

Vincent Novello. 1781-1861 (Concluded)

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'Miss Smithson has since become Madame Berlioz. Since then her husband has had his hair cut off. When I heard his symphony again in the Conservatoire this winter, he again sat as a drummer

at the back of the orchestra. The stout English-woman again occupied the stage-box; their eyes met . . . but Berlioz no longer beat so vigorously on the drum!'

FIRST PERFORMANCES IN ENGLAND.

It may be interesting as well as useful for reference to give the dates and places of the first performances of the chief works of Berlioz

in England. The following information applies to those given in their *complete* form for the first time in this country:—

OP.	TITLE.	SOCIETY AND PLACE.	DATE.	CONDUCTOR.
1	Waverley Overture - -	{ Società Armonica, Opera Concert Room, Haymarket - - - }	June 1, 1840 -	Mr. Henry Forbes
3	Francs-Juges Overture - -	{ Ditto - - - - - }	March 30, 1840	Mr. Henry Forbes
4	King Lear Overture - -	{ Willy's Promenade Concerts, Princess's Theatre - - - }	Dec. 7, 1840 -	Mr. J. T. Willy
5	Grande Messe des Morts -	{ Crystal Palace - - - - - }	May 26, 1883 -	Sir August Manns
9	Carnaval Romain Overture -	{ Philharmonic Society, Hanover Square Rooms - - - - - }	March 15, 1841	Mr. Charles Lucas
14	Symphonie Fantastique -	{ Hallé Concerts, Free Trade Hall, Manchester - - - - - }	Jan. 9, 1879 -	Sir Charles Hallé
14 bis	Lélio, ou Le retour à la vie -	{ Crystal Palace - - - - - }	Oct. 29, 1881 -	Sir August Manns
15	{ Symphonie funèbre et trionphale }	{ Ditto - - - - - }	June 3, 1882 -	Sir August Manns
16	Harold in Italy Symphony -	{ Berlioz's own Concert, Drury Lane Theatre - - - - - }	Feb. 7, 1848 -	Berlioz
17	Romeo and Juliet Symphony -	{ Philharmonic Society, St. James's Hall - - - - - }	March 10, 1881	Sir William Cusins
18	Tristia; three choruses with orchestra:			
	No. 2 - - - - -	Crystal Palace - - - - -	March 7, 1891 -	Sir August Manns
	No. 3 - - - - -	Ditto - - - - -	March 2, 1889 -	Sir August Manns
21	Corsaire Overture - - - -	Ditto - - - - -	Feb. 28, 1863 -	Sir August Manns
22	Te Deum - - - - -	Ditto - - - - -	April 18, 1885 -	Sir August Manns
23	Benvenuto Cellini (Opera) -	Covent Garden Theatre - - - -	June 25, 1853 -	Berlioz
24	Faust - - - - -	{ Hallé Concerts, Free Trade Hall, Manchester - - - - - }	Feb. 5, 1880 -	Sir Charles Hallé
25	L'Enfance du Christ - - - -	Crystal Palace - - - - -	Dec. 30, 1880 -	Sir Charles Hallé
	Rob Roy Overture - - - - -	Ditto - - - - -	Feb. 24, 1902 -	Sir August Manns
	Beatrice & Benedict (Overture only) - - - - -	Ditto - - - - -	Feb. 10, 1877 -	Sir August Manns

Acts 1 and 2 of 'Faust' and a portion of the 'Requiem' were given under Berlioz's direction at Drury Lane Theatre on February 7, 1848. Parts I. to IV. of the 'Romeo and Juliet' Symphony were played, also under Berlioz, at the New Philharmonic

Society's concert on April 28, 1852. M. Padeloup performed the greater part of 'Faust' at his concert on June 1, 1878. Extracts from others of the works tabulated above have been given at various times.

VINCENT NOVELLO.

1781—1861.

(Concluded from page 653.)

The instalment system applied to a biographical sketch has one advantage—an incident or fact inadvertently omitted in previous portions may afterwards be inserted, even at the risk of slight chronological disturbances. Therefore, we may hark back to the year 1829, when Vincent Novello and his wife 'took a pleasant journey together to Germany, for the fulfilment of a no less pleasant purpose.' This expedition, a much more formidable undertaking in those pre-railway days than now, was to present a sum of money, subscribed by lovers of music in London, to Mozart's sister, 'then in poor health and poorer means.' An extract from the kind-hearted musician's diary, dated Monday, July 15, 1829, is too interesting not to be quoted.

