mean more particularly that terrible pair, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth—stand out from their environment and dominate it, themselves at times even creating the atmosphere. Their volcanic spontaneity of intuition stamps them ineffaceably on the musical material; their bodies cast obscure and gigantic shadows; their voices have a vast resonance like the words of a man whom the drama has transported at a bound into the very heart of creation, and who, though still a mortal, thinks and speaks with the soul of a hero. Should I desire to point out the next of kin—in music—to Macbeth and his tragic spouse, I should have to seek them in the barbarous and michelangelesque drama of Modest Mussorgsky, in that primitive figure and—by reason of the complexity of his pathos—elusive personality, Boris Godounov. Certain scenes in Macbeth—for example, that culminating one of Duncan’s murder, of which, though it passes off-stage, we see the living reflection in the face and the words of Lady Macbeth, with its terrible silences and the fearsome whisperings of the night, and the duet that follows agitatedly, by fits and starts, with spectral hallucinations (“Macbeth has murdered sleep!”)—find their counterparts in certain scenes of the Russian drama, such as those of the convent and of the Tsar’s death. This juxtaposition of Bloch and Mussorgsky assumes a noteworthy interest and importance, and we should dwell on it, were we not urged by impatience to enter upon the mature period of Bloch’s work. Pizzetti, however, did dilate on Macbeth in his essay, which—like everything he writes—is acute; but, for obvious reasons, he did not tell us of the affinities that subsist between his drama and that of Bloch. Now, these affinities are numerous and of diverse character; they concern the man in his rounded-out conception of art, in his musicianship, and, in the specific case, in his intuitive grasp of the music-drama. A comparative study of the works of these two musicians, alike and unlike, yet born in the same year, though at an interval of a few days, would not be void of interest and would assume a character far more profound than that of a pure coincidence; but we must press on without further delay, though not without mentioning, in this connection, among the “Mussorgsky” numbers the Torture Scene and the Death of Fedra—pages which will be admired for many a long year.
For us the most prominent defect in Bloch's score is its comparative monotony in rhythm and harmony. The musician sometimes takes overmuch pleasure in the insistency of certain agogic figures and certain altered harmonies; to be sure, his intuition almost invariably seizes on the one or the other as an adequate expression of the momentary dramatic situation; but then he dwells and insists on it for too long a time; and it happens that the situation is left behind, while the symphonic commentary which it evoked still lingers. Syncopated figures, and duple times in triplet-rhythm, abound; the well-nigh continuous alternation of these two movements, while it may share in lending to the dramatic action that shade of gloom and depression which is in keeping with it, finally grows tiresome and develops a sense of immobility in scenes where the music ought to express progress. Moreover, the scarcity of vivid contrasts contributes to the levelling of the successive dramatic episodes; one is conscious of the absence of those violent shocks that occur so frequently in the later compositions—of those fantastic divagations which threaten at every step to capsize Schelomo, for example, while agitating the hearer with a swift and poignant emotion, or raising him of a sudden to the loftiest heights of lyricism. But whatever is lacking in Macbeth, although it may affect its musical value, in no wise diminishes its importance in the history of the musical drama, wherein Bloch's opera should be recorded among the two or three—till now—most significant specimens of their kind in the twentieth century.

The Poèmes d'Automne for voice are of decidedly minor importance; the individuality of Bloch, though sometimes emerging with its distinguishing features, especially in the vocal line, often strays into reminiscences of French lyrics, and discovers a mundane physiognomy bearing no resemblance to the musician's own. On the other hand, in the symphonic poems Hiver and Printemps, which are played in direct succession for the sake of contrast, we find the finest characteristics of Bloch the writer for orchestra—his calculated economy of sonorous power, the mellowness in the blending of timbres, the proneness to make of each instrument a living personality, and the clean-cut contours of the phrases confided to the solo instruments. Bloch's melody is never undulating, sinuous, pliant of outline (this man never insinuates himself into your soul by dint of flattery, but—if he can—overmasters it with violence); it is a melody which, even when sweet, melancholy and dolorous, is never tender. Even when (as in the symphonic poem Hiver) the principal theme
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of the English horn tends to create an atmosphere of lifeless desolation, to depict a gloomy and mournful landscape. Bloch's sadness of heart is that of his race, recalling and invoking their native land in the Babylonian captivity. It is a fervent longing, a striving which, however impotent, is resolute, an energetic and centripetal concentration of spirit. It is not, therefore, the vagueness of a confused dream, or the crepuscular aspiration for the remote, for the fantastic and unreal. Bloch's instrumental themes—the more so because of their strongly vocal type—give us the impression of pouring from the heart of a priest or prophet, in whose voice the people hearken to the eternal verities and recognize the true end of life.

* * *

The Hebrew Poems ("Trois poèmes juifs") constitute, as the author himself has stated, the initial opus of a new period, which consequently begins in 1913. This new period, now still running its course, includes the works of the Hebrew Cycle down to the Israel symphony and the opera Jezebel (in preparation), together with the string-quartet, though this seemingly does not belong to it.

This great cycle claims the appellation "Hebrew," not because Bloch employs Hebraico-Oriental themes and modes in the works of which it is constituted, but for a much profounder reason, which he himself communicated to us:

I do not propose or desire to attempt a reconstruction of the music of the Jews, and to base my works on melodies more or less authentic. I am no archaeologist. I believe that the most important thing is to write good and sincere music—my own music. It is rather the Hebrew spirit that interests me—the complex, ardent, agitated soul that vibrates for me in the Bible; the vigor and ingenuity of the Patriarchs, the violence that finds expression in the books of the Prophets, the burning love of justice, the desperation of the preachers of Jerusalem, the sorrow and grandeur of the book of Job, the sensuality of the Song of Songs. All this is in us, all this is in me, and is the better part of me. This it is which I seek to feel within me and to translate in my music—the sacred race-emotion that lies dormant in our souls.

And when "Jews" are spoken of, I would add "ancient." Bloch seems descended, not from the tribes of Israel dispersed throughout the world, despised and neglected, who are silently perfecting their terrible weapons, patience, persistency and astuteness, but from the free sons of Judah, Asiatic shepherds, wandering from pasture to pasture, to-day masters and to-morrow slaves,
joyous voluptuaries of life and adorers of a warrior-god, the enemy and destroyer of all rival peoples. Nowadays, such a race is inconceivable; it exists only as a splendid tradition. Of this tradition, which he has felt reawakening within himself with the fervency of a live and urgent necessity, Bloch has fashioned the hero of his cycle; and for this reason he ought to be considered as the first, and perhaps the sole, Jewish musician that the history of music affords us. (Per contra, there exist many musicianly Jews more or less influenced by certain melodico-rhythmic traits of Hebrew origin; from Mendelssohn to Meyerbeer, from Rubinstein to Carl Goldmark, from Ferdinand Hiller to Mahler, the last-named possibly the most characteristic from this point of view. But none of these reveals so pregnant a racial personality as that of Bloch; in the artistic line they all appear like descendants of Mendelssohn, ce notaire élégant of Debussyan memory.)

But now, having established this characteristic of the esthetic figure which is Bloch, further insistence on it would be ill advised. For this would tend to establish at the same time, to a certain degree, a limitation, a constraint, that the works of Bloch do not show; in their broader expression these works stir the heart by typically human characteristics, by a universality of pathos, which do not readily lend themselves to classification. For the rest, one cannot contend that Bloch will still continue to reveal so convincingly certain racial traits; from a man of forty, in the full vigor of his creative powers, there may be expected any day a work exhibiting some predominant feature of a different sort; of this, we may add, some symptoms are already discernible in the Suite for viola, one of his most recent compositions.

Danse—Rite—Cortège funèbre—these are the titles of the three Hebrew Poems for orchestra. In the first there is a great display of colors, from the most vivid to the dullest, seen through a series of reflexes and opalescent veils; the employment of Oriental modes and of certain muffled sonorities lends now and again a sense of sensual languor which well expresses the mystico-voluptuous character of the Hebrew dance, while generating a dim, mysterious background therefor. The Rite is of a more emotional character, notwithstanding the presence of “something solemn and remote, as in ritual ceremonies.” In it Bloch incorporated scenes of sacerdotal gravity, wherein, as against a scenario of golden ornaments and richly decorated hangings, the sacred words of the Celebrant slowly ascend. For in the Rite we already find that broad phrasing, full of majesty and meaning, which later forms one of the finest peculiarities of Schelomo.
To these two preceding compositions, of an eminently decorative character, is adjoined the dolorous finale of the *Funeral Procession*, wherein there is only sorrow, an infinite sense of dismayful grief. Written on the death of his father, it might bear as epigraph the biblical sentence, "If there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Here we find another of Bloch's characteristics—the already noted insistency of a rhythmic figure, as if it were intended to arouse an impression of the fatality which looms up and runs its course without heed to the supplications of mankind. The third *Hebrew Poem* forms one crescendo from the beginning to the moment of eternal separation, when sorrow finds expression in the most despairing and insensate outcries; yet there enters one ray of light to penetrate the gloom (a tender melody, serene and chaste) and pour the balm of resignation. The earthly part dies, but the spirits of our dear ones remain with us; the more we loved them, the nearer will they be, in silent communication with our hearts; the greater our despair at their death, the deeper the consolation they give us for all the tears we shed. This sublime lirico-evangelical admonishment is set forth on the final pages of the *Cortège funèbre* with all the warmth of firm conviction.

The musician drew his inspiration directly from the verses of the Bible for the three next-following works—three *Psalms* for one voice with orchestra. Edmond Fleg, the composer's excellent and faithful collaborator, adapted (with certain textual liberties) three masterpieces of Jewish poetry, *Psalms* cxiv, cxxxvii and xxii. In them all there reverberates the leonine voice of the people of Israel, and towers the majesty of the race; the musician reawakens the sensations of vehement expansion and energetic speech which we have already noted as peculiarly his own. Bloch's imagination revels in many-figured, animated frescos, in limitless landscapes teeming with impassioned life. When he composes for the pianoforte—and this came to pass, originally, only in the *Poèmes d'Automne* and in the *Suite* for viola, which he straightway hastened to clothe in a symphonic vestment—one feels the orchestra; the pianoforte, that most perfect medium for the creation of an atmosphere of intimacy and delicate coloring, does not suffice him for portraying the vast complex of his visions. Consider for a moment the picture represented by *Psalms* cxxxvii. The Jewish people, captive in Babylon, is discovered along the banks of the river; hanging their harps on the branches, they weep for Jerusalem. And the people of the oppressor require of them songs of mirth. "How shall we
sing the Lord’s song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!” And again: the immense assemblage rise suddenly to their feet, with arms upraised in frenzied agitation imploring and conjuring their God: “Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, *Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof*. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!”—This scene, of which only the biblical verses can bring home to us a vivid conception in its crude realism, and which Michelangelo alone might have depicted with his terrible artistry, Bloch’s music succeeds in expressing in admirable relief. Fashioned, as it is, of violent contrasts, of well-nigh brutal alternations of sonority, fitful and exclamatory, it attains a vivid immediacy of dramatic emotion. Its asymmetries, its angulosities, its barbaric simplicities, even its rhythmic monotony and its insufficient variety of harmonic combinations, all aid it in matching the power of the biblical narrative.

And there is still another point on which we should dwell. Bloch’s more recent music is not interesting music, in that acceptation of the term which is general among us students of modern music; one does not savor its harmonic subtleties or instrumental refinements on reading it from the printed page; on hearing it, one is moved by its impetus. Bloch’s technics are extremely modern; he quite calmly allows himself certain liberties which neither Schönberg nor Strawinski nor Casella ever dreamt of taking. Yet his compositions cannot be called *ultra-modern*, perhaps because the heterodox elements in his mode of expression are in themselves not important, but are founded on those which I will term *traditional*, using the word without any shade of depreciation. Certain tonal shocks, certain brusque shifts of tonality, do not surprise us, for they seem quite natural and logical in music like that of Bloch, barbaric and refractory. All in all, the exceptionality of his speech—either with regard to the harmony or to the rhythmic designs—does not strike us as provoked (we do not say designed) by an excess of refinement and intellectualism, as in many a page by contemporaries, but, as it were, by a primigenial instinct impatient of bonds and conventions. The music of many moderns seems to us beyond the school; that of Bloch, before it. The former has no memory of its past and attempts the construction of a future; the latter has no past, but is radiant with the youth of uncultured
and happy peoples without a history. Of these it possesses all the defects and all the qualities; even the defects are engaging, for they are ingenuous and calculated to set the good qualities in a stronger light. The level monotony of the background, at times exasperating, makes the fiery transcursion of certain melodic exclamations stand out in marvellous relief, emblazoned thereon like arabesques of lightning against nightly skies.

Bloch has reached the perfection of his music with the Hebrew rhapsody for solo violoncello with orchestra, which bears the name of the great king Schelomo (Solomon). In this, without taking thought for development and formal consistency, without the fetters of a text requiring interpretation, he has given free course to his fancy; the multiplex figure of the founder of the Great Temple lent itself, after setting it upon a lofty throne and chiseling its lineaments, to the creation of a phantasmagorical entourage of persons and scenes in rapid and kaleidoscopic succession. The violoncello, with its ample breadth of phrasing, now melodic and with moments of superb lyricism, now declamatory and with robustly dramatic lights and shades, lends itself to a reincarnation of Solomon in all his glory, surrounded by his thousand wives and concubines, with his multitude of slaves and warriors behind him. His voice resounds in the devotional silence, and the sentences of his wisdom sink into the hearts as the seed into a fertile soil: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. . . . He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."—The orchestra palpitates in all the colors of the rainbow; from the vigorous and transparent orchestration there emerge waves of sound that seem to soar upward in stupendous vortices and fall back in a shower of myriads of iridescent drops. At times the sonorous voice of the violoncello is heard predominant amid a breathless and fateful obscurity throbbing with persistent rhythms; again, it blends in a phantasmagorical paroxysm of polychromatic tones shot through with silvery clangors and frenzies of exultation. And anon one finds oneself in the heart of a dream-world, in an Orient of fancy, where men and women of every race and tongue are holding argument or hurling maledictions; and now and again we hear the mournful accents of the prophetic seer, under the influence of which all bow down and listen reverently. This vivid coloration is lost in the passage from the orchestra to the pianoforte; in the pianistic transcription the designs, the sketches,
one might say, of this immense panorama remain; yet the central figure still retains features of the highest interest. The violoncello-part is of so remarkably convincing and emotional power that it may be set down as a veritable masterpiece; not one passage, not a single beat, is inexpressive; the entire discourse of the soloist, vocal rather than instrumental, seems like musical expression intimately conjoined with the Talmudic prose. The pauses, the repetitions of entire passages, the leaps of a double octave, the chromatic progressions, all find their analogues in the Book of Genesis—in the versicles, in the fairly epigraphic reiteration of the admonitions ("and all is vanity and vexation of spirit"), in the unexpected shifts from one thought to another, in certain crescendi of emotion that end in explosions of anger or grief uncontrolled.

The statement of characteristics which has just been made, and which results from an examination of the greater part of Bloch's works—namely, that this is never "absolute music," that it does not present itself as a simple outpouring of sonority, but always claims to have a precise meaning, to interpret the rhythms of spoken language or of the emotions—appears to be contradicted by the advent of a recent quartet, which is indeed one of the finest things the Genevese musician has written. Yet such is not the case; even in this form, the purest of all, we discover unmistakable traces of Bloch's aisthesis (akin to that of Mussorgski in this respect, as well), magnetically attracted toward the dramatized word and toward that instrumental declamation that we noticed in Schelomo. Even in this quartet we do not experience the physical pleasure afforded by the harmonic coexistence and interpenetration of the parts, or by the brilliant fusion of the timbres of the several instruments; but we have the sensation of hearing voices that appeal to us by diverse characteristics, but are always essentially dramatic and expressive of emotions. Even in the quartet we are again haunted by this constant conception of a drama, for the musician never takes delight in constructing for the pleasure of hearing the four instruments sound well. Bloch carried over into the quartet those same objectives and those same expressions which he employed in the Psalms and in the musical drama; he did not bend to the requirements and conventions of the form, but sought to mould it to his will. In this he was not invariably successful, his already noted excesses of musical speech being here yet more clearly revealed. (In this there is, of course, no intention whatever to depreciate the technical value of the composition, which is
Facsimile of two pages from Ernest Bloch's score of his symphony Israel
very great, and once again demonstrates—as though that were necessary—Bloch's assured mastery of the means of expression.) Concerning the emotional content of the quartet the composer has disclosed his program, which we present below, without, however, attaching special importance to it. The complex of the conception represents (to tell it in his own words), the direct expression of my feelings, of my view of the world; it is a part of my life, a reflex of my joys and of my sufferings. The first movement is a lament of purely Hebraic inspiration, a blending of bitterness, of impassioned violence, and of anguish; the second describes a vision of human obliquity, the mouthings of perverse passions and the horrors of a desperate strife; the third movement, of a pastoral character, represents a reverie amid the sublimities of Nature, eternally true and consolatory; while the finale returns to the visions of strife, and concludes in a resigned pessimism.

The question whether the composition communicates, more or less, the sensations of these four psychological phases, interests us up to a certain point; nowadays it is an admitted fact that in music every one finds what he is capable of feeling or disposed to feel. And some find nothing in it—the fault being sometimes their own, and sometimes that of the author, who put nothing into it.—What is beyond all question is, that Bloch's quartet merits a place beside Schelomo as constituting one more proof of the musician's genial creative power, and so makes the ignorance of European audiences with regard to his best work seem the more deplorable to us—that is, their ignorance of that which, as we have seen, had its inception in the Hebrew Poems, and whose latest examples (with which we are not acquainted) are the symphony Israel, the opera Jezebel, on which Bloch has been working for some years, and the Suite for viola which took the Coolidge prize and was performed, according to the conditions of the competition, at last year's Berkshire Festival with most triumphant success. On the strength of American criticism, furthermore, we stated that this Suite marks a new orientation in the composer's art and makes us look forward to his future with ever-increasing confidence.¹

¹This much discussed Suite was first played, in its original version for viola and piano, by Louis Bailly and Harold Bauer at Pittsfield, Mass., on September 27, 1919. Even those who disliked the suite could not but admire the superlatively artistic performance. The suite was played for the first time in New York, at Aeolian Hall, November 18, 1919, by Emil Ferrir and Harold Bauer who rejoined Louis Bailly for the second New York performance before the Society of the Friends of Music in January, 1920. The first performances of the suite in its version for viola and orchestra took place with Louis Bailly as soloist at concerts of the National Symphony Orchestra under Artur Bodanzky at Carnegie Hall, New York, on November 5 and 7, 1920. The very
Bloch's music—and never, as in the present case, could it be spoken of as the complex of all his compositions, without making distinctions and classifications—possesses the character of the man; it is a music practically lacking in suavity and adornment; it seems rough-hewn with a chisel from a rude block of granite. Its lines are not smoothly bent, nor do they stretch out in soft curves, nor do they voluptuously seduce the sense by the fascination of grace; Bloch's music grips you and shakes you; it seizes you like a savage and sways you at will. His music makes you suffer; it is the expression of an intense nature that gave ear to it, and it is the most faithful and forceful expression of the impression made on one by hearing or reading Bloch's compositions. In Schelomo, in the Psalms, there are no twilight lassitudes or languors of tenderness; the music of Bloch does not know the meaning of that Verlainesque phrase uttered to evoke within us a sort of voluptuous stupefying grace; it is the expression of a savage that seizes you and shakes you. His music makes you suffer; it is the expression of an intense nature that gave ear to it, and it is the most faithful and forceful expression of the impression made on one by hearing or reading Bloch's compositions. In Schelomo, in the Psalms, there are no twilight lassitudes or languors of tenderness; the music of Bloch does not know the meaning of that Verlainesque phrase uttered to evoke within us a sort of voluptuous stupefying grace; it is the expression of a savage that seizes you and shakes you.

The essential fact remains that in either version Ernest Bloch has given us the greatest work for viola in musical literature, and what is more important, one of the most significant and powerful works of our time.—Ed.
passions clash and on the horizon hovers the dazzling red of a conflagration continually renewed, that fitfully illumines the fatal struggle of humankind.

This Hebrew does not see the happenings amidst which he is living. It seems as though he had lived always, and had already sung in the reign of the son of David. His art appears anachronistic, because it is eternal; its idioms may appear emphatic and magniloquent if we measure them by the standard of our social practices, of our conventions, of our mediocre egoisms and pygmy hypocrisies.

The times in which we live, those of my generation—that is, of the generation which is about to arrive at its thirtieth year—have produced a Debussy and a Bloch; and never has a more striking contrast appeared to one who is familiar with the works of these two musicians. But Debussy is much more representative of his period; if one were to name the musical admirable Crichton of the vicennium preceding the world-war, he would have to say, without hesitation, Debussy. A vicennium of bewilderment and expectancy; anxious, pallid years; an epoch of crises of volition, and of the weakening (even the negation) of ethical values.

Bloch's period of fruition synchronizes almost exactly with the tremendous conflict whereby the world has been convulsed and overturned as by a terrific earthquake; can this signify that the new epoch is beginning, and that, in matters musical, Bloch is to be its leader? To affirm this seems venturesome; and yet we venture to do so, so many are the signs and tokens which present themselves to confirm us in our idea.

Certain it is, that the immensity of the drama whose final scene has not yet been shown, the primordial grandeur of the struggle for the hegemony of the world, the revulsion of mankind to elemental passions goaded to an unheard-of paroxysm, and, finally, the ostentatious disdain for every acquired habit of a refined and cultivated community, find echoes and utterance in the most forceful pages of the Genevese musician. In them we recognize that musical expression which best succeeds in conveying the impressions of the life unfolding all around us; in them we descry the lightnings of the tempest, we hear the fierce voices of men hurled one against the other in furious turmoil;—and we listen to the voice of God, that reaches us through a rift in the clouds and renews our faith in life.

To-day it seems to us that Bloch's creative activity has thrown off its shackles; his affirmation of will and of strength
awakens echoes in our inmost souls, shaken by the tempest; his musical speech, that yesterday told of the storm, is to-day an expression of the necessity for our introspective refreshment at the wellsprings of all spiritual life, and for the wholesome development of our spiritual natures and of intellects capable of sane and fruitful thinking.

If it be indispensable—as it is—to be immersed body and soul in the life we are living, and at the same time to nourish one's self on the substance of the past, new senses will be needed for interpreting the world, a new language free from all trammels for expounding its ultimate meaning. Yes, in very truth: il nous faut des barbares!

**Bio-Bibliographical Note**

The life of this musician is not devoid of interest to any one who devotes himself to the study of his works; it will, therefore, be opportune to describe it here at some length.

Ernest Bloch, of Hebrew parentage, was born at Geneva, July 24, 1880; his father was a clock-merchant. None of his family had pursued musical studies or had shown any special aptitude for the art of tones. The boy began by studying the violin in his native town, but at the age of eleven he decided to devote himself entirely to composition. He made a solemn vow to do so; this vow he wrote down on a sheet of paper which he burned in the open air on a heap of stones, as if carrying out a rite of his people. Naturally, he encountered the opposition of his parents, but he nevertheless succeeded in repairing to Brussels (violin with Schorg and Isayé, composition with Rasse), and later to Frankfort, where he entered the school of Ivan Knorr. He passed something over a year at Munich under Thuille, then two at Paris, and returned to Geneva in 1904.

As usually happens—and it would have been a wonder if, in the case of a musician of Bloch's talent, matters had gone otherwise—no one cared to interest himself in him or his works; orchestra directors and concert managers equivocally “took under advisement” the scores of the unknown writer, who—it should be added—was not of a temperament to seek favor insistently or to resort to indirect means for the accomplishment of his object. Bloch was not excessively perturbed, his tenacious will and a characteristic spirit of fatalism sustained him then and thereafter, even when destiny was still more cruelly opposed. His father's affairs were rapidly becoming difficult, a doubtful future was impending
over the musician and his family. And all at once Bloch begins to sell cuckoo-clocks; he takes entire charge of the slender paternal interests, learns in brief space the science of commercial accounts, and commercial laws and customs, travels in Germany as salesman and agent for his goods, is daily absorbed in business. Meanwhile he he working on his Macbeth; in November, 1910, the opera was produced at the Opéra-Comique, and Bloch hastened to Paris, remaining there for the time required to assist at the rehearsals and to attend the representation. Chauvinistic criticism regarded it askance; it was a public success, but the clans of his Parisian colleagues consigned the work to the tomb. Bloch philosophically returned to Geneva and resumed his dual rôle of administrator and artist.

During this period (1909-10) he conducted the concerts at Lausanne and Neufchatel; after two years his post was taken by one of his pupils. Bloch did not wax profane; he assisted at the new conductor's rehearsals, and aided him with his advice. In the following year he was chosen professor of composition and esthetics at the Conservatory of Geneva, but in 1915 he was dispossessed of that function. He retired without animosity, and fell back on his work.

His compositions were brought out for the first time in Switzerland, but the name of Bloch did not pass the frontiers; for Europe he is to-day—we repeat it—virtually unknown.

But Bloch clings, above all, to his freedom. He is a man of fantastic pride; he cannot be tamed by hunger. If Fortune does not come, he will not go in search of her. He submitted himself to the most onerous toil to gain a livelihood for himself and his family; but no one has made him swerve by a hair's breadth from his path. He knows whither he would go—or, rather, he knows what he can do, and does it; to him nothing else matters.

In America, where his genius is celebrated and his works are continually performed, he arrived as a man unknown, at the head of the orchestra accompanying Maude Allan, the dancer; from Ohio he came to New York without a penny, without friends, with nothing whatever, and he sought nothing of any one. His compositions have made their way on their own merits. In America there exists a cult of such fighters of tough fibre, of such monolithic men whose moral stature is of a sort that towers above the crowd. And when the crowd recognizes them, it perforce bows down before them and worships them as gods.

Of Bloch's compositions listed below, those with an asterisk have been published or will be published shortly by the New York house of
G. Schirmer, both in full orchestral score and in piano score. *Macbeth* alone is the property of G. Astruc & Cie and printed by Enoch & Cie of Paris.

1896—*Orientale*, symphonic poem.
1900—*Vivre-Aimer*, symphonic poem.
1902–2—Symphony in C sharp minor.

1905—*Hiver–Printemps*, two symphonic poems.
1906—*Poèmes d’Automne* (B. Rodès), for voice and piano:
   1. La Vagabonde.
   2. Le Décîn.
   3. L’Abri.
   4. Invocation.
1913—*Trois Poèmes juifs*, for orchestra:
   1. Danse.
   2. Rite.
   3. Cortège funèbre.
1912–14—*Two Psalms* (adapted from the Hebrew by E. Fleg), for soprano and orchestra (or piano):
   1. Psalm 114.
   2. Psalm 137.
1916—*Schelomo* (Solomon), Hebrew rhapsody for violoncello and orchestra (or piano).
*Psalm 22* (adapted from the Hebrew by E. Fleg), for baritone and orchestra (or piano).
*String-quartet in B minor.
1916–18—*Israel*, symphony in F.
1918–19—*Suite for viola and piano* (or orchestra). Took the Coolidge prize in 1919.¹

(Translated by Theodore Baker.)

¹To this list must be added the Violin Sonata of 1920. The composer is also said to be composing a pianoforte concerto. Contrary to the belief of his distinguished Italian critic, the life of Ernest Bloch has not been a bed of roses in America of which country he has become a naturalized citizen. Recognition, sweetened by more or less intelligent opposition, there has been indeed, but also the struggle to make a living as teacher and conductor. It is to be hoped that the recent appointment of Ernest Bloch as organizer and director of the new Cleveland conservatory will not interfere with his creative work as a composer. In saying this, I have in mind the experience of noted American scholars who became college presidents and whom administrative problems compelled to abandon creative work.—Ed.
ARE THE CLASSICS DOOMED?

By D. C. PARKER

ARE the classics doomed? If we ask this question it is because there is a current of unrest in some quarters which it would be futile to ignore. The modern spirit of enquiry is abroad and no mere sentimental consideration is permitted to arrest its activities. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and many others on whose brows History has set the laurel wreath of wisdom and heroism are subjected to a close scrutiny by those with new ears and new eyes. There is nothing alarming in this. Every reasonable person knows that the verdict of competent criticism is more to be desired than the fulsome flattery of assumption, and the masters will leave the hands of the most rigorous expert with plenty of virtue to their credit. We can understand the man who says in effect, "I have been told Beethoven is a great composer. I am not content with what I have been told. I am going to put the assertion to proof." But we have to face a kind of impatience or dissatisfaction that is manifesting itself at the present time. What are you going to say to the man who tells you that Bach is a bore, Mozart trivial, Schubert sugary, Beethoven tedious?

What we must do, I think, is to search for the cause of this sense of dissatisfaction. Is it in the man himself? If it be due to an obvious inability to recognise a good thing, there is nothing more to be said. If it be not, we have to trace the feeling of disappointment to its source. This, I believe, is to be attributed in many cases to the effect of modern music on certain temperaments. The music of these times is ubiquitous. Of necessity, criticism is largely concerned with composers whose works provide ample texts and are prolific in critical interest. Stravinsky, Schönberg, Grainger, Strauss, Ravel, Delius, Casella—the commentator finds a multitude of themes to discuss in connection with their art. Along with this goes, in various centres, frequency of performance. So some people keenly alive to the value and interest of contemporary music are quite naturally influenced by it. What to the rigid conservative is chaos is not chaos to them. What seems daring to the mandarin is to the explorer the merest commonplace. The quickness of thought, the freedom of form, the tossing aside of clichés—with all of these the eager student of modernism is
thoroughly at home. The appearance of the unexpected does not disturb his equanimity, for he expects the unexpected. The disdain of convention troubles him not at all, for unconventionality is itself a convention.

We have to imagine one immersed in and much affected by a study of the modern bards listening to Schubert's C major Symphony, or the C minor of Beethoven. He may tell us that Schubert is leisurely. The composer takes a long time to tell his story. We can often anticipate what is to come. The variety and attractiveness of up-to-date scoring are not present to speed the work on its way. To get anything out of this situation it is necessary to remember that appreciation is a very subtle thing. To examine the rationale of appreciation would necessitate a lengthy excursus which cannot here be permitted. But it may be assumed that appreciation is of three kinds, intellectual, sensuous, and intellectual and sensuous. Intellectual appreciation fails because music is an emotional art and the ultimate test of any composer is his power of song. If a composer have no wings he cannot by any reckoning be called great. To say this is not by any means to say that intellectual appreciation does not bring thrills of its own. Sensuous appreciation is that of people who are content to allow music to play upon them, to excite or otherwise affect them; they have no curiosity concerning it, no desire to find out how the effect of this or that is obtained. There remains that kind of appreciation which is a delicate blend of mind and soul, the kind of appreciation which neither makes of music a mechanical affair, nor yet regards it as an intoxicant. The difficulty of touching this point with advantage is substantially increased by the fact that in appreciation apprehension plays a large and important part. The artistic nature knows that such and such a thing is right, and this knowledge is founded on an instinct and cannot be proved by mathematics.

It is plain, then, that music is largely what we bring into its presence. The "approach" is always a vital matter and if we listen to the classics we must listen without vain preoccupation. It is foolish to expect the tempo of the twentieth century from the nineteenth, the melody of Wagner from Mozart, the mood of the romanticists from the contrapuntists, the scoring of Liszt or Rimsky-Korsakoff from Haydn. The literary man knows very well that the vocabulary of Chaucer is not that of Henry James, the style of Shakespeare not that of Barrie. But he does not judge the earlier writers from the standpoint of the later, and one has no right to judge the classics from the standpoint of the moderns.
There is a unanimity in all human effort, as Emerson remarked. Ultimately all good musicians meet on common ground, in that they seek to express that which is in them. It is the methods of expression which differ, and allowance ought surely to be made for this simple fact. One must, consequently, be aware of the temper of the age, the master-thought of the time, the prevailing customs, the means at the disposal of the composer, if one is to do him justice. Without the exercise of the historical sense it is difficult to see how the musician can arrive at any accurate assessment of writers, whether of the past or the present.

Do we compromise when we ask for the exercise of this historical faculty? I do not think so. What does the intelligent person expect from Mozart or Beethoven? Obviously what Mozart or Beethoven has to give. If you are not unreasonable in your demand, you ought to find some grounds for satisfaction. This notwithstanding, the objection may be put forward that in spite of all the talk about environment and the spirit of the time, the music of the classicists is, frankly, dull. One must be sure that, in saying this, one has given it the benefit of approaching it with "a clean slate." There is the larger view which if a man possess he will not allow himself to be robbed of many riches by a conspiracy of circumstance. He will not allow himself to be robbed of the past because he has penetrated the secret of the present. He will not gain Scriabin at the expense of Mozart, Stravinsky at that of Bach. The world is a large place. It has toys for the babe, instruments for strong hands, a store of memories for the aged. On every side lies untold wealth. Petöfi sings the freedom of the plains, Scott the land of the mountain and the flood. Art, like the world, is a mirror. To the vital and interested personality every hedgerow proclaims its beauty, every man is a history, every city a great stage on which is acted daily an unending drama. But one must insist that the reality of all this beauty and romance and pathos and interminable interest is evident only to those with eyes to gaze upon them. In music we must take the large and open view. We must see the blood relationship between the past and the present. The sanest modernism is that which has a strong sense of association, which makes us conscious of the links in the chain that the centuries have forged, which recognises the growth of ideas, which subscribes to the fact that all artists have their ancestry. It is this modernism which shows us the figures of the past and present rubbing shoulders on the vast tapestry of history. I say this as one intensely interested in the music of the time, as one aware that the phrase
"modern music" represents much. Eclecticism is an admirable thing, and it is not an enemy of the right kind of catholicity. He pays a big price for his understanding of and delight in modern works who finds the music of the past utterly destitute of interest and charm.

