

A School of English Church Music

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In 1922 a Committee was appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York : " To consider and report upon the place of Music in the Worship of the Church, and in particular the Training of Church Musicians, and the Education of the Clergy in the knowledge of Music as a branch of Liturgical Study."

In 1923 this Committee issued a unanimous Report entitled " Music in Worship " (S.P.C.K.), and this Report attained a wide circulation and met with general approval. But it is evident that if the many valuable suggestions made therein are to effect any wide-spread improvement some further practical steps must be taken.

The rendering of the Services in many Parish Churches still leaves much to be desired : and this is due far less to a lack of good material than to a lack of knowledge how to obtain the best results from that which is available.

Provision is therefore much needed for the training of Choirmasters and Organists in the management of choirs and voice-training, accompanying of Church Services, organisation and development of congregational singing, study of ecclesiastical music of all styles and periods, knowledge of the Liturgy and of the principles and history of Church Services (see " Music in Worship," page 36 and elsewhere).

Provision should also be made to enable Clergy and candidates for Ordination to obtain practical knowledge of Church music in general, and to gain experience in the rendering of the Priest's part in the Service. (" Music in Worship," pages 33 and 34.)

Adequate training in these matters is not possible if it is confined to mere lectures and classes ; practical experience under expert guidance and criticism is essential, and it can only be obtained through regular participation in the conduct of actual Services in their proper environment. This is especially important as regards the study of congregational music.

The regular Colleges of Music can and do provide excellent training in solo playing, theory and general musicianship ; but they cannot supply the necessary environment or the practical experience.

In certain parishes a professional musician can expect to make a reasonable income by purely musical work : even so it will be desirable that his training should be supplemented by this specialised study. But in the majority of parishes there is not sufficient scope for a whole-time musician to earn a living, even by the combination of his Church duties with the taking of pupils, etc. It may often be more desirable that the Choirmaster or Organist should be a person whose main work lies in another direction, but who can do the necessary musical duties in addition. In such cases, however, it is obviously unlikely that he will have previously obtained a sound and complete musical training : so it becomes the more essential that some provision should be made for him to have facilities for such serious study and practice as would be possible outside office-hours.

To meet these needs it is proposed to found in London a School of Church Music.

The provision for such a School would include :—

- (A) A Chapel where regular choral Services of different types and differing degrees of elaboration or simplicity could be maintained, and in which the students would take an active part, in various capacities ;
- (B) A Hostel, where a certain number of the students could reside at a self-supporting yet inexpensive rate, thus forming the nucleus of a College life ;
- (C) A Warden or Director of studies, who should be a Church musician of experience and standing ;
- (D) A Chaplain who should be capable of assisting in the teaching ;
- (E) A sufficient number of Choirboys, some of whom at least should be resident.

Besides providing for the practical training of Church musicians, the School should have power to issue certificates of efficiency to students. It should form a centre for various activities for the promotion of the best Church music of all kinds, and the Chapel Services should themselves set a standard for what is suitable in Churches of different types and with different opportunities. It should in no way compete with existing institutions; and it should definitely aim not so much at meeting the individual claims of any one School of Churchmanship as at giving aid to all who desire to make their Church music worthy of its purpose.

For this scheme to be carried into effect on a permanent basis, a considerable sum of money will be required, either in the form of a capital sum or of the promise of annual subscriptions.

It is proposed to register the School as an Association not for profit under the Companies Acts which will limit the liability of the subscribers to the amount of their subscriptions.

It is estimated that an assured annual income of £6,000 to £7,000 would be sufficient to carry out the whole scheme, including the lease of certain existing buildings which are eminently adaptable to the purpose, and which may probably be available. A less ambitious scheme could be contemplated at an annual cost of £3,000 to £5,000.

The proposal now put forward has the cordial support of many prominent persons among both the Clergy and the laity.

The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, G.C.V.O., D.D., writes as follows:—

Old Palace, Canterbury,

1st November, 1927.

Dear Mr. Nicholson,

I am not a very competent person to write about musical matters, for that side of my nature remains wholly undeveloped and it is too late to develop it now! There can be no question that with such support as your plan has received from men who understand music and its English possibilities you ought to go forward and at all events endeavour to bring your plan into practical effect. I wish you God-speed in the matter.

I am,

Yours very truly,

RANDALL CANTUAR.

In addition the following have expressly authorised their names to be mentioned:—

THE MOST REV. AND RT. HON. THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, D.D.

THE RT. REV. AND RT. HON. THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON, K.C.V.O., D.D., LL.D.

THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, D.D.

THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD, G.B.E., D.D.

THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF MANCHESTER, D.D., D.Litt.

THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF TRURO, D.D.

THE VERY REV. W. FOXLEY NORRIS, D.D., Dean of Westminster.

THE VERY REV. A. B. BAILLIE, C.V.O., D.D., Dean of Windsor.

THE VERY REV. H. L. C. V. DE CANDOLE, D.D., Dean of Bristol.

THE VERY REV. F. S. M. BENNETT, M.A., Dean of Chester.

THE REV. PREBENDARY W. CARLILE, C.H., D.D., Founder and Hon. Chief Secretary of the Church Army.

THE REV. J. H. ELLISON, M.V.O., M.A., Rector of St. Michael's, Cornhill. Chaplain-in-Ordinary to H.M. The King.

THE REV. E. H. FELLOWES, M.A., Mus.D., Minor Canon of Windsor. Editor of "The English Madrigal School," etc.

- THE REV. L. H. NIXON, M.A., Precentor of Westminster. Priest-in-Ordinary to H.M. The King.
- THE REV. G. H. SALTER, M.A., Precentor of Winchester.
- THE REV. V. F. STORR, M.A., