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A Monument of English Mediæval Polyphony. The Manuscript Wolfenbüttel 677 (Helmst. 628)

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HAYDN'S COMPOSITIONS FOR MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS

By Egon H. Willfort (*Vienna*)

Music depends very largely on its interpreter—unlike poetry, which gives to any average reader direct intercourse with the poet. And the more remote the period of a composition, the greater the problem of interpretation. For this reason it is extremely interesting and instructive to possess some early music written for musical-boxes, clocks, and other mechanical devices widely popular in the 18th and early 19th centuries. By their aid we are able to make contact with a composer far more directly than if we had to depend solely on the printed page, with its frequent ambiguities, or on the interpretation of performers whose idiosyncrasies often hinder rather than help. Like other composers of this period, the great masters Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven wrote compositions expressly for such mechanical instruments.

At the Castle of Esterhaz, where Haydn spent a considerable part of his life as leader of the Prince's band, we find also the monk, Primitivus Niemerz, in the position of librarian. This man, a very gifted musician, became a pupil and intimate friend of Haydn. As he was also an extremely clever mechanic and a specialist in the making of musical clocks, we may reasonably assume that his intimate relations with Haydn enabled him to obtain from the master contributions for his instruments. As a matter of fact we are now able to date some thirty of such compositions.* Many of these charming miniature pieces existed neither in manuscript nor in print, and were consequently unknown.

At Vienna there are known to be in existence three 'Flötenuhren' (flute-clocks) that play Haydn pieces. The oldest dates from 1772, and was given by Haydn himself to his friend the leader of the Imperial Court Orchestra, Florian Leopold Gassmann, at the baptism of the latter's daughter. The 'flute-clock' is a miniature organ with horizontal pipes, the bellows and cylinders of which are manipulated automatically. If connected with a clock it plays its pieces at certain hours. The timbre of these small pipes is charming and delicate, the pieces are of delightful freshness, and give us very valuable hints as to the musical style and taste of the period.

The above-mentioned oldest 'Haydn-uhr' (clock), of 1772, plays sixteen pieces by means of a single cylinder. There are dances, short Andantes; Allegrettos, and quick movements somewhat like finales. Some of these miniatures contain reminiscences of famous larger works very popular at the time. The closing piece of the series is an extremely charming three-part fugue.

The clock is at the present time in the possession of Frau Paula Teubner, at Vienna, and with her kind permission one of the pieces is printed on this page:

To have an exact impression of the Waltz play it an octave higher. HAYDN.

* They have been recently published by Dr. E. F. Schmid, Ad. Nagel, Hannover.

A MONUMENT OF ENGLISH MEDIÆVAL POLYPHONY

The Manuscript Wolfenbüttel 677 (Helmst. 628)

By Jacques Handschin, Ph.D.
(*Professor at the University of Bâle*)

The share of England in the history of mediæval music, especially in the history of mediæval polyphony, has been very differently estimated by Continental writers. Opinions quite opposite have been formulated in this matter. The book of Victor Lederer, 'Ueber Heimat und Ursprung der mehrstimmigen Tonkunst' (1906), represented England (and especially the remains of Celtic civilisation in England) as the very source of European polyphony. But the argument of Lederer was inadequate. Lederer cared very little about the musical monuments preceding the 15th century. Polyphony as an art was, in his opinion, born with Dunstable; but even as to this author, Lederer was not able to elucidate completely the rôle played by him. As we know, this is a task still not achieved, though we may hope that the forthcoming edition of the Old Hall Manuscript by the Plainsong and Mediæval Music

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Society will at least be very useful to those studying the question.

Very naturally, Lederer's book provoked a reaction. Friedrich Ludwig, the scholar whose motto was ' the facts, the facts, and still the facts,' represented that reaction. The thesis of Ludwig was: (1.) English polyphony in the Middle Ages has been always strongly influenced by French art; (2.) English polyphony did not influence Continental art before the 15th century.