The plea for the exercise of the historical sense is, therefore, a thoroughly justifiable one; the more so because to see the classics as they are is not easy, and to see modern music as it is, decidedly difficult. The measure of a man's dissatisfaction is not the measure of his education unless discrimination be enthroned. It is, surely, an aim of education to give a man a sense of the real richness of art, to develop his power of selection, to help him to derive the greatest possible benefit from all that has been accomplished. One does not need to be told that the good thing and the valuable is not to be found only in one country or in one period. The entire world holds up its gifts with both hands and asks your acceptance in persuasive accents. The question of praise or blame is concerned solely with merits or defects, and these can be dealt with satisfactorily only if we equip ourselves patiently for the task. We may meet our fretful modernist friends to the extent of agreeing that a restatement of our attitude to the classics is imperatively called for. The musical Homer sometimes nods, the musical sun is not without its spots, and the classical master must be neither a superstition nor one of a group of infallible beings. We sometimes feel that mechanism shouts its triumph over inspiration, and long for the composer to get into his stride again; there are moments when the homage paid to traditional etiquette seems to us altogether excessive. But the recognition of this gives no sanction for wholesale condemnation. Our concern is to hold the balance justly.

It is inevitable that estimates of the music of the past should change from time to time. In its own way and according to its own fashion, every generation sets about the business of giving or withholding marks. New discoveries mean not only an enlargement of music's domains, but an alteration in our attitude towards what is familiar to ear and eye. Monteverde and Gluck, to cite extreme cases, are not to us what they were to their contemporaries. To-day few people are likely to discover in Gluck and Spontini all that Berlioz found there. The continual sifting is all to the good. It has a twofold effect. It tends to make us conscious of the defects of a man, and of these we ought to be conscious if we are to see him as he is; it tends to make us conscious of the greatness of a man whose powers have not hitherto been fully acknowledged.
A really important matter to recognise is that a distaste for or impatience with the music of the past advertises a distinct limitation of sympathies, that it is, in fact, a defect, and not a proof of superiority. Much could be written against fulsome adoration of the classics and the vain repetition of the items by which they are most widely known. And who can measure the amount of harm done to the cause of classical music by the injudicious advocate and the objectionable defender? How often, alas, does the man whose mind is closed, barred and bolted against liberal movements and progressive tendencies pose as the staunch champion of Bach and Mozart and Beethoven in a wicked world running its riotous and unseemly course to the wanton and unashamed strains of modernism; how often does he speak as though he and he alone had access to their inner secrets and knew the magic formula which opens the treasure-cave! Nevertheless, as I have hinted, the classics can stand the most searching criticism in that, after all has been said and done, they will yet have something to say to us. Bach, for example, is full of suggestiveness. The vigorous fibre of his music and the vital play incidental to the contrapuntal style make him far more modern than many writers of more recent date; and Mozart, whose sense of economy, balance, and note values has been admired by many composers, still has an interest for those occupied with the technique of writing.

There are times when we are impressed by the odyssey of the art-work. At its birth it has much antagonism to face and, if it survive the encounter, it passes to the slightly less hostile atmosphere of controversy. This phase is usually succeeded by that of almost general acceptance. Then comes, perhaps, the attitude of disparagement. So what commenced its career in the salon of the rejected may terminate it in the necropolis of art, the museum. Art is long and life is short, and man, an ephemeral animal, sees things in terms of his own duration upon the earth. The hills and sea alone are the silent witnesses of the death of what we call immortality. Are the classics, then, immortal? Will Beethoven be played a hundred years after this date? This latter question we can safely leave to posterity. It is for posterity to set the matter in the right focus according to its light. What we are called upon to decide is whether the classics have any interest for us, whether they touch a responsive note in our humanity, whether they give us visions that leave us less forlorn.
Let the reader pronounce judgment according to his temperament and disposition. But let him not forget that what has meant so much to so many musical people will not be dealt the death-blow by the cheap disparagement of egotistical superiority. Than that of giving the classicists and the modernists their places, few more urgent critical tasks exist. A thing is not great because it was written by one whose name is to be found in impressive volumes; a thing is not small in interest and unworthy of attention because a man named Smith who lives over the way penned it. We must concentrate on the essential and bear in mind that true insight is born of sympathy.
THE WAGNERIAN CULTURE SYNTHESIS

By WILHELM PETERSON-BERGER

A PROMINENT historian and Wagner critic, H. S. Chamberlain, in his great work "The Foundations of the 19th Century," makes a distinction between the words culture and civilization. The former word he applies to spiritual development, the latter to material, a distinction which seems to be more and more generally accepted. At the same time, he includes under the term culture the three spheres of religion, science, and art.

If one accepts this distinction and division, then the evolution of culture must be looked upon, not merely as a parallel movement within each and every one of its three spheres, but rather as a reciprocal action, and above all as cooperative. For it is clearly evident, that not one of these three spheres, isolated from the others, could satisfactorily carry out the idea of culture.

This, then, is the essence of synthetic art. And as, in consequence, all direct cultural development is manifested chiefly in a struggle for completeness and unity, so the climax and rhythm of the movement are marked by more or less comprehensive syntheses.

Without attempting to set forth in detail the general laws by which culture syntheses come into being, we shall now try to find out by what right one may call the artistic result of Richard Wagner's life-work a culture synthesis.

It is peculiar to the idea and nature of art, that the innermost being of an art work must always be presented in such a way as to act upon the sense of comprehension. This action, as we know, does not need to be direct. It depends upon the inclination, education, susceptibility, disposition, freedom of form or subjection to preconceived notions, and other qualities of the person, whether he must look or listen once or many times, before he apprehends the spirit of the work. But when he does apprehend, it is not his intelligence, his knowledge, or his will, but it is his sensibility that is first touched and made to vibrate, and which, at this touch, instinctively comprehends the essence of the work.

Therefore it would be of great value to our investigation, and would give us a suitable starting-point, if we could, in a general

1Translated from the author's "Richard Wagner som Kultur-företeelse." (Chapter IV: Den Wagnerska Kultursynthesen.)
way, determine the conditions under which a sufficiently interested
and educated, but at the same time sufficiently unprepared and
fairly unprejudiced listener, receives his first really conscious and
intelligent impression of a Wagner drama.

There are many Wagner admirers to be found to bear witness
with regard to their experience in this respect, but before appealing
to them, I shall cite a case which falls within my own field of
observation.

This case dates back to some twenty years or so ago. It con-
cerns a gifted and intelligent man who, born of the peasant class and
brought up in a thinly populated district, found opportunity only
when of mature age to follow his natural bent and devote him-
self to study. Of course, he wanted to be a preacher. His turn of
mind, as well as the devout spirit of the educated people with whom
he had hitherto come in contact, scarcely recognized any other
course of study as honorable. For the theatrical art, of which he
knew nothing, he cherished a horror which had been instilled into
him, and was possessed with the preconceived notion that its
influence was something injurious, if not dangerous, for the spirit-
ual welfare of mankind.

But he was musically inclined, and was attracted to the art of
sound. Of worldly music he knew little, but so much the more
of liturgical and church music. His knowledge embraced the
field of oratorio, and he admired both Bach and Händel, and
Mendelssohn as well.

During his course of study, this man came out into the world
somewhat, and coming in contact with other music lovers, he
often heard Wagner's name mentioned, and his art discussed in
such a way as to arouse his curiosity. Obtaining a closer know-
ledge of this artist's life and work, he found to his great surprise
that there was and had been for a long time a controversy as to
the legitimacy and truth of his work in both art and theory. It
was something strikingly new to him, and difficult to understand,
that art could be a subject of controversy. And his surprise was
not diminished by the discovery that in some respects this con-
trovery resembled the spiritual conflicts and passionate out-
bursts connected with the many external difficulties and inner
ruptures and crises of the early Christian church. His historical
training put him in a position to see the resemblance between the
Wagner movement and a missionary or religious excitement.

Indeed, it is scarcely necessary to add that his curiosity was
only increased by this discovery, and that at the earliest opportu-
nity he broke his resolution not to attend the theatre. When a
Wagner evening was announced at the opera house, he promptly bought a ticket for the performance which was, as it happened, "Tannhäuser."

Before discussing the effect which this drama had upon him, let us consider for a moment if the case is sufficiently typical to be of value as evidence.

The man was, without doubt, in the matter of esthetic preparation, a truly ideal Wagner listener. He knew none of the "aims" of art, and was pledged to no party. But he possessed an ideal temperament and a certain simple, general culture. He understood serious music, and had by virtue of his calling acquired some experience in interpreting the words, both of song and recitative. To be sure, he was governed by an ethical prejudice against all scenic art; but, as we shall see, this does not lessen the general significance of the case, but, on the contrary, strengthens it. Therefore, we may accept this listener as reasonably typical for our purpose.

Meanwhile, it remains for us to determine whether or not "Tannhäuser" was the most suitable drama for presenting the Wagnerian art to such a completely uninitiated, though otherwise suitable listener. The question is not difficult to answer, if we remember that the erotic life problem, which in varied forms and acts constitutes the foundation of reality and experience in all of Wagner's dramas, here in "Tannhäuser" takes on its most universally intelligible and, for the majority of people, the most easily recognized form; and that this work, for this and other reasons, occupies a strikingly central position among Wagner's productions. We may say therefore with certainty, that the choice of dramas which chance made for our curious Wagner novice was the best that could have been made.

It is hardly probable that the presentation was a model one. Nevertheless, the impression received by the listener was to him entirely unexpected—new, rich, deep, and thrilling. Afterward, he summed up the details and expressed the key-note in a single word: worship. All the factors in the work, the life problem, the action, music, characters all fused into something with which he was familiar in the calling he had chosen—a public religious exercise, the observance of a cult.

It can not be denied that this characterization is striking. The ordinary irreverent opera-goer perceives, indeed, the seriousness of the Tannhäuser drama, and its close connection with Christian religious views, yet always, as it were, through the veil of worldly amusement. This unpractised listener, with his prejudice against
all forms of theatrical art, discovered at the first glance the strongest, deepest, and most distinguishing characteristic of the Wagner art, its serious religious note.

Indeed, it must be admitted that this is especially conspicuous in "Tannhäuser," with its many distinctly religious ideas, motifs, and situations, as sin, repentance, prayer, pardon, condemnation, holy pilgrims, Madonna pictures. But this has a specifically Catholic stamp—and the listener was an orthodox Lutheran—and we all know how easily, in an ordinary uninspired opera presentation, one's attention is turned away from the essential and directed toward distracting details, such as new singers, costumes, theatre parties, decorations, or scenic arrangement. All these and similar details are what the superficial, habitual theatre-goer first notices. Therefore, when this man, totally inexperienced as he was in this line, first of all perceived something else, it was due entirely to the fact that his being was attuned to the key-note of the work, so that he instantly vibrated in unison with the ringing force which welled up through his consciousness, in spite of a host of bewildering and half understood details.

Numberless listeners, among them both greater and lesser critics—Wolzogen, Glasenapp, Schuré, Chamberlain, and others—have been affected in a similar way, in particular by "Tannhäuser." One can, in fact, read this more or less clearly in their enunciations and analyses; and yet, most of them have been so bound by their esthetic and musical theories that the question which lay so near at hand, as to whether this religious spirit might not possibly be common to all of Wagner's productions, has never once occurred to them.

Yet such is the case. Let us imagine that a person such as I have just described, introduced to Wagner in the same way, is impelled by his first strong impression to investigate Wagner's other works. This very reasonable assumption will prove to be particularly significant in its results. We shall find support for our view that all of Wagner's art is fundamentally a manifestation of religious sentiment, and at the same time we shall get a picture of the culture synthesis which we suggested in the beginning.

After such an initiation, the next work which a yearning Wagner novice gets to know, presumably is "Lohengrin," which follows "Tannhäuser" chronologically. That this work likewise strengthens and confirms the previously acquired impression of religious sentiment, every one who has any conception of its purport feels. The entire drama is a brilliantly symbolic presentation of the highest doctrines of theoretical Christianity, above
all, the doctrine of faith and its significance in the struggle between
the powers of light and darkness.

Following "Lohengrin," it is probable that our novice comes to
"The Flying Dutchman" which, together with the two previously
mentioned belongs to the group of Wagner's most often pre-
presented works, all of them being of a popular religious nature. Here in the "Dutchman" he finds again the well-known theme
taken from the Christian and other religions, that of sacrifice and
redemption, used as the chief dramatic motif.

But at the same time he learns that this theme, on the one
hand incarnated in the ghostly romanticism of the Dutchman tradi-
tion, and on the other appearing in a milieu of idyllic-realistic
commonplace, is made up of such scattered and destructive
elements that the religious note does not always sound forth
clearly, although there is plainly an effort in that direction through-
out the work. If our Wagner friend remembers that the "Dutch-
man" is the first real achievement of the music dramatist in this
field, he will find the effort still more interesting, and will see in it
a confirmation of his first Tannhäuser impression.

We can now imagine that his interest and enthusiasm have
increased until, along with his cultivation of the Wagnerian
dramas, he begins the study of their mythical, literary, and folk-
lore sources, the Celto-Germanic and early Scandinavian sagas,
as well as Wagner's own theories of art and critical writings, his
life and spiritual development. Therewith two significant dis-
coversies await him. First, he will learn that Wagner himself, in
his brochure on "Religion and Art," states that these two mani-
festations of the human soul-life are intimately related and mu-
tually dependent one upon the other. Second, he will find that
among the dramas of which Wagner completed the literary part
alone and never composed the music, one treats of Volund the
Smith, a confessedly erotic-artistic life problem, while in another,
"Jesus of Nazareth," Wagner does not hesitate to present dra-
matically the most religious of all figures in the history of hu-
manity. In general, he will learn that the great founders of reli-
gion, among them Buddha, kept Wagner's imagination busy in a
characteristic way.

Thus prepared, he goes to see the five dramas next in order
after "Lohengrin": the four parts of "The Ring of the Nibelung,"
and "Tristan and Isolde."

His expectation of perceiving here a religious undertone of the
same sort as that in the preceding works, is disappointed when he
learns that all these works taken together form a single group
among Wagner's productions, a group which may be designated as the "philosophical." However, that insight into the nature of philosophy which we may assume with him, makes it possible for him to discover, differentiated somewhat from this philosophy, an atmosphere of deep and passionately pulsating religious sentiment. Further, he finds that the purely philosophical element, not only where it steps naked into the light, but even more perhaps where the artist succeeds in blending and fusing it with the whole, impresses upon the work a peculiar stamp of universality, of something which goes beyond the usual boundaries of art. And it is this universality which, without direct religious action, nevertheless elevates and sustains the work within the realm of the religious mood, and calls forth corresponding admiration.

Certain it is, that in a closer study of the separate Nibelung dramas, he will encounter unexplainable contradictions in the action, and dull passages in both words and music. But besides this, nevertheless, in such fundamental scenes as that of the death augury in "The Valkyr," the awakening of Brünnhilde in "Siegfried," and the death march in "The Twilight of the Gods," he will find that underneath it all the stream of religious feeling runs unbroken, watering with its flood the roots of this Yggdrasil of music dramatics, "The Ring of the Nibelung." This powerful composition, he perceives, is built up on religious myths and symbols, treating not only of the beginning of the world, but of the end, and of its redemption from suffering through love.

By this time, therefore, a fairly complete familiarity with this great work, and the study of its fundamental spiritual note, are calculated to awaken within the mind of our investigator a conception of the entire subject of synthesis in art, and at the same time to develop more acutely his comprehension of the religious element in Wagner's art. He comes now to understand that the religion which is professed and enunciated in and through this art, is endlessly far above the stiff, scholastic formulas of the usual dogmas, and is in itself the quintessence of the so-called creed of common life, by virtue of its high spirituality a confessionless, and—further—a nameless religion.

The study of "Tristan" will not disturb this view. The philosophy of this work is that of Schopenhauer, and its acknowledged pessimism is related both to Buddhism and Christianity. Likewise, the part which the "world" plays in its complex of ideas, reminds one strongly of the position which it occupies in the scheme of Christianity. But more than all these external forms, must the unparalleled passionate strength of feeling expressed in
the Tristan drama lead the thought into the sphere of religion where alone, up to this time, was such ecstasy known—ecstasy which in itself is of a religious nature, and which, in its fiery glow, melts and transforms into luminous emblems and metaphysical symbols all within its circle. And all this in "Tristan" is even more incapable of being formulated, still more inexpressible and spiritual, than in the Nibelung dramas.

If our Wagner friend is the least bit sharp-sighted psychologically—and in this respect he ought to have developed by this time—then this study of "Tristan" will surely remind him of a point so often demonstrated by psychological investigation, the relation between eroticism and religion. And it is this relation which Wagner brings out so clearly in his art. Yes, one may venture the assertion that Wagner's dramas are as strongly pervaded with a religious fervor or ecstasy, as the life problems are manifestly erotic. This is one of the conclusions to which a study of Wagner leads.

Our coming expert has now progressed so far on his way of initiation that there remain only two dramas, the latest and perhaps the most wonderful of all: "The Meistersingers of Nuremberg," and "Parsifal." We may imagine that in order to familiarize himself with these, he sets out for the festival at Bayreuth, where "The Meistersingers" likewise ought preferably to be seen and heard in its national setting. Not one of Wagner's works is better suited to that stage than this happy, sunshiny comedy with its mild, conciliatory philosophy of life, its humor and its triumphant music, giving as a whole a lightly sketched but fairly historical picture of German temperament, German feeling and culture. No work can ever illustrate more clearly or more brilliantly than this, the national thought and cultural significance of Bayreuth, in its character of the logical and real conclusion of the Wagnerian art production.

It is not difficult to find the religious element in this work. It is wholly and completely embodied in the figure of Hans Sachs on the one hand in a more general way, in his piety, his understanding and fine resignation in the presence of youth, yes, even in his humor. On the other hand, it is to be seen in his specifically Wagnerian conception of art, which naturally is Wagner's own. This pervades and controls a principal and integral part of the action of the drama, but is summarized in a highly characteristic manner in Sachs' concluding speech by the words "the sacred German art." His entire view is expressed in that one word "sacred."
With Wagner art was a religion, the most generally accepted expression for his religious feeling—therefore, it was “sacred.” It never occurred to him in any of his many theoretical works to discuss the raison d’être of art. So free as he was from every trace of skepticism or agnosticism, it was impossible for him even to question this view of art, and he had but little idea of its biological significance. Art had for him an absolute value. The word to him meant origin: in the beginning there was art. Viewed from this standpoint, the personally religious element in the philosophical dramas of “The Nibelung’s Ring” and “Tristan” stands out still more conspicuously.

But the art that Wagner meant was not a superficial, plebeian embellishment and decoration of the commonplace of everyday life; it was brought about by the coöperation of all the separate arts. It was a lifting up of the soul to the spiritualized heights of religion, to the pure realm of deep, though radiantly happy seriousness, to a plane the most immaterial possible in this material world, a plane which presented a picture or interpretation of life so drenched with the tears of pain and joy, so steeped in the silent and eternal sunshine of truth, that in its presence all other pictures or interpretations dissolved and melted away into nothingness.

All this he attained—after years of struggle and effort, and even mistakes—in clearest and most consummate form in “Parsifal,” that beautiful work of his old age. With this “Bühnenweihfestspiel” (that is, festival play, intended to consecrate, to sanctify the theatre) he sets the final official seal of religious feeling on his entire life-work, and gives us the key to the inmost secret of his being: he was an artistic reformer and promulgator of religion.

But with the experience of “Parsifal,” and with the discovery of its relation to the personality of its originator, our Wagner investigator has concluded his initiation, and he now emerges a full-fledged expert. The magic circle of the great dramas closes about him in a symbolization of the highest religious sentiment. Here in “Parsifal” he receives once more his first impression, though endlessly widened, deepened, and clarified. Here he finds again not only the Tannhäuser struggle between elemental eroticism and religio-esthetic romanticism, but also the radiant faith symbolism of “Lohengrin,” the redemption theme of “The Flying Dutchman” and “The Ring,” the noble gentleness of “The Meistersingers,” together with the light and joy of its midsummer mood.

That Wagner, in his treatise on “Religion and Art,” denies every intention of founding a new religion, is naturally no evidence against the correctness of this statement, since it is a question of what he did, and not of what he thought he was doing.
here subdued to the Good Friday spirit, and finally, even the intense fervor and passion of the "Tristan" music, now purified of all worldly desire or earthly dross. "Parsifal" is the essence and sum total of the entire Wagner dramatic art, the synthesis of synthesis.

If now we try to get a survey of the store of knowledge which our Wagner expert, during his analytical investigation, has accumulated in his memory and in his library, we shall find that it comprises all the essential results gleamed from Germany's spiritual evolution up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and that it gives a very complete picture of the cultural and religious history of the German people, its literary, dramatic, and musical development, its philosophical productivity, its legendary treasure, its race kinships and origin.

On this basis, it becomes clear that Wagner's artistic life work may be truthfully designated as a culture synthesis. And this becomes still more evident if we now follow up the association of ideals which all our previous reasoning logically requires, and thus disclose the connection between the religious key-note of the Wagner art, and its manifest character of a musical culture syntheses.

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When Chamberlain, the author mentioned in our introduction, undertook his division of culture into three spheres, it is not impossible that he may have had in mind one of Goethe's most remarkable aphorisms: He who has art and science, has likewise religion; he who has neither of the first two, may have religion.

So runs the great poet's enunciation, remarkable for the reason that it expresses so clearly the well-known, intensely universal and synthetic nature of his genius. He obviously formulated his thought with intent, to the effect that religion may take on two entirely different aspects or forms of evolution, and must not be looked upon merely as a point of departure or hypothesis, but also as the final conclusion and quintessence of development of science and art. It is clear that to him, as well as to many other spiritually great minds such as Beethoven or Wagner, that the word religion did not mean any definite dogma or fixed creed. Such things, indeed, merely signified an incidental, though perhaps at times long extended mediary period in the evolution of religion from simple materialism to the highest form of conscious idealism. No, Goethe's religion, like that of many others before
and since, undoubtedly may be described as the positive attitude taken by the willing, feeling, and knowing—perhaps still more, the unknowing—human being, toward the mysteries of reality and infinity, those mysteries which can never be explained logically, that is, as to cause.

And this attitude, which is revealed in the lower stages of development in unconscious myths, and in conscious symbols in the higher stages, is but the expression in its most generally accepted form, of the passionate seriousness of life, and the struggle of the inner being to attain, by way of the highest truths and deepest facts, that completeness which alone constitutes the true value of all genuine religious feeling.

But culture as a biological phenomenon is, as we recall, the highest manifestation and application of a surplus of life energy accumulated in a being capable of development, during centuries of struggle with environment, and liberated only when, in some way, a diminution is brought about in the pressure of the external hardships of life. This surplus—which also may be called a sort of superqualification of pure animal existence, and which therefore distinguishes the primitive people capable of development from those incapable—is the force which has impelled the religion of the past to lift itself from the simple, materialistic stage of nature common to all, up to the plane of highest spirituality and idealism. Such an evolution of necessity emerges sooner or later as a culture synthesis.

But if we try to imagine the different phases of this development, we must first and foremost admit that Goethe was right when he conceived religion as the hypothesis and first source of science and art. Out of the myths, the emotionalism, the doctrines and theories of the original materialistic religion, gradually evolves a desire for truth, for investigation and knowledge. In the same way comes the evolution of art from the practical side of religion, from the forms of primitive worship, in especial from the ceremonial use of rhythm as a means of exciting emotion, as well as from externals such as amulets, symbols, images, or temples.

Science soon splits into many branches and groups, consciously frees itself from religion, and often attacks and opposes her forms of revelation. Likewise, art divides into a number of individual forms, all more or less separate from religion, and endeavoring still further to develop independently of one another.

Meanwhile, unnoticed and without ceasing, the surplus life energy is driving the sap of religion up through both of these shoots from her stem, thus nourishing the process of development.
And during the course of this upward movement, religion herself is developed, purified and transformed, like a gas that is filtered and rarefied. When the individual sciences approach the zenith of their special line of development, she is the secret force which enables them once more to come together in a synthesis.

The sciences unite to form a comprehensive, universal science, philosophy; and the separate arts in the same way bring forth universal art, expressed in the music drama. But when this happens, religion herself also reaches her highest point of refinement and becomes, so to speak, a universal religion, the quintessence of all typically human religious experience and feeling. But as such, she is too immaterial, too incomprehensible, too unassertive, to possess body or form of her own, so she borrows one from art, and takes, very naturally, the form of the most ethereal and most ideal of all, the art of music.

Music has on its part, during the period of isolation, developed to the highest point of spiritual worth and power. Thus, through Bach and Beethoven it has been expanded and refined until it forms the strongest expression of the tragic-humorous conception of life, and as such becomes the body for the spirit of purified religion. Religion becomes music, and music, religion. And in this form of manifestation, she unites with the two lesser syntheses of universal science and universal art. They are absorbed in her, and the last combination takes place and produces the culture synthesis, the symbol of music-religion, the true music drama.

As we have seen, Wagner's art corresponds fairly well to this theory and characterization of the origin of the music drama. But naturally, Wagner's culture synthesis is not the only one possible or conceivable in our day, from the fact that it has, along with the typical, too many individual or incidental features. Such individual features, as we have previously pointed out, are the rôle which eroticism plays in all of the Wagner productions, and the opposition of this eroticism to religion. This opposition has its analogy and secondary manifestation in the contradictory relations between love of the world and love of art, which may be seen in Wagner's attitude toward music as an individual art.

On the other hand, the more or less fundamental religious atmosphere is a necessarily typical feature. For whatever the musical culture synthesis which Europe and humanity may yet bring forth, certain it is, they must have the same roots as Wagner's art. The fibers of life must run back to that first wonderful culture synthesis, the Greek music drama, which, originating in
a form of worship, the Dionysos cult, continued to be a religious service up to the time of its highest development.

This music drama, whose greatest creators, Aeschylos and Sophocles, were deeply imbued with the esoteric and mystic religious spirit of their time, this drama, whose mission was religious purification through instinctive sympathy and awe, began to decline the very moment that religion passed away. It was then that the art of the music drama lost its soul and became an ordinary "public entertainment."

We now know that this decline resulted in complete withering of branch and stem. Life withdrew to the roots, and all efforts at revival continued artificial and fruitless until, after the lapse of centuries, the spirit of tragedy again entered into the drama, when a genius was born, humanly strong enough and richly endowed to embody in his art the most synthetic of all elements, religion.

For the religion which Wagner so passionately proclaimed—which only as music drama can be proclaimed—is tragedy itself, the essence of the culture synthesis, which we have seen evolve from a tragic-humorous conception of life, through centuries of struggle and changes of time, among the highly gifted races of northern Europe.

(Translated by Hester Coddington)
“NICHT MEHR TRISTAN”

By B. M. STEIGMAN

PHONOGRAPHED music is an eminently suitable objective for the smiter of Philistines and the slayer of them with great slaughter. For one thing, its devotees are so many that the warrior has cause enough to appeal for Jehovah’s thunder against them. Then it proceeds from a mechanical contraption, hateful, accordingly, in the ears of the true believer. More than that, it has become commercialized, and with amazing success. It is therefore unmistakably a contrivance of the Children of Darkness. It is an institution, an automaton, banal, crude, lifeless, soulless!

It is or it isn’t art. Its present significance only the deaf could deny. That the mechanical contraption eliminates time and space as obstacles to the hearing of good singing and playing may have far-reaching effects. It is because music more than any other of the dynamic arts is actually only of that point of time we mean by the present, that so much popular misunderstanding as to its “meaning” exists. The interpretative faculty is given scant footing. The phonograph, however imperfectly, does fix performed music for further observation. This leads to understanding, which presently becomes critical. The opera record gives a relentless exposition of what might otherwise have escaped unnoticed.

Now it is not at all unlikely that one of the first results will be the insistence upon operatic sense as well as sound. The words may have to pass muster. Of all the wonders about the opera the strangest is the complacent acceptance of the unbelievable drivel that is the general text. The sharpest theatre-goer, who, if the same crude and absurdly colored bait were laid for him in a play, would utterly condemn it, swallows the whole affair at the opera-house and even believes he has partaken of a rare feast. What matters the story or the language? Who insists upon such extraneous matter cannot possibly care for opera. The passionate lover of music should be blind and deaf to the impenetrable stupidity, the wizened and painted gaudiness, the idiotic prancing and sputtering and fuming, of his beloved. The closer view and
hearing of what it really is may bring him to his senses. The phonograph may help to dispel the enchantment which the distant stage has lent.

The foreign language is something of a refuge. For nonsense appears blatantly exposed only when it stands in the vernacular. The alien tongue is more merciful, for to most of us it is not altogether transparent. The fonder the lover of grand opera, the more reluctant, it would seem, should he be to have it translated. In English, to be sure, it is all arrant rot; but, look you, such may be the thoughts and feelings far away where there are Cannibals that each other eat, the Anthropophagi, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders. They perhaps do express themselves in just such bombast and are naturally given to the maudlin and tawdry.

Such considerations may have had little to do with it;—it may have been only the natural inertia of the opera companies that until the outbreak of the war preserved most opera and music drama in the original. The force that overcame all doubt and inertia was the force that in 1918 preserved civilization on the fields of France. Yet it was not at all spent in the performance. It carried on where there could not possibly be any need for it. It struck with particular violence—of all things—the music drama; the activity than which there is none at a further remove from the daily activities. We might as well have sent an expeditionary force into Arimaspia or Xanadu. It must be admitted that it was the simplest way of showing resentment against the German language. It required merely a negative insistence, preferable certainly to a positive abolition of the German press or to a carting forth and burning of a hundred thousand German books. Beside this, the banishment of Wagner was much easier to effect, much easier, peradventure, to endure.

And then after a decent interval of time he may be restored. But he must first turn English. Considering it all, it may be an unconscious tribute to the poet. We have with charity aforethought forborne from insisting upon translations of French and Italian opera. We recognize in Wagner’s dramas truly noble poetry such as may well grace our tongue. We find them staged sensibly in Monsalvat, in Nibelheim, at the bottom of the Rhinemaidens’ Rhine, at the top of the Valkyries’ mountains, where poetic rapture is more likely than, say, in Violetta’s drawing-room in Paris or in the real home for boys in the Golden West. We find them, moreover, set to music that is of acknowledged greatness. The combination, we feel, may bear the closest scrutiny. Fix it
for the ear by phonographing it and it will remain music and poetry. Well, that ought certainly to stand translation.

But the tribute which the general demand for Wagner in English implies turns into grotesque insult when this is carried into effect. The sound and sense and spirit of the new words will no longer fit. They bulge here and strain there and are warped and awry nearly all over. The general form, fixed by the music, remains the same. The poetry it is meant to grace is a dead and senseless weight.

If it were only possible to submit proof—phonographic proof that could be considered leisurely—of how it would turn out, there might be less enthusiastic subscribing to the ugly perpetration. Only a partial representation, the graphic, the black and white, is possible. It is at least indicative. As it is the more so, the greater the beauty of the original, the proof here submitted is of “Tristan und Isolde.”

That of all incredible nonsense that is called translation of this music drama the Corders’ is the generally used English libretto, is evidence of how operatic is the accepted regard for the text. The libretto is usually anonymous, a saving indication of sense by the authors. Here is a sample from the opening scene:

**Brangâne:**

Dem Wunder aller Reiche,
dem hochgepries’nen Mann,
dem Helden ohne Gleiches,
des Ruhmes Hort und Bann?

**Isolde:**

Der zagend vor dem Streiche
sich flüchtet wo er kann,
weil eine Braut er als Leiche
für seinen Herrn gewann!—
Dünkt es dich dunkel,
mein Gedicht?

Well, let the reader judge.

Tolerable poetry is perhaps the hardest to stomach. We spew the lukewarm concoction out of our mouths. The Corders are noteworthy at least in that their banality holds the reader’s attention. There is nothing mediocre about it. At times it is so pronounced as to be quite impressive. The interpretation of the meeting of the lovers is an example. Possibly the pace of the English text is set by the customary antics on the stage of Tristan and Isolde immediately after drinking the love potion. The two score bars or so that it takes to get the lovers started is used by the singers according to tradition for muscular activity familiar on
the baseball field as incidental to the pitchers’ warming up. When at last they do go to it their speed and control are relentless:

Ohne Gleiche!  Endless pleasure!
Überreiche!  Boundless treasure!
Überselig!  Ne’er to sever!
Ewig! Ewig!  Never! Never!

As the poetic rapture of the second act rises, the Corder translation begins to froth and rave. The reader will hardly believe that the following, for example, is the accepted version of part of the duet, reprinted from the standard libretto:

Barg im Busen  Hid our hearts away
uns sich die Sonne,  sunlight’s streaming,
leuchten lachend  bliss would bloom
Sterne der Wonne.  from stars’ tender beaming.
Von deinem Zauber  To thy enchantment
sanft umsponnen,  we surrender
vor deinen Augen  beneath thy gaze
süss zerronnen,  so wondrous tender;
Herz an Herz dir,  heart to heart
Mund an Mund,  and lip to lip,
Eines Athems  Eines Athems
ein’ger Bund;—  breath we sip. Etc.

Further quotation might be spared. But it is not only from the fury of the existing translations that the good Lord is to deliver us, but from threatened further barbarous invasions. Which to prevent, the terrifying record of those who in the past have sought to effect anything like a landing, is herewith dutifully exposed.