A still more delightful day, if possible, than yesterday—Mozart's son came to me at about 11 to conduct us to his aunt Sonnenberg—after a little chat

we accompanied him to her house, which was within a few yards of where we resided.—It seems that she had passed a very restless and sleepless night for fear we should not come to see her, and had repeatedly expressed her regret that we had not been admitted when we first called. On entering the room, the sister of Mozart was reclining placidly in bed—but blind, feeble, and nearly speechless. Her nephew kindly explained to her who we were, and she seemed to derive much gratification from the intelligence we conveyed to her. During the whole time, I held her poor thin hand in mine, and pressed it with the sincere cordiality of an old friend of her brother. She appeared particularly pleased that the little present we had brought her should have arrived on her own Saint's day (St. Ann, the 26th of the month). Her own birthday is on the 30th, on which day she will have completed her 78th year. Her voice is nearly extinct, and she appears to be fast approaching 'that bourn from whence no traveller returns.'

Novello and Mozart's son played on the clavichord which had belonged to Mozart himself,

and the English organist subsequently paid a visit to the widow of the immortal composer. It is no wonder that this visit to Salzburg, with all its associations with the career of Mozart, should have been one of the most interesting incidents in the life of Vincent Novello.

In 1831 he composed a sacred song, the words by Mrs. Novello, entitled 'The Infant's Prayer,' which had an extraordinary vogue, no fewer than 100,000 copies having been sold of this one publication. Its popularity was greatly stimulated

by the manner in which the simple strains were expressively sung by his daughter Clara, now the Countess Gigliucci. An interesting sidelight on the propagation of Bach's organ music in England—in which Novello, led on by the red-hot enthusiasm of 'old Sam' Wesley, took a prominent part—is furnished by the following little note, which reached him by hand on a Sunday morning in May, 1832, from his friend Thomas Attwood, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral. Here is the short-notice invitation in facsimile:—

Sunday May
27th 1832

Dear Novello,

Mendelssohn has just
rec'd some Manuscripts of Sebastian
Bach which he proposes
trying this M^o. Hope you will
meet him in 1100—
young hulk

T. P. Attwood

It was doubtless on this occasion that Mendelssohn played the delicious prelude and fugue of Bach, known as 'the little E minor.' Novello, as well he might, took a fancy to this Sebastianian gem, and asked Mendelssohn to give him a copy of it. In reply he wrote:—

As soon as I have a free moment, I will try to write for you the Fugue in E [minor]; but I cannot promise whether I shall succeed, as I fear I do not recollect exactly the distribution of parts in some passages. However, I will try it, and if I do not recollect it, get you a copy from Germany.

At that time Novello was editing his 'Select Organ Pieces,' and, as usual, on the sharp look out for novelties. Upon receiving the transcript of this Bach piece (in 1833) he immediately published it as No. 42 of the series. And this brings out the very interesting fact that the little E minor organ prelude and fugue by J. S. Bach was first printed and published in England before it had appeared in any other country; moreover, this honour can be claimed by the house of Novello through the zeal of its founder. As this edition of the prelude and fugue differs greatly from other printed versions, students will enjoy making their own comparisons.

At the beginning of the piece Novello states: 'From a MS. never before published'; and at the end: 'For originality of subject, masterly treatment of it, refined taste, and pathetic expression, this exquisite fugue has probably never been exceeded, even by Sebastian Bach himself.—V. N.' A foot-note, also by Novello, printed at the end of the first page, is too interesting not to be quoted in full:—

For this extremely rare specimen of Sebastian Bach's extraordinary musical genius, the Editor is indebted to the obliging politeness of his kind friend Mendelssohn Bartholdy, who frequently played it to him, *from memory*, at the time when there was no copy of the manuscript to be obtained in England. During his visit to Germany this year (1833), Mr. Mendelssohn was so kind as to procure a copy, and very obligingly allowed a transcript of it to be made for the Editor of this work, who had so often expressed his admiration of the composition. The writer of the present note gladly avails himself of this opportunity of expressing his best acknowledgments to a gentleman whom he considers one of the greatest ornaments of the musical art in the present age, for this as well as for other gratifying proofs of his liberal and friendly sentiments towards him.