I think that we can gradually determine the share of England in the history of mediæval polyphony beyond doubt or controversy. For this purpose we must consider and thoroughly study some facts which, till now, have been unnoticed. Of course it is not possible to do so in an article like this, and therefore I shall confine myself to intimating these facts in a concise form. But before doing so, let us shortly consider the facts on which the negative opinion of Friedrich Ludwig is principally based.

The starting-point of Ludwig was a discovery made by Wilhelm Meyer, the eminent philologist and mediævalist. In his paper, ' Der Ursprung des Motetts ' (1898), W. Meyer stated that the manuscript Plut. 29, 1, of the Laurenziana of Florence, very closely corresponds with Coussemaker's Anonymus IV.'s description of books with polyphonic music, in the composition of which the Paris Notre Dame School must at least have had a large part; hence it must be the copy of a manuscript which was in use in the choir of the Paris Cathedral. At the same time Meyer showed that a series of compositions are contained in the Florence manuscript in a double form: as motets, *i.e.*, with syllabic text in the upper voices, and as melismas, *i.e.*, without this text; so he derived the origin of these motets from melismatic pieces (the latter being in their turn parts of larger compositions based on Gregorian tunes). This manuscript of Florence, probably the most valuable and the most important of all mediæval music documents, had already been studied as to its literary texts by the French historian, Léopold Delisle (Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France, 1885). Delisle established that the manuscript must have been written in France at the end (I should prefer to say: in the second half) of the 13th century; he also examined the poetical texts alluding to historical events and found that, as they relate to the period from 1181 till 1236 and to Northern France and England, the corresponding chants must have been composed in that period on the borders of the Seine or Loire. I have yet to mention that the late Prof. Wooldridge was the first to publish extensive extracts from the Florence manuscript in the first volume of the ' Oxford History of Music ' (published in 1901). In the second edition these extracts have been curtailed—a fact explainable from the point of view of general economy, but regrettable for the student.

After the Florence manuscript some others turned up which have a distinct relationship with the former, notably: Wolfenbüttel 677 (Helmst. 628), the manuscript which I am going to discuss, Wolfenbüttel 1206 (Helmst. 1099), and Madrid Bibl. Nac. 20486 (formerly Hh 167). These four manuscripts together represent the greatest collection of mediæval polyphony which has come down to us. Their contents in the bulk are divided into three great classes: (1) compositions based on Gregorian tunes (I apply to them the German term ' Choralbearbeitungen '); (2) parts of such compositions in melismatic form and in motet form (see above); (3) ' Conductus,' *i.e.*, compositions with a poetical text and with a ground melody not pre-existent, but composed by the author. Friedrich Ludwig has given a detailed comparative analysis of these manuscripts, with concordances from other sources, in his magnificent work, the ' Repertorium organorum recentioris et motetorum vetustissimi stili ' (1909); and by reason of the close connection by which the four manuscripts are apparently linked up, he did not shrink from classifying them all as ' Notre Dame Manuscripts.'

In my studies I had already been led, in 1921-22, to presume the *Spanish* origin of the manuscript Madrid 20486, but the work in which I expressed this supposition has been neither completed nor published. In a study which appeared in 1924, I approached the Wolfenbüttel MS. Not that I considered the bulk of the compositions which it has in common with the Florence MS., but I lifted the curtain from one corner, looking specially at the contents of the last (11th) fascicle, which stands quite isolated. Different circumstances make it probable that the contents of this fascicle do not come from Paris, but from *England*. Chronologically they are from the 13th century, but probably later than the production of the Paris Notre Dame School (*c.* 1181-1236, see above). They are all compositions for Mary Masses, including tropes of the Ordinary, Allelujas, Sequences, &c. The given melody (plainsong) is always in the lowest voice.