To the natural difficulties which the unfortunate translator encountered in the German sentence structure, transposed as it is beyond the limits of our widest poetic license, must be added such cramping requirements as rhyme, which produced distortions such as “When in the sick man’s keen blade she perceived a notch had been made”; and alliteration, responsible for monstrosities like “Blood-guilt gets between us,” “Blissful beams our eyes are binding.” ‘Then there are many abstract terms, especially those that have distinct Wagnerian connotation, that cannot possibly be translated. “Wahn” is not “folly” (the Corders turned “Welcher Wahn” into “What a whim!”), nor is “Lust” the same as “bliss.” “In (Isolden) selig nicht ganz verging” is supposed to mean “not sink at once into bondage blest.”

The greatest obstacle is, of course, the fixed melody, not of the larger, simpler and more obvious “dance-form,” as Wagner names it, into which a stanza or whole verse paragraph may be
made to fit, regardless of the position of individual words or even lines, but melody that is an intense and beautiful reading of the poem. Precise textual equivalence is hardly ever possible. And even slight transpositions result in utterly meaningless singing. Thus, "er sah mir in die Augen," the last word of which is linked with the corresponding motif, becomes "his eyes on mine were fastened," to which the music is quite unrelated. "Das Schwert—ich liess es fallen" is turned into "The sword—dropped from my fingers," in which the fine repression and suspense of the pauses after "ich" and after "liess" are lost by the anteposition of "dropped," and the following words made merely redundant. "Mit dem Blick mich nicht mehr beschwerte!" where the significance of text and music depends on the word "Blick," is in Corder English "my emotion then might be ended," with its equivalent of the inane syllable "mo." Isolde’s unspeakable contempt "für Kornwalls miden König" is absurdly made a geographic aversion: "for Mark, the Cornish monarch."

The page from which these examples are taken is representative of the whole work. There is hardly a passage but has its shortcomings. And every now and then these wax into truly monumental lapses, like Isolde’s puzzling

Wie das Herz ihm muthig schwillt,
voll und hehr
im Busen quillt:

How his heart with lion zest
calmly happy
beats in his breast.

and Marke’s shocking

"Why in hell must I bide" . . .

Why, indeed!—

In the preface to his translation Jackson attempts to indicate the climactic effectiveness of the drama by quotations such as: "The waves of melody rise higher and higher, as if the distant portals of heaven opened to the vibrations of two hearts."—The most curious of literary illusions certainly must be his who imitates a high winged flight by flapping his blunt feathers and believes the windy disturbance he makes indicative of altitude and speed. The prefatory dizziness is felt throughout the work.

O blinde Augen!
Blöde Herzen!
Zahmer Muth, verzagtes Schweigen!

O branded blindness!
Heart’s ensnaring,
Daunted daring’s
Silence despairing!
Jackson's diction is noteworthy. Tristan considers the potion "heart enmaddening," Isolde calls him her "faithless enfolder," and while Brangäne is "blooming and wailing to heaven," the two lovers are in chewing-gum rapture over their "lusious delights." The translator throughout shows vast range, now gushing forth that

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{des Quelles sanft} & \quad \text{The purling fount's} \\
\text{rieselnde Welle} & \quad \text{Rippling current} \\
\text{rauscht so wonnig daher;} & \quad \text{Murmurs so merrily on,}
\end{align*}
\]

now in a business-like manner begging to state that

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dein Loos nun selber} & \quad \text{Thy fate had truly} \\
\text{magst du dir sagen:} & \quad \text{Been settled duly.}
\end{align*}
\]

The Earl of Roscommon's rule for translators is never forgotten: "Tho' gross innumerable Faults abound, in spite of nonsense, never fail of sound."

Of regard for the music there is probably less here than in any other translation meant to be sung. Even outstanding conformity is ignored. Brangäne's "was dich quält," with its implication both by voice and orchestra of the key motif of the play, is made meaningless by "to me confess." "Der Wunde, die ihn plagte," with its continuous suffering in chromatic descents, is in fine musical and dramatic contrast to the following line, "getreulich pflag sie da"; and the effect is destroyed by singing both ideas in the first line: "She healed the wounds that pained him," and then adding, as Jackson seems to have a mania for doing, trite and irrelevant details: "And watched him night and day." Similar ruinous treatment is accorded the admirable setting of "das Schwert—ich liess es fallen!": "It fell—for thee alone meant." The absurdity to which this indifference to the music led him is well exemplified by his disregard of the four bars that separate Brangäne's reply to Isolde's request for the casket—a passage necessary dramatically for Brangäne to cross the stage to fetch the casket, and musically to develop the phrase associated with it—from her exposition of its contents. Jackson's sentence is left dangling, broken in two by the passage.

With a parting mention of the Beckmesser versification ("Be'fore the sun shall set"; "whatever Y'solde com'mand," etc.) and the distortions that they produce, such as "No insult such would twice to give they desire to" and "In custom search" ("Frags die Sitte")—this chamber of "Tristan" horrors has received sufficient notice. We pass to Exhibit C, the Chapman version.
"Nicht mehr Tristan"

The inevitable crippled and club-footed lines are here, too, in abundance. Especially cruel is the constant dismemberment of the text, sentences and phrases being ruthlessly lopped off where the music and the drama call for a pause. Specimen: "dem Eigenholde" (rest): "forthwith be told, he"; "nun höre" (rest): "now hear what"; "Und warb er Marke" (rest): "and if to Mark he."

The exigencies of rhyme make it necessary for Isolde to "mend" Tristan; of alliteration, to "waken the deep and the growl of its greed"; of stanzaic conformity, "from this wonder, sun to sunder."

The text has in general the usual defects. There is such senseless translation as that of "Welcher Wahn" into "This is false," "Hart am Ziel" into "Right at land," "Liebeswonne" into "Love and passion." "Diess wundervolle Weib" becomes "This wondrous fair, a wife"; "Sehnsucht Noth" is "wistful pain"; "Isolde lebt und wacht" means "Isolde lives aright." The significance of "Urvergessen" is "out of thinking." The music becomes often meaningless, as when Isolde's scornful reference to the king, "Stehen wir vor König Marke," is turned into "We shall ere long be standing"; or, when orchestra and voice suggest "Laubes säuselnd Getôn," the words are: "(by) branches art thou misled." Nor are there lacking such special features as Tristan's suspicious account of how he obtained that powerful drink. Somebody "slipped it" to him, he says, and he goes on to relate how "filled with rapture" he "sipped it." Isolde, as befits a lady, takes it of course only for her health. "This draught will do me good," she says.

The Jameson translation clutches fearfully to the original. It aims at perfect word and even phrase equivalence and does succeed better than any other. But it follows that much of it is utterly unidiomatic, and some of it even absurd. The disregard for rhyme and alliteration is conducive to exactness; but the removal of such restraints makes the poetic rapture of the drama fly outward into apparently irrelevant directions. Unrhymed lyric expression that can give the engraved effect of the rhymed (as Tennyson's "Tears, idle tears" does) is rare. The ordinary attempts sprawl. Jameson at best writes prose. At worst his accurate following of the German leads to such constructions as "No day nor morrow" ("Nicht heut' noch morgen") or "True be to me?" ("Bist du mir treu?"); or to such felicities as "this peerless first of heroes" and "he looked beneath my eyelids."

Forman's translation is certainly not prose. If eight pages of appended press notices (quoting among others Swinburne and Watts-Dunton) can establish anything, it ought to be magnificent
poetry. It is presumably the best that has been done by way of “Tristan” translation, and is therefore the most illuminating. It permits of judgment of a product finished in conformance with the Wagnerian requirements. It follows carefully, as the title-page promises, the mixed alliterative and rhyming metres of the original. It is not intended, however, says the author, “to be taken in strict and continuous company with the music,” and he has “not considered it necessary to print the numerous alternative readings which would be requisite for such a purpose.” Whereby is implied that the alternative lines are more singable than readable. It would be rather interesting, considering the “readable” text, to see those alternative lines which have been kept prudently out of print. They baffle speculation of possibilities in grotesque.

For the printed version is as fantastically puffed up a piece of writing as the affliction of “style” has ever produced. It is really astonishing that anyone of our own age should care to accept the tinsel legacies that were Euphues’. But here they are, jacked up on impossible stilts, those mechanical contrivances of elaborate indirectness and far-fetched phraseology, that dreary parade of senseless sound. And it has not even the occasional glib cleverness and fancy that some of the anatomists of wit attained. It is altogether ridiculous. “Let laughter,” says Isolde when she extinguishes the torch, “let laughter as I slake it, be the sound!” And surely no audience will disappoint her when the next thing heard is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISOLDE:</th>
<th>Faithlessly fondest!</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tristan:</td>
<td>Deathlessly dearest!</td>
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provided the audience hears it. Typographically it is certainly no more preposterous than phonographically. Whether they be read or sung, such phenomena must be encountered as “hope of hap,” “unshuddering ship,” “for baneful draught its backward bane.” Tristan is here a “bride-beseecher,” “in truth the most unturning.” The alliterative orgy makes the lines stagger (“From
him back you will hear,” “me thou wouldst linger not nigh to”) and hiccup (“He prated at lip,” “The sword—I downward sank it”), and go off into besotted gibberish (“A scorn that scarred her land,” “who Isold’ could see and in Isold’ not madden to melt his soul”). Which suggests the literal subject-matter of Tristan’s reference—irreverent and unconstitutional though it be—to that accursed drink “whose foam with bliss I sipped and swallowed.”

If a final demonstration were needed of what Wagner is like in English it is furnished by Le Gallienne. His “Tristan” is unrestrained by any consideration for the music or the original metre, rhyme, and alliteration. The freedom thereby gained should be promising. Yet the product is very tame indeed. It is sometimes incorrect as translation, often slipshod, rather wearisome throughout. Illustrative passages might be taken almost at random; but Wagner translations probably the reader’s bosom “more can bear not of this.”

An interesting sidelight upon the subject is cast by Oliver Huckel’s effort to translate into narrative blank verse both the words and the action of the music drama. For though his muse, certainly unlike Le Gallienne’s, is one of raven hair and ruby lips, his version is the more readable. But only when Wagner is lost sight of altogether, as in “Tristram of Lyonesse,” is English poetry evidently possible.

Mention should be made of Mr. Krehbiel’s new translation of the “Liebestod,” which has been sung at several orchestral concerts. It is a faithful enough version, but there is nothing about it to modify the conclusions already drawn. It is better than the Corders’ cabaret finale of “sinking, be drinking, in a kiss, highest bliss.” And yet, more than such damning praise can hardly be given “immerse me, disperse me, wittingless find sweet bliss.” “Immerse” and “disperse” have none of the connection and sequence that “ertrinken” and “versinken” have, except the rhyme. And “wittingless” is a brainless bauble-intrusion of the kin of Wamba, serf of Cedric the Saxon.

Reference has already been made to the suggestion that the dramas be translated into French. The difficulties, however, would be similar. Besides which, the spirit of French, its genius, or whatever it is that gives any language atmosphere, is more alien even than that of English. The theme of “Tristan und Isolde,” as conceived by Wagner, is especially beyond French expression. The translation becomes sharp, polished, pretty, at times even flippant. Such impression has not merely a surface origin in yellow paper covered books. It goes deeper. In considering a language,
the style is the people. The emotions of Wagner’s “Tristan” are not of the French. Taine is enlightening:

The bent of the French character makes of love not a passion but a gay banquet, tastefully arranged, in which the service is elegant, the food exquisite, the silver brilliant, the two guests in full dress, in good humor, quick to anticipate and please each other, knowing how to keep up the gayety, and when to part.

Of the five French versions, that of Le Comte de Chambrun is admittedly unsingable, and that of Wilder has been discarded as impossibly crude and inaccurate. D’Offoël insists that his is for singing only. His excuse accuses: when the words are sung, he says, their imperfections, only too apparent when read, will disappear or at least seem slighter. The implied license enables him to conform fairly well with the music. Lyon’s is a linear prose translation, too literal to be idiomatic, poetic, or musically sensible. That of Ernst is the least unsatisfactory. But although his work is sufficiently careful, it is quite impossible to consider it as anything more than a correct French gloss. How disillusioning seems Isolde’s Liebestod, how matter of fact, when she can give so precise an account of it as: “Dans la Vie souffle immense du Tout, me perdre, m’éteindre, sans pensée, toute Joie!” That’s all. (Lyon’s is: “Me nouer, Disparaître, Inconsciente, Suprême volupté!” D’Offoël’s: “se perdre, se fondre, sans pensée, ô bonheur!”) The dramatic concepts lose their connotation. “Wahn” becomes either “L’erreur” or “Aveugle”; “göttlich ew’ges Ur-Vergessen” in Lyon’s translation is “Du divin, éternel, primitif oubli”; in D’Offoël’s: “l’oubli divin, total, suprême.” Ernst’s is “que l’oubli divin sans bornes”; and of “Ich war, wo ich von je gewesen”: “J’étais aux sources de mon être.” Good enough perhaps as science, but hardly as poetry.

More detailed consideration can profit little. Whether in English or in French a translation can give merely the lifeless substance of what in the original is the greatest of music dramas. The characters are mechanical contrivances singing mechanically contrived words. They are not the characters Wagner conceived: “nicht mehr Isolde, nicht mehr Tristan.” None of the translations is really deserving of any serious criticism. And their exposition here is in part to indicate to such as may want to venture again upon so arid and waste an undertaking the unhappy fate of those who perished before them. The main concern is of course the suffering that may be inflicted upon the audience. It is sincerely to be hoped that any proposed text will be submitted on the
typograph at least for general inspection before it is made into the
great and inflexible, almost permanently fixed, record that is an
opera company's performance. What the verdict would be it is
fairly safe to foretell. And if the musical setting could be added
and we could try out the "record" at close range, there could be
no doubt about it.
TONIC-SOL-FA; PRO AND CON

By J. A. FULLER-MAITLAND

In two articles in the April, 1918, number of The Musical Quarterly, the Tonic-Sol-Fa system comes in for hearty praise, which in truth it well deserves. As I gather that the system is not in such universal use in the United States as it has been in England, I may perhaps be allowed to refer to some aspects of its working in the country of its origin. The time has gone by when one was obliged to take sides about it, and either to enlist as a whole-hearted partisan of T.S.F. eschewing all music that could not easily be written in it, or else to be classed among the "high-brow" musicians who knew nothing about it and cared less, condemning it as superficial and associated with the 'lower orders' and non-conformity in general. In the present day, one may recognize, without going thereby in peril of one's life, that it has defects as well as merits, and that it is eminently useful in certain ways, though in others it has the effect of keeping back musical progress.

It is obvious that its great asset, the constant reference to the tonic of the key, is nothing new; this was recognized under the Hexachordal system, just as clearly as the principle of the movable Do, though that was called by the original name of Ut. The truth of Just Intonation is contained in the T.S.F. modulator, though it is a curious fact that this is not intentionally or expressly taught. The fact that G sharp and A flat are not the same note, though the same key has to serve for both on the piano, is conveyed, or might be conveyed to the pupils of T.S.F., but by a very singular accident, the modulator which hangs on the wall of every elementary school in England, and the book which the teacher holds in his hand, were formerly at variance as to which note is the higher. This discrepancy remained unnoticed so long, that it is fair to conclude that the valuable information contained in the system was not turned to much account in practical teaching.

Consciously or unconsciously, the pupils of T.S.F. do sing better in tune than other children, and this of itself is no light matter. The ease with which a single part of a vocal composition can be read is of course a very great advantage. As long as the
attention need only be kept to the singer's own part, and as long as there is a competent conductor to superintend matters, there is no comparison as to which is the more successful notation, and the ear-training which goes on while the T.S.F. system is being practised, is not to be despised. Again, there is the fact that some kind of musical nourishment is given to a large class of the community who, if confined to the staff notation, would never take the trouble to learn music at all. Perhaps the most useful work of T.S.F. is as the best possible introduction to the staff notation. Just as the musicians of old time used the Gamut (i.e. the plan of the Guidonian hexachords), side by side with the more elaborate notation of the stave, so the wise music-teachers of the modern world would do well if they used the T.S.F. principally as a stepping-stone to higher things. For who, having any wide survey of the history of music, or of any period of its development, can doubt for a moment which of the two systems is the higher? The staff is in truth a language of universal application, and the attempt to set up the T.S.F. system as a rival to it is bound to meet with ultimate failure. Nevertheless, a great number of people in England are now under the impression that the two systems are rivals, and tell you, with a smirk of complacency, that they do not sing from "the old notation."

But before going on to the practical effect of T.S.F. teaching, I may be excused for summing up a few of the charges brought against it by those trained musicians who have been at the pains to understand it. The abolition of the ideas "up" and "down" in connection with sound, is claimed as an advantage by the ordinary teacher, who can see that there is nothing actually high about a "high" note, or low about a "low" one. We hope that this abolition will not proceed so far that the Shakespearean commentator of the future will be puzzled to know what can have been meant by the line "that can sing both high and low." When all arguments have been exhausted to prove that one end of the keyboard, for example, is not in a more elevated position than the other, the human instinct still persists, and in the effort of singing a "high" note there will always be some psychological correspondence with the notion of actual altitude. A less doubtful defect of the T.S.F. system is the difficulty of reading anything like a score so as to give the composite idea of a harmonic progression by the sight of four rows of letters; it may be attained, but the difficulty of attaining it leaves all the difficulties of reading the usual notation far behind. The representation of rests, and in general of the endurance of notes, as well as of silences, is so imperfect
in T.S.F. that its strongest advocate will hardly claim that it is perfect in this way. The absence of any indication as to the length of time during which the one part upon which the singer’s attention has to be fixed, should keep silence, makes it exceedingly difficult to impart even to an intelligent choir any composition of a polyphonic character. With a very first-rate conductor who can be trusted to give each part its cue, the result may be satisfactory, but as a rule it is one of a choir-trainer’s great difficulties that singers will not understand that the blank space on the paper they are reading represents an exact space of time.

In the early days of the movement, I have heard that there was some difference of opinion concerning the notation of the minor mode in modern music. Whether this were so or not, the fact remains that the tonic of the minor mode is called Lah, so that the Doh is not quite as movable as some people might wish it to be. For, of course, the base, final, or keynote of the minor mode is the note a minor third below the keynote of the major scale to which it stands in the relation of “relative minor.” It is not merely an offshoot as it were of the major scale, to be constantly referred to the keynote of that scale instead of to its own keynote. The same erroneous decision, as I venture to think it, is even more glaringly seen in the attempt to force modal music into the T.S.F. notation. Each final should be called Doh, and the only really logical way of adapting the new notation to the old scales would be to use the “accidental” syllables much more freely. The following is a table of the modes in what would be their T.S.F. notation if this were logically carried out (it will be observed that no modification of the syllable Ray appears to exist which would indicate the second step of the Phrygian mode):

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<th>I Dorian</th>
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<th>VII Mixolydian</th>
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I wonder whether it is really the case that “the Roman Catholics like the notation because it fits in so well with the Gregorian system.” (Mus. Quarterly, vol. iv, p. 194.) In one way no doubt it fits in well with the Gregorian system, in that its imperfect
notation of time is not felt as a drawback in singing Plainsong. But the expression of the modes in the T.S.F. system leaves a great deal to desire.

Another defect inherent in the system is in connection with its process of modulation. Sometimes half-way through a simple hymn-tune, the Sol-faist is required to change his keynote, and go through an elaborate mental calculation to the effect that the note he has approached as Soh is for the next few bars to be thought of as Doh. This is of course in regard to the simplest of all modulations, implying a half-close in the dominant; but whether complicated or not, the change of tonic does require a psychological change of attitude towards the old key and the new, which is beautifully left in a kind of uncertainty in the staff notation. The use of accidentals there is understood as indicating no new attitude towards another key; this, when required, is effected by a change of the whole key-signature. But every slightest modulation in T.S.F. requires a shifting of the mind to the new tonic, and, what is worse, a quite definite acceptance of the new key as established. Now in much of the music that has best stood the test of time, and in much that has been most universally accepted as the greatest, part of the charm it exercises over mankind is due to the gradual change in the hearer’s attitude towards a new key, to the gradual discovery of the point to which the modulation is going to take him; his pleasure will be greatly lessened if he is obliged at every note to have a clear idea in his mind as to the whereabouts of the key he is stated to be in at the moment.

The weightiest objection which trained musicians have to T.S.F. is based on the quality of the music provided for its pupils. It is beyond question that some of the greatest choral compositions can be expressed in T.S.F. and for the popularization of such works as Messiah or Elijah by its means, we should, I suppose, be thankful, even though the vogue of these two masterpieces in England has prevented lovers of Handel and Mendelssohn from intimacy with the other oratorios of either composer. Perhaps some bold T.S.F. advocate has tried to put Bach’s B minor mass into this notation, but, if so, I am sure that most people who have attempted to learn it by that notation will have flown to the safe simplicity of the staff. As the use of the T.S.F. system is virtually compulsory all over England, and as school inspectors are easily dazzled by feats of so-called “reading” which seem to them phenomenal, the financial success of the system has brought about the composition of an enormous quantity of music whose sole excuse is that it is well adapted for the notation for which
it is intended. Most of it has no other merit whatsoever, and it is a sad experience to go into a school in some part of England where all the children's voices are of beautiful quality and all or nearly all possess strong musical instinct, and to hear the kind of trash that is being forced into their throats and being called "good music." Nowhere is the commercialism of the musical world of England so rampant as in regard to the poisonous balderdash with which the taste of the children is being corrupted. I spoke above of "so-called reading"; it is only too evident that most teachers and inspectors of schools are quite satisfied when the children have read the notes together with the T.S.F. names for them, without regard to the words provided in their copies. Very few people seem to realize that the work of reading has only proceeded halfway when this is done; and here is another defect of the T.S.F. system, that the singer's mind is always hampered by the temptation to repeat, instead of the words put down for him, the actual syllables which he is accustomed to associate with the notes he sings.

As an independent musical system, even within its limited sphere of choral singing, the T.S.F. cannot take a very high place, though it is invaluable as a stepping-stone to the other notation. Apart from the intrinsic merits and defects of the system, we may consider some points of its practical working in England. Of course it has the very great merit of making choral societies a familiar feature of English country life, and so of providing the raw material for those competition festivals which are an ever-increasing influence in national music, and which will no doubt pursue their successful course now that the war is over. But the difficulty of expressing any of the more complicated kinds of music, and the kind of attitude generally adopted by Sol-faists towards real music, has caused the managers of many festivals to forbid any competing choir to use T.S.F. It is a merit, no doubt, that the cost of printing T.S.F. music is so low, but this is surely counterbalanced by the corresponding cheapness of the artistic quality usually attained in the compositions that are printed in it. While the system gives much encouragement to the cause of vocal or rather choral music, its unavoidable discouragement of instrumental music is a very serious drawback. For one cannot conceive of any advocate of T.S.F. being so enthusiastic as to attempt to play any instrument from his favourite notation. The experiment of printing instrumental compositions in T.S.F. may have been tried, but it has certainly made little way even with the public that is accustomed to use it for singing.
UNPUBLISHED LETTERS FROM VERDI TO CAMILLE DU LOCLE (1866–76)

By J.-G. PROD'HOMME

The letters of Giuseppe Verdi, which we publish here for the first time, after the original manuscripts, were gathered from the Library of Archives of the Opéra, whose keeper, M. Banès, had informed us years ago, with his customary obligingness, of their existence. But the events of the period just past prevented us from undertaking their selection and publication. Of the correspondence addressed by Verdi from 1866 to 1876 to his French librettist, Camille Du Locle, comprising more than two hundred letters or notes, we have chosen those which seemed to us to have the most important bearing on this decade of the maestro's life, which extends from Don Carlos to the Requiem Mass dedicated to the memory of Manzoni. It is true that these familiar epistles do not shine by reason of stylistic refinement, but therein resides their peculiar value; for they all the better depict the man as he was, with his somewhat rough frankness, his forthright sincerity, and that peasant simplicity which never forsook him, even at the height of his fame amid worldwide successes; and the artist no less, with his equally plainspoken and definitive likes and dislikes. Once again, on perusing these half-century-old pages, we recalled the so frequently cited epigram of Buffon's: "The style is the man."

Moreover, an analysis of his handwriting, of the maestro's own "graphics," made by a learned graphologist, M. Vauzanges, furnishes additional confirmation of the traits of his energetic and independent character under the control of a genial artistic temperament. "The first impression that emanates from it is an intense vitality, as of a nature peculiarly vigorous and vibrant. The intelligence reveals itself as clear, alert, and exact; the culture is visible in the simplifications, the numerous calligraphic forms, likewise indicating originality. The critical faculty is well developed, the liking for contrasts is marked, the sense of order is good. The graceful and lofty inspiration is manifested more especially through power. Some elegantly formed letters lend a certain distinction; but the general aspect of the handwriting, taken as a whole, is more energetic than elegant. The musician's writing presents, altogether,
a character rather popular than genuinely aristocratic, thus differ-
ing from that of Händel, Rameau, or Gluck, for example. The
talk of men seems more familiar to Verdi than the language of gods
and heroes. Handwriting of this description reveals a strong indi-
viduality, not temporizing with its convictions but, on the contrary,
clinging to them with obstination, although without seeking to im-
pose them on others. The nature of the man is good, sufficiently
affectionate, straightforward, loyal, and moderately communicative.
Verdi did not like importunate persons, and was fond of
withdrawing into the circle of his intimates. The convolute flourish
surrounding his signature is a self-revelation in this respect, and the
signature itself, of like dimensions with the text, betrays no pride.
During fifty years it does not vary in letter after letter—a sign of
constancy.” (Vauzanges, l’Écriture des Musiciens célèbres, Paris,
1913, pp. 192-195.)

In the “Souvenirs” of his publisher, Léon Escudier (1863),
we may read the same conclusions from personal contact. With
Verdi (so Escudier opines) his faults are the excesses of his very
qualities. Coolly reserved when in company with mere acquaint-
ances, he threw off constraint when among those to whom he had
given his friendship—a friendship that only death could sunder.
Stiff, frowning, unsociable, his enemies called him a bear, and this
sobriquet did not seem to displease him; he himself was the first to
adopt it (see especially his letter of September, 1868).

Camille Du Locle was one of his few chosen friends, and—even
in letters dealing wholly with business matters—Verdi never failed
to slip in some affectionate words. Relations between the French
librettist and the Italian maestro probably found their inception
at the time when they were discussing the adaptation of Schiller’s
Don Carlos as a piece for the Opéra at Paris. Up to that time Verdi
had brought out in the “grande capitale” Nabucco, Il Proscritto
(Ernani), Le Due Foscari, La Traviata and Rigoletto at the Italiens,
besides (in French) the two last-named works, his revised Macbeth
and Le Bal Masqué at Carvalho’s Théatre-Lyrique. The Opéra had
produced translations of Jerusalem (a new version of I Lombardi),
Louise Miller, and—the first work written especially for this theatre
to a French libretto—Les Vêpres siciliennes, during the Exposition
of 1855.

Following a silence of five years—for Verdi, after La Forza del
Destino, had written nothing but the French version of his Macbeth,
which did not succeed—Don Carlos was his second attempt with a
French libretto. It gave him slight matter for self-congratulation;
and the eight months that he had to abide in Paris for the rehearsals
Caricature of Verdi (about 1880)
left a memory equally unpleasant and enduring. In his letters he omitted no opportunity of recalling it with undisguised bitterness. Our correspondence unfortunately breaks off before the representation of *Aida* in Paris (at first at the Italiens, later at the Opéra), which was followed, at a long interval, by *Otello* and *Falstaff*. But it appears that to the end he kept up his scathing criticism of "la grande boutique" (the big shop)—his familiar name for the Grand Opéra of Paris.

A great reader, Verdi kept himself informed concerning contemporary dramatic production, always on the lookout for some subject calculated to awaken his inspiration and appeal to an audience; he would ask his collaborator and friend to send him a certain book or play, and would indicate by a critical word the value, from his viewpoint as a dramatic musician, of any given play or novel. But nothing of all he read during the ten years we are about to explore, could hold his attention. Only the "Egyptian programme" of Mariette, which it was apparently intended to offer, besides, to Gounod and Wagner, the subject of *Aida*, versified by Du Locle and thereafter translated into Italian by Ghislanzoni, could arrest him; and we know what a remarkable score—one might say, what a masterpiece—he made of it.

After *Aida*, he returned simply to Shakespeare—to Shakespeare, who certainly was Verdi's great literary idol, whom he admired above all the poets from whom he had borrowed subjects for operas—Byron, Schiller, Victor Hugo. After *Macbeth*, he had long cherished the idea of writing a *King Lear*; he himself sketched the scenario, which after his decease was found among his papers. He had also thought of *Cleopatra*. As for *Hamlet*, we shall read the few concise and severe lines which he addressed to Du Locle with regard to the libretto that Barbier and Carré concocted for Ambroise Thomas. "Povero Shakespeare!" he exclaims.

Attaching the highest importance to the action, the drama, Verdi, once in possession of a libretto, revised and corrected it to suit himself, recklessly overturning the sapient arrangement of airs and recitatives elaborated by his text-writer; for he was, above all, a man of the stage, even fonder of violent contrast than of purely musical effect, or, at least, not separating the one from the other. This it is that partly explains the opposition which his works met with on the part of the dilettanti of 1840.

Per contra, he cannot find stinging epithets enough to hurl at the stage-settings—too luxurious for his taste—of the Parisian Opéra, which for him are no substitute for the fire, the enthusiasm, that he encounters in the lesser Italian theatres.
Having written the score, or remodeled it for a revival in Italy or France, Verdi detested nothing so cordially as the rehearsals. But when this critical period was finally past, and the work on the stage, he demanded from his correspondent an unvarnished report of the reception accorded it by the public, fearing neither the criticisms of some nor the prejudices of others, and dreading above all things, with his honest and sincere artist-conscience, incapable of concessions, to be the dupe of accounts colored by a desire to please.

And now a few words concerning Camille Du Locle, the librettist of Don Carlos and Aïda.

A son of the sculptor Ducommun Du Locle, known under the name of Daniel, he was born in 1832 at Orange (Vaucluse). The son-in-law and secretary of Perrin, the Director of the Opéra from 1862 to 1870, Du Locle had produced (with Méry) on that stage, in the same year as Don Carlos, La fiancée de Corinthe, music by Duprato. In 1870 he was appointed Director of the Opéra-Comique (la petite boutique, as Verdi called it), a position which he had to vacate in 1876, after mounting Bizet’s Carmen, in a very difficult situation, leaving to his father-in-law Perrin the task of setting its affairs in order before ceding his post to Carvalho.

A better artist than director, in the commercial sense of the term, Du Locle had no exaggerated fondness for the old-time repertory of his theatre, and a typical remark of his is still current. One evening when the receipts for La Dame blanche had been insignificant he observed, with unfeigned delight: “At last! The White Lady is no longer making money!”

Between times, Du Locle had versified the libretto of Aïda, after a scenario by the learned Egyptologist Mariette Bey; thereafter he collaborated with Reyer, to whom he gave Sigurd and then Salammbô (after the celebrated Carthaginian romance by Flaubert). In 1892 he still produced Hellé, music by Alphonse Duvernoy, at the Opéra. He died in October, 1893, at Capri, where he had dwelt for several years.

In this correspondence will be found several letters written in French by the hand of Madame Verdi (Giuseppina Strepponi). This cantatrice, who had created La Traviata, became the maestro’s second wife in 1859. At that time she was forty-three years old. She was born in Cremona, and died three years later than the maestro, in 1898.

J.-C. PROD’HOMME.
Unpublished Letters from Verdi to Camille Du Locle  

Dearest Du Locle,

I was glad indeed to receive your letter from Thebes, and to learn that you are safe and sound, and satisfied with your journey. I am writing you immediately to Paris, where, if you arrive on the 20th as you say, this letter of mine will be among the first to grasp your hand most heartily and to give you a "welcome home." When we meet you shall give me a description of all the happenings on your travels, of the wonders you have seen, and of the beauties and blemishes of a land which once possessed a grandeur and a civilization which I could never bring myself to admire.

Now take a rest and, at your leisure, send me a libretto of *Hamlet* directly it is printed, for I am curious to know how your poets have treated Shacspeare [sic].

You can readily imagine with what pleasure I again repeat "welcome home," and I dare not say with what delight I am looking forward to meeting you. Good-bye meanwhile. Best regards to your Maria, in which Peppina joins; and believe me now and ever

Your affectionate,

G. Verdi.

Geneva, March 14, 1868.

Dear Du Locle,

Thanks for the information you sent me, and thanks for the libretto of *Hamlet*.

Poor Shacspeare! How they have maltreated him! What have they made of the character of Hamlet, so lofty, so original! And then, where is that grand, sweeping action, that elevated, unwonted, sublime atmosphere that one breathes when reading the English Hamlet? ... This strikes me like a comic opera taken seriously. And Thomas has done wonders if he conquered success with a libretto futile as a whole and in detail, saving the duet in the third act between Hamlet and the Queen, which seems to me very well treated.

Now for *Don Carlos*, you say? What do you think, *inter nos*, of Mazzolani? Ah, if you could persuade your orchestra that there are effects which they neither obtain nor care to produce! And to think that the Bologna orchestra, conducted (say) by Mariani, sounded better than yours, and even the orchestra at Rome (which is a poor orchestra) brought out effects which yours does not know how to bring out! Ah, if you could convince the Sasse that her part is better than she thinks. With us, the Stolz took the leading part. You will see that she will take it at Milan, too! If you could work these two miracles at the Opéra, *Don Carlos* would be better than it has been so far.

For you, whose legs are perpetually in motion, would it not be well to come here for a few days and to return by way of Milan, to hear *Don Carlos*? It will go on the stage at the end of the month, perhaps

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1 Du Locle had just made a trip to Egypt.
2 *Hamlet*, music by Ambroise Thomas, libretto by Barbier and Carré, was to be brought out at the Opéra on March 9th.
3 Antonio Mazzolani, composer, singer, and teacher, born 1819, died 1900.
sooner. Here, too, about a month of rehearsals!! But hold!—let me
tell you if it is worth your while to go to Milan. There is a sufficiently
good company, for certain; an orchestra of one hundred players; a
chorus of one hundred and twenty, forty-six basses for the choral finale.
Ah, if Mariani were at Milan, success would be assured.

