

THE Musical Times ESTABLISHED IN 1844

The Music of Thomas Hardy

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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 62, No. 938 (Apr. 1, 1921), pp. 255-258

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/909401>

Accessed: 12/03/2013 13:20

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whiskers which met his tumbled hair half-way: 'Eat? No, I no eat.'

Huneker knew many celebrities. He had occasion to throw a glass of beer (or at least the beer from a glass) at Pachmann. He dined at a boarding-house table d'hôte next to Helena von Doenniges (the heroine of 'The Tragic Comedians'). He was cursed by Strindberg, whom he sought to interview in the middle of the night. And Mr. Bernard Shaw acknowledged him 'a likeable old ruffian' in a letter here printed (with Mr. Shaw's permission). 'Towards the end of her life she looked like a large, heavily upholstered couch'—so unreservedly could he speak of a famous singer, whose name is mentioned.

Balzac and Flaubert in letters, Chopin and Wagner in music, appear in the long run to have been the staple delights in the life of this clever and experienced American. Such men are great enough to 'tell' even when deprived of their European background, amid the strange phenomena of a new continent. Huneker, who was a pianist, tells us that from one end of his life to the other he never tired of playing Chopin. The sources of Chopin's art were a pleasure in the qualities peculiar to the pianoforte's tone, together with suggestions from current operatic arias and the folk-dances of his native land. America knows all about pianofortes and operatic arias, while the whole world of to-day has borrowed her folk-dances. When the melting-pot 'gets going' and Americans manage a home-made art, should not an American Chopin be reasonably expected? But Huneker had nothing nice to say about fox-trots.

James Gibbons Huneker was born in 1860. His father and paternal grandfather were organists at Philadelphia, and his maternal grandfather an Irish poet. On leaving school he worked in an engineering shop and then in a lawyer's office before devoting himself to music and journalism. At eighteen he went to Paris, travelling steerage, and acquired there a taste for French literature.

He settled in New York in 1887, and wrote for the *Musical Courier* during the next twelve years, as well as teaching at the National Conservatory of Music, and later he criticised music, the theatre, painting, and letters in the daily newspapers. His books number sixteen, of which the two most useful are studies of Chopin and of Liszt. But all afford proof of his remarkable verbal exuberance, of which these extracts (from the *Courier*) are examples:

ON BRAHMS

Brahms dreams of pure white staircases that scale the infinite. A dazzling, dry light floods his mind, and you hear the rustling of wings—wings of great, terrifying monsters; hippogriffs of horrid mien; hieroglyphic faces, faces with stony stare, menace your imagination. He can bring down within the compass of the octave moods that are outside the pale of mortals. He is a magician, spectral at times, yet his songs have the homely lyric fervour and concision of Robert Burns. A groper after the untoward, I have shuddered at certain bars in his F sharp minor Sonata, and wept with the moonlight tranquillity in the slow movement of the F minor Sonata. He is often dull, muddy pated, obscure, maddeningly slow. Then a rift of lovely music wells out of the mist; you are enchanted, and cry: 'Brahms, master, anoint again with thy precious melodic chrism our thirsty eyelids!'

THE NETHERSOLE 'CARMEN' KISS.

Olga Nethersole was the gypsy Paula Tanqueray, and a large audience held its breath when she kissed Don Jose. And how she kissed him! Ye tutelary vestals of osculation, ye canthariditic deities, who swoon to Swinburnian dithyrambs in secret groves, and all ye Paphian bowers that resound with amorous lays as the moon rises!—avaunt thee all for dullards and 'prentice hands at the sacred art of kissing when compared to Nethersole's supreme, everlasting, and sonorous labial assault. All heaven shudders as she, with incomparable virtuosity, hovers over the victim's mouth. You hear the whirr of her vampire wings; then she pounces on the fortunate man's lips, and a sound like the sob of a New Jersey mosquito is heard. The rest is sigh and silence!