Then another category of compositions from Wolfenbüttel attracted my attention. These compositions, too, do not occur in the other manuscripts (Florence, Wolfenbüttel 1206, and Madrid). It is a series of Sanctus and Agnus tropes which, though they are not assembled in one fascicle, are obviously uniform in style. Here also the English origin of the compositions is indicated by different circumstances. But they are very different from the compositions of the 11th fascicle as to the style, and so, in a paper which appeared in 1928, I put forward the supposition that both are productions of two different English centres of the second part of the 13th century. The year before I had already expressed the opinion that the manuscript Wolfenbüttel itself must have been written in England. In 1930 this has been acknowledged by Friedrich Ludwig in his contribution to the *Adler-Festschrift*. At the same time Ludwig disavowed his former opinion about the French origin of the Madrid manuscript. The supposition of the English origin of the Wolfenbüttel manuscript is for the rest supported by its history. We know that it had been taken away from St. Andrew's in the 16th century by an emissary of the theologian M. Flacius Illyricus. The legality of this act was not greater than in many other similar cases. . . . Flacius was professor at the University of Wittenberg, and afterwards at Jena; after his death his books were bought by the Duke of Braunschweig, and so they came into the Wolfenbüttel Library.

For the student of the English music of the 13th century the task resulting from all this is to study first of all the contents of the 11th fascicle

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and the tropes of the main part of the Wolfenbüttel manuscript. All these are compositions which, properly speaking, do not belong to the three enumerated categories, Choralbearbeitungen, Conductus, and Motets; one might also say that they are about half-way between Choralbearbeitung and Conductus. The ground melody, it is true, is a given one, but in the sequences and tropes it is not a Gregorian tune; and in the Allelujas of the 11th fascicle, though it is taken from the plainsong, it is treated in a way not very different from that of the tropes. At any rate, our compositions have this in common with the Choralbearbeitungen and the Conductus, that they presuppose the simultaneous pronunciation of the syllables of the text in all voices; which distinguishes them from the Motet. Therefore one might describe them in the terminology of a *later* time as Conductus, but I should prefer to use this term, so far as the 13th century is concerned, in the older sense.

But here further questions arise: Does not our manuscript contain English compositions also within those categories which it has in common with Florence? And are not English productions to be found even among the actual compositions which it has in common with Florence? And if so, is there something of English influence to be felt in the productions of the school of Notre Dame? These questions lead to entangled investigations into which I cannot enter here. I will only observe that the English contribution is to be perceived mainly in the sphere of the *Conductus*.

As I said above, Léopold Delisle has already established that a few poetical texts, *i.e.*, texts of Conductus occurring in Florence, relate to events of English history: *e.g.*, the poems 'Anglia, planctus itera' (according to Delisle on the death of Geoffrey of Bretagne, 1186, but according to G. M. Dreves, on the death of Henry II., 1189), 'In occasu sideris' (on the death of Henry II.), 'Redit ætas aurea' (on the accession of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, 1189), and 'Divina providentia' (on the regency of William of Longchamp during the crusade of Richard Cœur-de-Lion). All these texts have been published in the 'Analecta hymnica medii ævi,' vol. 21, by G. M. Dreves. We may legitimately suppose that the corresponding compositions also are English. Now I was struck by a great stylistic likeness between 'Redit ætas aurea' and 'Nulli beneficium,' another Conductus which is found in Wolfenbüttel as well as in Florence, the text of which is published in the volume of the 'Analecta hymnica' referred to. The latter text contains an earnest admonition, and even a severe censure, against a young dignitary of the Church, whose past was not exactly ecclesiastical. I asked a connoisseur of English civilisation (Prof. Bernhard Fehr, of Zurich) whether he could give me names for the thing. And lo! among the names quoted by Prof. Fehr there was one which fitted exactly, that of Geoffrey, the natural son of Henry II., who, having been nominated as Bishop of Lincoln in 1173, entered on his See in 1175 and left this post in 1182. The passage 'Virtute, non sanguine decet niti' occurs in this text ('upon virtue, not upon blood thou must rely')—it suits the son of a king exactly.

This is typical of the way in which we can ascertain the English share of the main répertoire of Wolfenbüttel and Florence: the texts give certain clues, but we have then to turn chiefly to the stylistic study of the music. Besides this, a point of external evidence has to be considered: if a composition occurs *only* in Wolfenbüttel, it is some indication of its English origin; and if the stylistic facts harmonize with this, the English origin can be stated with reasonable probability.