I leave you, my dear Du Locle, and inform you that your lovely
[piece of] calligraphy has remained in Egypt. I have not been in the
mood to decipher that phrase of Gevaert’s, to whom please give my best
regards.

Good-bye; kindest regards from us all for your Maria.
Write me, and always remember me kindly.

G. Verdi.

Busseto, St. Agata,
May 8, 1868.

Dearest Du Locle,

Although I wrote you only three or four days ago, I let this letter
follow, that you may satisfy my curiosity on one point, if you can.

I have seen a statement that you are doing The Cid with Sardou. Is
it true? I will tell you why I ask this—possibly—indiscreet question.
Last year, while I was still in Paris, they wrote me from St. Petersburg
asking if I would like to write an opera, and suggesting The Cid, by
Graziani. Having Don Carlos on my hands just then, I immediately
answered, No. This year they have again approached me with the
same proposition. I have not accepted it, and have small desire to
accept it. And even this small desire would vanish if you were writing
The Cid; and it does not seem possible that I could find a pretext.¹

Returning to Mazzolani, I find it most singular that now he should
have become impossible, when six months before everybody pinned their
hopes on him and expected a success.

This is one of the phenomena which do not occur at the Opéra!

Do me the kindness to explain it. Either the climate of Paris is
actually injurious to him, which is hard to believe, for Mazzolani is
hardy and robust, or you have ruined him by ill-conducted studies (which
is more likely).

Good-bye. Write me about The Cid, and believe me ever your

G. Verdi.

Sant’ Agata, July 10, 1868.

Dear Du Locle,

I do not need to tell you, and I repeat for the hundreth time, it is
a blessed hour for me whenever I receive a letter from you, whether you
speak to me about your capital, or about your Opéra, but still more so
when you write about yourself and your wife.

So I thank you ever so much, and Peppita likewise.

¹A version of The Cid by Sardou, Du Locle and Gevaert was really announced at
that time as if it were to be produced at the Opéra. The Cid, which inspired more
than twenty-five operas given on the stage or in manuscript, has appeared but twice at
the Opéra: with Sacchini, under the title of Chimène, in 1784, and the one by Massenet,
produced Nov. 30, 1885 (libretto by Deynay, Louis Gallet, and Ed. Blau, after Guil-
I am not surprised at what you say about *Herculaneum*,1 and the Nilson's exactions do surprise me. You devils of Parisians have said and done so much for her, that it is quite natural if her head has been turned a little. What will be still more natural and surprising for you will be to see the Direction of the *Opéra* passing under these *Caudine Forks*, and if it can do no better, engage her even at that rate.

As for *Don Carlos*.2 I had pretty much forgotten it. What would you make of it with newly launched primadonnas and tenors?

Do you know that I have been in Milan? I had not seen it for twenty years, and found it completely renewed and very greatly embellished. There is a new Colonnade which is really a beautiful piece of art. While there I paid a visit to our great Poet.3 Poor old man! If you could see him in all his simplicity and naturalness! I felt like falling on my knees before him, for he is in very deed a serious writer, who will be known not only as the first of our time, but will be acclaimed as one of the greatest of all times. He left a great book, a real book; the loveliest of our lyrics, and sacred Hymns, than which the Prophets wrote no better. And all is perfect!

What a long string of talk—very likely of no interest to you. You must excuse me! What would you have! . . . When I find something fine or good (and we have so little of either!), I stop in ecstasy to contemplate it.

We shall go to Genoa next week. I shall take some seablaths, and if they do not do me good I may go to Cauterets, not far from Bordeaux. On my way home I shall come to Paris to clasp your hand.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Kindest regards to your wife, in which Peppina joins me; and a kiss for the little girl. Write me often, and keep me in kind remembrance, and believe me

Your affectionate,

G. Verdi.

Tabbiano, Sept. 8, 1868.

Bravo bravissimo, my dear Du Locle! That is truly a fine inspiration, that you should come and see this old he-bear at Busseto. At the present writing I am in Tabbiano,4 a village at the foot of the Apennines, where there are strong sulphur baths; but I shall be at Sant' Agata, near Busseto, by the 16th. In case you come via the Simplon, you will get off at Milan. At Milan you will take the railway as far as Borgo S. Donnino; from Borgo S. Donnino a vettura takes you to my house—a short journey of an hour and a half. If you could let me know the day and hour when you expect to arrive in Borgo S. Donnino, you would

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1. *Herculaneum*, opera by Méry and Hadot, music by Félicien David, given at the *Opéra* March 4, 1859, repeated in 1861 and 1863, had been awarded the year preceding the grand prize of 20,000 francs by the Institute. Christine Nilsson had just created Ophelia in A. Thomas's *Hamlet*.

2. Verdi's *Don Carlos*, text by Méry and Du Locle, had scored forty-three representations at its production in 1867. Verdi, who had retained a very unpleasant recollection of the eight months of rehearsals of this work, was apparently not anxious to see it revived.

3. Alessandro Mansoni (1785–1873), in memory of whom Verdi was to write, in 1874, a *Requiem Mass*.

4. Verdi, who had given up going to Cauterets, the watering-place in the Pyrenees, was then in the little spa of Tabbiano, seven kilometers from Borgo S. Donnino, in the province of Parma, and consequently not far from his residence in Sant’ Agata.
find me at the Station; at all events, you will find at the station some lean bucephalus that will bear you swiftly to me. If you return by way of the Corniche, I will accompany you as far as Genoa, where you will see my imposing and humble abode. So hesitate no longer; a pack on your back, and away. You cannot imagine what a festival I and Peppina are enjoying in anticipation; and it would be still better if your adorable Maria were to accompany you.

So without greetings, till we meet again.

Affectionately,

G. Verdi.

Sant’ Agata, Nov. 12, 1868.

Dearest Du Locle,

I did not reply earlier—pray excuse me—because I wanted to read all the Dramas you sent me; but, alas, not one of them is for me. The best are too long, too uproarious, and just now I do not care to deal with that kind. The exception might be Adrienne Leco. Most assuredly, there are many fine rôles, but none of genuine interest except that of Adrienne. Let us think no more of them. Might I dare ask you to send me others?

I venture this blunt refusal in reliance on your goodness of heart; for you have a good right to tell me to go to ———.

So take heart again, my dear Du Locle; look around, make inquiries, and send me another lot.

Please remember that I should not know what to do with dramas like La Tour de Nesle, or l’Abbaye de Castro. I want things that are more touching, more simple, more in our style. I say in our style because doings like those in La Tour de Nesle or l’Abbaye now appear impossible to me.

We shall stay here this whole month, and perhaps longer, but shall be home again before Christmas. Tell me what’s going on in the capital, and in the big shop. Remember us to your Maria; now for Christmas.

G. Verdi.

Sant’ Agata, Dec. 2, 1868.

Dearest Du Locle,

How many excuses I ought to proffer you, and how many thanks. I blush to think of all the letters you have written me that still remain unanswered. Shame! Shame! Shame!

What are you doing now with that poor Hisson, who was so barbarously mutilated in that affair of Les Huguenots? Now, I believe that if you had not pushed her so hard, and had held rehearsals for only two

\(^1\)The Cornishe is the coast-road along the Mediterranean between Genoa and Marseilles.

\(^2\)This letter is addressed to “Monsieur Edmond About, pour Mr. Camille Du Locle, à la Schlittenbach, par Saverne, Bas-Rhin.”

\(^3\)Adrienne Lecouvreur, by Scribe and Legouvé, produced in April, 1849.

\(^4\)Drama by Alexandre Dumas and Fr. Gaillardet, produced in 1832.

\(^5\)At the revival of Les Huguenots, which took place on Wednesday, Nov. 13, Mlle. Hisson, who had sung La Traviata several times, was to have assumed the rôle of Valentine. In the eleventh hour it was recognized that this was an impossible task for her, and she was replaced by Marie Sass. For the rest, the representation, despite new mounting, was very mediocre. Furthermore, during the evening the death of Rossini was announced.
weeks, she would have acquitted herself admirably, if it is a fact that she possesses high talent and instinct for the stage.

Many thanks for the information concerning Rossini. Although not on terms of familiar intimacy with him, I deplore as everybody does the loss of the Great Artist. I have read all the funeral orations at his tomb. The one by Perrin is the finest. That by Thomas is the worst; he estimates him ill, from a too narrow point of view. The bounds of art are wider, or, rather, limitless. A Canzonetta can be a work of art as well as an operatic Grand Finale, if it possess the essential inspiration.

I am more than ever embarrassed by that business with St. Petersburg. Do not forget me, and help me if you can.

In view of your promise, I await another lot of dramas.

Kindest regards from us for your Maria, and—for Christmas.

P. S. We shall stay here till the 10th.

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Jan. 22, 1869.

Dearest Du Locle,

The big shop was not enough for you, so you have reached out for the little one. But how about Perrin? and the opera? Have you deserted him? Anyhow, I wish you all the good fortune that ever you can imagine.

You are always giving me hopes of seeing you here, but the time never comes. For the rest I have to tell you that in a few days I shall go to Milan to assist at the rehearsals of La Forza del Destino. I have reconstructed the last scene, and some ignoramus or other has promised Ricordi in my name that I should go. In case Les Huguenots is represented to-morrow at La Scala, I shall start for Milan the day after. So before going I am writing you a couple of lines.

Kindest regards meantime to your Maria from Peppita and myself. I clasp your hand affectionately, and remain,

Your loving,

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, April 20, 1869.

Dearest Du Locle,

I am very sorry that I left Genoa so suddenly without having had the pleasure of seeing Sardou, which I have wished to do for a long time. But what would you have? The temptation to see the green fields was too great, now that the season of fine weather has come. So I am here, and shall probably stay here until it is time to go to Cauterets, where I hope, or rather expect, to see you.

What do you want me to say to you about your project in the Opéra-Comique? Do not lay too much stress on this notion, which may be ruinous for you, or at least, if not ruinous, of no benefit whatever. I have never attained to self-expression at the Opéra; there is no reason for believing that I should do better at the Opéra-Comique. So why lose time, reputation, and money? Honestly, I have a bear's disposition which does not go on all fours with the velvet of the Capital.

Verdi, in search of a libretto, seems to have contemplated collaborating with Sardou, who was about to produce Patrie. See the two letters next-following.
Always bear me in kind remembrance, and always trust in the friendship of

G. Verdi.

P.S. Best regards to your most amiable better half. My wife has been in Cremona for two days to visit a sister. And I shall go there to-morrow, but only for a short, very short, time.

A LETTER FROM MADAME VERDI.

October, 1869.

Dear Monsieur Du Locle,

I have read, you have read, he has read, but Piccolino, for all the fine things it contains, is not a piece for Verdi. It neither makes one laugh nor cry; there are no distinctly drawn characters; in a word, it lacks the incisiveness and originality Verdi would prefer in a comedy-opera. Amen—for this time, too. The trouble is, that Verdi cannot make up his mind to cross the Alps, and should you ever succeed in obtaining from him what you desire, it will be only at Paris, mark my word. For some time he has been fixed, rooted like his trees, in the Italian soil, and more particularly in the soil of Sant' Agata. If you knew all the splendid projects that have been flashed before his eyes, to tempt him—it is incredible that he should not have taken the trouble to consider them, at least for half a day. So it is, and I have not the strength to strive with that obstinate Breton!

I have seen the announcement of a fairy opera by Sardou and Offenbach. What do you say of it? I have heard nothing further from Escudier directly; I have been assured, however, that his affairs are in the best of order and that he is making much money. So much the better. I do not know what country you will be in when this letter arrives in Paris, for nowadays it would appear that you make your abode with horses and locomotives; but sometime you will receive it somewhere.

Embrace your wife from me, and give little Claire a kiss.

Believe me ever, my dear Monsieur Du Locle,

Your devoted friend,

Joséphine Verdi.

Busseto, Oct. 4, 1869.

P.S. We have heard a tenor named Paoletti very favorably spoken of, and it may help you that I mention him.

To what address should we write you now—Grand Opéra or Opéra-Comique?

1 At this period there are several letters from Mme. Verdi in the correspondence addressed to Du Locle. The Piccolino mentioned here is a comedy-opera adapted from a piece by Sardou (1861), by de Lauzières-Thémine. As set to music by Mme. de Grandval, this work had been played at the Italiens on Jan. 6. Libretto revised by Nuitter in 1876, with music by Guiraud.

2 This was probably Le Roi Carotte, given at the Galté in 1872.

3 Du Locle was then a candidate for the directorship of the Opéra-Comique, with De Leuven.
Sant' Agata, Oct. 6, 1869.

Dearest Du Locle,

I have received *Patrie*,¹ and read it through in a trice. A fine drama—broad, powerful, and, above all, scenically effective. It’s a pity that the woman’s part should necessarily be hateful. There is, among so many, one situation that I find particularly new; when the conspirators throttle and bury beneath the snow the Spanish patrol. Fine, and novel! Thanks, a thousand thanks, my dear Du Locle, for not having neglected to send me this fine drama, which caused me to pass a delightful hour, and made me admire still more the genius of Sardou.

So you are continually astride of the railways, and have also actually found a *cancatrice*? I compliment you on your find; may you find all the rest, and so train your excellent troupe as to fill your theatre twice daily, thus filling your strongbox to overflowing!

And the big shop! marching triumphantly upon its laurels! Happy why who, hypnotizing their audiences with a stridulous, nerveless, bloodless musical performance, fill the theatre regularly. I see nothing new announced for this year! As for that, they are right.

I cannot tell you when and whether I shall come to Paris. It is easier for you, who are always in railway coaches, to make a flying trip to Italy. But there is nothing more to say about that. It is such a short journey now that one can, so to speak, breakfast in Paris and return to Italy for dinner.

Peppina sends her special regards both to you and your Maria, to whom please remember me too. Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Wish me well.

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Dec. 8, 1869.

Dearest Du Locle,

Thank you for *Froufrou*,² which I read at a sitting, and if (as the Revue³ says) it were all as perspicuous and original as the first three acts, this Drama would be extraordinarily fine; but the last two fall into commonplace, although they are effective, and tremendously so. However fine *Froufrou* may be, if I had to write at Paris I should prefer, to the *cuisine* (as you call it) of Maillach [sic] and Halévy, one that is finer and more piquant—that of Sardou, with Du Locle to write the verses. But, alas! it is not the trouble of writing an opera, or the judgment of the Parisian public, that restrains me, but simply the certainty that I cannot succeed in having my music played in Paris as I want it played. It’s a most singular thing that an author must always find himself contradicted when he ventures an opinion, or snubbed when he makes a concession! In your musical theatres (be it said without a suspicion of an epigram) you are too knowing! Everyone wants to judge according to his own conception, his own taste, and, what is worse, according to a system, without taking into account the character or the individuality

¹ *Patrie*, drama in five acts by Sardou, had been given at the Porte-Saint-Martin, Mar. 18, 1869. Later, Sardou adapted it for an opera with L. Gallet, music by Paladilhe, given at the Opéra Dec. 20, 1886.
² *Froufrou*, by Meilhac and Halévy, had been represented at the Gymnase Dramatique on Oct. 30.
³ *La Revue des Deux-Mondes*, to which Verdi subscribed.
of the author. Everyone wants to give an opinion, wants to express a
doubt, and the author, after living long in that atmosphere of doubts,
cannot help, in the course of time, being somewhat shaken in his convic-
tions, and ends by correcting, by accommodating, and, more correctly
speaking, by spoiling his work. And thus it comes, if one finally has on
one’s hands not an opera cast all in one piece, but a mosaic, however
fine you may think it, it is nothing but a mosaic.

You will raise the objection that at the Opéra they have a whole string
of operatic masterworks made in this fashion. Call them masterworks,
if you will; but I may be permitted to observe, that they would be far
nearer perfection if one did not notice now and again the patches and the
joinerwork. Surely, no one will call in question the genius of Rossini?
Well, in spite of all his genius, in William Tell this fatal atmosphere of
the Opéra is perceptible, and sometimes, though more rarely than in the
case of other authors, one feels that there is something too much, or
something too little, and that the musical devolution is not so free and
sure as in Il Barbiere. With all this I do not mean to express disapproval
of what is done in your city; I mean only to tell you that for me it is
absolutely impossible to pass again under the Caudine Forks of your
theatres; that, feeling as I do, no real success is possible unless I write as
I feel, free from any influence whatsoever, and without reflecting that I
am writing for Paris any more than for the folks in the moon. Moreover,
it is necessary that the artists should sing, not in their way, but in my
way; that the players and singers “who, in Paris, really possess great
ability,” should exhibit equally good will; and, finally, that all should
depend on me, that everything should be controlled by a single will—
my own. This may seem a trifle tyrannical!—and yet it is true. For if
the opera is made at one cast, there is a Unity of Conception, and all
factors should combine to present this Unity.

You may say, that nothing prevents the attainment of all this at
Paris. No; in Italy it can be done, or, rather, I can always do it, but
not in France. When I, for example, show myself in the foyer of an
Italian theatre, no one dares to express an opinion, a criticism, before
he is thoroughly informed, and no one ever risks asking irrelevant ques-
tions. Per contra, in the foyer of the Opéra, after four chords, one hears
whispers all around like, “Oh, ce n’est pas bon”—“C’est commun”—
“Ce n’est pas de bon goût”—“Çà n’ira pas à Paris.” Whatever do these
trivial words commun—de bon goût—à Paris—signify in the presence
of a work of art, which ought to be universal!

The sum and substance of all this is, “that I am not a composer for
Paris.” I do not know that I possess sufficient talent, but I do know that
my ideas with regard to art are greatly at variance with yours. I
believe in Inspiration; you believe in Symmetry. I admit your criterion
for the sake of argument; but I demand enthusiasm, which you do not
possess, in feeling and forming an opinion.

What I want is Art, however it be manifested; not arrangement,
artificiality, system, which you prefer. Am I wrong? Am I right?
Be this as it may, I have good reason to assert that my ideas are greatly
at variance with yours; and I will say, besides, that my backbone is not,
like those of so many others, so pliant that I will give up and renounce my
convictions, which are very profound and radical. And I should also
be very sorry to write for you, my dear Du Locle, an opera which you might have to withdraw after a dozen or two of representations, as Perrin did with Don Carlos. Were I a score of years younger I would say, "Let us see if your theatrical tendencies later take a turn more favorable to my notions." But time passes rapidly, and at present we cannot possibly come to an understanding, unless something unforeseen occurs that is quite beyond my ken. Should you come here, as you gave my wife reason to hope, we will talk it over again in extenso; if you don't come, it is likely that I shall make a trip to Paris towards the end of February.

If you do come to Genoa, I can no longer offer you ravioli [a species of pie or tart], because we have no Genoese cook, but at all events you will not die of hunger, and you will certainly find two friends who are most kindly disposed toward you, and to whom your presence will afford the keenest delight.

What a long letter!! I really had to give you some explanations, and you will excuse me for not having made them with greater brevity.

A thousand good wishes from us two for your dear Maria, and a kiss for little Claire.

Good-bye.

G. Verdi.

FROM MADAME VERDI TO DU LOCLE.

Dear M. Du Locle,

Please pardon my long delay in thanking you for the little diary which you were so kind as to send me, and which is very useful. Alas! you are not ignorant of the misfortune which has befallen me, and you can easily imagine what sad duties I have had to fulfill, and in how sorrowful a state they have left my mind and heart.

Verdi has not given up his trip to Paris. For that time I am saving myself to settle my obligations and to renew in person my acknowledgments for all your kindness to me.

Kindly excuse the disorderliness of this letter, and give my best regards to your charming wife. Believe me,

Your devoted,

Joséphine Verdi.

Genoa, Jan. 9, 1870.

Genoa, Jan. 17, 1870.

The Baratti is 38, and has a fine stage presence. A good ballet-dancer. Good actress. For all that, the effect is always raw. The audience admires, but remains cool. The fault—her only fault—is her 38 years! Such are the conditions in Naples, and here, too. Every one tells me to take the Laurati. They all say that she cannot dance like the Baratti, that she cannot act like the Baratti, but that the effect on the public is sure. So think it over and engage the Laurati, if you can.

I see that matters in Paris are rather quiet. How long will this quiet last!

Is it true that M. Perrin will also take over the Théâtre-Lyrique? May heaven inspire him to abandon the routine of your musical theatres!
But he will go on with the idea of the big shop—a hoary stage with tainted blood, productive only of pedants and weaklings.

Good-bye, good-bye, my dear Du Locle. I hope to see you soon.

G. Verdi.

P.S. Peppina has gone away. She is in Cremona, where her mother lies dead—an old lady of about eighty who has been ailing for a long time.

Genoa, Jan. 23, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

Arch-rascally Du Locle! you have taken care not to send me the literary writings of Wagner. You are aware that I desire to know him from this side, too, and therefore I beg you to do what you have not done. I beg of you to send Acte et Neron along with them. I still believe that Nero might be a subject for a grand opera—always provided that it were in my style. So it would be impossible for the Opéra, but superlatively possible here.

Froufrou has been produced up to now at Naples, Florence, Bologna, Turin and Milan. A curious fact—everywhere the first three acts have been well received, and the last two have met with coolness or disapproval. This agrees, as you know, with my own opinion, but I did not expect to hear this unanimous verdict from the public. So I am obliged to give up the idea of making an opera of this drama.

I must speak to you again about the Baratti. Yesterday evening an habitué of the theatre told me that she is the best dancer in the ballet—that on the stage she does not look at all old. Corticelli, whom I have known since his début, was there and said the same thing; and, as regards her age, he could assure me that she was not over thirty-two.

I write you all this because I should not wish to have to blame myself later for my first severe pronouncement. After all, what is one to believe? The opinion of Naples was conveyed by a person worthy of all confidence. I can say the same of the one who spoke about her yesterday evening. You could best decide by seeing her yourself. For the rest, I believe that she is an excellent ballet-dancer. Just now she is having poor success at Naples, but to me that is no proof that she might not succeed overwhelmingly in Paris. When the Cerrito and the De Ferraris came to Paris, they were no longer an attraction in Italy.

Peppina has returned from Cremona, and, although much cast down—as she wrote you—by the death of her mother, is in very fair health, and desires to be remembered to you and your Maria. So do I. Good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Feb. 18, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

Do you want to help me in doing a good deed? It concerns a young maestro, known as one of our best, who has written a Hamlet; his name is Faccio. I think you know him by name. This young maestro wishes to set Sardou’s Patric to music, and to this end he requires the permission of the author of the drama. He has applied to me, supposing that I am

1Given at Genoa in June, 1865, and at La Scala in Milan on Feb. 9, 1871.
acquainted with Sardou; and I apply to you. Could you, without inconveniencing yourself, do me a favor and assist a young maestro by asking Sardou’s permission to let him set Patrie to music? I should be very grateful to you for helping Faccio. Let me hear from you as soon as possible, however the conclusion may be.

The weather continues wretched, and will consequently delay my coming to Paris. Before that, I am obliged to go to Sant’Agata. And now, what are you doing? Are things running smoothly?—and for how long? So you are firmly established at the Opéra-Comique? Do you like it? We shall have a long talk about it in Paris; for the present I am well posted, for, as you know, I read the Figaro.

The Sass has had a genuine success at Milan in Les Huguenots, and with her, and at least equal to her, the basso Medini.

Kindest regards to you and your Maria, from whom Peppina has had a letter.

Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Naples, Feb. 27, 1870.¹

The rehearsals of Aida with orchestra have not yet begun. Directly after the first rehearsal I shall write you, or telegraph, and then you may be fairly certain that ten days thereafter the opera will be brought out. So you really intend coming to hear Aida again? Then do not expect any such representation as at Milan. Excepting the two ladies, you will not find other artists here equal to those, nor the choruses, nor all the rest of it. Still, the orchestra is good and will certainly rival the execution at Milan. As for the mise en scène, we are a thousand miles behind that in Milan. For a Frenchman, that means a great deal. You, who are surfeited with the luxury of the Opéra, will find it difficult to reconcile yourself to our poverty. As for myself, it is certain that if we could have had, in Milan, the mounting or the scenery that we had in Parma, the rest would have satisfied me. I greatly admire a fine frame, but it must not distract my attention from the picture. This is the reason that I am not overenthusiastic for the splendors of the Opéra.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Best regards from us for your Maria, and believe me ever

Your affectionate

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Ma (March?) 26, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

Two words to inform you that this evening I embark on the steamer for Nice and shall soon be in Paris. On arriving at Marseilles I shall send a telegram to you and also to Leon [Escudier] to let you know when I shall arrive.

It’s an age since I had news from you; I am coming to get some. No good-bye, but “so long.”

G. Verdi.

¹Obviously it escaped Mr. Prod’homme’s attention that the date Naples, Feb. 27, 1870, is impossible. The letter must have been written in 1873, for the simple reason that the dates for Aida are: Cairo, December 24, 1871; Milan, February 8, 1872; Parma, April, 1872; Naples, March 31, 1873.—Ed.
Dear Du Locle,

I am sending you only a couple of lines to say that we arrived here yesterday evening after a delightful journey, and to thank you a thousand times for all the kindness shown me during our brief sojourn in Paris.

I return the sketch, etc., etc. Do you wish me to tell you my opinion? It is a subject founded on a fallacy, and in which it would be very difficult to avoid certain well-known effects. Besides, it is not a comedy-opera. Take notice that I am not passing judgment, which would be too venturesome on my part, but merely offering an opinion. Seek, and seek again, and then in the end we shall find something.

Do not have El Zapatero y el Rey translated, for I have some one to translate it into Italian. A thousand kind wishes for your dear Maria and you from us both. We leave on Wednesday for Sant' Agata.

Good-bye from your

G. Verdi.

Genoa, April 25, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

In the book "Études sur l'Espagne contemporaine" I find a summary of a comedy by Lopez d'Ayala that strikes me as excellent for the Opéra-Comique. Look up the work, open it at page 199, and begin reading at the sentence Le premier acte se passe au milieu des provinces basques, etc., etc., down to the end.

Of course, it is difficult to judge from a summary, but it seems to me that the subject would suit you. If you agree with me, find the comedy and have it translated. I leave to-morrow for Sant' Agata, so am writing in haste. Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, May 26, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

I have read the Spanish drama by d'Ayala. It is made by a master-hand, but—one neither weeps nor laughs. It is cold, and to me it does not appear adapted for music. I am exceedingly vexed that I induced you to have the translation made. Put a stop to it, if it is not too late.

I have read the Egyptian program. It is well done; the mise en scène is splendid, and there are two or three situations which, if not wholly new, are certainly very fine. But who did it? Behind it all is the hand of an expert, familiar with such work, and thoroughly acquainted with the stage. Now let us consider the general feminine situation in Egypt, and then we shall decide. Who would have the Italian libretto made? Of course, it would have to be done in a hurry.

In great haste I squeeze your hand and say good-bye.

G. Verdi.

1Lopez de Ayala, Spanish statesman and dramaturgist, born in 1825 at Guadalcanal (Badajoz), died in Madrid Dec. 30, 1879. His "Obras Completas" have been published in seven volumes (1881-1896).
Dear Du Locle,

As yet I have not received the two pièces you sent me, but perhaps books take longer. I have read Rédemption. It has little action, and is too serious. I should prefer some comic relief.

There is no telegraph wire to this place; it goes only to Borgo San Donnino. You might send telegrams addressed to Borgo San Donnino, Italy, by post to Busseto, but you would not gain much time; for instance, if you were to telegraph at 8 or 10 o'clock in the evening, I should receive the telegram at noon the next day. So one would gain twenty-four hours.

If an agreement is reached on Egypt, you would come here. That is what gives me the greatest pleasure. Now I am really desirous for an agreement, and between ourselves we can soon come to an understanding with regard to the arrangements to be made. Only try to allow yourself the longest time possible.

Meantime I will tell you good-bye “till then.”

G. Verdi.

P.S. I shall write again immediately after having received and read the pièces.

Dear Du Locle,

Here I am at work on Egypt; and first of all it is necessary for me to reserve time to compose the opera, because we have to do with a work of vast proportions (as if we had the big Shop in view), and because the Italian poet has to begin by finding thoughts to put into the mouths of the characters and turn them into poetry. Now, supposing that I can get through in time, these are the conditions.

(1) I will have the libretto made at my expense.
(2) I will send persons to Cairo, at my expense, to prepare and conduct the opera.
(3) I will furnish copies of the score and relinquish all right and title to the libretto and music to the kingdom of Egypt only, reserving to myself all rights in libretto and music for all other parts of the world.

In compensation there shall be paid me the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand francs, drawn on the bank of Rothschild in Paris, the moment the score is sent off.

This is a letter as dry and formal as a bill of exchange. You will pardon me, by dear Du Locle, if I do not dilate on other matters this time. Excuse me, and believe me ever

Your affectionate,

G. Verdi.

'Drama by Octave Feuillet (Théâtre du Vaudeville, 1860), after the romance of the same name (1849).
TELEGRAPHIC REPLY FROM DU LOCLE TO THE PRECEDING LETTER.

[About June 15, 1870.]

Italy. Verdi Borgo San Donnino per Busseto. Receive the following dispatch. Am authorized to inform you that the proposition one hundred fifty thousand francs is accepted. Sole condition opera shall be ready end January. Mariette. Answer. Will send definitive reply to Cairo. Greetings.—Du Locle.

SKETCH OF THE AGREEMENT FOR AIDA IN VERDI'S HANDWRITING.

With this private agreement between and the composer of music G. Verdi.

(1) Maestro Verdi will compose an Italian opera in musica (adapted from a program, etc., etc.) entitled Aida, to be represented at the Italian Theatre at Cairo in the course of the month of January, 1871, the verse to be made by an Italian poet selected by the aforesaid Maestro.

(2) Maestro Verdi will retain all rights in the aforesaid score and libretto for all other parts of the world. In due time there shall be sent to Egypt a copy of the score from which the vocal and orchestral parts shall be copied.

(3) Maestro Verdi is not obligated to go to Cairo to conduct the rehearsals, but he will send a person on whom he relies, in order that the opera may be executed according to his intentions. The expenses of this person shall be borne by , and the expense for the poet, which at present can be set at twenty thousand lire, is likewise to be borne by

(4) While the opera is being played at Cairo, Maestro Verdi may, at the same time, have it played in some other large theatre in Europe.

(5) Maestro Verdi will indicate the artists who are to assume the characters.

(6) For this work there shall be paid to Maestro Verdi by the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand lire, payable in Paris at the Bank of Rotschild [sic] as soon as the score is sent off.

Dear Du Locle,

I am impatient to see you—first, for the pleasure of seeing you, secondly, because I think that in a very short time we shall agree on those modifications which, it seems to me, it would be well to make in Aida. I have already considered them, and shall submit my ideas to you.

I asked Muzio if he would be disposed to return to Cairo in case we made a contract. Now that I know that he is negotiating with Bagier, I would not for all the world have him turn down an engagement at Paris, which would be much more advantageous for him.

1In a letter of the 16th, addressed to his wife, Du Locle announces that the arrangement is concluded and that Verdi's propositions have been accepted.

2Emanuele Muzio, a pupil of Verdi and his first wife, born in Zibello, near Busseto, Aug. 25, 1825, singing-teacher of the two Patti sisters, and orchestral conductor, in which capacity he was to conduct Aida at Cairo.

3Bagier had been director of the Théâtre-Italien in Paris since the season of 1862-3.
I am glad that that Egyptian contract has not yet been trumpeted abroad in the newspapers. It seems impossible that Figaro should not have got wind of it! Of course, it cannot be kept secret forever, but it will be quite unnecessary to make the terms known. The sum, at least, ought to be kept secret, for it would serve as a pretext for disturbing so many poor dead folk. There would be cited, without fail, the 400 scudi for the Barbiere di Siviglia; the poverty of Beethoven, the misery of Schubert, the vagabondage of Mozart in search of a living, etc., etc.

The two dramas you sent me recently also do not strike me as adapted for making a good opéra comique. The one by Feuillet lacks action—that by Sardou¹ has too much—that is to say, there is too much seeking after effect, too many smart conceits. One wearies in the end. We shall talk about it. Good-bye, but not for long!

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, July 15, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

I have not written you before, because Giulio Ricordi has been here with the poet who will versify Aida. We have agreed upon everything; I hope soon to receive the verses for the first act, for then I myself could get to work. We have made some modifications in the duet in the third act between Aida and Radames. By this means the hatefulness of the betrayal is mitigated without in the least detracting from the scenic effect. I shall send it to you. I thank you for the information you have given me concerning the Egyptian musical instruments, which may be of service in various details. I should like to give them the Fanfara of the third act in the finale, but the effect, I fear, would fall flat. I assure that it is horribly distasteful to me to employ, for example, the instruments of Sax. They are tolerable in a more modern argument—but for the Pharaohs!! . . . .

And tell me whether there were priestesses of Isis, or of any other divinity. In the books I have skimmed through I find that this service was reserved for men. Let me have these points, and give serious thought to the costumes. If only this matter is carefully done, I shall see that they will serve for Europe, too.

I hear that you have had a success with the Ombra.² I am glad of it, more especially if it continues and runs up receipts.

I have received the books from D (?). Make a note of it. Kindest regards to your dearest (gentiliss.).