J. G. Huneker was not only greatly admired in the United States, but also much beloved, for as a critic he was as slow to anger as he was quick to be generous. He was twice married and once divorced. He leaves a widow and a son, Erik.

C.

THE MUSIC OF THOMAS HARDY

BY F. HADLAND DAVIS

Thomas Hardy has revealed the spirit of the country more intimately than any other writer, and not only the country but those born and bred upon Wessex soil. Brooding over his men and women, his lanes, woods, and hills, is the Supreme Intelligence, an inexorable Being to whom the little tragedies and comedies of life present so many pictures that never awaken a moment's pity. Jude and Tess move forward to their appointed end, and it would be easier to change the face of Egdon Heath than to change the fate of this sorrowing man and woman.

If Hardy has emphasised, perhaps over emphasised, the darker side of country life, he has not forgotten the sunshine of laughter. In 'Under the Greenwood Tree' he has written a delightful comedy from start to finish.

With the exception of 'Jude the Obscure,' the music introduced into Hardy's stories, and also into 'The Dynasts,' is full of jollity. It is as racy of the soil of Wessex as Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies are racy of the soil of Hungary. We hear the fiddler playing a merry tune: the patter of feet dancing upon a polished floor, and Sergeant Stanner, in 'The Trumpet Major,' roaring out 'Rolli-Cum-Rorum.'

The most famous references to music in the Wessex novels are to be found in 'Under the Greenwood Tree.' In the chapter entitled 'Going the Rounds' we get a delightful description of carol-singers assembled outside the tranter's house. In those days, not later than the 'seventies, Christmas always seemed to bring seasonable weather. We are told that

The older men and musicians wore thick coats, with stiff perpendicular collars, and coloured handkerchiefs wound round and round the neck till the ends came to hand, over all of which they just showed their ears and noses, like people looking over a wall.

The younger men and boys wore 'snow-white smock-frocks, embroidered upon the shoulders and breasts, in ornamental forms of hearts, diamonds, and zigzags.'

When the cider mug was passed round nine times, the music-books arranged, the horn lanterns put in order, the snow began to fall, and those without leggings made use of wisps of hay wound round their ankles.

When these preparations were completed the rustic choir set out to play and sing in the parish of Mellstock. We read :

Old William Dewy, with the violoncello, played the bass ; his grandson Dick the treble violin ; and Reuben and Michael Mail the tenor and second violins respectively. The singers consisted of four men and several boys, upon whom devolved the task of carrying and attending the lanterns, and holding the books open for the players.

Old William Dewy could not have flourished his baton after the manner of Sir Henry Wood ; but nevertheless he had his opinions on music, and expressed those opinions with extreme frankness :

'Now mind, neighbours,' he said, as they all went out one by one at the door, he himself holding it ajar and regarding them with a critical face as they passed, like a shepherd counting his sheep, 'you two counter-boys, keep your ears open to Michael's fingering, and don't ye go straying into the treble part along o' Dick and his set, as ye did last year ; and mind this especially when we be in "Arise and hail." Billy Chimlen, don't you sing quite so raving mad as you fain would ; and, all o' ye, whatever ye do, keep from making a great scuffle on the ground when we go in at people's gates ; but go quietly, so as to strik' up all of a sudden, like spirits.'

Just before midnight the little party moved forward, the glow of swinging lanterns shining through the thickly falling snow. As the men trudged along they talked of country musicians. Among the last of the string-players, they spoke with some heat of

'barrel-organs, and they things next door to 'em that you blow wi' your foot.' Another member of the choir observed that 'They should have stuck to strings, as we did, and keep out the clar'nets, and done away with serpents. If you'd thrive in musical religion, stick to strings, says I.' Mr. Penny rejoined '... a serpent was a good old note : a deep rich note was the serpent.'

