Mail 14.7.23

PROFESSOR E. HAROLD DAVIES, MUS. DOC.

In his lecture on Tuesday night on music he said there were many people who received a smattering of some instrument, generally the piano. "But that," said the Professor, "has as much to do with music as operating a typewriter has to do with literature."

Register 16 7.23

THE CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC.

From "VIOLIN":—Having the welfare of this fair city at heart, more especially where the musical outlook is concerned, may I be permitted to point out how disappointed the community is in general with the breadth and scope of the Adelaide Conservatorium. When the plan was first mooted, and the College of Music was transferred from its original home in Wakefield street, we all thought that the school would devote itself entirely to the training of advanced students. It is with great sorrow one realizes that the majority of scholars are junior pupils. To enter on a course at the Adelaide University it is necessary for students to first matriculate. I do not understand that the equivalent examination is essential to entrance at the Conservatorium. Speaking from memory, when the Elder Building was opened, the staff consisted of not more than six or seven capable instructors in the various branches of advanced music. While quite appreciating the excellent ground work done by the numerous staff at present connected with the institution, one feels that the constant influx of what are popularly known as "flappers" has certainly a tendency to bring ridicule upon the otherwise consistently dignified University of Adelaide.

Advertiser 14.7.23

THE STRUCTURE AND GROWTH OF MUSIC.

Professor Harold Davies will deliver the second of the course of lectures on the "Structure and Growth of Music" to-night in the Prince of Wales lecture room of the University. The stage of musical evolution to be discussed will cover the first 15 centuries of the Christian era, embracing the growth of ecclesiastical polyphony. The whole of this period forms a preparation for the subsequent development of the art of harmony, and of all those distinguishing characteristics which belong to modern music. The gradual realisation of the possibilities of combining sounds of different pitch will be the main object of discussion and the various phases of development will be illustrated practically.

Herald 18-7-23.

LECTURE ON MUSIC

In the Prince of Wales lecture room at the Adelaide University on Tuesday evening Professor Harold Davies, Mus. Doc., delivered the second of his course of lectures on "The Structure and Growth of Music," in the presence of but a moderate attendance. The lecturer dealt with Ecclesiastical Ploryphony and covered the first fifteen centuries of musical evolution. Professor Davies dwelt on the gradual realization of the possibilities of combining sounds of different pitch. The lecture was illustrated with various slides of an interesting nature. The lecture was a preparation for the third lecture when art of harmony, and the distinguishing characteristics which belong to modern music, will be dealt with.

Advertiser 18.7.23

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC.

A RICH ENGLISH HERITAGE.

The second of a series of lectures on the structure and growth of music was delivered by Professor Harold Davies at the Prince of Wales Theatre, University, on Tuesday evening. The subject was "Ecclestical Polyphony."

Professor Davies said that the literal definition of polyphony was "many sounds." In its applied sense it was taken to be the association of two, three, or four or more voices, or instruments, each of which sang or played a distinct tune. The course of musical evolution through countless centuries had been restricted to melody pure and simple, which though it might be sung by hundreds or thousands in concert was only the singing of consecutive single notes. There was no idea of combining even two sounds of different pitch. It was not until the ninth century that it was realised that differing sounds could be satisfactorily combined, and this was the foundation of the art of music as it was understood to-day. Through every age of musical history two constant influences had been apparent. On the one hand there had been the schoolman, laying down with exactitude the laws which should govern composers. Let it be granted that his canons were generally framed upon the consensus of practice, none the less his role was too often that of a zealous dogmatist. Then there was the tone poet who gave spontaneous voice to his feelings in such terms as were commensurate with his striving to express the truth in himself, and often with but scant reverence for academical usage. Song was based largely upon natural human impulses. Theorists who had devised arbitrary scale systems as well as rhythmic and formal principles had been influential, but purely lyric art, or melody, was often the product of unfettered imagination. The survey of polyphonic invention dealt mainly with the devising of rules. It was an age of a multiplicity of commandments regarding the ways of effectively combining sounds of different pitch. Until the fifteenth century organised music had been exclusively in the hands of the church, and it was only through the various liberating influences of that period that it began to assume a secular guise. Despite the unremitting work of the ecclesiastical schoolmen, however, even in mediaeval times the unchecked exuberance of folk-song and dance, and the wayward fancies of the wandering minstrels and knightly troubadours contributed to and influenced the growth of musical art.