Good-bye, good-bye,

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, July 23, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

From your silence I begin to suspect that the delirium of the war may have impelled even the directors of the Opéra-Comique to rush to the frontier! Alas! what a calamity is all this war, which, although foreseen for a long time, I could never have imagined as breaking out all

¹This probably refers to Fernande, by Sardou, produced at the Gymnase Dramatique on March 15, 1870; and to Dalila by Octave Feuillet, a piece first played in 1857, which the Comédie-Française had also revived in March.
²Flotow's L'Ombre, libretto by Saint-Georges, had just come out at the Opéra-Comique on July the 7th.
of a sudden, like a bolt from the blue. What say you of it, my dear Du Locle?

I have heard nothing further about your contract. Perhaps the war has turned the heads of our Orientals, too—or, rather, has turned them aside from matters theatrical. To me they are indifferent, and what we cannot do now we shall do later, and later still. Only we have to think about the libretto, of which nearly half is already done.

So pray write to me. First tell me about yourself; then about your theatre; then about the Egyptian contract.

Good-bye, good-bye. Kindest regards from us for your Maria, and believe me ever your affectionate

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, Aug. 22, 1870.

Dear Du Locle,

I am heart sore over the news from France, and wish that I were, not an individual, but government and nation in one, to do what is not done—and perhaps, alas! cannot be done!!

Yesterday I had allowed my soul to hope, to-day I am prostrated! Up to now there is a certain fatality in this war, undertaken—it must be said—with none too much forethought. But French valor will end by overcoming destiny and that fatality you have hitherto encountered! Dear Du Locle, a hundred times I have started to write you, and a hundred times the pen has fallen from my hand. I have seen how About, lost for several days, was finally found! I know how well you love him, and what a consolation it must have been to you to learn that he was among the living, and unharmed! I do not dare ask you for a line, but, if you will and can, write only to tell me that you, your wife, your dear ones, are well—I shall be truly grateful!

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Take heart, and think kindly of Your affectionate

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, Aug. 26, 1870.

Dearest Du Locle,

Under present conditions I have really not ventured to speak to you about the Cairo contract. You ask me for it, and I send it herewith, with my signature, but with reservations regarding two articles which you will find justified, and will have approved by Sig. Mariette.

You will have the goodness, I trust, to demand for me the fifty thousand francs for which I send you the receipt. Take from that sum two thousand francs and give them, in whatever way you think best, in aid of your brave and unfortunate wounded. With the remaining forty-eight thousand buy me drafts on Italy. Keep the papers by you, and give them to me the first time we see each other—and I hope it will be soon. I wrote you yesterday. To-day I have only to press your hand and say that I love you dearly.

Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi. ¹

¹Among Du Locle's papers we find, dated Oct. 22, 1870, a bill from the metal-founder Barbedienne, made out to Du Locle, 37 rue Le Peletier: "A Florentine Singer No. 3 art bronze by Paul Du Bois. Legend: Verdi aux blessés français. Net, 530 fr." In Verdi's letters there is no passage referring to the purchase of this art bronze, whose fate is unknown to us.
MME. VERDI AND VERDI TO DU LOCLE.

Genoa, Feb. 4, 1871.

Being the most expert in deciphering your handwriting, it was I who read your letter of the 22d (arrived to-day) to Verdi and Corticelli, who listened with profound emotion, for we all love you, dear friend, and all of us love our sublime, devoted France. I read your letter brokenly; tears choked my voice while perusing these lines that told, with lofty simplicity, of miracles of self-abnegation, of greatness of soul, of patriotism, wrought amidst sacrifices and privations without end! Poor, dear Du Locle!—may blessings fall on you and on that great country, even more admirable in disaster than in prosperity! Paris has capitulated; but, while its capitulation was expected and inevitable, its resistance has surpassed anything that one could imagine, whether in length or in heroism! A few days ago I wrote your wife, who must be suffering greatly away from you, unable to aid you in the least in your works of charity among your sick and wounded. From here I can see how you, with your eminently virile nature, and your exquisite, almost feminine delicacy, are helping, encouraging, consoling these glorious victims of a barbarous war, who have found balm for their anguish beneath your hospitable roof. Again I say—blessings on you!!

I send this letter by way of Brussels, in order that it may reach you more surely and sooner. Verdi wishes to add some lines, so I make room for him.

In your heart of hearts you know, dear Du Locle, that in Genoa there are two hearts that love you—two friends!—Good-bye! good-bye!

Joséphine Verdi.

Dear Du Locle,

You know me, and I know that you will believe me when I tell you that I suffer with you and that my sorrow is equal to yours in the great disaster that has overtaken your country. We, far from the scene, saw matters clearly, and foresaw the immense catastrophe. In spite of this, the news came to us as though unexpected, because hope never deserts one, especially him who suffers! What can I say to you? Join you in execration? No! You of Paris, so heroic in resistance, will now be noble and resigned in misfortune. Be prudent, and the future, I hope, will be propitious to you. I need not tell you that in me you have a friend who loves you greatly, and on whom you can rely in all things and for all things.

I press your hand and say, with aching heart, good-bye!

Affectionately,

G. Verdi.

(In Mme. Verdi's hand.)

P.S. Write us a line about our mutual friends and acquaintances—one dreads to pronounce their names!

Dear Du Locle,

Am very glad to hear that you are in Arcachon. Have thought much of you, particularly during these recent days of such grievous vicissitudes for your country—but at least you are distant and in the bosom of your family! A piece of good luck, after all! What shall I
say to you about the last calamity in France? It is far worse, a thousand times worse, than lost battles! From the havoc of war, a great nation recovers easily after some years of self-denial and self-sacrifice, but who can foretell the consequences of this fearful social struggle!

We shall leave Genoa to-morrow, and return to our corner in Sant' Agata. When shall we meet?—who knows, and who can tell? I expect to come to Paris, but at present cannot decide on anything.

Give my most affectionate regards to your Maria, who must have suffered. A kiss to Claire. With much love, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Dear Camille, dear Marie,
I shall say nothing about the Prussians or about the conflict with your brothers. Your souls must be lacerated without a retelling of these mournful chapters. I shall only say that I love you both, and wish for your dear, unhappy France an end of her woes! I embrace you, and am, with all my heart, your

Joséphine Verdi.

Sant' Agata, June 6, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,
I sent you a letter to Alançon about twelve days ago, and Peppina also wrote to your wife at the same address—now I have received yours of June 1 from Paris, and am very glad that you have not had to suffer malicious injuries. I shall not mention your disconsolate country, for it is of no avail to reopen a wound that still aches. I can only counsel your beautiful land to heal her own hurts, and with such resources this will be readily realized if your men of politics look around them, and do not blame others for their own difficulties. So long as you have Trochus, who have eyes only to see Italian corruption, and do not perceive the fatal infirmities which they bear in their own breasts, more and yet more woes are indeed to be feared!

Draneth Bey was here for a few hours, and told me he would come back later with Mariette. Oh, if you could be the third! from the moment you came to Aix,¹ you cannot imagine what pleasure Peppina and I would have. Anyhow, whether with Signor Bey or by yourself, I expect you, and ardently wish for your coming, all the more because just now it will be very difficult for me to come to Paris.

Once again I repeat that I am very glad that you have not had to suffer malicious injuries, and that I wish and hope all good things for you with all my heart for the future.

Greetings from us for your Maria. I embrace you most heartily.

Good-bye. Affectionately

G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, June 17, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,
I know that Paris is rallying and will recover her former brilliancy, and I wish that she may prosper and find a stable government, for the peace of yourselves, ourselves, and all the world. But what am I interfering in? By this time you will have received my reply of June 1,

¹Probably Aix-les-Bains, in Savoy.
Unpublished Letters from Verdi to Camille Du Locle

in which I told you that I positively expect to see you, not in Paris, but here from the moment that you come to Aix. I believe, moreover, that I have informed you that Mariette Bey is coming to Europe, and in case he should first go to Paris he will be well informed as to how matters stand with regard to Aida. As you know, Draneth Bey was here for a few hours. He has engaged the Pozzoni as the artist for the part of Aida, but he still has no mezzo-soprano for Amneris. He wanted to have this rôle adapted for the Sass, but that is impossible for a thousand reasons. I wrote him that I should have a mezzo-soprano who would serve our turn, and he answered me that the pecuniary resources were exhausted! Then why engage the Sass when it was certain that she would not be needed? Meanwhile, time is passing, and later perhaps we shall find ourselves in trouble.

And you, I fancy, are at work from morning to night! Poor Du Locle! Courage, courage—peace will return.

Peppina has received a dear, good letter from your wife, a real outpouring of the heart.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. About the middle of July we shall go to Genoa for a few days. Au revoir, then, there or here.

Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Mme. Verdi to M. and Mme. Du Locle.

Dear Monsieur Du Locle,

Thank you for the photographs you were so kind as to send us. We study them with a tremulous interest; but how one’s heart is oppressed by them! How could a nation so amiable, so keen-witted, so kindly in a calm frame of mind, become so frantic, so cruel, in its revolutionary turmoil? Alas! it is only too true: man is everywhere and always the same when blinded by passion. Progress is like the vast swell of the ocean; it advances to a certain point fixed by some mysterious power, and then retreats to begin anew its eternal repetition of the same movement. Under what form of government are you living now? If it is that of Henry V [HENRY V ! ?] or that of the house of Orleans,¹ we shall have the war for the Pope! It is a dreadful thing to think of, and I wish I could, though I cannot, share your opinion and your assurance in this regard. I read with delight the passage in your letter that says, “I have taken note of your plan for a trip to Genoa, for my own to . . .” (I could not make out where). Well, dear friend, I hope you will make an excursion thitherward, and although at Genoa in the summer we are merely camping out, I trust that you will come straight to us and be so kind as to put up with what we can offer you. The memory of what you suffered during the siege will make the bed and board of your friends grateful to you.

We shall leave for Genoa about the 18th or 20th of July, and shall return to the country about the 11th of August. Au revoir then very soon, dear M. Du Locle.

Your letter touched me, my dear Marie! You are so frank, so good, so unaffected in your manner of expressing yourself, that I seemed

¹The comte de Chambord (Henri V); the comte de Paris (Philippe d’Orléans).
while reading to hear the sound of your voice, and to see that sweet face, so saddened by the fearful disasters that have overwhelmed you! I wish it were all over, but I do not believe it, and I am afraid that the war has only changed its direction. It was against the North, it will be against the South. That would be heartbreaking! But let us not anticipate misfortunes; they always come too soon!

I thank you for all the details you gave me, which I should not have ventured to ask you for. It is an evidence of confidence which I cherish, and of which I think myself not undeserving, for I love you both and take a genuine interest in everything that concerns you. So in spite of the destruction and ruin in Paris, neither you nor yours have had to suffer directly and materially in any way? Let us thank God together, dear Marie, for there is something miraculous in that, more especially as regards the hôtel of your old aunt, so near to the conflagration. As for Madame Perrin, I can see her, calm and grave, controlling her agitation for the sake of her loved ones. To her, and to all your dear family, I beg you to give my respects and cordial greetings.

At what a moment your poor Auber departed this life?! In what a state did he leave that Paris which he so dearly loved! It appears that Thomas will be his successor, and that is right. I hope to see your Camille in a few days, and you may imagine with what delight I shall press his hand after all that has happened! A kiss for your children, and another for you, my dear Madame Du Locle, from your friend.

Joséphine Verdi.

Busseto, July 3, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

I hear that Mariette Bey is in Paris at 170, rue de Rivoli, and I beg you to go to him and tell him that something is going wrong in this Aida matter.

Draneth Bey has not yet found, or has not wanted to find, the mezzo-soprano for the part of Amneris, and now he writes me once more that he is out of funds!! How am I to blame for it? And why didn’t he stop to think before he spent it all!! . . .

Draneth insists on getting the libretto of Aida so that he can send it to Mariette, but I cannot send it to him before this question is settled. Nevertheless, in order not to lose time, I send the libretto to you, and if you find that Mariette can settle this difficulty, you may deliver it to him for executing the directions concerning the costumes and scenery.

Under this I send a copy of the letter that I wrote to-day to Draneth, so that you may have a succinct survey of what has happened.

We have been in Genoa since yesterday evening, and shall remain here some three weeks. Now then—are you coming here?

Best regards from Peppina and myself.

Your affectionate,

G. Verdi.

P.S. Let me have a line from you as soon as you receive the libretto.

1Auber died during the Commune, on May 19, 1871.
Genoa, July 20, 1871.

On returning to Genoa I received your kind favor of the 17th. It seems to me that before sending the libretto of Aida it should be decided who is to execute the part of Amneris. As I had the honor to inform you previously, neither the Sass nor the Grassi is, or ever was, a mezzo-soprano. You say that the Grossi sings La Favorita, and Fides in Le Prophet. Yes; and the Alboni has sung the Gazza ladra, and (I think) La Sonnambula, and even the part of Carlo V in Ernani!! But what of that? It signifies nothing more nor less than that the singers and managers did not scruple in the least to manhandle the Authors’ creations, or to let them be manhandled.

Permit me to relate a bit of history concerning this same Aida. I wrote the opera for the last season, and it was for no fault of mine that the opera was not produced. I was requested to defer its production until the year following, a proposition to which I assented without protest, although it was greatly to my disadvantage. As early as Jan. 5 I mentioned that the part of Amneris was written for a mezzo-soprano, and later I asked that the conductor of the orchestra should not be selected without giving me due notice (because I was always hoping to get Mariani).

While I was carrying on these negotiations, another conductor was engaged, and no thought has been given for engaging a mezzo-soprano!! Why is this?—and why, when an opera written to special order is involved, is care not taken at the outset to provide everything, all the constituent elements that could be required for its production? I find it very strange that this was not done, and Your Excellency will permit me to observe, that this is not the way to obtain a satisfactory result and a success.

I have the honor to subscribe myself

Your obt. servt.

G. Verdi.

Genoa, Dec. 25, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

Have received yours of the 22nd, and unfortunately the figure that Granger demands is obliterated. Do me the kindness to repeat it in your next, and then, of course, I can tell Signora Stolz what it is. I am sending this letter of mine to Leo [Escudier], enclosing the measures which you require, and it will be forwarded to Paris, thus gaining 24 hours.

All this is as it should be, but Granger asks too much time for fulfilling the provisions of his contract. Here the rehearsals are advanced—the singers know their parts; the choruses are so-so; the mountings are nearly ready; and it may well be that precisely on the 20th (which is Sunday, the day always chosen for the premières) the production will take place. So pray see to it that Granger has everything ready not later than the 15th, so that it may be in Milan by the 18th. Keep a sharp lookout in this matter, for delay would be absolutely ruinous. And look out that the work is done as it ought to be. Write me directly about this.
I wrote you that Peragallo had paid my moneys after all; but if you wish to be my banker, do not get angry, and pay away——. You will have received news from Cairo. I have two telegrams, which are favorable. We shall see if they are confirmed. I am told that the Viceroy has invited Reyer. Oh bravo!—that is indeed a good friend!! and the Viceroy has a keen nose. As for that, it is better thus than to read the nauseating praise of fulsome reports. So send me without delay the article that Reyer writes for the Débats.¹ There will be a cannonade, for certain. But don’t be frightened, I am thoroughly steeled by indifference.

Ever your affectionate

G. Verdi.

(In the handwriting of T. Stolz.)

P.S. All right so far. Teresa Stolz.

Genoa, Dec. 29, 1871.

Dear Du Locle,

I know that Peppina wrote to your wife yesterday; but I too want to send you a few lines to wish you everything that is finest and best, health and prosperity. And whatever is better that you may desire.

I shall leave for Milan on Wednesday the 2nd to begin the rehearsals of Aida. So address your letters to Milan. I really expect that the première will be on the 20th, and therefore I implore you and beg you not to forget that the work which Granger is doing for the Stolz should be in Milan by the 18th at the very latest.² For the love of God! If this miscarries, it will be a most serious matter. Look out for it, and let me know about it.

As soon as the rehearsals have commenced I shall write to tell you more positively when the day will be. Then you can make your arrangements for coming to Milan. How I long to see you!—but alas! poor Du Locle, if you were to assist at a fiasco! Well, at all events you will experience a sensation and see how decisive and unmistakable a fiasco in Italy is.

Good-bye, I press your hand and renew my good wishes for you and all your family, and am as ever

Your affectionate

G. Verdi.

P.S. It appears that Aida did not go badly at Cairo. That is, according to the telegrams. The letters are yet to be seen. Send Reyer’s article to me at Milan. Address to “Albergo Milano, Milano.”

Milan, Jan. 26, 1872.

Yesterday the Stolz received her bijoux, with which she is greatly pleased. Now I beg you to pay Granger and send me the receipted bill. In addition I send you sincerest thanks, and will forthwith repay the money you have laid out.

¹Reyer wrote an introductory article on Aida for the Débats, dated Dec. 23, 1871. On returning from a trip to upper Egypt, he sent off a second article on Feb. 3, after the fifth performance. These two articles, very favorable to Verdi’s new work, were reprinted in “Notes de Musique” (Paris, 1875, pp. 185–213) under the caption, “Notes de Musique.”

²This refers to costumes or accessories for the principal interpreter of Aida.
Unpublished Letters from Verdi to Camille Du Locle

It is almost certain that Aida will come out on Feb. 3. I shall write you again, and if things go as I expect towards the end of this month, I shall send you a telegram.

Meantime good-bye in haste, and a hearty handshake.

G. Verdi.

Parma, April 17, 1872.

Dear Du Locle,

Your letter reached me rather late, because I had left Genoa—and I answer you rather late because I have not had time to breathe, so to speak. We have reached the final rehearsal of Aida, and you can imagine how busy we are! Aida comes out Sunday, and the performance will be very nearly like that at Milan, both musically and scenically. On account of these affairs I have not been able as yet to attend to David, but Ricordi is coming here to-day, and I shall turn the matter over to him.

You are translating Aida? For the Opéra, mayhap? Oh! oh! I should be very [illegible] for this combination! In that theatre I accept the mise en scène (although it's too big and pretentious for me), but, on the musical side, all that is done there is in no way acceptable to me. I have no luck in that theatre! Not a bit of it! Let us stay as we are! I am so comfortable here.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. Peppina, who is with me, sends very kindest regards to your Marie, and I squeeze your hand with all my heart.

G. Verdi.

Sant’ Agata, June 22, 1872.

Dear Du Locle,

You were quite right to complain that I have not written you for an age. It is entirely my own fault, for recently I have had hardly anything to do. I am living in complete idleness; nobody disturbs me, and even the Po, which has ruined so much of the Ferrarese countryside, has left us in peace. All the better for us—but those poor people!! What destruction!! It includes no less than one hundred square kilometers, all inundated. It is the most fertile soil one can conceive of! Imagine what resources are gone to waste!

Whatever do you tell me?

Reyer!!! Reyer convinced? That is more overwhelming than the inundation of Ferrara. Only it is less ruinous! All the better! and all the better if Aida affords pleasure to the reader. I believe it will lose nothing in performance, if it is played as I would have it. But that is very difficult at Paris!

And you—how do you feel? Is your little shop¹ still prospering? It looks that way to me, and I wish you the same for the future.

Good-bye, my dear Du Locle. And how has the translation of Aida turned out? Put modesty aside, for there are times when one should say exactly what one thinks.

Give our kindest regards to your dear Marie, and believe me ever and ever

Affectionately

G. Verdi.

¹The Opéra-Comique.
Dear Du Locle,

Naples, Nov. 16, 1872.

It is an age since I wrote you, but you understand that the journey, the matters I had to attend to at Sant' Agata, and the getting settled here, have deprived me of invaluable time.

I have been here with Peppina about ten days; the rehearsals of Don Carlos are well advanced. The tenor intended for Don Carlos was taken sick, and we have to be content that he has a fine voice, but an unhappy face. But my basses are below par; they are three baritones who are not quite sure [unintelligible]. Before the end of the month we shall go on the stage—at least I hope so.

And you—what are you doing? I am rejoiced with your little shop—and how is the big shop getting on?

Write me here with the simple address

Maestro Verdi
Napoli.

All kinds of good wishes to you all, in which my wife joins. Good-bye.

G. Verdi.

P.S. Please write post-haste to tell me whether the monks in the last scene in Don Carlos are Inquisitors or brethren of the monastery of San Giusto. Lose no time in answering this. Good-bye.


Dear Du Locle,

What! what! You have not received my letter, or, I should say, my two letters mailed after the representation of Don Carlos the same day on which I wrote to Muzio and Leon!

Those few words have been lost in the post—but it matters little—no; yet it does matter a great deal, because you have accused me, with reason, of a lack of courtesy and consideration for you.

Well, our Don Carlos is doing finely and the public is extremely pleased with it. Indeed, if not everything is good, many portions of it are superlatively good. The two ladies and the baritone are very fine. The tenor has a lovely voice and is intelligent, but unhappily his figure is too stout for a lover. The basses are just barely mediocre. The mise en scène deplorable as regards costuming of the crowd. Some scenes are good. Men’s chorusses good. Orchestra excellent. In the ensemble of the musical execution there is a verve and brio that are always lacking in Paris. Here Don Carlos takes half an hour less than in Paris. It begins at 8 and ends at 12:05.

Unfortunately the performances are suspended because the Stolz has a throat disorder of quite a serious nature.

I shall expect you for Aida, which goes on in February.

With all my heart I wish you a monster success with Giulietta e Romeo.¹

Write me, and believe me ever

Your affectionate

G. Verdi.

¹An allusion to the approaching representation of Roméo et Juliette, by Gounod which, brought out at Carvalho’s Théâtre-Lyrique, was transferred to the Opéra-Comique Jan. 20, 1873.
Unpublished Letters from Verdi to Camille Du Locle 101

Naples, Jan. 2, 1873.

Dear Du Locle,

Thanks for your letter and kind wishes, which, as you may easily imagine, Peppina and I return in kind with fifty hearts. I want to see you here as much as you do, but fear that we ourselves will leave Naples very shortly, because the theatre is probably going to close. The management, which has been improvident, and failed to prepare any alternative opera for the Ballo, 1 was taken by surprise by the Stolz’s indisposition, which has persisted for three weeks. During this forced suspension of the representations of Don Carlos disorganization has set in, and the management finds itself in a very tight place. If the municipality does not help, the management cannot save itself, but the municipality will not help, because of a personal grudge against the management.

Well, all the better for me. I shall fatigue myself the less, and can contemplate the beauties of Naples at my ease, and enjoy the mildness of the climate. The windows open all day at a temperature of 15° Réaumur! which is about 20° Centigrade! What say you to that, in the midst of your damp, and fog, and cold?

Now good-bye. Should you not come to Naples, it is not impossible that I may go to Paris this Spring. So au revoir and Happy New Year, and greetings to all!

Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Sant’ Agata, June 24, 1873.

Dear Du Locle,

To-morrow we shall leave for Paris, but we are going to stop over a day in Turin, and shall not arrive till Sunday. I shall let you know the hour.

I beg, I entreat, I implore you not to put yourself out in any way on my account, and, above all, to tell no one that I am in Paris. I shall not visit any of the theatres, especially the musical ones. I am coming to see my friends, to visit Paris, and to get the rest I so much need.

Au revoir! Good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Turin, L [July?] 13, 1873.

Dear Du Locle,

Here we are the very next evening in Italy, after a delightful journey. The Tunel is really a sensational affair! The splendid internal illumination by gas, and the profound external darkness, the fresh air, and not to be suffocated by smoke, is a very fine thing. And besides, three thousand metres of earth and stone overhead! —

We shall not leave Turin until 12 o’clock; we breakfast at Piacenza, and at 7 shall be in Sant’ Agata.

And now, what can I say to you, my dear Du Locle? How can I thank you for all the kindness shown my wife and myself during our too long sojourn in Paris? You have treated us with a courtesy and con-

1Il Ballo in Maschera.
sideration certainly not to be excelled; and I, with a faint blush mantling
my forehead, can only say, thank you, thank you, a thousand times.
Good-bye. Write me, always to the usual address.
Good-bye. And wish me well, as I do you.

G. Verdi.

P.S. When you write to your Maria, do not fail to send her our
very best regards. Once more, good-bye.

Sant' Agata, Nov. 3, 1873.

My Dear Du Locle,
I have received your letter, and well understand what grief you felt
at the destruction of the Opéra.1 You who loved it, and who had passed
so many delightful hours in it. I myself was moved by the sorrowful
tidings—I who, all four times that I have entered it in the capacity of an
artist, have not invariably lived through pleasurable moments. It is
certainly a genuine calamity for the artists and operatives belonging to
the Opéra. However, the other edifice will be ready very soon, and
besides, your country is so rich that it will easily provide for the needs of
all.

Keep me continually informed about yourself, and believe me
Affectionately
G. Verdi.

Sant' Agata, Dec. 28, 1873.

Dear Du Locle,
I thank you for your kind wishes, which arrived most punctually
on my birthday. And I return them for you and all your family, also
on the part of Peppina. I wish you what you desire, even to being
director of the New Opéra. But have a care! These theatres once in a
while are mantraps! I would not see you caught for all the gold in the
world.

Day after to-morrow, on Wednesday, we shall be in Genoa, to
remain there the rest of the winter. Good-bye, and believe me
Affectionately
G. Verdi.

Genoa, Feb. 24, 1874.

Dear Du Locle,
Greetings to my well-beloved liege lord—to the sole and singular
Tyrant and despot of the Little Shop,2 reserving to myself the business of
kneeling when you shall have become Czar and Sultan of the Big One.
You say nothing about Carvalho! What has happened? Has he played
a sly trick on you, and is everything quite in order? Never mind—
however and whatever things may be, I wish you tranquil prosperity,
and, above all, that you may see your dreams more than realized.

I am working on my mass, and really with great pleasure. I feel
as though I had become a serious man, and were no longer a “barker”
for the public, who, to the accompaniment of the big drum, calls out,
“Here you are! here you are! Walk in! etc.” You must understand

1 The Opéra was burned down Oct. 28.
2Du Locle had just taken over the directorship of the Opéra-Comique. He retained
it only up to the middle of 1876, when Carvalho succeeded him.
that now, when I think of "opera," my conscience is scandalized, and I cross myself without delay!!! What do you say to that? Don't you feel edified?

But do you know that I shall probably make another trip to Paris this year, after the mass, that is to say, towards the end of May? Why not? Is it because you ought not to give yourself all the trouble you took last year? Who knows! Good-bye meanwhile.

Peppina sends greetings to you and your dear Maria, and I squeeze your hands most heartily. Good-bye, good-bye.

G. Verdi.

Wednesday

(A Copy.)

My dear Marie, for the love of God, do not send me those unhappy papers. What should I do with them? Everybody will always be in the right as against me, and I in the wrong as against everybody. One must decide accordingly. I should only succeed in having insult hurled at me, and in raising an uproar about my wretched names Concerning Aida, here is the absolute truth. The real author of the libretto is Mariette Bey, who, having invented an Egyptian story of a certain sort, persuaded the Viceroy to have an opera made of it for the opening of the Isthmus. This story of Mariette's, a few copies of which were printed in Cairo, is in Nuitter's portfolio. Because I gave him the copy which I had. The question was, to construct an opera from it. That is what I did, building up and demolishing a scenario with Verdi, then writing the whole thing out in French—not the scenario, but the entire piece, bit by bit, sentence by sentence. Verdi had the piece put in verses by Ghislanzoni, and he was so far from asserting his paternity of it that we read on the Italian playbills Versi di Ghislanzoni—not "poem," as is usually put there. Such is the real truth. I did this work at Busseto, whither I was called by Verdi. All this should be verified by letters and dispatches. A dispatch to me which ought to be found, and which is curious, is the one in which I am given the choice, for Aida, between Verdi, Gounod, and Wagner! Verdi never knew of this dispatch; but I have been ill recompensed. I, who always find that everybody is right as against me, as in excusing Verdi for having taken, over and above the bargain, the rights of translation from poor Nuitter!

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

1In a note of April 8 following, Verdi announces his arrival in Paris, with his wife, for the 14th.

2This copy, in a feminine hand, is that of a letter from Du Locle to his wife. Its date is unknown. Compare Du Locle's letter addressed at Rome, March 28, 1880, to the journal L'Italie.

3In June, 1879, Du Locle passed some three weeks with Verdi at Busseto.
THE EARLY YEARS OF THE FIRST ENGLISH OPERA HOUSE

By W. J. LAWRENCE

The story of the slow, laborious emersion of Italian Opera in England, of its struggles to displace the hybrid monstrosity which for over a lustrum flaunted itself in its name, this, as it has been written piecemeal by various hands, is a tangled skein before whose complexities even the keenest expert might well stand aghast. Error crept insidiously into the tale at its first telling, and subsequent historians, in striving to dislodge it, have only succeeded in rendering confusion the more confounded. When one finds an alert mind like that which was labelled "Colley Cibber" blundering over dates and circumstances well within its individual observation and experience, confidence is shaken and it is difficult to know on whom to place dependence. To-day, despite our scientific methods of attack, we are too remote from events of a painfully evanescent order to be able always to arrest their flight and so fully to restore order out of chaos. But the more difficult the task the greater its fascination for the researcher; and it may not be wholly presumptuous for a lifelong delver into both the virgin soil and the well-tilled fields of English musicodramatic history to attempt the blazing of a trail.

Accustomed as we are to speak of that landmark of the Augustan age, the old Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, as England's first Italian Opera House, we are apt to forget that initially the term does not apply, and that in it for long opera was, in drummer's phrase, nothing more than an occasionally useful "side-line." Built in 1705 by Sir John Vanbrugh, architect by profession and dramatist by choice, the Queen's was primarily intended as habitat for the veteran tragedian, Betterton, and his associates of the little theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, who had found that their bandbox of a house hopelessly handicapped them in their uphill fight with the players of Drury Lane. Each camp in its endeavour to best the enemy had already fallen back on occasion on the adventitious aid of musical spectacle; and Vanbrugh as controller of the new house clearly foresaw that the same expedient would have to be resorted to. There was no idea in the beginning of the Queen's eventually becoming a substantive opera-house, and its ultimate transmutation was due, curiously enough, to a
View of the Front of the Old Opera House, Haymarket

Built by Sir John Vanbrugh

From an original drawing by Capon, made in 1783
determining combination of purely fortuitous circumstance. Its
defectiveness, acoustically, for the speaking voice, together with
the peculiarity of its location, fitted it better for an opera-house
than a theatre, and an opera-house it became. On this score,
Cibber is an excellent witness. Discussing the delusive prospects
of Betterton's company just as they were on the verge of entering
on occupation of their new home, Colley writes, in the ninth
chapter of his Apology (1739):

As to their other dependence, the house, they had not yet dis-
covered, that almost every proper quality and convenience of a good
theatre had been sacrificed or neglected, to show the spectator a vast
triumphal piece of architecture; and that the best play, for the reasons
I am going to offer, could not but be under great disadvantages, and be
less capable of delighting the auditor here, than it could have been in
the plain theatre they came from. For what could their vast columns,
their gilded cornices, their immoderate high roofs, avail, when scarce
one word in ten could be distinctly heard in it? Nor had it then the
form it now stands in, which necessity, two or three years after, reduced
it to. At the first opening it, the flat ceiling that is now over the or-
chestra was then a semi-oval arch, that sprung fifteen feet higher from
above the cornice: the ceiling over the pit too was still more raised,
being one level line from the highest back part of the upper gallery to
the front of the stage: the front boxes were a continued semi-circle to
the bare walls of the house on each side. This extraordinary and super-
fluous space occasioned such an undulation from the voice of every actor,
that generally what they said sounded like the gabbling of so many
people in the lofty aisles in the cathedral. The tone of a trumpet, or
the swell of an eunuch's holding note, it is true, might be sweetened by
it; but the articulate sounds of a speaking voice were drowned by the
hollow reverberations of one word upon another.

To this inconvenience, why may we not add that of its situation?
For at that time it had not the advantage of almost a large city which
has since been built in its neighbourhood. These costly spaces of Hanover,
Grosvenor, and Cavendish squares, with the many and great adjacent
streets about them, were then all but so many green fields of pasture,
from whence they could draw little or no sustenance, unless it were that
of a milk diet. The city, the inns of court, and the middle part of the
town, which were the most constant support of a theatre, and chiefly
to be relied on, were now too far out of the reach of an easy walk; and
coach hire is often too hard a tax upon the pit and gallery.

Some idea of the troubles that lie in wait for the conscientious
operatic annalist may be gained from a full exposition of the
perplexing contradictoriness of the various early authorities as to
the date of the opening of the new Queen's Theatre, and the fare
presented on that occasion. Downes, who wrote nearest to the
event (his serviceable Roscius Anglicanus appearing in 1708), and
who is therefore the least likely to blunder, tells us that
Betterton, finding himself unequal to the struggle, now transferred his company over to Captain Vanbrugge, to act under him at the theatre in the Haymarket, and upon April 9th, 1705, the latter opened his theatre with a foreign opera, performed by a new set of singers arrived from Italy—the worst that ever came from thence, for it lasted but five days; and they being liked but indifferently by the gentry—they in a little time marched back to their own country.

Cibber, writing thirty years after Downes, begins badly by placing the date of opening in 1706, and then goes on to say that the initial bill proffered a translated opera, to Italian music, called *The Triumph of Love*; but this not having in it the charm of *Camilla*, either from the inequality of the music or voices, had but a cold reception, being performed but three days, and those not crowded.

Along comes Burney to add to the intricacies of the problem. According to his “General History of Music,” the date was Easter Monday, April 9, 1705, when an inaugural prologue written by Garth was spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle, and the performance consisted of Dryden’s tragedy of *The Indian Emperor*, together with singing by “the Italian Boy.” Ashton¹, in condemning Downes’ and Cibber’s details, seeks to confirm Burney’s statement in all but the dating, and relies on the fact that the first Queen’s advertisement to be found in The Daily Courant deals with the performance of *The Indian Emperor* on April 14, 1705. This of itself is no proof, since Vanbrugh undoubtedly placed his dependence at the outset purely on bills supplemented by the obvious attractions of a new theatre.