Michael Mail, in support of his contention that 'clar'nets . . . be bad at all times,' relates the following story :

'One Christmas—years ago now, years—I went the rounds wi' the Weatherbury choir. 'Twas a hard frosty night, and the keys of all the clar'nets froze—ah, they did freeze !—so that 'twas like drawing a cork every time a key was opened ; the players o' 'em had to go into a hedger-and-ditcher's chimney-corner, and thaw their clar'nets every now and then. An icicle o' spet hung down from the end of every man's clar'net a span long ; and as to fingers—well, there, if ye'll believe me, we had no fingers at all, to our knowing.'

The final argument in favour of strings was delivered by Dewy :

'Your brass-man is a rafting dog—well and good ; your reed-man is a dab at stirring ye—well and good ; your drum-man is a rare bowel-shaker—good again. But I don't care who hears me say it, nothing will speak to your heart wi' the sweetness o' the man of strings !'

Having described harmoniums and barrel-organs as 'miserable sinners' and 'miserable dumbledores,' they arrived at the schoolhouse, re-tuned their instruments, and played 'number seventy-eight,' which Hardy describes as 'an ancient and time-worn hymn, embodying Christianity in words orally transmitted from father to son through several generations down to the present characters'. The opening lines are as follows :

Remember Adam's fall,
O thou Man :
Remember Adam's fall
From Heaven to Hell.

The choir then sang lustily 'O, what unbounded goodness' and 'Rejoice, ye tenants of the earth' ; but these efforts awakened no response from Fancy Day, the new schoolmistress. Somewhat crestfallen, the men and boys, as a last resort, shouted the old familiar greeting : 'A merry Christmas to ye !'

Then it was that Fancy Day opened her window and expressed her thanks. Her brief appearance gave much pleasure, for Michael Mail observed, 'If she'd been rale wexwork she couldn't ha' been comelier,' while Dewy added : 'As near a thing to a spiritual vision as ever I wish to see !'

Farmer Shiner did not give the Mellstock Choir a friendly welcome, and when the members had sung 'Behold the Morning Star,' he roared fiercely, 'Shut up, woll 'ee ! Don't make your blaring row here ! A feller wi' a headache enough to split his skull likes a quiet night !'

Dewy did not take kindly to this sally, and said :

'Gi'e it him well ; the choir can't be insulted in this manner !'

"Fortissimy!" said Michael Mail, and the music and singing waxed so loud that it was impossible to know what Mr. Shiner had said, was saying, or was about to say ; but wildly flinging his arms and body about in the form of capital X's and Y's, he appeared to utter enough invectives to consign the whole parish to perdition.'

Passing over other incidents connected with these carol-singers we meet the choir assembled in the gallery of Mellstock Church on Christmas morning, with neither voices nor instruments in the best condition. The girls sang with unwonted vigour, and when the sermon commenced the aggrieved choir discussed the matter with some vehemence. 'What I want to know is,' said the tranter . . . 'what business people have to tell maidens to sing like that when they don't sit in the gallery, and never have entered one in their lives?'

The same characters appear at the tranter's party, where, instead of playing sacred music, they play country dances with considerable zest. During a much needed interval for rest and refreshment Mr. Penny gives the following description of the 'Dead March' :

''Twas at Corp'l Nineman's funeral at Casterbridge. It fairly made my hair creep and fidget about like a vlock of sheep—ah, it did, souls ! And when they had done, and the last trump had sounded, and the guns was fired over the dead hero's grave, a' icy-cold drop o' moist sweat hung upon my forehead, and another upon my jawbone. Ah, 'tis a very solemn thing !'

Michael Mail, anticipating, perhaps, James Huneker's gastronomic interpretation of music, was of the opinion that 'there's a friendly tie of some sort between music and eating.' He relates the following story :

'Once I was a-setting in the little kitchen of the Dree Mariners at Casterbridge having a bit of dinner, and a brass band struck up in the street. Sich a beautiful band as that were ! I was setting eating fried liver and lights, I well can mind—ah I was ! And to save my life, I couldn't helping chawing to the tune. Band played six-eight time, six-eight chaws I, willynilly. Band plays common, common time went myteeth among the fried liver and lights as true as a hair. Beautiful 'twere ! Ah, I shall never forget that there band !'