An important Beethoven event took place in London on Christmas Eve, 1832,—before the Christmas card microbe had germinated—when

the great Mass in D was first performed in England. At the home of a zealous amateur, Mr. Thomas Massa Alsage, at Queen Square, Bloomsbury, there assembled together a full band and chorus, conducted by Moscheles. Novello played the organ, his daughter and son (Clara and Alfred) were the soprano and bass soloists respectively, his daughter and son-in-law (Mr. and Mrs. Cowden-Clarke) sang in the chorus, as did also his son Edward Novello, the painter. A copy of the programme of this interesting event is preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Nine days after the Beethoven performance the Choral Harmonists Society sprang into existence. This association of amateurs, devoted to the performance of important choral works with orchestral accompaniment, held its first meeting at the New London Tavern, Bridge Street, Blackfriars, on January 2, 1833. Novello, one of the pioneers of the Society, shared the duties of conductor with Charles Lucas, Charles Neate, and Henry Westrop. From an almost complete set of programmes, word-books, &c., of the Society (1833-1851), presented by its leader, the late Mr. J. H. B. Dando, and now in the possession of the present writer, one is able to form an opinion of the energy and enthusiasm of London amateurs seventy years ago, and moreover to pass judgment on the excellence of the music performed by them. For instance, Purcell's 'King Arthur' was given at the London Tavern (to which place the concerts had been removed) on June 26, 1835. The social element appears to have been a feature of these pleasant music-makings, as we find this injunction printed on the programmes :—

The Committee request that Members and Visitors will resume *the same seats after tea* which they occupied during the first part of the performance.

The eclectic nature of the music performed must have added greatly to the enjoyment of these meetings. Madrigals, Oratorios, Masses, including the Credo from Bach's B minor Mass (in 1838), &c., were sung, Overtures were played, and on May-day, 1838, there was performed 'Grand Concerto E *flat* (Piano-forte obbligato) *Beethoven*.' The 'piano-forte *obbligato*' is amusing. In setting the word-book of this concert the printer uses the figure 6 for a flat sign (♭)—'Grand Concerto . . . (E6) . . . *Beethoven*.' On February 25, 1839, the Choral Harmonists gave the first *public* performance of Beethoven's Mass in D in this country. But we must hasten on and rapidly survey the remaining years of Vincent Novello's career.

In 1834 the family removed to 69, Dean Street, where for thirty-three years—till the removal to Berners Street in 1867—the business of the Novello firm rapidly developed. At the Philharmonic concert of March 17, 1834, a dramatic cantata, 'Rosalba,' for six voices, composed expressly for the Society by Vincent Novello, was performed. Later in the year he officiated as one of the organists at the Royal Musical

Festival held in Westminster Abbey on June 24, 26, 28, and July 1. On that occasion Sterndale Bennett played the viola in the orchestra, while the rank and file of the chorus included Henry Smart (then of Blackburn) among the altos (all male voices), while John Hullah and G. A. Macfarren lent vocal aid to the basses.



THE NOVELLO WINDOW IN THE NORTH TRANSEPT OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

(Photographed specially for THE MUSICAL TIMES by Mr. Thomas J. Wright.)

From 1840 to 1843 Novello was organist of the Roman Catholic Chapel, Moorfields. According to the list of subscribers to Dr. Joseph Pring's 'Twenty Anthems,' he seems to have held a similar appointment at St. Patrick's Chapel, Soho Square, in the year 1805, but this organistship has not hitherto been mentioned by

any of his biographers. After living for a few years at Craven Hill, Bayswater, Novello, owing to the delicate health of his wife, removed to Nice, where he resided from 1849 to 1854. Upon the death there of Mrs. Novello (July 25, 1854) he returned to England, and remained in London for two years, at 27, Porchester Terrace, Bayswater. In 1856 he again sought the genial climate of Italy, and died at Nice on August 9, 1861, within a month of his eightieth birthday.