Finally, Michael Kelly, in the handy synopsis of early operatic records given in an appendix to the second volume of his Reminiscences, contributes still further to the tangle. While agreeing with Burney as to the date and the prologue, he states that the production was “Signor Giacome Greber’s *Loves of Ergasto*, set to Italian music.”

Notwithstanding this extraordinary diversity of opinion, it becomes apparent on probing the matter to the bottom that the truth can be arrived at by fusing Downes’ and Kelly’s statements. The date of opening was certainly Easter Monday, April 9, 1705. *The Triumph of Love*, to which Cibber pins his faith, was not produced until the following July, when it was given at the deserted theatre in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, not in the Queen’s, whither Betterton and his associates had temporarily returned, but with

¹*Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne, 1882, II, p. 7.*
indifferent success. Sir Samuel Garth undoubtedly wrote the
inaugural prologue, and Congreve the dramatist (who was asso-
ciated in the beginning with Vanbrugh in the management of
the theatre, but retired after the first season), the epilogue. As
neither address has been reprinted by any operatic annalist, and
as Congreve’s epilogue helps materially to solve the problem, I
reproduce both:

PROLOGUE BY SIR SAMUEL GARTH, SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF THE
QUEEN’S THEATRE, HAYMARKET:

Such was our builder’s art, that soon as nam’d,
This fabrick, like the infant-world, was fram’d.
The architect must on dull order wait,
But ‘tis the poet only can create;
None else, at pleasure, can duration give,
When marble fails, the Muses’ structures live.
The Cyprian fane is now no longer seen,
Tho’ sacred to the name of love’s fair queen.
Ev’n Athens scarce in pompous ruins stands,
Tho’ finished by the learn’d Minerva’s hands.
More sure presages from their walls we find,
By beauty founded, and by wit design’d.
In the good age of ghostly ignorance,
How did cathedrals rise, and zeal advance?
The merry monks said orisons, at ease,
Large were their meals, and light their penances;
Pardon for sins was purchas’d with estates,
And none but rogues in rags dy’d reprobates.
But now that pious pageantry’s no more,
And stages thrive, as churches did before,
Your own magnificence you here survey,
Majestick columns stand where dunghills lay,
And cars triumphal rise from carts of hay.
Swains here are taught to hope, and nymphs to fear,
And big Almanzors fight mock Blenheims here.
Descending goddesses adorn our scenes,
And quit their bright abodes for gilt machines.
Shou’d Jove, for this fair circle, leave his throne,
He’d meet a lightning fiercer than his own.
Tho’ to the sun, his tow’ring eagles rise,
They scarce cou’d bear the lustre of these eyes.

Read side by side with Cibber’s strictures on the architec-
tural deficiencies of the house, Garth’s strophes assume an ironical
flavour. With relief one turns to the

1Not elsewhere to be found, I think, save in a little book entitled “Prologues and
Epilogues celebrated for their Poetical Merit,” published at Oxford, without date.
2Referring to the fact that the foundation stone had been laid in 1704 by the beauti-
ful Lady Sunderland, popularly known as “the little Whig.”
Whatever future fate our house may find,
At present we expect you shou'd be kind:
Inconstancy itself can claim no right,
Before enjoyment and the wedding night.
You must be fix'd a little ere you range,
You must be true till you have time to change.
A week at least; one night is sure too soon:
But we pretend not to a honeymoon.
To novelty we know you can be true,
But what alas! or who, is always new?
This day, without presumption, we pretend
With novelty entire you're entertain'd;
For not alone our House and Scenes are new,
Our Song and Dance, but ev'n our Actors too.
Our Play itself has something in't uncommon,
Two faithful lovers, and one constant woman.
In sweet Italian strains our Shepherds sing,
Of harmless loves our painted forests ring,
In notes, perhaps less foreign than the thing.
To sound and shew at first we make pretence,
In time we may regale you with some sense,
But that at present were too great expence.
We only for the beaux may think it hard,
To be to-night from smutty jests debarr'd:
But in good breeding, sure, they'll once excuse
Ev'n modesty, when in a stranger muse.
The day's at hand when we shall shift the scene,
And to yourselves shew your dear selves again.
Paint the reverse of what you've seen to-day,
And in bold strokes the vicious town display.

Not only the heading of the epilogue, but the lines specially italicised, as well as much of what follows, negatives the possibility that the Queen's could have opened with The Indian Emperor or any other old play. Congreve's reference to "two faithful lovers, and one constant woman" established the accuracy of Michael Kelly's statement, for these are characteristics of the plot of The Loves of Ergaste, an Indian pastoral printed in 1705 alternately in Italian and English (undoubtedly for sale in the theatre), as "represented at the opening of the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket" and as "compos'd by Signior Giacomo Greber."

Burney says the date of the production of this pastoral was April 24, 1705, when the character of the nymph, Licori, was sustained by "the Italian Boy" and the bill also comprised a new farce called The Consultation. But since the anonymous Italian youngster had sung separately on the 14th previously, he might have suspected that the pastoral, or at any rate some sort of exotic musical production, had been given earlier.
Greber, it may be noted, was a German musician who came to London in 1692, bringing with him the celebrated Francesca Margherita de l'Epine, the first Italian vocalist of any distinction who sang in England.

All this sifting of evidence has been distinctly worth while, as the upshot brings us face to face with a remarkable fact. It was in keeping with the eternal fitness of things that the future home of Italian Opera should open with a pastoral piece sung entirely in Italian by Italian artists. That such homogeneity was not to be experienced there again until the production of *Almahide* in January, 1710, was due to a question of ways and means. Vanbrugh's initial experience had shown that the cognoscenti were not to be fobbed by an association of mediocre singers, and the difficulty and expense of bringing a first-class combination from Italy proved for long an insurmountable barrier. Nothing better than an ugly compromise could be effected. The attractions of a male soprano of the first or second order were eked out by the more or less competent singing of home-born artists, many of whom were incapable of dealing with any language save their own. Hence that arid lustrum in which, in the well-known words of Colley Cibber, Italian Opera masqueraded in as rude a disguise, and unlike itself, as possible; in a lame, hobbling translation into our own language, with false quantities, or metre out of measure to its original notes, sung by our own unskilful voices, with graces misapplied to almost every sentiment, and with action lifeless and unmeaning through every character.

The bad impression made at the beginning by a foreign troupe of incompetents was consolidated immediately afterwards when Betterton's players came to act at the new house and its acoustic defects became fully apparent. It was a case of give a dog a bad name and hang him. Patronage proved lukewarm, and a painfully dull season ended in June.

Just here I may say that questions of space preclude the possibility of my dealing with the theatrical records of the Queen's save in a superficial, glancing way. But it will remain for the ultimate historian of Italian Opera in England to assemble both the musical and the dramatic annals in order that the sense of proportion may be attained.

With the reopening of the Queen's on October 30, 1705, Vanbrugh's excellent new comedy, *The Confederacy*, saw the light.

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1See Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration to 1830*, Vol. II, for satisfactory summaries of the theatrical seasons at the Queen's.
It was given ten times, but not to the overflowing houses its merits demanded. Three other new plays followed in quick succession, and on February 21, 1706, there was a notable production of Lord Lansdowne’s tragedy with florid musical embellishment, *The British Enchanters*, or *No Magic like Love*, a reversion to the Post-Restoration type of English dramatic opera, which met with considerable success and was afterwards revived in reduced and more strictly operatic form. Next in order came, on March 7, Motteux’s pastoral opera, *The Temple of Love*, a translation from the Italian sung to music by Saggione. Unless a later addition, the following allusions in the epilogue seem an “intelligent anticipation” of the Drury Lane production of Marc Antonio Bononcini’s *Camilla*, which did not materialise until the penultimate date of the month:

Get some fam’d Opera, any how translated,  
No matter, so the t’other House don’t get it.  
Get clothes, tho’ the Actors with half-pay dispense;  
Get whims, get anything . . . . but Sense.

It is noteworthy that Owen McSwiney, the Drury Lane manager’s factotum, who had translated the libretto of *Camilla* from the Italian of Silvio Stampiglia, was soon to be identified with the fortunes of the Queen’s Theatre.1 The production itself was remarkable for two circumstances, first for the appearance of Signor Valentini (Valentini Urbani), earliest in order of the male sopranis, a singer of the second rank, with a weak but melodious voice; and again for establishing the absurd system of bilingual interpretation which, despite the girdings of the wits, so long obtained. Other countries, however, for similar economic reasons, had been compelled to resort to the same expedient. If Riccoboni is to be believed, when Italian opera was first produced in Hamburg, the recitative was given in the home tongue, whilst the airs were sung in Italian.

By way of countering the attractions of *Camilla* at Drury Lane, Vanbrugh, on April 5, brought out Tom D’Urfey’s fantastic comic opera, *Wonders in the Sun*, or *The Kingdom of Birds*, which may be pithily described as a Jules Verne tale with a spice of Rostand’s *Chantecler*. Barring an air by Eccles, the music was all old, compiled from a variety of sources, even Lully being laid under contribution. According to Whincop “it had several ballads in it that took very much with the common

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1For details of McSwiney’s adventurous career, see my article, “A Famous Wexford Man,” in *The New Ireland Review* for August, 1908.
people,” but although given five or six times, it was not successful enough to establish the vogue of ballad opera. The necessary impulse for the creation of that long-popular genre was lacking until Gay’s satiric genius afforded it in The Beggar’s Opera.

At the close of his second season, Vanbrugh, disappointed in his expectations and wearied with the cares of management, leased the Queen’s to Owen McSwiney at a rental of £5 per acting day, the total sum not to exceed £700. To this arrangement Christopher Rich, the astute Drury Lane Manager, made no objection, feeling assured that his old lieutenant, who was heavily in his debt, would remain subservient, and that the upshot would be his own control of both houses. Hoping to hoodwink both players and public, he secretly agreed to the enticing away by McSwiney of the principal members of his company, only to find when the manoeuvre had been effected that his quondam satellite had played him false and intended fighting for his own hand. Thenceforth between the two it was war to the knife.

Opening the Queen’s on October 15, 1706, with the Drury Lane players, McSwiney was for a time too hampered by lack of means to compete with Rich on operatic lines. All the signs of the hour gave delusive indications that Drury Lane, and not the Haymarket house, was to be the future home of Italian Opera. The vogue there of the hybrid makeshift was trenchantly girded at in Addison’s prologue to Smith’s tragedy, Phaedra and Hippolytus, as brought out by McSwiney on April 21, 1707. Doubtless some impetus to the rage for the exotic had been given by the performance at court of Camilla, in celebration of the Queen’s birthday, a couple of months previously. Anne never condescended to visit the playhouses, and, since Mahomet refused to go to the mountain, the mountain at long last had to be brought to Mahomet. Forced by the defection of his players to make strenuous appeal to his patrons’ musical instincts, Rich brought out Motteux’s Thomyris, Queen of Scythia, one of several futile attempts made about this time to establish a piratical school of English grand opera, based on Italian groundwork. McSwiney could only respond by producing a new play or two, and, after missing fire with Mrs. Centlivre’s Platonic Lady, scored a remarkably happy hit with Farquhar’s fine comedy, The Beaux’ Stratagem.

Precisely at this juncture Fate willed it that an exchange of weapons should take place. A certain Colonel Brett, having become possessed of an interest in the Drury Lane patent, forced

1For the characteristics of this pasticcio, see O. G. Sonneck, Catalogue of Opera Librettos printed before 1800, p. 1072.
himself resolutely into partnership with the scheming Rich, and seriously disturbed the equanimity of that despot by treating the players as creatures of flesh and blood. Not only that, but having arrived at the conclusion that two playhouses were in excess of the requirements, Brett petitioned the Lord Chamberlain to enforce an amalgamation of the rival companies. The result was that the players were one and all commanded to betake themselves to Drury Lane, McSwiney, as a solatium, being awarded a monopoly of Italian opera at his house from January, 1708. As will shortly be seen, however, this attempt to establish a regular Italian Opera House, important as was the outcome, proved abortive.

In his new rôle of impresario (the first time anybody had ever sustained it in England), McSwiney reopened the Queen's on January 14, 1708, and proceeded to give operatic performances twice a week by subscription. Then, and for some time afterwards, no more than 400 tickets were issued for the fashionable parts of the house, the pit and boxes, which were both at the one price, but McSwiney's custom of asking for subscriptions for the first six nights of each new opera was afterwards abandoned in favour of subscriptions for the entire season. Prices ruled high, and opera-going was a luxury that only the rich could afford. At best, McSwiney could do little more than mark time while elaborate preparations were being made for his Italian opera campaign, and the season which ended on May 28, yielded but little novelty. No particular attraction was proffered until the end of February, when Motteux's pastoral opera in three acts, *Love's Triumph*, translated from the "book" of Cardinal Ottoboni, and sung to music by Carlo Cesarini Giovanni, *detto* del Violone, and Francesco Gasparini, was given eight times. Only about a fifth of the opera was sung in the original Italian. Motteux was an indifferent writer of lyrics, and his libretti were strewn with most of the absurdities so lucidly animadverted upon by Addison in the 18th *Spectator*. It is noteworthy that Valentini, who made his first appearance at the Queen's in this production, had arranged all the choruses with dance accompaniments, after the French manner, the idea being to see whether British liking leaned to the French or the Italian style. For his work he was given a benefit on the last night of the opera.

1 About which time we find Vanbrugh writing to Lord Manchester, "I have parted with my whole concern (the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket) to Mr. Swiney, only reserving my rent, so he is entire possessor of the Opera, and most people think will manage it better than anybody. He has a good deal of money in his pocket, that he got before by the acting company, and is willing to venture it upon the singers."
McSwiney now demonstrated his enterprise by bringing over the first great Italian star to set foot on English shores. This was the celebrated Cavaliere Nicolino Grimaldi, professionally known as Nicolini, a Neapolitan castrate, whose reputation was already so assured that no foreign triumph could add to its lustre. Salaries in Italy were not then of any particular munificence, and itinerating singers had not yet grown exorbitant in their demands. Consequently Nicolini closed with McSwiney’s offer of 800 guineas for the season, a sum little better than half what was afterwards paid to artists in nowise his superiors. His delicious soprano voice, which changed later to contralto, was then in the heyday of its charm. Cibber, much as he disliked foreign opera and its exponents, had perforce to yield to the Neapolitan an extorted admiration:

Whatever praises may have been given to the most famous voices that have been heard since Nicolini, upon the whole I cannot but come into the opinion that still prevails among several persons of condition, who are able to give a reason for their liking, that no singer since his time has so justly and gracefully acquitted himself in whatever character he appeared, as Nicolini. At most the difference between him and the greatest favourite of the ladies, Farinelli, amounted but to this, that he might sometimes more exquisitely surprise us; but Nicolini (by pleasing the eye as well as the ear) filled us with a more various and rational delight.

Steele, who, as press agent to the Drury Lane players, was little disposed to do the foreign singer justice, unites with Cibber in his admiration of Nicolini. Writing in the 113th Tatler, he says:

For my own part, I was fully satisfied with the sight of an actor, who, by the grace and propriety of his action and gesture, does honour to the human figure. Every one will imagine, I mean Signor Nicolini, who sets off the character he bears in opera by his action, as much as he does the words of it by his voice. Every limb and every finger contributes to the part he acts, inasmuch that a deaf man may go along with him in the sense of it. There is scarce a beautiful posture in an old statue which he does not plant himself in, as the different circumstances of the story give occasion for it. He performs the most ordinary action in a manner suitable to the greatness of his character, and shows the prince even in the giving of a letter, or despatching of a messenger.

Nicolini made his English début on December 14, 1708, when McSwiney reopened the Queen’s with his own version of Pyrrhus and Demetrius, “a noble entertainment” (in Steele’s phrase), translated from the “book” of Adriano Morselli, and sung, partly in Italian and partly in English, to the combined scores of Alessandro Scarlatti and Nicolo Francesco Haym. The latter composer, who was then resident in London, contributed a new
overture and about twenty arias.1 As Italian-singing coöperators, Nicolini had Valentini, now deposed from his pride of place, but still popular, Margherita de l'Epine, an old favourite, and the mysterious German lady known as “the Baroness,” who after acquiring her art in Italy, had come to England in 1706. The chief singers in English were Mr. Cook, Mr. Ramondon, and the beautiful Mrs. Tofts, then on the verge of her retirement. No such combination of lyrico-dramatic talent had ever been seen before, and it is not surprising that what with the compelling genius of Nicolini and the simple beauty of the arias, Pyrrhus and Demetrius proved a great success. Later on, there was a revival of the perennial Camilla, followed by the production of another new opera, Clotilda, and a remarkably prosperous season ended on May 20, 1709.

Every student of the story of the rise of opera in Italy knows how insistent there were the claims of spectacle, and with what alacrity they were responded to. Probably because scenic excesses of the sort in association with Post-Restoration dramatic opera of the type of The Fairy Queen had occasioned severe, well-remembered losses, managers were long loath to expend much money on the pictorial embellishment of its imported successor. Records are ominously silent upon the point until May, 1709, when a paragraph cropped up in the papers saying that “a new set of scenes painted by two famous Italian artists lately arrived from Venice” had been added to the Queen’s theatre stock. Apart from the question of expense, there was another reason why elaborate scenery was for long eschewed. The end-of-the-century theatre practice of allowing certain well-mulcted spectators to sit on the stage and lounge about behind the scenes had spread itself to the opera, where the “buzzing mosquitos,” as Cibber called them, occupied enclosures ranged along the wings in a manner indicated in Hogarth’s picture of The Beggar’s Opera. It is noteworthy in this connexion that when the four Iroquois Chiefs who visited England in April, 1710, were taken to the Queen’s to see Macbeth, they were given seats on the stage so that the expectant audience might have full value for their money. The practice finally proved so offensive to singers and spectators alike that it was specially prohibited at the Opera by an order of George I, issued in December, 1729.

No sooner was Owen McSwiney on the crest of the wave than along came fell circumstance to throw him again into troubled

1For him, see The Spectator, No. 258. He was an accomplished man of letters and wrote a History of Music.
waters. Wearied out by the purposeful intriguing of his wily co-patentee, Colonel Brett threw up the sponge and retired in high dudgeon from Drury Lane. Once more monarch of all he surveyed, Rich resumed his tyranny over the players, who, tortured beyond all endurance, made clamant appeal to the Lord Chamberlain. The result was that the standing theatrical order was annulled, leaving the players free to go whithersoever they pleased.

Without loss of a moment, Wilks, Dogget, Cibber and Mrs. Oldfield entered into an agreement with McSwiney whereby the whole five became joint managers and sharers in the Haymarket house, which was now to be run partly as a theatre and partly as an opera house; and this once concluded they set about altering the building with the view of remedying its defective acoustics. In the multitude of counsellors there is not always wisdom, Holy Writ to the contrary notwithstanding, and on opening the Queen's in September, 1709, the new syndicate showed its exquisite bad taste by sandwiching acrobatic feats between the acts of Othello. It was hardly to be expected that a governing board on which there was a plurality of players, and which had evinced so little reverence for Shakespeare, would be considerate in its attitude towards the foreign singers; and it is not surprising to find that there was considerable friction during the season. In January, 1710, came the first operatic production of note, the Almahide of Bononcini, sung entirely in Italian by Nicolini, Valentini, Cassani, Margherita de l'Epine, and Signora Isabella, otherwise Isabella Girardeau. Fearing unnecessarily that the public would weary of the exclusively foreign feast of showy, over-pretentious music, the management sought to temper the severities by giving vocal intermezzi, sung in English between the acts by Dogget, Mrs. Lindsay and Mrs. Cross. Notwithstanding the artistic offensiveness of this mélange, the opera bore fourteen repetitions, and by its success was instrumental in sweeping away the old mongrel type of performance. Writing a year later, Addison pretended that the public had grown tired "of understanding half the opera, and therefore to ease themselves entirely if the fatigue of thinking, have so order'd it at present that the whole opera is performed in an unknown tongue." But that was only Fanny's pretty way.

Of the precise nature of the friction between the controllers of the Queen's and the Italian singers we should know nothing were it not for the lucky preservation in the collection of Mr. Harrison Garside of Victoria, B. C., of an interesting handbill,
which, as it is now the oldest thing of the kind extant, we reproduce below. It reads as follows:

ADVERTISEMENT

Friday, March the 17th, 1710.

It has been publish’d in yesterday’s Daily Courant, and last night in her Majesty’s Theatre at the Haymarket, that to Morrow (being Saturday the 18th of March) will be presented there, a comedy, with several select scenes of Musick, to be perform’d between the Acts by Cavalier Nicolini, Signior Valentini, and Signiora Margarita; which sort of performance the said Cavalier Nicolini finding to be directly contrary to the Agreement made between him and Mr. Owen Swiny, and that the same wou’d prove a real means to vilifie and prejudice the Opera. He doth hereby acquaint all Gentlemen and Ladies, that his intention is strictly to observe the tenour and meaning of the said agreement, that is to say, to sing during the winter season only formal operas, and to be always ready to please and serve them according to his duty and usual custom.

Clearly, if the Haymarket players had no sense of the dignity of their art, Nicolini had a deep sense of the dignity of his!

On May 23 following came a noteworthy production of the Hydaspes of Francesco Mancini, in which Nicolini and his Italian associates had the coöperation of a capable English tenor singer named Lawrence, who was accomplished enough to be able to render their tongue. The curious will find an analysis of this romantic Persian opera (so amusingly satirised by Addison in the 13th Spectator), in Hogarth’s Memoirs of the Musical Drama. Nicolini’s fight with the property lion must have been a sight for gods and men.

Meanwhile there was much troubling of the waters at old Drury, where the turmoil was again to affect the fortunes of the rival house. On June 7, 1709, just as McSwiney had signed articles with the deserters, the Lord Chamberlain issued a mandate forbidding Rich to give further performances. Among the owners of Drury Lane at that period was one William Collier, a popular member of Parliament and persona grata in court circles. Exerting his influence, Collier gained permission in the following November to reopen the theatre under his own control, the understanding being that neither Rich nor any of his satellites were to have any further say in the management. Acting on this, Collier forcibly ejected Rich, who was living on the premises, and, with what players he could secure—mostly second-rate—

1In deference to English susceptibilities (Irish patronymics being viewed with distaste), McSwiney had for some time dropped the “Mac” before his name, but he replaced it later.
proceeded to open the house. His failure was a foregone conclu-
sion, as it was not to be expected that an inexperienced manager
with an inefficient company could compete with the strong and
manifold attractions of the Queen’s. Baffled in his schemes, he
once more appealed to the Lord Chamberlain, and succeeded in
effecting a very silly exchange. McSwiney and his joint sharers
were peremptorily ordered to remove to Drury Lane, where they
were to have the sole right to represent plays, and Collier was given
a monopoly of opera at the Queen’s. Allied with this was the
curious understanding that whenever opera was given at the Hay-
market house on Wednesdays, Drury Lane was to remain closed.

Collier, immediately on gaining possession of the Queen’s,
let the house to Aaron Hill, the dramatist, at a rental of £600
per annum, and the season opened on November 22, 1710, with
a revival of *Hydaspes*. In the brief period he was at the helm,
Hill proved himself an impresario of initiative and resource, and
contrived to leave an indelible mark on the annals of early Italian
Opera. He was the first to appreciate the potentialities of Handel
(then languishing in obscurity in London), and to demonstrate
that to procure good opera it was unnecessary to go the whole
way to Italy. After thoroughly maturing his plans, he set about
writing a libretto based on Tasso’s *Gierusalemme*, and on its
completion, handed it over to Giacomo Rossi to be translated into
Italian. That was done, and the “book” given to Handel, who
took his duties so lightly (there was no elaborate orchestration
to worry over!) that the music was written in a fortnight. The
result was *Rinaldo*, brought out with triumphant success on Febru-
ary 24, 1711. Whincop tells us that the maestro “then made his
first appearance in England, and accompanied the voices himself
on the harpsichord in the orchestra, and performed his part in
the overture, wherein his execution seemed as astonishing as his
genius.” Thanks to the absorbing romantic interest of the
theme, the beauty of the music and the splendour of the spec-
tacle, *Rinaldo* was given uninterruptedly to crowded houses until
the close of the season. In the judgment of many connoisseurs,
Handel’s first opera remains his best. Certainly a work which
contained those delightful arias, “Cara Sposa” and “Lascia ch’io
pianga” must be for ever memorable.

With the sacred name of Handel one must bring this proem
to a close. It only remains to add that with the performance of
Motteux’s comedy, *Love’s a Jest*, on August 31, 1711, the players
took their farewell of the Queen’s, and that thenceforth the theatre
became a permanent opera-house.
SOMETHING “BIGGER” THAN THE BETHLEHEM BACH FESTIVALS

By CHARLES D. ISAACSON

It is over half a year since I made a pilgrimage to the city of Bethlehem, and sat at the feet of old Bach. Ever since, the festival has been alive in my memory. And yet something “bigger” than the event has been arousing the propagandist in me. What is being done in Bethlehem by the citizens of the town, by Dr. Wolle, the conductor, by Charles H. Schwab, the millionaire patron, by the university officials, by the musicians—wonderful as it is, inspiring as it is, artistic and beautiful as it is—is made pygmy by the something “bigger” which it suggests to my mind for action.

* * *

Every year Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, holds its now famous cycle of Bach classics. The choir and organist are assisted by well-known singers and an orchestra that are imported. Doctor J. Fred Wolle conducts. Some of the wealthy people underwrite the expenses. The large hall is packed to standing-room for every session, and out on the lawn thousands listen without charge. Indoors the audience consists of pilgrims from all over the States. The performance is excellent. The metropolitan newspapers carry a stick or so about the music.

“Very beautiful, very beautiful,” say the visitors, and they go home and maybe they come again, and maybe they do not. All of the facts mentioned are, in a way, very ordinary. The Bach Festival, viewed purely as a musical function, deserves little more attention or comment than any other big musical event at Carnegie Hall or Symphony Hall or the Chicago Auditorium.

As performers of Bach, the Bethlehem musicians are gifted and inspired. True, but so are the Vatican choristers, so are the Metropolitan Opera choristers, so are all the orchestras, ensembles, organists, conductors; and many another festival chorus, small or large, manifests the same degree of unselfish devotion to the cause of good music.
What, then, lifts the Bach festivals at Bethlehem far out of the ordinary and what is it that makes them suggest something still greater, something “bigger”?

Here is a community’s pride. Here is a development which is ingrained in the social life of the residents. It is the daily gossip and romance of the citizens. It is as much a part of the household cares and routine as the winter preserves and the summer crops and the daily business. It is the pet of the whole population, not of a selected sect or set. The storekeepers are as much in the game as the trombone choir. The school-teachers are no more intimate with the details than the bell-boy at the hotel. Nearly every family has at least one representative in the chorus or the trombone choir, or among the reception committee or the ushers or the publicity men. It is the regret of one’s life to be without a relative in the Festival. But worse than claiming no relative in the music would be the disappointment of the villager in permitting a Festival to pass without being present for a session or more. During the Festival the discussion everywhere is about the music, the visitors, “the greatest annual we ever had.” For weeks afterward, the event remains the most important topic of conversation, giving place finally to just one other matter more serious—the next Festival!

As I write these words, I have before me the record of a conversation heard in a Bethlehem grocery store. The proprietor was engaged in quite a heated argument over the particular Bach chorale which he believed should surely be included next June! The customer was willing to bet that the grocer was wrong, that Dr. Wolle would never think of including it; the customer was in favor of a totally different chorale, one of the later masterpieces.

What does this mean? What is the real significance of the incident? Year in and year out ordinary every-day folks of all types and conditions, rich and poor and healthy and strong, chatter about the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Paradox of paradoxes! It is as though one were to say that the baseball teams of the National Baseball League were leaders in a movement to spread Socrates! That the subway crews of New York were heart and soul in a plan to raise a monument to Dante. That the longshoremen of Hoboken were madly in love with the ninety teachings of Confucius!

When many musicians themselves still inwardly shudder at Bach and put him on their recital programs because it is the tradition to open with something cold and academic; when many musicians still consider Bach an antiquated, unsympathetic,
lifeless composer—what should be expected of the people? The
paradox grows as Bethlehem’s marvel spreads on the canvas.

Yet there is nothing extraordinary about the people of Beth-
lehem. They are not martyrs, saints or intellectual paragons.
In fact, they are very ordinary. Bethlehem is a manufacturing
town. Among other things, the encyclopedia-authority says:

Bethlehem: a borough of Northampton and Lehigh Counties on
North bank of Lehigh River. Population (1910), 12,837. . . .

During the war of the Independence, part of its well-known Mor-
avian seminary was used as a general hospital of the continental army.
. . . Among the borough’s industrial establishments the manufactories
of iron and steel are the most important, but it also manufactures brass,
zinc, and silk and knit goods. The municipality owns and operates
its own waterworks. . . .

Bethlehem has often been called the American Bayreuth. . . .

The paradox grows, indeed, as the consideration of Bethle-
hem’s love of Bach appears to be the supreme interest in the
communal life of the town.

The father of modern music, the head of our musical family
tree, the popular idol of a thriving, rushing, bustling commercial
American city! The cantor of Leipzig, the patron saint of a
population of common business people and professional families!

It was a soft, balmy day in late May when we arrived in
Bethlehem. The town is situated in the heart of the beautiful
Pennsylvania country. The roads are well kept, the houses are
spick-and-span. The river runs through the center of the town,
separating the factory section from the homes. The chimney
spires rise like sky-giants, belching forth smoke in clouds such as
precede a thunder-storm. The steel works spread and sprawl over
hundreds of acres, reaching down to the waterfront and stretching
to the outskirts. A massive span-bridge colors the commercial
aspect of the picture. Bright, modern stores show alluring
windows to the passer-by; hundreds of automobiles give a metropo-
litan touch to the scene; smart street-cars, with smart conductors
and motormen, are crowded all the time; in the mornings, earlier
than seven o’clock, girls and men are rushing to their jobs; in the
evening the city is as lively as New York. The lights twinkle,
the place is busy and wide-awake.

A very modern city. A very business-like city.

On the other side of the river are the homes and the other
stores, and the hills and Lehigh University. There is much
open space and a beautiful view of the country. There are some old landmarks—the Moravian settlement, the Moravian seminary, the chapel, the remains of colonial days and revolutionary days, and early American days. The guide shows the spinet which entertained George Washington and Benjamin Franklin and James Madison; she points out the pulpit where the early Moravian ministers preached, and the very spot where the missionaries addressed the Indians.

This, the guide insists, is the place where the Indians were halted one Thanksgiving night as they were about to massacre the population—halted by the sound of music in the chapel, halted by the belief that it was the Great Spirit murmuring his protection to the white folk. Further, the guide leads to where the Revolutionary soldiers were nursed, and where the little Colonial ladies were taught to read and sing.

A very historical city—a very quiet, studious city.

But the people? They talk about selling their goods as anybody else does. They dress the same. They are the same. It is beyond contradiction that there is nothing about Bethlehem and its people which makes for a different set of conditions from those which apply elsewhere. Bethlehem is a regular American city.

The only outstanding characteristic is the musical idea. And that is inbred by years of training. If in the earlier days the Oberammergau Passion Play had been introduced, it, instead, would be the big idea, except that naturally other religions would be excluded; if the scheme of performing Shakespeare's plays had been proposed and followed, that would be the driving motive, except that fewer could participate, because a limited number could understand and feel the message. If it had been the custom to hold Grecian dancing pageants, that would be the town's hobby, except that dancing is not as uplifting and could never have been so fundamental in its appeal as Bach.

When the visitors went to the Packer Memorial Church to hear the performance, they found the lawns covered with thousands of villagers, who sat on the grass under the great shade trees. Townspeople stood eagerly peering into the edifice. They held scores of the Bach Chorale and were poring over the notes and the words. The chorus of katy-dids and crickets gave a character to the stilly atmosphere—for the people were silent as they waited. The visitors entered the high-roofed church. In the darkish twilight of the chapel every seat was occupied. At the front, under the altar and in a white light that streamed through the side windows, was the chorus. They were banked
against the pipes of the majestic organ with the golden tongues. The women in white, the men behind them—several hundred singers. An orchestra was in the front, and the soloists sat with folded hands.

This is the interesting thing about the chorus, these highly trained students of Bach: The personnel reads something like this: housewife, housewife, saleslady, manager’s wife, steel-worker, housewife, clerk, etc., etc. There are the workers, the daughters and wives of the workers. There are the foremen, the managers, there are the millionaires in the chorus. There are the pupils and teachers from the university. Nearly every family of Bethlehem is represented.

At the moment of three o’clock, the director comes to his place and lifts his hands. The music starts, ever so faintly, but increases and increases to a burst of sound so tremendous that it is awe-inspiring. Sopranos and tenors and basses and altos blend marvelously. One is lifted completely out of one’s self, and carried into the upper regions of rarified ideals.

The man Wolle, the director, is a fine figure of a man. He has a genial smile and he loves his work. He is Bach’s disciple in America. He is everybody’s friend, from the wealthiest patron to the lowliest clerk in town.

This is not a review of the music. The dailies have carried the criticisms and will carry the criticisms of the next Festival. There exists an excellent summary of the entire history of the movement, as told in Raymond Walters’ book. This volume reviews the development of Bethlehem’s music from the earliest days, shows how the expenses have been underwritten and gives intimate pictures of the workers. As a guide to other community workers who would attempt to follow suit, a perusal of Mr. Walters’ book will prove invaluable.

My endeavor here is to find the meaning of the work; to point out the principles which underlie the activities, and the something “bigger” which is in the movement, which can be transplanted anywhere. Bethlehem has proved that music can be made a genuine civic enterprise; not the sort of namby-pamby enterprise indulged in by some cities; not the sort of activity of a “Civic Music Association,” which is just the high-flown name of a clique; not the political treadmill of some new-fangled mayors. Bethlehem has demonstrated that there is something in music capable of dominating the collective mind of a community, and providing a vehicle that can be universally popular.