The famous chapter, 'Interview with the Vicar,' describing the Mellstock Choir assembled in the vicarage, is too well known to need quotation. We laugh over those homely musicians, but our laughter is kindly. They had to give way, whether they clung

to strings or serpents, to the newer musical methods introduced by Fancy Day. They fell, but they 'fell glorious with a bit of a flourish at Christmas.' The dignity of their ancient calling was respected, and they were not allowed to 'dwindle away at some nameless, paltry, second-Sunday-after or Sunday-next-before something that's got no name of his own.'

In 'Friends Beyond,' from 'Wessex Poems,' we learn that William Dewy and many others 'lie in Mellstock churchyard now':

'Gone,' I call them, gone for good, that
group of local hearts and heads;
Yet at mothy curfew-tide,
And at midnight when the noon-heat breathes
it back from walls and leads,
They've a way of whispering to me—
fellow-wight who yet abide—
In the muted, measured note
Of a ripple under archways, or a lone
cave's stillicide.

'Under the Greenwood Tree' was dramatised by Mr. A. H. Evans under the title of 'The Mellstock Quire,' and was produced in London by the Dorchester Debating and Dramatic Society, on December 1, 1910. The excellent programme contains three carols with music: 'O what unbounded goodness, Lord,' 'Behold! good news to man is come,' and 'Behold the Morning Star arise.' The play was so well performed, the spirit of the original so faithfully preserved, that when I had the pleasure of seeing it, and all the other Hardy plays, I doubted if William Dewy and the other carol-singers 'lie in Mellstock churchyard now!' It seemed to me that Mr. T. Pouncy had made them very much alive.

The finest of the Wessex novels, 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles,' does not lend itself in the main to musical interpretation; but d'Erlanger wrote an opera based upon this story, and it was produced at Covent Garden some time ago. It was not, in my opinion, a success. The composer caught the lighter side of country life admirably. He made us realise the magic of an early morning with the singing of joyous birds, but it was beyond his power to convey any idea of the tragic life of Tess herself. Tess was too sad to sing, and a Tess singing in opera is not likely to please a lover of Hardy's works.

'The Trumpet Major,' the first of the series of Hardy plays adapted by Mr. Evans, was produced at Dorchester (Casterbridge of the novels) in 1908. It was revived at the Cripplegate Institute, London, on December 5, 1912, and is of special interest from a musical point of view. The play contains Hardy's 'Rolli-Cum-Rorum,' air by Harry Pouncy, harmonized by Boyton Smith, 'Valenciennes,' from 'Wessex Poems,' with music by Boyton Smith, and 'Budmouth Dears,' from 'The Dynasts,' with music by the same composer. 'Budmouth Dears' is a fine song. I give the concluding verse:

Shall we once again meet them,
Falter fond attempts to greet them?
Will the gay sling-jacket glow again
Beside the muslin gown?

Will they archly quiz and con u
With a sidelong glance upon us,
As our spurs clink, clink, up the
Esplanade and down?

In 'The Three Wayfarers,' from 'Wessex Tales,' will be found 'The Hangman's Song.'* In the

* In 'Wessex Poems' it is called 'The Stranger's Song.'

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dramatised version, written, I believe, by Hardy himself, the song was sung by Charles Charrington, and set to a tune described as 'a traditional one in the County of Dorset, and very old.' When the play was produced in London the musical programme included a chanson, 'Dorset—our Dorset,' by Stanley Galpin, while Boyton Smith's 'Praise o' Do'set' was played at the production of 'The Woodlanders.'