But the importance of our manuscript for the history of English music is not exhausted by the English compositions it contains. It is found by comparative study that there is a number of compositions in Wolfenbüttel which occur in a different form in Florence. From that we must infer that they are Continental compositions remodelled in England. These remodellings—which do not only concern the category of the Conductus, but also Choralbearbeitungen and perhaps Motets—must naturally arouse a particular interest, as they provide opportunity for studying the special taste of the centre from which they emanate. So the English taste and the Continental, especially the taste of a country so closely connected with England as France, can be studied in comparison with each other.

In seeking to ascertain more closely the origin of the Wolfenbüttel MS. and of the English part of its contents, we are for the present reduced to guesswork. The manuscript as such might have been written at St. Andrew's, the ecclesiastical metropolis of mediæval Scotland, for, as F. Ludwig has noted, it was already there in the 14th century; and this is just the century in the beginning of which it was very likely written. The tropes for the main part are closely connected as to style with tropes in a fragment of the Cambridge University Library, which perhaps originates from Bury St. Edmunds. But they were probably composed at another place, as a trope tune has undergone a different treatment in the Cambridge manuscript and in ours; moreover, as our tropes give a slightly more provincial impression than those of the Cambridge fragment, we must perhaps suppose that they were composed at a place further in the North. The purpose of these tropes is evident: whilst the Choralbearbeitungen of Notre Dame ornamented only the responsorial parts of the Mass, here the Ordinary also was to have its embellishment. The contents of the 11th fascicle might proceed from St. Andrew's itself. Through these compositions the Mary Masses also were to get an artistic embellishment. This category of Masses gained an increasing importance and popularity from the 13th century onwards, and this circumstance also leads us to suppose that the compositions of that fascicle, though more simple as to their construction, date from a later time than those of the main part of Wolfenbüttel.

To sum up: the Wolfenbüttel manuscript contains polyphonic music which is for the greater part Continental and for the smaller part English. Nevertheless it ranges, beside the Winchester Troper, as the most important monument of English mediæval polyphony. The Continental compositions which it contains date from a period including the second half of the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century; the English ones embrace the whole time from the second half of the 12th century to the second half of the

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13th century. We can certainly say that neither the circle which has produced the tropes of the main part, nor that from which the 11th fascicle derives, are to be sought at Worcester. As it is known, the Plainsong and Mediæval Music Society published recently a beautiful collection of Worcester music edited by the Rev. Dom Anselm Hughes, O.S.B.; this music is taken from manuscript fragments of the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century.* A comparison between this material and that contained in Wolfenbüttel will show how manifold and rich was the art of polyphony in England in the later Middle Ages. It is true that both the centre from which the tropes of the main part of Wolfenbüttel originated, and that which produced the 11th fascicle, have taken the greater part of their supply of Choralbearbeitungen from Notre Dame; and Worcester also has drawn from that source. But on account of that the whole of the liturgical polyphony cultivated in those centres has grown even more rich and varied. Chronologically the English music from Wolfenbüttel goes back to an earlier period than the music hitherto known from Worcester. Wolfenbüttel forms a connecting link with the interesting, though short, manuscript Cambridge U.L. Ff I., 17 B, published by the Plainsong and Mediæval Music Society in the first volume of 'Early English Harmony'; this document in its turn has a connection with another Continental school, that of St. Martial, at Limoges.

If I may be permitted, I should like to give in a second article a general view of the matter, and to quote examples. As space makes it impossible for me to support fully my thesis, I refer provisionally to previous papers in which I have touched upon the foregoing questions: (1.) 'Eine wenig beachtete Stilrichtung innerhalb der mittelalterlichen Mehrstimmigkeit' (Schweiz. Jahrbuch für Musikwiss. I., 1924); (2.) 'Ueber den Ursprung der Motette' (Bericht über den musikwiss. Kongress in Basel, 1924); (3.) 'Die mittelalterlichen Aufführungen in Zürich, Bern, und Basel' (Zeitschrift für Musikwiss. X., 1927); (4.) 'Zur Frage der melodischen Paraphrasierung im Mittelalter' (Zeitschrift für Musikwiss. X., 1928); (5.) 'Gregorianisch-Polyphones aus der Handschrift, Paris, B.N. lat. 15129' (Kirchenmus. Jahrb. XXV., 1930).