One who would go about making another Bethlehem might safely follow the example of the Pennsylvania town. He may
Something “Bigger” than the Bethlehem Bach Festivals

enter the task with the assurance that an experiment is under way which is not contrary to human nature and American constitutio-
nality. The mouths of the teachers of pessimism are stilled by Bethlehem. Whenever another gentleman remarks on the futility of extending the circle of musicians, let him talk on and then quietly whisper in his ear, “Go to Bethlehem.” He will quote arguments beyond measure on American taste, and its failure to respond to good music. He will state the number of hundred million sheets of rag-time compositions which are sold every year. He will compare the vaudeville audiences with the concert audiences. He will tell you that artists cannot get their pay out of a début recital. He will say that Shakespeare and Rostand and Dunsany and Ibsen go unheralded and unsung, while George M. Cohan, Al Woods and Irving Berlin are knighted and crowned with laurel. He will point to the newspapers and show the front page headlines on murders, rape and bigamy; the full page rhetoric on base-ball, foot-ball and indoor hockey; the columns devoted to the epics of how to keep the menus in order and how to beautify the fading complexion and how to keep your sweetheart’s love torrid—and then with malicious glare he will exhibit a bare three inches on last night’s musical events. The gentleman with the pessimistic trend will tell you how the operatic society died and how the Philadelphia orchestra came near bankruptcy and how the poor young singer goes through the tortures of the inferno to reach a goal situated about Fortieth Street and Broadway, New York City.

All of this he will tell me, and I will shake my head up and down, which is the affirmative, and tell him that he is right as far as he goes, but that he stops too soon. And that he had better take a trip as far as Bethlehem, the new Jerusalem of music, at once!

Generalizing is the curse of all logic. To generalize on music from now until doomsday will lead nowhere. But when one “gets down to brass tacks,” then results develop. Generalize about newspapers: it is true that newspapers are not fair to music. But particularize, make a campaign of common sense and perseverance to win over a newspaper, and then watch for results. To illustrate the point, I may be pardoned if I quote the particular case where it fell to my lot to break down the conventional generalization concerning newspapers, and in the hardest city in the world. In New York City, the Globe is to-day devoting more space to music than to any other feature, outside of sports. It is not uncommon for musical events to gravitate to the first page. More
especially, the *Globe* has fostered musical education and has sponsored free concerts to spread musical propaganda throughout New York. By July, 1920, over twelve hundred concerts will have been given free to the people; and the total population reached in this manner will have topped the two million mark.

Generalize about singers; but it would be easy to list here dozens and dozens of young artists who have won high places with no more difficulty than a similar number of young people in any other walk of life would have encountered to get as far.

Generalize about operatic societies that flounder on the rocks. Of course there must be efficient management. Where is a better example to offer in a particularizing way than the "Society of American Singers?" These artists, under the direction of William Wade Hinshaw, have combatted every tradition. They are singing opera in English (you could never make a success of this, one tradition has it). They are singing grand opera and light opera (you can never do both schools together, runs another tradition). They are singing with only American artists (the public won't go to a company which doesn't offer foreigners as bait, runs still another tradition). They are making an extended run of over thirty weeks (a long season can never be launched, goes the last tradition).

To return to Bethlehem, here is the example *par excellence* in particularizing, an example which should be both a flaunt at traditions, and an impetus to dreamers and idealists. If the musician is going to put up his armor and spear because he is afraid, then he will never be music's champion in the new world. But if his spirit is high, if his aims are mighty, if his ambition is undaunted, he may immediately get ready to be the maker of a new Bethlehem. But beware of confusing the community chorus plan with the Bethlehem plan!

How did Bethlehem become the center of such an intense musical interest? By years of endeavor?—Yes! By universality of appeal?—Undoubtedly! By massing of professions and businesses?—Precisely! By publicity?—Bravo, by publicity indeed!

Some of Bethlehem's own leaders will combat me in declaring the possibilities of extending the idea. They will insist that Bethlehem's musical history is an old one—that it has been developing since pre-Revolutionary days. That is true. But the handicap is not difficult to overcome. There can be quicker progress, because it is not necessary now to go over all the ground which was covered in the evolutionary progress of the Bethlehem enterprise. Conditions are different. Interest in music is greater
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and more widespread. It is my personal feeling, based on five years of propaganda with the New York Globe's activities, that it would take a very short time to make a noticeable impression on any community. Let us suppose that an ambitious set of individuals were determined to make the town of San Antonio, Texas, the musical city of the South. Within one year, the thing would begin to take root, and show results. Within five years, it could be made the talk of the country; within a generation it would be as much a civic entity as that of Bethlehem.

Universality of appeal! What has so universal a message as music? Surely no sport, no commercial drive, no educational scheme, has such a grip on a community. Try to mass a town on any idea; not a single one can be found which has so general a pull on every kind of citizen as that of a music-festival. There is no taint of gain—it is an art-project. There is something uplifting and yet not sanctimonious. If the project were the control of a market, it would gain some business men and lose the women. If the project were the development of a monument or a park, what would be the inner joy to the participants?

Publicity! Is it not easy to understand the peculiar psychological effect on every Bethlehemite, of the publicity which the project brings to the town? Bethlehem advanced in public attention when the festivals attained to national prominence. Outsiders turned their eyes upon the spot on the map, and made the journey. The post-office felt the larger mail. The residents found their friends on the outside "looking up" to them. The local newspaper discovered a project around which it could write eternally and furnish outside newspapers with matter to clip—with credit! It takes no stretch of the imagination to realize that residents, especially shop-keepers, felt the necessity of sprucing up and getting in shape so that these visitors would not find the local minds wanting!

Thus develop local pride, local unity, intelligence. Not for one moment would I try to create the impression that every Bethlehemite has become a musician and an expert on Bach. Oh, no! But I do believe that there is not a single Bethlehemite who is not now acquainted with Bach and chorales and good music.

Dr. Wolle, the director of it all, is a keen student of humanity. He chose Bach, if not consciously, then by inspiration, because Bach is a vessel which cannot be emptied. Being so inexhaustible, the singers cannot encompass the wisdom of Bach in a moment. They can never find the last of Bach values! At first they can
only get a taste of the beauty—then the beauty grows on them; and the first taste of wisdom is had. Then the wisdom grows on them, and the infinite goodness and religious fervor dawns on them. Then these grow on the singers, and the inspiration is tasted, and so forth. Why worship a man who is less than a god? This is why Bach has proven such an ideal choice for Bethlehem—and why Bach will always be the saint of Bethlehem. Bach is not dry, or academic—again tradition is dealt a death-blow. Bach is supremely human, supremely beautiful. He was a man who suffered, he was a man who loved, he was a home-man, a father, a husband, a gardener, a hater of tyrants, a lover of friends. A man with enemies, a man who came from a family of artists, but who made his own art, who conceived his own schools, a man of simplicity of taste and catholicity of appreciation. One who lived in the country and visited in the city, who adored the church-loft, and knew the joy of the organ. He could wash the dishes at night, and go then to his scores, and pat his wife on the head between bars, writing never to go back; suffering because of pigmy rivals who stood in his way and barked at him; and dying, as he lived, alone with his family, his organ, his music.

There is a figure to love—and Bach is growing alive in Bethlehem. I have not heard that a marble statue is to be erected to his memory; but a much finer monument has been built in the hearts of the people! And in my mind's eye I could see Bach enjoying it all immensely!

To sum up:

1. Bethlehem's music is really of the people and hence is significant.
2. Bethlehem's music is of a sort to change their whole character and bring beauty ever-increasing to the business and domestic life of the community.
3. Bethlehem's music is making the town the Mecca of musicians.
4. Bethlehem's experiment suggests something "bigger," which can be followed, and will be followed throughout the States, until there is a counterpart in every section of the country.
5. Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner, MacDowell, Brahms, Gluck, Haydn, Händel—and others are calling to be brought to life in a community like Bethlehem. It is not necessary to take only one; it is not even necessary to follow a fixed idea, though that is to be preferred.

The something "bigger" than the Bach Festivals at Bethlehem will be the sum total of the civic musical festivals in Akron, Belleville, Cleveland, Davenport, Easton, Fargo, Galveston, Hammond—and so on throughout the alphabet of the land!
THE PASSING OF THE PRESSURE TOUCH

By WESLEY WEYMAN

To question the efficacy of the pressure touch as a means of melodic expression, is to commit an act of iconoclasm hardly to be equalled in the whole range of pianoforte technique. Pressure has been the fetish of half a century in the art of tone production. No word has been used so constantly to describe melody playing, or to guide and stimulate the student to his best effort in that direction. Trite comparisons have been drawn upon, such as pressing the juice from ripe fruit; even a tremolo of the finger, a legitimate device in playing stringed instruments, has been advocated and not infrequently exhibited on the concert stage. But whatever the outward manifestation, it was always the pressure that was the basis of the principle. It is interesting and important to investigate the historical evolution of a custom so universal, and to study its advantages and its defects.

Four or five generations ago, when our musical forebears were still playing the clavichord, they were confronted by a technical problem so vastly different from our own to-day, that only those who have played both clavichord and modern pianoforte are able to appreciate the chasm which separates the two. One fact alone, however, apart from any other difference, suffices to show the fundamental irreconcilability between the ancient and the modern technique. The dip or drop of the key was very slight, only about one-half that of the present key; and the force required to start it in motion was little more than a feather’s weight—an amount scarcely perceptible to our less sensitive fingers accustomed to exerting two ounces and a half of force to set in action the modern key. In other words, we find that the clavichord has a phenomenally “easy action,” and that the key goes down only half as far as on the pianoforte of to-day. This fact, so admirably adapted to the lightest agility, together with the lack of resonance in the clavichord, and the lack of singing tone and varied nuance in the harpsichord, at once explains to us the characteristic quality of the music of the early period. It was limited mostly to movements of extreme speed, and this lightning rapidity was far more easily obtainable then than it is on the modern instrument. Piano technique in the early period depended entirely on the lightest agility of the fingers, a purely
muscular force apparently emanating from the knuckles at the base of the fingers, though in fact lightly controlled by the hand behind them. Evenness was not difficult of attainment as the force exerted was so slight; and the purely percussive quality of touch was inoffensive to the ear in the low range of dynamics at one's command.

As we trace the development of music from the clavecinistes through Scarlatti to Mozart and Haydn, and finally to Beethoven, we find this constantly broadening musical scope accounted for by the concurrent change in the instrument from clavichord to piano and then to pianoforte. Already with Mozart we find sustained adagio and andante movements, although no one felt more keenly than he the inadequacy of his piano to express the tonal effects which he desired. For these he was obliged to turn to the strings and to the voice, while he patched out the rapidly dying tones of his piano melody with a pseudo-cantilena of roulades, repetitions and ornamental traceries. But with the advent of Beethoven we find the formation of a new melodic style, and the development of an instrument far more capable of expressing it. The romantic school was emerging from the classical period, freeing itself from shackles of artificiality and false propriety. Music followed literature in its great awakening to the fact that it was a medium of expression for human emotion and experience, and not merely a framework for the development of pyrotechnical roulades, or of involved concetti to be worked out according to mathematical rule. This outburst of the spirit from the throes of classical restraint required an adequate means of expression; and the older instruments with their limited resources were forced to make way for others with wider range of tone and greater dynamic power. The harpsichord served only to depict the soulless emotions of conventional figures, as did the contemporary drama through the commedia dell'arte; the soul-tragedy of a Beethoven—an undreamed of expression in pianistic art—required vastly larger resources. Only a pianoforte could furnish these—an instrument on which one could play forte as well as piano, with the entire dynamic range between. Yet to our modern ears these pianistic attainments would sound as slightly startling as the harmonic innovations of Beethoven and Hummel, with which they were contemporary.

With, then, the romantic period opening to music the scope of human experience, and the instrument offering a comparatively wide range of tonal possibilities, the superficiality of the old percussive finger touch was inadequate. The problem of the roulade and that of the cantilena were quite different. For the expression of a singing melody, the key required a more exact and constant control, and the
The element of percussion had to be eliminated. Both these needs could be met by a gentle pressure exerted by the fingers. To press a key one must approach it comparatively gradually, take hold of it, and displace it with intention. Thus the actual touch itself, like the music it was used to express, contained a human element quite lacking in the light and superficial touch of the earlier schools.

This, it would seem, was the genesis of the pressure touch which has for many decades been the basis of all melody playing, and of all expression of tender emotion. It had indeed the advantage of a human element. It showed a vast advance in both art and instrument, in that it made the key an implement for creating varying tone-emotions. The performer was forced to take hold of the key and use it to a definite purpose, an attitude of mind which is still, indeed, the last word in modernity, the most important principle in the pianoforte technique of today.

Why, then, if pressure has so great a virtue, if it has served to transfer pianistic art from a basis of mere line to the realm of color and emotion, if it indeed forces us to the most important mental attitude toward the instrument, that of actually using the key to create definite and exact tones—why need we look farther for our melody touch?

We have seen that the clavichord touch was a purely muscular exertion of the fingers, and that the pressure touch was developed directly from it. It remained a purely muscular operation, but located itself in the palm of the hand, beyond the fingers, where the real control of the fingers is more readily felt. In its incipiency, the actual cost of this muscular operation was slight; but through the following decades, the development of the pianoforte to its present orchestral proportions presented a quite different case. For the tones of enormous volume which we now require, a correspondingly enormous force must be exerted to overcome the “heavy action” of the modern pianoforte, and to produce in addition to this the desired tone. As it requires two and one-half ounces of force merely to set each key in motion, that act alone absorbs a surprising amount of strength, and yet this takes no account of the great force used to produce the actual tones we hear. The pressure is still exerted muscularly, but has been forced to transfer itself to the upper arm, as the hand alone is no longer adequate. Many teachers carefully locate the melody touch for their pupils on the under side of the upper arm, immediately below the shoulder, and then encourage them to press, press, press, until the amount of force used in playing a program is gigantic. If actually registered, the muscular energy required even in playing a Chopin Nocturne under these conditions
would astonish us, and would exhaust us by its very connotation. This expenditure, whether consciously felt or not, must necessarily react deleteriously on the nervous system of the performer.

A study of the mechanism of the piano reveals a farther disadvantage in pressure. Careful students of the instrument now realize that the tone is actually produced when the key has traversed only half its descent, and not when it hits the felt pad at the bottom. This fact requires us, if we wish to make beautiful tones, and to reproduce exactly the musical vision in our minds, to aim our force with the greatest exactness to this place in the descent of the key. This principle is almost impossible of attainment with pressure, which is bound to aim the force not merely at the pads beneath the keys, but, indeed, far beyond them. The flattened sensation at the end of one's finger bears evident witness to the suddenness with which the active force was arrested on reaching the pads—already far beyond the crucial point in tone production. Indeed, is it not safe to assert that the person who presses is necessarily prevented from aiming his forces correctly? This is painfully evident in the playing of those who press out fortissimo chords from the shoulder. Is not a really beautiful fortissimo the rarest quality that one hears in one's concert-going season? And yet a harsh, unmusical fortissimo is an unpardonable hiatus in the equipment of one who claims to be an artist, particularly as beauty of tone is the simplest of qualities to attain to, if one knows how one's instrument must be treated. Thus we find the pressure touch, while incorporating the most important mental attitude in piano-playing—that of consciously using the key to create tone—at the same time grossly transcending a physical law which is incontrovertible for every correctly produced tone—that of aiming the force exactly at the proper place, and not beyond. One aims one's foot with the utmost care and exactitude for every step. When one inadvertently steps an inch below one's expectation, one receives the same violent shock that the string receives when the force is aimed a quarter of an inch below the point of impact of the hammer with the string.

Again, our knowledge of acoustics reveals the inadequacy of pressure in producing tones of every quality such as must be at our command. We know that the difference between a bright tone and a dull one is one of harmonics or overtones. The bright or brilliant tone is produced by the over-emphasis of the smaller sections or harmonics of a string, through a sudden attack by the hammer. The dull or melodic tone is produced by a very careful and gradual displacement of the string by the hammer, in such wise as to suppress...
as far as possible the upper harmonics. In other words, the emphasis of the higher overtones in a tone gives it definiteness, brightness and aggressiveness; the suppression of these overtones gives it fulness, a vague suggestiveness, and a remarkable carrying power even in pianissimo. This carrying power is due to the fact that the vibration naturally continues longer when the string vibrates as a regular whole, rather than as a series of small segments. Although possessing the meditative character essential to melody-playing, tone of this quality is most rarely heard. The direct reason for this is the practically universal use of the pressure touch which precludes tones of this character. To press, a finger must be curved, unyielding in the knuckles, and inelastic throughout at the moment of producing tone. This combination can only result in a sudden impact of hammer against string, with a tone of brilliant quality in which the harmonics are emphasized. Hence the pressure touch is inherently unadapted to depicting emotions of thoughtful, suggestive or vague quality on the modern pianoforte.

How are we then to get these results so rarely heard in concert and yet so essential to the artist who aims to have at his command the whole range of emotional expression? In these days an artist is indeed poorly equipped who must limit himself to a single tone color, or must distort an emotion by depicting it with a quality adapted rather for its reverse. Many pianists are as inconsistent as the painter who paints his grass pink and his sky green. What other force than pressure is at our command?

Only comparatively recently, since the pianoforte in its present orchestral proportions has required of the artist an enormous expenditure of force, have we come to realize that the arm is available not only in its active attitude of exerting muscular energy, but also in its passive attitude of relaxed weight. Here, indeed, we have at our command a gigantic power, capable in amount of meeting any of the requirements of the modern instrument for the loudest forte passages; and since the very creation of the force of weight in the arm is due to a relaxing or letting-go of the supporting muscles, the more we let go, the greater force we have. There can be no fatigue in relaxation, and we can in consequence look forward to our forte passages rather as periods of recuperation than as the exhausting and muscle-straining ordeals which the pressure touch has inevitably doomed them to be in the past. The opening pages of Tschaikowsky's Concerto in B Flat Minor, or similar passages of chords, should react upon one only with the comfort and ease of relaxation, and with the stimulating exhilaration of a mechanism which works with no trace of opposition or strain.
Furthermore, this weight force, powerful as it is when unrestrained, is the most easily controlled of all forces at our command. It may be released in every degree from the softest pianissimo to the mightiest forte of which the instrument is capable. It can be aimed to the exact place in the descent of the key where the tone is produced, giving as a result a tone of complete fulness and carrying power. It can be caught up again instantaneously by the mere willing of the sensation of lightness so that the arm with the rapidity of thought is as light as a feather. So immediate, indeed, is the response, that the released weight need never reach the pads under the keys, although the momentum would naturally carry the key lightly down to its resting-place. Yet most important of all is the fact that weight can be used with much greater deliberation than muscular force, through a yielding of knuckles and joints. A flat finger is particularly adapted to weight in melody playing and the joints of both finger and wrist should yield at the instant of tone-production. This reluctance in the descent of the key in turn sends the hammer against the string with greatly reduced speed, and the string is set into vibration without the emphasis of the undesired harmonics. As a result, we receive the effect of a dull, full, resonant, thoughtful tone in marked contrast to the bright and energetic quality of tone which pressure is bound to produce.

Here, then, in weight of arm, we have a force which fills the deficiencies of pressure in melody playing. It cannot exhaust, as it causes no effort. Indeed its very existence is due to a lack of effort—relaxation. It can with ease be projected to the exact place necessary for reproducing in tone our musical idea. It can instantly be sustained again before reaching the felt pads beneath the keys, leaving the arm lightly poised. Finally, it opens to us an entire new range of tone color quite unattainable under the use of muscular force or pressure. By no other means can one portray the meditative, passive moods which underlie nocturnes and similar melodies, particularly those vague, suggestive qualities which are the very basis of Debussy, and the mystic school. To limit one’s tonpalette to pressure and the muscular elements of touch, is to reduce poetry to puritan practicality. The artist of to-day who has not the resources of weight at his command is hopelessly old fashioned, and should confine himself to the music and instrument of one hundred years ago, for which his touch is essentially and inherently fitted.
STENDHAL AND ROSSINI

By HENRY PRUNIÈRES

Byeyle was taking a walk in the Giardini at Milan. A German military band was playing and Beyle listened as he eyed the women who passed by. Having grown accustomed to life in Milan he yielded himself to the beauties of art and of nature in Italy, to the charm of amorous confidences, to the delights of the theater and of music. He recognized an impassioned melody by Mozart which “one hundred and fifty faultless wind instruments” played with a “particular melancholy,” and his sensitive soul was stirred. Then the band began another piece, and this time Beyle was astonished as he heard the light music, effervescent and sparkling like the wine of Asti, which seemed to twit everybody and everything with its mockery. Upon asking who the composer was, he was told that it was “a young man named Rossini,” and was urged to go to see the charming Tancred of this new, fashionable composer.

From this time forth Beyle heard the name of Rossini on every tongue and was astonished at not having heard his compositions before. Everywhere, at the concerts, at the balls, in the drawing-rooms, in the cafés, on the streets, they played airs from Tancred and from The Italian in Algiers.

At first Beyle rebelled. All of Rossini’s tempi and rhythms were like “eel pie”; and then what did this music, always lively, elegant and smart, pretend to express? It was a ragout, a piquant sauce, a veritable lobster bisque meant to excite blasé tastes and jaded senses. But what enjoyment could this deluge of dancing, leaping little notes afford a man, who like Beyle, demanded of music the expression of tender emotions? The form, the “physique of music” concerned him very little. It is, after all, merely the adornment, the more or less sumptuous cloak, which drapes the composer’s thought. The latter alone is important. A melody by Mozart, by Cimarosa, gave him the impression of being in communion with the very emotion, with the sentiment which had inspired it. Soul spoke to soul. He could not help finding Rossini amusing, but how much he preferred Mozart, who never amused

1Preface to the author’s edition of “La Vie de Rossini” in Stendhal’s “Œuvres complètes.”
him. "He is like one's heart's mistress, serious and often sad, but all the more beloved just because of her sadness." Cimarosa has portrayed love in all its phases with a marvellous delicacy of touch and richness of color. His gaiety is natural, naïve, spontaneous. Paesiello charms us with irresistible grace. All three in varying degree and by different means gratify the deeper passions of the soul. Rossini contents himself with an agreeable tickling of the epidermis. His crescendos, his finales, provoke explosions of nervous and factitious gaiety, of forced laughter. He electrifies his hearers, he does not move them.

If Rossini had never had other rivals on the Italian stage than Mozart and Cimarosa, Beyle would never have departed from his disdainful attitude toward him. But this was not at all the case. While French audiences accepted novelties with difficulty and remained desperately faithful to works which had once given pleasure, the Italians, on the contrary, grew disaffected with old operas for the sole reason that they had been applauded long enough. Cimarosa, Paesiello, were no longer in fashion. Mozart was enjoyed by a mere handful of dilettanti. His music seemed obscure, learned, of a sombre violence. He was admired more than he was loved. Simon Mayr, Paër, Fioravanti, Guglielmi, Generali, Mosca, Anfossi, held the boards. It was they who reconciled Stendhal with Rossini. Beside Mozart the new-comer appeared little; beside Paër he was a giant.

After the void, the interminable ennui, of an opera by Simon Mayr, with his emphatic style, his coarse gaiety of the "good fellow without esprit," the music of Rossini seemed to Beyle radiant with youth. The composer "scattered out new ideas with lavish hands. Sometimes he succeeded, sometimes he missed his aim. Everything is piled up, pell-mell, all negligence. It is the profusion and the carelessness of riches without limit." Music "fashioned out of nothing," light, vapory and subtle, a veritable magic tissue woven with rays of sunlight. You stifle when you listen to an opera by that Germanic pedant, Mayr. Go to a Rossini opera, and suddenly you feel the pure, fresh air of the upper Alps; you feel yourself breathing more freely, you seem born anew; it was genius you needed.

The mediocrity of contemporary musicians compelled Stendhal to recognize the superiority and the genius of Rossini. He preserved his cult of Mozart and of Cimarosa, but he admitted that Rossini had renewed the opera seria, had infused new life into this decrepit genre. He admitted that men were thoroughly amused by The Italian in Algiers, The Touchstone (La Pietra del Paragone),
The Barber of Seville, even while he reiterated the dictum of the older dilettanti, that Rossini had never written a real buffo aria, and that Cimarosa and Paesiello remained inimitable in this style. The welcome given to the first operas of the son of Pesaro in Paris brought about the final conversion of Stendhal to "Rossiniism." He had suddenly realized that this brilliant, superficial music, sparkling with malice and esprit, was just made to ravish the Parisians. It was for this very reason, to some extent, that the seductive charms of the "Voltaire of music" had only partly captivated him at first. When he saw that in Paris Tancred and the Italian in Algiers provoked the absurd criticisms of Berton, whose operas bored one to death, he felt his admiration for Rossini redoubled immediately. Beyle was endowed with a marvellous spirit of contradiction. At Milan, he preserved for a long time his "anti-Rossinian" attitude, but with his Parisian friends he became the apostle of the new music.

In his desire to become better acquainted with Rossini's operas, he ended by loving them. As a matter of fact, he was always, to use his own expression, a "Rossinist of 1815." A fervent admirer of the Italian in Algiers, The Touchstone, The Turk in Italy, and even, though more moderately, of the Barber, he never acknowledged the works of the Neapolitan period.

Passages of Othello and of Moses moved him profoundly, but he never, in their entirety, accepted these operas, in which the German symphonic style appeared to make itself felt to the detriment of the Italian melodic quality. He could never pardon Rossini for the vocal writing of his last compositions, the vocalises, like flourishes on the clarinet, and the embellishments fused into the melodic line.

In spite of his reservations, in spite of his resistance, his taste developed almost unconsciously. One day he noticed with sorrow that the music of Cimarosa no longer produced in him the same effect as formerly. The feelings, the passions, seemed to him expressed "like rose water," and he had to agree that, while his chosen composer had "more ideas, and above all, much better ideas than Rossini," Rossini, to make up for this, showed an entirely different mastery of style. The same disillusion in the case of Paesiello. He was charming, exquisite, but after half an hour of this delicacy one surprised one's self in a yawn. Only his Mozart worship remained intact, and suffered no harm from his very lively enjoyment of Rossini.

In his own phrase, Beyle would have said that for Mozart he felt the "love-passion" in all its beauty, its grandeur and its purity;
and that for Rossini he felt only the "love-taste," without allowing himself to be blinded in any way to the defects of the object of that taste.

If Beyle showed indulgence toward the faults of harmonic orthography which aroused the ire of the pedants and of the envious critics of Italy, France and Germany, he did not in return easily pardon Rossini for his indolence, his negligence, his continual repetitions, his errors of sense and taste. Like a disabused lover, he did not fail to mingle a few disagreeable observations with his praises. Now, the defects which he emphasizes are precisely those into which he himself falls. One such criticism, aimed at Rossini, could be applied to Beyle himself without modification. He reproaches Rossini with writing an opera just as he would a letter. Are the Life of Rossini, or Rome, Naples and Florence, anything else than long letters written by fits and starts? In reality, if Beyle feels for the works of Rossini a singular sentiment of mingled admiration and hostility, of sympathy and repulsion, it is because they too much resemble his own works, and because Rossini is a great deal less the Voltaire of music than the Stendhal of music.

We must, of course, leave Stendhal’s Le Rouge et le Noir and Rossini’s William Tell out of consideration; but is there anything which so much resembles Stendhal’s early works, with their happy inventions in the way of expression, their delicacy of thought and analysis, the fine observations scattered all through them, lost in an inextricable confusion of loose phrases and the rigmarole of reiterated ideas, as the first operas of Rossini, in which a few pieces, a veritable treat for the ears and for the finer understanding, are knit together well or ill by the most insipid transitions and padded out with most banal formulas? I imagine that Beyle discovered a little of himself in Rossini, and resented the discovery with a certain irritation.

He experienced an analogous feeling when circumstances brought him into personal contact with Rossini. Rossini would have declared that he had never seen this gentleman who was mentioned to him. It is very possible that the musician who, in every town in which he stayed to be present at performances of his operas, had carelessly watched a line of some hundred dilettanti pass by him, disputing among themselves the honor of being introduced to him, had preserved no recollection of the little, thick-set, whiskered man with keen eyes, who was a party to his conversations with the poet, Monti, or who, seated at the same table, laughed at his sprightly repartee. Beyle, in 1820, spoke Italian but poorly and could not readily have taken part in a general conversation when
a man with such caustic wit as Rossini's took an active share in it. He preferred to keep silent, to listen and to lose not a word. If Stendhal made of whole cloth his story of his meeting with the composer in the inn at Terracina in 1817, it is certain that he saw him often in Milan in the drawing-rooms which he frequented between 1819 and 1821. Before being presented to Rossini, Beyle knew him well through the many anecdotes, agreeable or scandalous, which were told of the composer. He heard not only the *bon-mots* and gallant adventures attributed to Rossini, that supplied material for conversation in the boxes at the Scala which Beyle visited night after night, but he could pick up bits of most amusing gossip and scandal about the composer in the salon of Elena Vigano, where he went thrice weekly after the theater. Elena was the daughter of the celebrated choreograph whose glory, in the eyes of Stendhal, equalled that of Canova, of Rossini, even of Napoleon. She was a charming woman, a thorough musician, with a pretty voice, who liked to gather round her, from eleven o'clock in the evening until two in the morning, fifteen or twenty amateurs and artists, who, like her, were passionately fond of music. No formality, no ceremony. One went to these soirées in street boots if one wished; one stretched out at ease on a sofa and was charmed by the airs which the fascinating diva sang with consummate art. One was not obliged to contribute to the conversation. One talked or remained silent entirely according to one's natural inclination. There, surely, Beyle heard the most interesting discussions about music, and there he laid in a stock of anecdotes about the composers then in fashion. The amiable "Nina" knew them all. Simon Mayr was an old friend of her father's. Rossini had been her teacher and honored her with his friendship. Michele Carafa was quite at home in that house. Beyle could not be better situated to pick up the echoes of the life of the theater and of music in Italy.

He had, moreover, had a chance, in the house of some other friends, to make the acquaintance of the very young singer, Adelaide Schiassetti, whose angelic face made one forget her slightly deformed body. The daughter of an Italian general and a countess, she was "proud as forty aristocracies," and created a furor when she was in voice. Beyle cultivated her acquaintance and took pleasure in hearing her sing Rossini's airs. She sought, but without avail, to make him enjoy the operas of Mercadante, a new composer in whom she was interested.

Beyle frequented another house in which the memory of the youth, Rossini, had been kept alive. He was well acquainted with the sisters Mombelli. It was for them, to a libretto written by
their mother, and with the advice of their father, a celebrated tenor, that Rossini at the age of fourteen had composed in Bologna his opera, *Demetrius and Polibius*, which the sisters afterwards sang all over Italy. One of them had married a journalist, Angelo Lambertini, a savant and a fool, an excellent violin player and an intimate friend of Rossini's. At the Mombelli house Beyle could hear many a tale of adventure in Rossini's early life, and was amused to hear father Mombelli, who in the days of his glory had been on terms of great intimacy with Cimarosa, Sacchini and Paesiello, declaim against "ornaments and piquant sauce à la Rossini."

It was not before November, 1819, that Beyle was introduced to Rossini, with whom he was already so well acquainted by hearsay. The conversationalist amused him, the man was antipathetic. So much wit, verve, animation and waggishness could not leave him indifferent. He took a lively pleasure in observing him, in listening to his discussions with Monti, and received as oracles his observations and criticisms in musical matters; but the coarse Epicurean, fond of high living, was repugnant to him. He was shocked to find a man who carried out the principles of "Beylism" to their very last consequences. Beyle, it is true, had formulated the theory of the pursuit of happiness and maintained that every man ought to take his pleasure where he found it, but he did not, in fact, feel much sympathy with those who were too easily contented. He who, at this very period and in spite of his truculent letters to his friend, de Mareste, suffered cruelly because of his lofty passion for Matilde Dembrusky-Viscontini, was astonished that an artist like Rossini could limit his desires to being courted and petted by several women at the same time, setting them down plumply and without ceremony when he had enough of them, "eating like three ogres, twenty beefsteaks a day," scrimping, haggling, hoarding, making the lover of his mistress support him, in brief, living like "a disgusting pig." There were also, in the character of the artist, many things that Beyle could not approve of. Rossini did not conceal the fact that he wrote operas only to make money, and that, when he had laid by enough to guarantee his income, he counted on abandoning music and taking a rest. One has gone far afield to find the reasons why Rossini ceased to compose after *William Tell*. It will suffice to cast a glance at Stendhal's correspondence. There, under the date of November 2, 1819, in a letter to de Mareste we read: "I saw Rossini yesterday upon his arrival. He will be twenty-eight years old next April. He wants to quit working at thirty." Ten years later, Rossini,
having secured the income which he deemed necessary, realized the dream of his life. He snapped his pen in two and consecrated himself to the joys of gastronomic art. This decision, although it stunned the public at large, could cause but little astonishment for Stendhal. He, who cultivated letters for the love of letters and above all for the love of the ideas he wished to express, could not approve of such a corruption of the rôle of the artist. The pursuit of happiness, as Rossini practised it, could not but appear to him as a caricature of his dearest theories. And yet he could not bear Rossini a grudge because of this. If a Frenchman or an Englishman had conducted himself in this fashion, he would have despised him. But how could one be indignant with, how could one even take seriously, this Olympian buffoon? He offered sacrifices to his instincts with such tranquil assurance, with such natural ease, with such indifference to opinion! At need, he knew so well how to justify himself with a pun, and to make game of all, of himself before all others. Beyle was too well aware of Rossini’s genius to think of measuring him with the common measure, but this somewhat spoiled his great man for him. The more so as his admiration had a certain admixture of antipathy. It is this complex sentiment which manifests itself in all that Stendhal has written on Rossini and his work.