When 'The Dynasts' was performed at the Kingsway Theatre, London, and this year at Oxford, the songs were set to folk-airs selected and adapted by Cecil Sharp.

There are references to music in 'The Trumpet Major.' Henchard observed that 'Hymns, ballets, or rantipole rubbish; the Rogue's March or the cherubim's warble—'tis all the same to me if 'tis good harmony, and well put out.' When he suggested that the musicians assembled in the 'Three Mariners' should play the hundred-and-ninth Psalm, the leader strongly objected. He said:

'We chose it once when the gipsy stole the pa'son's mare, thinking to please him, but he were quite upset. Whatever Servant David were thinking about when he made a psalm that nobody could sing without disgracing himself, I can't fathom!'

'The Soldier's Joy' is referred to in 'Far from the Madding Crowd.' Hardy writes:

As to the merits of 'The Soldier's Joy,' there cannot be, and never were, two opinions. It has been observed in the musical circles of Weatherbury (Puddletown) and its vicinity that this melody, at the end of three-quarters of an hour of thunderous footing, still possesses more stimulative properties for the heel and toe than the majority of other dances at their first opening. 'The Soldier's Joy' has, too, an additional charm, in being so admirably adapted to the tambourine . . . no mean instrument in the hands of a performer who understands the proper convulsions, spasms, St. Vitus's dances, and fearful frenzies necessary when exhibiting its tones in their highest perfection.

Hardy is familiar with many country dances, and during rehearsals of the Wessex plays at Dorchester has been seen to dance a rustic measure himself.

When Mr. Phillotson, the schoolmaster, sent for his pianoforte, Jude placed inside the case of the instrument a letter asking his friend to send him some second-hand grammars. Some time after the pianoforte had been despatched, and after calling frequently at the cottage post-office, he received a parcel containing the books he wanted.

There is a satirical reference to music in 'Jude the Obscure.' Jude Fawley had sung 'The Foot of the Cross' in the choir of a church near Melchester (Salisbury). Pleased with the work, he went to see the composer in order to express his appreciation. When he said: 'I—like it. I think it supremely beautiful!' the composer observed, as many before him have done and will continue to do in the future, that publishers 'want the copyright of an obscure composer's work, such as mine is, for almost less than I should have to pay a person for making a fair manuscript copy of the score.' The composer told Jude that 'music is a poor staff to lean on—I am giving it up entirely. You must go into the trade if you want to make money nowadays. The wine business is what I am thinking of. This is my forthcoming list—it is not issued yet—but you can take one.' What a note for Prof. Saintsbury's 'Cellar Book'!

In the closing scene of 'Jude the Obscure,' music plays a most dramatic part. It is made to emphasise the terrible irony of Jude's life. As the poor fellow

lay dying at Christminster (Oxford), he heard the bells, celebrating Remembrance Day, ring merrily. He heard the notes of an organ mingling with the shouts and hurrahs of the people, and as he listened to these things that unwanted failure, who had failed in love and work, that buffeted soul tossed into the world before his time, whispered :

'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.'

(Hurrah!)

No writer of fiction has used music with more poignancy than in this memorable scene. In 'Under the Greenwood Tree' Hardy has made music express rustic comedy, and even described his heroine's eyebrows 'as two slurs in music.' But under the crushing hand of the Supreme Intelligence, Hardy has made music express a cry too deep for words.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT PLACING OF THE VOICE

BY CHARLES TREE

So simple! Yes! Easy singing is as simple as easy golfing, yet how great is the proportion of easy golfers to that of easy singers! Correct singing (physically) is, perhaps, much easier than is correct golf. The foundation of the former can, probably, be more unified, because we have naturally the real foundation—correct speech. Of course we must admit that in most things simplicity, up to a point, is difficult; but in vocal work it appeals to us as being difficult only because its simplicity is *so simple*. Except to the very few, it is difficult to believe that 'that's all there is in it.' We persist in *making* it difficult. We set out to find the intricate byways, with the direct open road staring us in the face. On the finger-post is writ large, 'True speech—direct road to true vocalism.'