Finally, let us glance at a period still much older. Is it astonishing that England possessed a flourishing polyphony in the 13th century, if the existence of this art is already strongly indicated in the beginning of the Middle Ages? It has been long known that the great Irish thinker, Johannes Scotus Erigena, in the 9th century refers to polyphony. I have examined his utterances ('Die Musikanschauung des Johannes Sc. Erigena,' Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Lit. und Geist., 1927). In his musically-influenced metaphysics the idea of harmony is a crucial point; and he clearly makes us understand that, for him, musical harmony presupposes the *simultaneousness* of sounds. But I came across a still older witness: the Anglo-Saxon Aldhelm, in the end of the 7th century, is the first mediæval writer who distinctly refers to part-song (*cf.* 'Zur Geschichte der Lehre vom Organum,' Zeitschr. f. Musikw. VIII., 1926). Other witnesses from olden times could still be quoted. But they would entice us into discussions too far-reaching, and not directly connected with the present subject.

* See *Musical Times*, April, 1929.

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THE GUARNERI FAMILY OF VIOLIN MAKERS

By W. W. Cobbett

Hill's well-known and sumptuous contribution to the literature of violin craftsmanship, 'Antonio Stradivari, his Life and Work,' is now followed, after an interval of thirty-one years, by a companion volume* treating of the five Cremonese craftsmen bearing the name of Guarneri. Instruments chosen for illustration (as in the Stradivari book) are displayed by a process of colour-printing, to which are added some outstanding examples of photogravure. These are from the atélier of Messrs. Emery Walker, who have provided photographs in which the minutest markings in the wood are reproduced with almost uncanny fidelity. This enables violin-makers to whom the opportunity is denied of examining these instruments in the original, to note the characteristics of the wood used, and to study what is perhaps the most important factor in the art of violin making—the proper use of well-chosen material; whilst the coloured plates give an idea of the lustre of the varnish. For a craftsman interested in Cremonese violins the next best thing to possessing a collection of them is to possess reproductions of the kind found in such generous profusion in this volume.

In the letterpress there is a mine of information in which to delve, including a genealogical table which we append for the benefit of readers:

Andrea Guarneri (founder of the clan),
1626—1698

Pietro Giovanni Guarneri (Peter of Mantua), 1655—1720	Giuseppe Giovanni Battista Guarneri (known as Joseph son of Andrea), 1666—1690
Pietro Guarneri (Peter of Venice), 1695—1762	Bartolomeo Giuseppe Guarneri (known as Joseph del Gesu), 1698—1744

To this pedigree of birth might be added, in fanciful humour, a pedigree of craft, tracing the pedagogic activities of the family back to Andrea Amati (*b.* 1520), who, side by side with Gaspar da Salo, represents the final evolution from viol to violin, descending from him through his two sons Antonio and Geronimo, and his grandson Nicolo, most brilliant of the Amatis, down to Andrea Guarneri, with whom begins the family pedigree. From the latter one gathers that Messrs. Hill assign to Joseph, son of Andrea, the hitherto doubtful paternity of Joseph del Gesu, one of the two greatest luthiers of all time. There is relativity, it may be urged, in this quality of greatness, which might conceivably be ascribed to Amati and da Salo no less than to Stradivari and Guarneri, by virtue of their pioneer work at a supreme moment in the history of the violin, but that is a matter for personal judgment. This book is mainly concerned with the rise to a high plane of perfection of del Gesu, the eponymous hero of the story, a sun in the Guarneri firmament round which the other members of his family, worthy as they are, with individual merit all their own, revolve as satellites.

In this review it will be noticed that technical criticism has no place. The authorship of the book reviewed is shared by three brothers, through whose hands thousands of instruments have passed during its compilation. One of them is a recognised expert of European fame. Neither I, nor

* 'The Violin Makers of the Guarneri Family—their Life and Work,' by W. H. Hill, A. F. Hill, and A. E. Hill (Oxford University Press).

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