Beyle, driven from Milan in 1821 by calumnies which represented him as a spy of the French government, returned to Paris, where again he found Rossini’s music triumphant at the Théâtre Louvois. After The Happy Deception (l’Inganno Felice), Tancred, The Italian in Algiers, The Barber of Seville, there were performed in the course of two seasons from 1821 to 1822, six Rossini operas unknown in France: The Touchstone, Elisabeth, Othello, The Thieving Magpie (La Gazza Ladra), Cinderella, Moses. Regretting always the wonderful voices he had but lately heard, the orchestra of the Scala, so discreet and so supple, and the marvellous stage-settings of Senquirico and Perego, who knew so well how to persuade “the imagination to take the first steps into the land of illusions,” Stendhal attended the Italian opera assiduously. There he found Madame Pasta again, who in the role of Desdemona made all Paris weep. He attempted to reconstruct his Milanese life. In the evening he went to the opera or into society and toward midnight he made his entry regularly at Madame Pasta’s. There, listening to the music or playing faro by way of distraction with the Italian friends of the diva, he imagined himself in Milan again.

Beyle had rented a room at the Hotel des Lillois, 63 rue de Richelieu, attracted, without doubt, by the neighborhood of Madame
Pasta, who occupied the first floor of this hostelry. He had only to go downstairs to imagine himself in Italy. Around the piano the same discussions took place on the subject of Rossini as he had recently heard at the house of Nina Vigano.

In Paris Beyle was surely the man who knew Rossini and his works best. Up to that time there had appeared, in France as well as in Italy, only the criticisms and reviews in the journals, which were written as the works of the master from Pesaro were performed. Of the life of the man not more was known than a certain number of more or less authentic anecdotes. Assembling all his recollections, running through the sketches of his letters to his friends, and aided perhaps by a few scattered publications carefully preserved, Beyle wrote an article on Rossini for an English review published in Paris, to which he was a regular contributor. In January, 1822, The Paris Monthly Review published, under the pseudonym of Alceste, an English translation of this essay. It reached its aim and profited by the curiosity which the name of Rossini had aroused. Slightly altered it was immediately reprinted in two great British reviews: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine and Galignani's Monthly Review. A Milan journal got possession of it and printed an Italian translation. This article was included in a volume in company with a pedantic dissertation on the aesthetic aims of Rossini's music. This work appeared in Milan in 1824, under the title of Rossini and His Music, almost at the same time as the two volumes of Beyle's Life of Rossini in Paris.

However ardent a Stendhalian one may be, it is difficult to attribute this great success solely to the merit of the article in the Paris Monthly Review. Translated into English or Italian, the grace of the style is dissipated. There remains only the matter stripped bare: facts and opinions. Now, one cannot pretend that Beyle revealed himself in this study as a very well-informed historian or as a subtle critic. It was evidently written to order hastily. The author trusted to his memory for the anecdotes and the information relating to Rossini's youth. It is for the most part wrong, or at any rate very inexact, whether it be a question of the date of the composer's birth, of his family, or of the beginning of his musical career. One finds, moreover, numerous disputable details in the Life of Rossini: an air in Tancred borrowed from a Greek chant, letters addressed by the musician to "Signora Rossini, mother of the illustrious maestro at Pesaro," Rossini's mystification of his travelling companions on the way to Reggio, the first performance of the Barber at Rome, instances of the incredible facility with which the composer worked, etc.
Stendhal and Rossini

Stendhal had ended his article by artfully mingling criticisms with his praises, as a man who refused to be “duped entirely by Rossini’s whipped cream and fanfaronades.” He admired the extreme rapidity, the brilliance and the freshness of his melodies, but he deplored the fact that the soul could find no deeper enjoyment in them. What will remain of The Barber of Seville when that work is as old as Don Giovanni?

In Italy the article appeared to the Rossini party as a pamphlet against their god. Signora Gertrude Giorgi Righetti, who had created the rôle of Rosina in The Barber of Seville and that of Cinderella, believed herself personally involved in the quarrel, for Stendhal had neglected to sing the praises of her voice in speaking of the Barber. She had retired from the stage, and, married to a worthy bourgeois citizen, lived in Bologna, without, however, resigning herself to oblivion. She took up the pen to confound the giornalista inglese, and to refute, point by point, his lying assertions.

The pamphlet which we owe to the ex-prima donna’s rage is entitled: Notes of a lady, formerly a singer, on Maestro Rossini, in reply to what the English Journalist in Paris wrote of him in the Summer of 1822, as reported in a Milan Gazette of the same year. This little work of some sixty pages is extremely diverting. On every page the singer’s indignation against the foreign journalists breaks forth. Stendhal is not the only object of her invective. Did not an infamous Paris critic dare to insinuate that if, in the book of Cinderella, a lost bracelet was substituted for the traditional glass slipper, it was because the actress who played the title-rôle had big feet?

In the course of her pamphlet Signora Righetti gives us valuable information about Rossini, about his family, and above all, about the memorable evening on which The Barber of Seville was performed for the first time in Rome. Did Beyle know the brochure when he wrote his Life of Rossini? Evidently many of the inaccuracies pointed out by the singer do not recur in Stendhal’s book. But he may have drawn his information from other sources. It seems hardly possible that Beyle would have allowed certain picturesque details in the lady’s story to escape him. He knew by hearsay that the piece which was greeted with hisses the first night was repeated with great success the next day. But if he had been aware of the scenes which Signora Righetti describes: the furious crowd interrupting the first performance and then going, the next night, to awaken Rossini from his sleep, invading his bed-chamber to congratulate him in his bed upon the success of his opera, would he not have made use of this in his Life of Rossini?
On the whole Signora Righetti does not fulfill her promises. She does not refute Stendhal except in a few biographical details. She confines herself more often to disputing unimportant points and completing certain data only summarily indicated by Stendhal. Her great preoccupation is to keep her own memory green, to remind the world that she possessed “the most beautiful voice ever heard in Rome.” In addition she does not fail to slip in a few allusions to her own beauty and to emphasize the boundless admiration that Rossini displayed toward her at the time when she did him the honor to interpret his operas.

While the article in the Paris Monthly Review was causing all this excitement, Stendhal sat in his hotel room, writing An Essay on the History of Music in Italy from 1800 to 1823. The unexpected success of his article induced him to bring out this new work in English. By the 4th of December it was well advanced, for he wrote to Mr. Sutton Sharpe in London that this History of Music at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century had just been translated into English by a friend, and that it would make a volume of about four hundred octavo pages. “There are not many ideas in this little work,” he explains, “but it is full of little facts which have the merit of being true.”

Through the mediation of a young English barrister, Mr. Luby, negotiations were carried on with the publishing house of Murray, which had already brought out The Life of Haydn, but they led to nothing. Beyle withdrew his manuscript and subjected it to considerable modification. During the Winter and Spring of 1823 Beyle worked at his Life of Rossini. He had decided that this work should be seriously authoritative. Friends furnished him with analyses of the scores, others sent him from Italy biographical data about Rossini. The salon of Madame Pasta must have been a rich source of information for Stendhal. In 1823 only ten years had elapsed since the triumph of Tancred in Venice, and the history of Rossini’s operas was still living in the memories of the dilettanti gathered around Madame Pasta’s piano. Beyle wrote the preface of his new work in September 1823 and dated it Montmorency, where he often stayed during the warm season. At this time the Life of Rossini was ended with a chronological list of the composer’s works. The English translator must have worked with a manuscript copy of the Life.

In January, 1824, the publisher, Hookham, in London brought out The Memoirs of Rossini by the Author of The Lives of Haydn and Mozart. In the preface the translator declines to identify himself with the anonymous author’s judgment of the talent of Madame
Colbran. He warns the reader that he has had to cut various passages concerning religion, politics, Italian manners and morals, and that he has added from his own pen information regarding Rossini's trip to Vienna in 1822, and the success of *Semiramide*. As an excuse for the typographical errors which may be encountered, he alleges the haste with which the book had to be printed. Rossini had been in England since December 7, 1823, and we can understand the publisher's desire to bring before the public a work so strikingly opportune.

I imagine that the English *Memoirs of Rossini* represent the first draft of *The Life of Rossini*, revised and corrected by a translator anxious not to let the subject disappear under the accumulation of digressions and accessory details. It is a well constructed work, clear, authoritative, lively, giving valuable historical information and judicious analyses of Rossini's operas. It is, in fine, the material from which *The Life of Rossini* was to be made, but condensed, arranged, reduced by one-half. From the historical point of view this is the first and, without doubt, the best book written on Rossini in the first half of the nineteenth century. For Stendhalians, however, it is far from possessing the same interest as *The Life of Rossini*, which is an improvisation of genius, exuberant with life, bubbling over with ideas.

While Stritch was laboring to translate and summarize the contents of the manuscript which Stendhal had sent him, the latter was at work completing and augmenting it with a view to publication in French. He added notes everywhere. The performances of Rossini operas at the Théâtre Louvois suggested to him reflections on the execution of these works in Italy and in France. He wrote several new chapters, most of them entirely foreign to the subject, which he intercalated among the analyses of the operas.

*The Memoirs of Rossini* had been out for several months in London, and Stendhal, without hurrying himself, was still reworking his manuscript. He had even requested his friend, de Mareste, to furnish him with a chapter on the history of the establishment of the *opéra bouffe* in Paris from 1800 to 1823. He had only to add a note attributing this study to "M. Adolphe de Besançon." In this way de Mareste was enabled to denounce the intrigues of Paër and his associates against Rossini's music.

"If you will not do this chapter for me (writes Beyle), you will give me a devilish lot of trouble, for I was away and have no recollection of the facts. You can pour out your bile on the idiotic administration of Madame Catalani, and you can display your genius by sketching out a scheme of organization for this opera."
The good Barilli, who looks favorably upon you, can give you all the data you may need, between two hands of faro." And Beyle continues to develop his ideas on the ideal constitution of an Italian opera in Paris. We shall find them again in Chapter 43 of *The Life of Rossini*. At the last moment the author adds to the end of his manuscript a long letter from Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. He has succeeded in transforming a coherent work into a monster. Let us not complain, however, for the monster is a masterpiece.

*The Life of Rossini* by M. de Stendhal appeared in 1824, published by Auguste Boullard and Company, booksellers in Paris. It was graced with portraits of Rossini and of Mozart and bore as a motto these words, attributed to Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*: "Let your thoughts go out like this insect, which we set free in the air with a string to its leg."

The work was successful and helped to revive interest in Rome, Naples and Florence. Beyle, however, anxious to create the impression that the first edition was immediately exhausted, had a copy of the title struck off with the remark: *Second Edition*, and inserted between the preface and the introduction a notice of four pages on *The Life and Works of Mozart*. We do not know how large a return *The Life of Rossini* brought Stendhal, but it was surely much more than he derived from his famous novels. It spread over the whole world. In the very year of its publication, Professor Wendt in Leipzig brought out a German translation, or to be more exact, an adaptation. If the spirit and the style of Stendhal were somewhat dimmed by the varnish of the English translation, they were effaced still more in the German version under the thick coating with which they were covered by the conscientious German editor, who was not skilful in his handling of the explanatory notes and emendations.

In Italy *The Life of Rossini* was much sought after in spite of its high price, but more through malignant curiosity than because of any taste or understanding for the work. Those who did not simply draw upon the book as plagiarists, were pleased to point out its biographical inaccuracies, and to insinuate that Beyle had been the victim of Rossini's jokes and *rodomontades*. The admirers of Rossini found fault with the author for not having handled their idol more gently in his criticisms, and Rossini's detractors were astonished that Beyle should have taken him so seriously.

Even in France it was a matter of good tone among musical critics to treat *The Life of Rossini* as a work of pure fantasy, which did not prevent them from stealing from it, even reproducing entire chapters in biographies of Rossini published in Belgium. Stendhal was bitterly reproached with having fallen into errors of detail, and...
even with a lack of sympathetic spirit. "If he had subjected all his ideas to the domination of one fruitful parent thought," wrote Joseph d'Ortigues in 1829, "this writer would have turned out only a little work, a pamphlet. M. de Stendhal has had nothing but esprit; he has written two volumes."

The memory of the famous case of plagiarism of which Beyle had been guilty toward Carpani when he published The Life of Haydn, aroused the suspicion that in this case also he might have stolen the property of another. It so happened that in this very year, 1824, Carpani had brought out his Rossiniane, a collection of letters on the music of Rossini and Weber which had, most of them, appeared previously in the Biblioteca Italiana. So much more reason for accusing Stendhal of renewed plagiarism. But this time the reproach is without foundation. There is not a line in The Rossiniane which could have inspired the author of The Life of Rossini. If there are, at times, similarities, it is a question of commonplace without interest. Better still—whether as a result of chance or owing to a fixed purpose—Stendhal had abstained from commenting on those operas of Rossini which had been treated by Carpani. Fétis did not take the trouble to read either The Life of Rossini or The Rossiniane to bring his charge of plagiarism against Stendhal. In truth, Beyle took his material where he found it with a too graceful ease to escape, perhaps, on this one occasion when he was not poaching, the ill will of his detractors. The Life of Rossini is a work at first hand and of immediate conception. In it the personality of Stendhal is manifested tumultuously from end to end with its worst defects and its most admirable qualities.

Those who, on the strength of the title, seek in The Life of Rossini a biography in the usual sense of the word, will be doomed to disappointment. It is no more a biography than the Promenades in Rome or Rome, Naples and Florence are guides to Italy for the use of the ordinary tourist. Some one has characterized Rome, Naples and Florence as "a journal of sensations." One might say that The Life of Rossini is a journal of sensations experienced by Stendhal in the course of a voyage through the field of music.

Stendhal was acquainted with only a limited territory in this field: Mozart, Cimarosa, Paesiello, Rossini—but he knew that territory well and not indirectly through others. He was ignorant of all the glorious past of Italy. Allegri's Miserere, heard at the Sistine Chapel, appeared to him like music from afar, almost barbarous, contemporaneous with Dante and the Gothic cathedrals, even though he takes note of the last offshoots of the polyphonic style which tradition had kept alive in the schools of Rome up to
the end of the seventeenth century. For Stendhal, music begins with Pergolesi, Vinci, and Leo. And yet he knew of these charming composers of the eighteenth century only because he had read of them in the letters of the President de Brosses, in the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and in Burney's *History*. He mentions their names and passes on. Let us be grateful to him for not seeking to make a display of erudition. He would have felt himself obliged to adapt and translate chapters from some more or less well-informed foreign historian. We should have had another plagiarism in the style of *The Life of Haydn*, a strong work, very agreeable without doubt, bearing Stendhal's mark, but not contributing much to his glory.

Limiting his desires to the writing of the musical history of his own times, that is to say of the "era of Rossini," he did not have to borrow erudition from others. It would, moreover, have been difficult for him to copy any other writer for the simple reason that, aside from the newspaper articles, the criticisms and the polemical writings in the press, no book summing up Rossini's life and works had yet been written. Now, it is not an act of plagiarism to make use of published documents or manuscripts in writing a historical work.

For the rest, the biographical element in *The Life of Rossini* is reduced to a few data: the date of the composer's birth, his family, his education, his débuts, the dates of first performances.... All this could have been condensed into a paragraph of twenty lines for a dictionary. There were certainly in Italy, among Beyle's friends, at least a dozen persons who could have procured this information for him. All the rest of the book is made up of analyses of operas, anecdotes, and aesthetic, political, moral, critical, philosophic and literary considerations. The printed sources of *The Life of Rossini* are, accordingly, insignificant.

There are found here and there, in this book, passages which give the impression of having been adapted from the Italian: for instance, the technical dissertation on singing in Chapter 33; but Beyle contented himself with translating a few pages from some book, or perhaps he made use of a note written especially for him by some obliging friend. Beyle reserved for himself the task of fixing the collective character of his work. It is not his own personal judgment that he gives from beginning to end, but the opinion, or rather the opinions, which he has heard expressed by those around him.

I pray the reader to believe (he writes) "that the *I* in this work is but a form of speech, which might be replaced by: "They say in Naples
in the salon of the Marquis Berio . . .” or: “M. Peruchini of Venice, this well informed amateur, whose sentiments are law, told us one day at Madame Benzoni’s . . .” or: “This evening, in the circle which gathers around the armchair of Mr. Attorney Antonini in Bologna, I heard Mr. Agguchi maintain that the harmony of the Germans . . .” or: “Count Giraud was of the opinion that Rossini’s friend, Mr. Gherardi, had fought to the bitter end . . .”

And Beyle does not hesitate to declare that “to write this Life of Rossini he has collected from all sides, for example, from the German and Italian journals, the judgments on this great man and his works.

This time he exaggerates. A few years earlier he had claimed that he owed nothing to Carpani, whom he had despoiled even while he scoffed at him. Now he exerts himself to convince us that his Life of Rossini is nothing but a “cento,” made up of extracts from journals. That Stendhal drew useful bits of information from the newspapers, is quite probable; but as a matter of fact, he made little use of them, as one is quite convinced in looking through the pages of the gazettes and journals then published in Italy. As he himself very justly remarks a little farther on, “the articles in the journals are either hymns of praise or Philippics and rarely offer anything positive.”

A historical and critical work like The Life of Rossini, could not be wholly a work of fantasy. Authorities are necessary. To procure them Beyle certainly made his friends work very hard. We have seen him ask Baron de Mareste for a note on the opéra bouffe in Paris. He must have procured from able amateurs the analyses of operas which he used in writing his work. One can thus explain certain contradictions which may be discovered in the course of the book between the rather severe appreciations of certain operas and the eulogies paid elsewhere in the book to the various pieces of which they are made up. Stendhal does not fail to point out that he has forewarned his readers in good faith. It is their task to distinguish between the expression of his own opinions and the reproduction of the opinions of others. It is not always easy to do this, and for the uninitiated reader there are often contradictions between the praises and the criticisms of one and the same work. Stendhal is never very kindly disposed toward Rossini, but he worked with notes furnished him by ardent admirers of the master. Hence the conflict, which is, moreover, very amusing to observe when one is initiated. Precisely because of this abundance of argument for and against Rossini’s music, Stendhal’s book is truly representative of the opinions current in the drawing-rooms of
Milan about 1820. From time to time the mordant voice of Beyle dominates the hubbub of these impassioned discussions.

As he wrote the successive chapters of his book he submitted his manuscript to the approbation of friends so that they might correct the "errors of fact" into which he often fell "like La Fontaine's astrologer who tumbled into a well while gazing at the stars." And he renders account of these suggestions and corrections. Somewhere he thanks the "Chevalier de Mirechoux, former Minister at Dresden," for valuable corrections made by the latter, and for acceptable and useful ideas which he had suggested. The dialogue which he writes at the head of his analysis of the Barber must have taken place often between him and the diletanti whom he interrogates: "Come, let us get to work seriously. Let us open the score. I am going to play you the principal airs. Make a concise and sensible analysis."

They are quite exact and very neat, these analyses of Rossini's operas which Stendhal gives us. He makes no display of technical terms and does not consider that he has accounted for a piece in dissecting its grammatical structure. He seeks to give us in words an idea of the music, and complains of his inability to note down for us in simple fashion the musical motives of which he speaks, because he cannot let us hear them. This had not yet become the custom. Even when we feel that Stendhal is reproducing the ideas of others, he impresses his own stamp upon them and intermingles his analyses with reflections and digressions which forbid our being bored. He is something of a "Jacques, the fatalist" relating the tale of his amours to his master, subject to continual interruptions. In the end the analyses are finished and a charming impression remains. This absence of pedantry is not the meanest attraction of Stendhal's book.

We may find in the Correspondence judgments on Rossini's operas which he has just heard, formulated in terms almost identical with those in The Life of Rossini. As to Rossini's style, however, Beyle is, in general, more severe in his letters than in his book. He seems to have made use of sketches of letters written in Italy. It is to be regretted that the manuscript of The Life of Rossini has disappeared. It must have bristled with passages pasted over and with inserts. To make a note at the head of Chapter 45 he simply pins to his manuscript a fragment of a letter, forgetting that a passage in the second person sounds very strangely in that place:

In music, conversation or discussion never leads to anything beyond the necessary recitative; melodic song, the aria, is a new atmosphere for which one must have a feeling. Now, this feeling is very rare in France.
south of the Loire. It is very common in Toulouse and in the Pyrenees. Do you remember the little rascals who sang beneath our windows at Pierrefite (on the road to Cauterets) and whom we called up to our rooms? Toulouse.

The whole book is written with this nonchalance, often quite charming, this disdain for pompous phrases and emphatic common-places. Beyle explains himself boldly in the beginning of Chapter 33:

If I have had one constant care, it was to exaggerate nothing through style, and to avoid, above all, securing any effect by a succession of considerations or images of somewhat forced warmth, which would lead one to say at the end of the period: “There is a fine page!” In the first place, as I entered the field of literature very late in life, heaven had denied to me entirely the talent of deck ing out an idea and of exaggerating gracefully. Furthermore, there is nothing worse than exaggeration in the tender concerns of life.

Like Rossini’s early operas, Stendhal’s book is an improvisation. When he has once set up his canvas satisfactorily he “broiders” it with astonishing ease. At times his threads become tangled and the design appears no longer distinct; but just as one begins to believe that the work is irremediably spoiled, order is reéstablished, and an exquisite flower, of charming color and new form, blossoms out under the fairy fingers of the adroit workman. For Stendhal is infinitely adroit in spite of his continual awkwardness. To point out his inaccuracies, his repetitions and reiterations, would be to imitate those whom he derides for finding fault with Rossini’s negligence. Of what consequence are the banal transitions, the rapid cadenzas, the curtailed developments, as long as the opera includes a dozen dazzling numbers written with verve and fine feeling? There is not a chapter in The Life of Rossini which does not produce some flower of thought, some turn of expression, which in itself alone is worth a whole volume of chastened and emasculated style.

Stendhal never creates the impression that he is forcing himself, but rather that he is indulging in play. He writes “to while away the morning,” and the “trade of author” fills him with deep disgust. He writes what comes into his head, what he believes, without caring whether he runs counter to or offends the opinions of others. In fact, he takes pleasure in stirring up his own spirits. He does not plume himself on his impartiality. This may be a very fine quality for historians, but in the arts it is, “like reason in love, the portion of cold or feebly smitten hearts.” He says what he thinks without the slightest faith in his own infallibility. He does
not pretend that his judgments are law. He thinks thus and so, but he is quite free to admit that others may have received a widely divergent impression of the same work. He asks only that they be sincere and that they refrain from simulating feelings which they do not experience. He agrees with the best grace in the world that he may have shown himself unjust to the operas in Rossini's second manner:

I myself am probably as much the dupe of my feelings as any of my predecessors, when I proclaim that the style of Tancred is the perfect union of antique melody with modern harmony. I am the dupe of a magician who afforded me the most lively pleasure in my early youth; and on the other hand, I am unjust to the Thieving Magpie and to Othello, which arouse feelings that are less sweet, less entrancing, but are more piquant and, perhaps, stronger.

One cannot picture a critic with more good faith than Stendhal, or less systematic. His perpetual contradictions give an amusing incoherence to his work. He loves Rossini, but with reservations. He has no great affection for the noisy Rossini of The Thieving Magpie. He prefers the esprit, the delicate charm, the grace and the waggishness of The Italian in Algiers or of Tancred. Above all he finds fault with the composer for having encroached on the prerogatives of the interpreter. In Italy Beyle was privileged to hear Velluti and two or three other singers who preserved the method and the tradition of bel canto. He was captivated. Surely, then, it makes little difference what music they sing. One forgets the composer and thinks only of the virtuoso who transfuses his soul into his song. Velluti with his voice, Paganini with his violin, Liszt on his piano, transfigure the themes which they take as a pretext for their sublime improvisations. Beyle was charmed by them, just as we would still be charmed today if such singers could be found; but Rossini complains that he no longer recognizes his own music. And then, every singer pretended to follow the example given by such high authority. The most mediocre prima donna embroidered with trills, figures and flourishes the air which fell to her, and of which shortly no substantial part remained. Rossini resigned himself to the inevitable, but saved what he could.

He himself wrote out the embellishments and demanded that his interpreters sing the airs as he had written them and not otherwise. Stendhal could not reconcile himself to this reform, and found that Rossini was in the wrong, even though he recognized the disadvantages for the art of music which resulted from the excessive liberties in which the virtuosos indulged to the point of abuse. Under the old system the interpreter was enabled to express the
subtlest shades of feeling of which his soul was capable at the moment when he appeared upon the stage. Now he was constrained to discover the feeling which the composer meant to convey, and hence he sang with less sensibility. Now, for Stendhal, sensibility was everything in music. "Good music is merely our emotion." Surely his is not a technical judgment. He feels a profound disdain for those who are interested only in the "physics of sounds." Music must call forth emotions in him, must arouse reveries. "Every work which lets me think of the music," he declares, "is mediocre for me."

With what authority, then, and—let us speak boldly—with what good sense, he justifies Rossini in the tricks which the composer sometimes plays the sacrosanct rules of the art. These rules, which hamper the genius of the artist, are idle, mathematical stuff, invented with more or less cleverness or imagination. Each of them must needs be submitted to the test of experience. The sure method, the impeccable logic of his master, Tracy, forbids his implicit belief in the value of rules. The Abbé Mattei, when Rossini requested him to explain the reason for his corrections, answered: "One ought to write thus!" Beyle rebels against this dogmatism in which he scents a mystification. "If one has the scandalous temerity to want to inquire into the justification of the rules, what will become of the self-importance and the vanity of the conservatory professors?" So much the worse for grammar, if an artist like Rossini offends against its laws. Stendhal has too intense a love and feeling for music to descend so low as to examine minutely its dismounted mechanism. Of what importance is the mechanism to him, when the sound that it produces alone moves him?

Few men were more sensitive than he to the nuances of musical expression. He takes pleasure in defining in words its intangible complexity. He discovers in music the passion which he himself has so subtly dissected: Love. On another occasion, in the book which he has devoted to the phenomena of "crystallization," Beyle was impelled to have recourse to quotations from airs by Mozart, by Cimarosa and by Rossini to portray more exactly a certain shade of sentiment. In analyzing Rossini's operas he continues his psychological work, and in order to enable us better to seize the sense of the music, he relates anecdotes which illustrate feelings like those expressed in the music. There is a close relationship between the book on Love and The Life of Rossini, and the theories formulated in the earlier work are illustrated and commented upon by means of musical illustrations in the latter.
In Stendhal's opinion, we can in no wise understand the music of Italy, if we do not render ourselves an exact account of the soil from which it is sprung. As he writes to a friend: "This species of froth which one calls the Fine Arts is the necessary product of a certain fermentation. To acquire a knowledge of the froth one must know the nature of the fermentation." Here we have, in fine, the whole theory of the influence of environment, so brilliantly formulated and exemplified in the systematic method of Taine.

Stendhal, in order to reveal to us the meaning of Rossini's music, or to be more exact, of Italian music in Rossini's time, outlines for us a picture of contemporary manners and morals, evoking with each page the memory of the manners of times past which have contributed to forming those of the present. There is no more lively element than this in Stendhal's book. To tell the truth, he often merely repeats what he has already said in Rome, Naples and Italy, but one has not the heart to complain of that. A delineation of this kind we find, for instance, in the account of the representation at Como of Demetrius and Polybius, which ranks among the finest pages in Stendhal.

Convinced that we cannot study the music of a people if we abstract from the land, the customs, the ideas, the passions of that people, he seeks to give a combined impression of the whole, and tries to make the French understand Italy through Rossini's music. The whole book is written with an eye to the French public for which it is intended. Beyle, faithful to his rôle of "bon cosaque auxiliare," harrying the laggards of the column with his lance, seeks to excite the curiosity of his compatriots, and to arouse in them the desire to know more of this beautiful land of Italy where one lives and loves after another fashion than the French. Like all those who have lived long in a foreign land, he is enraged by the self-sufficiency and the complacent pride of those who have never travelled beyond Saint-Cloud, and who live in the firm belief that there is nothing under the sun which can compare with what is done in Paris. As Sainte-Beuve very aptly remarks, Stendhal addresses himself not so much to the public at large, as to the artists and above all to the critics, whom he urges "to get out of the academic circle, too narrowly French, and to become aware of what is going on outside."

In his disdain for the "patriotism of the antechamber" he hurls the truth at the heads of French musicians. Carried away by his ardor for the fight, he goes too far and at times becomes unjust; but who would have the heart to find fault with him for taking sides against Berton? His rebukes for the noisy orchestras, the expressionless and voiceless singers, seem only too well founded, if we
judge by what our ears suffer to this very day in our lyric theatres.

Stendhal does not confine himself to overwhelming with sarcasm the public of the Feydeau and the Louvois, with ears "lined with parchment." He never misses an opportunity to war upon the national vices, against the defects which, according to him, are French par excellence: vanity, the fear of ridicule, affectation, materialism in art. He exaggerates a great deal, but what an admirable preacher of idealism is this Epicurean! Noble souls cannot escape the infection of his enthusiasm. "I have read through The Life of Rossini," confesses Eugène Delacroix in the pages of his diary. "I saturated myself with it, and I did wrong. As a matter of fact, this Stendhal is an insolent fellow who is right with too much arrogance and, at times, reasons falsely!"

Certainly he reasons falsely, but often—and probably Delacroix understood him thus—it is just then that he is all the more right. And then, what luminous aperçus, what prophetic views of the future of the art! In particular, he predicts with astounding surety as early as 1824, the fusion in French grand opera of opposing aesthetic principles of Italian and German opera, a prophecy which was to be realized by Rossini five years later in his Othello:

These two great currents of opinion and varying sources of enjoyment, represented today by Rossini and Weber, will probably be blended to form but a single school, and their union, forever memorable, ought to take place under our very eyes, in this Paris, which in spite of the censors and the rigor of the times is more than ever the capital of Europe.

If we overlook certain whims, certain venturous strokes of the pen, we are struck by the justness of his judgments on the musicians of his day. No one, perhaps, has spoken with more tenderness or sensibility about Mozart. As for Rossini, one is astonished both by Beyle's criticisms and by his enthusiasms, for alas! who knows Rossini to-day? I mean the Rossini whom Stendhal loved, the author of Tancred and of The Italian in Algiers. It is very difficult to judge from the French adaptation of Le Barbier de Séville which we are offered at the Opéra-Comique; and how many are there who have really heard an Italian troupe in Il Barbiere di Siviglia? Those who have taken the pains, or rather those who have had the pleasure of studying the operas of Rossini's youth, can only admire the stern equity of Stendhal's judgment:

Vivacious, light, piquant, never tiresome, rarely sublime, Rossini seems born expressly to throw mediocre minds into ecstasies. However, though far surpassed by Mozart in tender and melancholy situations,
and by Cimarosa in the comic or in the impassioned style, he is superior in vivacity, celerity, piquancy and all the effects derived from these qualities.

To some people this judgment will appear surprising. "What! Is this all that Stendhal finds to praise in a composer about whom he has been telling us in more than five hundred pages? 'Vivacious, light, piquant, never tiresome . . . ' Does an artist who is no more than this deserve our attention for so long a time?" To be never tiresome, this in itself is reason enough for Stendhal. If one cannot attain the sublime heights of Mozart or Beethoven, if one cannot dispense to men profound emotion or serene joy, then, to amuse them, to give them a pleasure which is more ready, more amiable, but which distracts them from the realities of daily life and transports them into the world of agreeable illusions, is in itself a great deal.

Our age has succumbed to the fascination of the imposing monuments erected by the Romantics. It finds it difficult to imagine that one can listen to music outside of the coffee-house in any other mood than that of receptive ecstasy; that one can enjoy cheerful or tender airs with lively pleasure, and talk or sip sherbets during unimportant recitatives. We listen to the Barber to-day as we do to Parsifal, religiously from beginning to end. How Stendhal would laugh, and what would he not say of these people who go to the opera as to a sermon!

To be sure, there is music which is nothing but a sublime prayer, which introduces us into mysterious sanctuaries; there is music which fills us with holy horror, which arouses in us delight, woe, superhuman joy; there is music which takes possession of us, carries us along, tosses us upon its irresistible flood and abandons us on the sandy shore, broken as one who recovers consciousness after a long swoon. But is there no place, then, for music of another kind, and is it necessary that the passionate admiration which it calls forth for artists, highly gifted but falling just short of genius, should still impose upon us for any length of time this host of honest, respectable works, proclaiming the highest ideals, but which we cannot hear without yawning? Stendhal teaches—and there are people who have taken his words to heart:

There is room for a less severe, a less dogmatic art. I pray you, gentlemen who compose, put aside this superannuated equipment of sonatas, fugues and canons. Do not persist in resuscitating a dead tongue. What is the use of writing Latin verses? That is good enough for the college. You are no longer, so far as I know, college students. Do not hypnotize yourselves with the contemplation of the past.
to your own times. It is not given to every one to be born a giant. If
Nature has not fashioned you thus, make your effort proportionate to
your strength. In seeking to plunge men into ecstasies you risk putting
them to sleep. Flee from boredom, pedantry, affectation. Life is hard,
full of troubles. Aid men to escape them through the imagination.
Ponder the example of Rossini who, feeling neither the strength nor the
desire to take Destiny by the throat as Beethoven did, prefers to snap
his fingers at her. His lusty laughter dissipates the shadows. We forget
our misery, the emptiness of life, and we are transported into a world of
illusion and delight, wherein, dusted over with golden light, entrancing
phantoms are wafted into view.

(Translated by Otis Kincaid.)