The word 'industry' must be writ large in estimating the life-work of Vincent Novello. His editing achievements were quite remarkable, especially taking into consideration the constant claims of a busy teacher of music and other regular engagements that must be fulfilled. No one can grudge the credit that is due to him for making known many strains of music that would otherwise have remained hidden and unpublished, at least for many a day. Some of his principal publications have been mentioned in the course of this sketch. To these must be added the editing of eighteen Masses by Mozart and sixteen by Haydn, of which ten of the former and nine of the latter were printed for the first time; The Psalmist, a large collection of Hymn-tunes (1836); Croft's and Greene's Anthems (each two vols.); Boyce's Anthems (four vols.); the Masses of Beethoven, and a large number of Oratorios by Handel and other composers, &c. Keenly interested in the literary side of his art, he was an assiduous collector of manuscripts, many of which he presented to the British Museum on his departure to Italy in 1849. He also presented to the Museum a large collection of his letters, those, for example, written to him by that master of epistolary humour, Samuel Wesley, being of special interest.

The personality of Vincent Novello may well be given in the words of his eldest daughter, the late Mrs. Cowden-Clarke, who records* :—

His manners, when in good health, were social, gay, and lively. Fond of conversation, he talked well and freely, when with those he intimately knew; but he was retiring—nay, shy—with strangers. He had a good deal of English reserve in his bearing towards those whom he met for the first time; though it wore off on acquaintance, and vanished altogether when he took a liking to them. He had a certain quiet pride, common to very modest men; conscious of innate merit, yet averse from self-assertion. With his chosen friends he was easy, genial, cordial. With them he gave way to mirth and good-fellowship; laughed, bantered, punned. He was a great punster; and vied honourably with Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, and Henry Robertson,—those masters in the art of punning.

Two years after his death a window to his memory was placed in the North Transept of Westminster Abbey, a sanctuary he loved to visit. We give a photograph, specially taken for this article, of the Novello Memorial window, the subject of which, appropriately enough, is St. Cecilia, the patron saint of Music.

F. G. E.

* Life and Labours of Vincent Novello, p. 62.

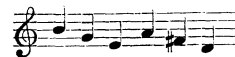
Occasional Notes.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY TO—

Sir Frederick Bridge, M.V.O.	-	-	December 5.
Charles W. Pearce	-	-	„ 5.
John E. West	-	-	„ 7.
Pietro Mascagni	-	-	„ 7.
Algernon Ashton	-	-	„ 9.
Wilhelm Kuhe	-	-	„ 10.
Charles L. Graves	-	-	„ 15.
Henry R. Gadsby	-	-	„ 15.
Moritz Rosenthal	-	-	„ 18.
Edward MacDowell	-	-	„ 18.
Stephen S. Stratton	-	-	„ 19.
Charles Fry	-	-	„ 20.
Alan Gray	-	-	„ 23.
Hugh Percy Allen	-	-	„ 23.
William H. Hadow	-	-	„ 27.
Charles Manners	-	-	„ 28.
Henry Hiles	-	-	„ 31.

We are permitted to make a preliminary announcement of an important nature. The Grand Opera Syndicate, in conjunction with Mr. Schulz-Curtius, intend to give at Covent Garden Theatre an Elgar Festival. The Festival will consist of three concerts of Dr. Elgar's works, to be performed on three consecutive evenings—March 14, 15, and 16, 1904. Dr. Richter is to conduct, and as he will bring with him from Manchester his own orchestra and choir, perfection of ensemble, no less than delicacy of detail, will be assured in the various interpretations. The scheme includes performances of 'The Dream of Gerontius' and 'The Apostles,' in addition to an orchestral concert, at which will be produced a new and important orchestral work composed by Dr. Elgar. The success which has attended his 'Variations on an Original Theme' will naturally raise high expectations in regard to this important orchestral novelty. The occasion will be looked forward to with peculiar interest, as the event is one that may be regarded as unique in the history of music in this country.

Dr. Sweeting, in his article 'Dr. Crotch on Bach's Forty-eight' (p. 717 of our November issue), gives a Crotch annotation to the Fugue in G (No. 15), consisting of two words, 'New College.' This prompted Dr. Sweeting to ask the question 'What does this mean?' Mr. J. F. R. Stainer kindly explains the old Professor's enigmatical reference by stating that the three-quarters chime of New College, Oxford, sounds—



which may be compared with bar 10 (from the end) of the Fugue in question. Mr. Stainer adds: 'The New College chimes are all of them original. Here they are:—



I always remember them because my father once turned them into a hymn-tune. You have only to repeat the Hour after the Half, and add appropriate harmonies. Try it.'