Take any of the old singers, those upon whom time had comparatively little effect—Patti, Melba, Maurel, Sims Reeves, Santley. Listen to Melba and Calvé to-day: note the ease and simplicity of their physical work; the close connection between speech and song in their vocalisation. Note the excellence of their diction—due to that close connection. Their voices go on the same, year in, year out, with all that delicious ease which makes for *long life of the voice*, and which alone allows of true temperamental art having full play. Unfortunately the great public does not object to a bit of 'neck-swelling' and 'face-bursting.' It is inclined to look upon these as necessary adjuncts to art. But a voice which is 'back' cannot 'paint.' It can make use of *ff* or *pp*, but it has a great sameness of colouring, and its life is likely to be short.

It is a deplorable fact that the great mass of vocal teachers do not know that something is wrong. Yet if they will realise that only one in a thousand trained singers keeps his voice fresh during a period of, say, thirty years' public work, it will be seen how important is the matter of correct vocal placing and consequent ease. As already said, the difficulty of singing is its simplicity. The fact is, we are working largely on the indefinite, whereas true, easy singing can be brought about by a very definite means—that of true speech changed into song. Here is the real key to ninety per cent. of all the trouble.

We are a nation of voices, but until this is generally realised we shall not become a nation of singers. When we diagnose the cases of vocalists who complain of want of ease and whose enunciation is poor, we find that the cause is usually that of such voices not being sufficiently 'forward.' They are not necessarily 'throaty': some might even think them 'forward.' But compare the correct speaking position with that of the singing position they are using, and it will be found that in ninety-five per cent. of cases the speaking is by far the more forward. And, moreover, the patient immediately realises that difference, and is able in an extraordinarily short time to obtain the correct position. Nature is ever ready to avail itself of the correct adjustment.

Now in this correct adjustment the voice will grow in quantity and quality, whereas in the backward position such development is impossible. I repeat, this is the vital point—the one simple cure for most of the difficulties that beset the path of the student.

Quantity, quality, enunciation, variety of colour, long life of the voice, nearly everything that is worth anything on the physical side of singing, depend very largely on this 'forward position' (as in true speech). And this ultra-vital point is simplicity itself. It is merely a matter of not altering the 'apparatus' or position of true production when passing from speech into song. Speech is *not* continuous in its flow of tone—song *is*.

Let the singer speak easily, in the front of the mouth, a phrase of the song. Repeat this several times, and realise mentally the position and physical feeling of this speech. Make this gradually louder, using great care that no physical change takes place, and then gradually break into song. It will be found a ridiculously easy procedure. But this very ease is at first a drawback, because the student almost invariably imagines there is not sufficient sound, whereas the voice is in reality carrying to all parts of the hall instead of being boxed up in and around the executant.

Now think for a moment of the camouflage which exists to-day in connection with vocal tuition. Here is one of the great enemies of vocal ease. Another is the pianoforte—a good accompaniment covers up the faults of both teacher and student. All teach the 'Italian production,' yet it may safely be said that only a very small percentage of teachers know what that means. The great majority of Italian 'teachers' themselves don't know. Every ice-cream vendor in Italy teaches singing if he can get people to believe in his particular 'method.' And cajole them he does. The results of this are evident in the numerous singers who return home with badly produced voices. The fact is, we may term the correct method Italian, French, English, what we will, it still remains the correct method—there is only one. And its foundation is common-sense. The one great need is to refrain from building a wall of difficulty round vocal art.

But let us not overlook the fact that speech must be perfect in order to be the foundation of true singing. Here is work to do. Look at the position of our churches to-day, chiefly through the incompetence of the clergy in the matter of vocal delivery. It is a crying shame that our Church authorities do not insist on a thorough knowledge of the voice being one of the principal studies of our ordination

(Continued on page 263.)