More than once when the theorist had blundered the unlearned had instinctively solved the problem, and academic principles had been forced to yield to the dictates of the natural ear. The immediate task of polyphony was the selection of some interval of pitch to provide a satisfactory relation between two voices. In the light of present experience it was almost certain that an interval of a third or a sixth would be the musician's first choice. The fact remained, however, that for purely scientific reasons intervals of a fourth or a fifth were insisted upon until good sense prevailed and the third and sixth grudgingly permitted, were at last approved. The origin of the Chinese system, based on the interval of the perfect fifth, was illustrated by means of a monochord. Musical temperament and the system of tuning known as equal temperament were also described, and the lecturer remarked that incidentally the best tuner was he who knew best how to "tune out of tune."

Professor Davies traced the course of polyphonic development in detail and with several musical illustrations of the period. He laid considerable stress on the loss of ecclesiastical modes and their submergence in modern major and minor scales. By playing various melodies in distinctive modes the lecturer showed the character of each. There was a marked tendency among modern composers to revert to the ancient modes in quest of distinctive tone color. A beautiful string quartet movement by the Russian composer, Glazounoff, based upon the ecclesiastical mode, was an excellent illustration of this.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century the principles of polyphony, which were fostered exclusively in the ecclesiastical forms of the Mass or motet, were transplanted into the realm of secular music, and applied to the development of the madrigal. In this connection reference was made to the truly amazing legacy of English music of this order composed in the Tudor period. In a recent statement no less an authority than Sir Henry Hadow had said the discovery in the twentieth century of the existence of Shakespearian drama could not have created a greater sensation or a more profound impression than the results of the recent research into the English madrigal music of the sixteenth century. The playing of a madrigal by King Henry VIII., "Pastime with Good Company," was an appropriate corroboration of these remarks. In conclusion the beautiful art of the Italian, Palestrina, the Raphael of music, might be described as the consummation of polyphonic development.

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"THE STRUCTURE AND GROWTH OF MUSIC."

Ecclesiastical Polyphony.

Professor Davies's Second Lecture.

The loss of the ecclesiastical modes, and their submergence in modern major and minor scales, have been recently realized by modern composers. This great loss to our music has resulted in a tendency nowadays, to revert to the ancient modes in the quest for distinctive tone colour.

This thoughtful reference to present-day musical advancement was contained in a scholarly lecture given by the Director of the Elder Conservatorium (Professor E. Harold Davies, Mus. Doc.) on Tuesday evening, in the Prince of Wales Theatre. Last week Dr. Davies commenced a course of three lectures upon "The structure and growth of music;" and "Melody" formed the text of the first address. Last evening the subject of "Ecclesiastical polyphony" occupied the intermediate stage, and next Tuesday will be devoted, finally, to "Harmony." By way of introduction, the literal meaning of the word "polyphony" was described as that containing many sounds. In the applied sense, they took it to be the association of two, three, four, or more voices or instruments, each of which sang or played a distinct tune of its own. The course of musical evolution, for countless centuries of time, had been restricted to the art of melody, pure and simple. This might have been sung by hundreds, or even thousands, of people in concert, but it was still, only a series of consecutive single notes. There had been no idea of combining even two sounds of different pitch. Not until about the ninth century did it occur to musicians to attempt such a thing. But, when, for the first time, it was raelized that differing sounds could be satisfactorily combined, the foundation of the art of music—as they now understood it—was laid, and the quest of harmony was begun.

The Instinct for Truth and Beauty.

In every age, proceeded the speaker, the history of music showed them two constant influences at work. On the one hand, there was the schoolman laying down, with as much exactness as he could, the laws which should govern composers. Let it be granted that his canons were generally framed upon the concensus of practice; none the less, his role was too often that of the zealous dogmatist. On the other hand, there was the home poet, who gave spontaneous voice to his feelings in such terms as he could command, striving only to express the truth that was in him, and often with scant reference to academic usage.. Song, as they had already seen, was based largely upon natural human impulses; and, while those theorists—who devised arbitrary scale systems, as well as rhythmic and formal principles—were influential in many important ways, they might, nevertheless, view the purely lyric art—that was, melody, as, often, the product of unfettered imagination. The survey of polyphonic invention, now before them, dealt mainly with the devising of rules. It was the age, not merely of the Ten Commandments, but of a great multitude of "Thou shalts!" and "Thou shalt nots!" as to the ways of effectively combining sounds of different pitch. Up to the fifteenth century, organized music was exclusively in the hands of the Church, and it was only through the various liberating influences, associated with the latter period, that it began to assume in any way a secular guise. Yet, alongside the unremitting work of ecclesiastic school-men, there still existed, even in medieval times, the unchecked exuberance of folk song and dance, the wayward fancies of wandering minstrels and knightly troubadours. All of these contributed to, and immeasurably influenced, the growth of the art. More than once, when the theorist blundered in his reasoning, the unlearned man instinctively solved the problem, and academic principles were forced to yield to the dictates of the natural ear. To take an outstanding instance, the immediate task of the polyphonist was the selection of some interval of pitch that would provide a satisfactory relation between two voices. In the light of present-day experience, and if such a problem were before them now, it was almost certain that the interval either of a-third or of a-sixth would be their first choice. Yet the fact remained that, for scientific reasons, fourths and fifths were not only preferred, but were insisted upon. That is, until natural good sense prevailed, and then thirds and sixths were tolerated, at first somewhat grudgingly: but, at last, fully approved. Practical illustrations were given of the process by Dr. Davies.

Legacy of the Tudor Period.

The lecturer then went on to discuss the question of intervals of pitch in relation to their mathematical ratios, and illustrated—with the aid of a monochord—the discoveries of Pythagoras and Euclid. He also described the origin of the Chinese System of music which was entirely based upon the interval of the perfect fifth. The question of musical temperament and the system of tuning, known as "equal temperament," was also described; and, incidental to this, the Professor remarked that the best tuner was literally the one who best knew how to tune out of tune! The course of polyphonic development was then traced in some detail, with several musical illustrations of the period. Considerable stress was laid, throughout the course of the lecture, upon the loss of the ecclesiastical modes and their submergence in modern major and minor scales. The speaker, by playing various melodies in different modes, showed what distinctive character belonged to each. Modern composers, he said, had recently realized this great loss to music, and there was a marked tendency nowadays to revert to the ancient modes in the quest for distinctive tonal colours. In illustration of this, the beautiful string quartet movement of the Russian composer, Glazounoff was introduced by means of a gramophone record, and it could be discerned that the composition had been based upon ecclesiastical modes. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the principles of polyphony, which had been fostered exclusively in ecclesiastical forms of the Mass, or the motet, were transplanted into the real of secular music, and applied to the development of the madrigal. In this connection, reference was made by the speaker to the amazing legacy of English music of this order, composed during the Tudor Period. He also quoted a recent statement, made by Sir Henry Haddow, to the effect that the discovery of the existence of the Shakesperean drama for the first time in the twentieth century, could create no greater sensation or profounder impression, than recent research had done into the English madrigal music of the sixteenth century. It was a realisation of great wealth. Among the illustrations given by Dr. Davies was one of King Henry VIII.'s songs, "Pastime with good company."

In conclusion, the lecturer spoke of the perfectly beautiful work of the Italian, Palestrina, who might be described as "the Raphael of Music," and had achieved the consummation of polyphonic development.

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THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

From "NONREV":—One hears daily so many abuses of our mother tongue that it makes one fear there is a danger of its becoming, at no very distant date, a bastard language through the misuse of existing words, and the addition of slang, and other unbecoming words and expressions, many of which seem to have their origin in the United States of America. Our language in its purity is a beautiful one—a heritage of which we may be justly proud. It is composed of a wonderful range of words, each with its derivation and age-long use. There is nothing which cannot be expressed by it, and this, I believe, cannot be said of any other language, including French. I wish that some abler pen would take up this subject, and help to foster a pride in this our birthright. We are ready to copy and adopt "the latest" innovation, which is not always to our advantage. I feel sure that it only requires a moment's thought and we shall realize that our language—used for centuries by so many noble men and women of our race—with its traditions, equally worth preserving.

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THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

From "V.S.".—I think there is a danger of our language becoming tainted and spoilt by the introduction of words and expressions (chiefly American), which may, perhaps, be considered smart or humorous, or "the latest." Examples may be heard daily, and almost anywhere. Our language is a heritage of which we may be justly proud, and in its purity is a beautiful collection of words—each with its derivation and age-long use. There is nothing which cannot be expressed by it; and this, I believe, cannot be said of any other language—even including French. We should take a pride in this, our birthright, to help to prevent the English becoming a bastard language through the misuse of existing words, and the addition of slang and other welcoming words and expressions which many people seem to be so ready to copy.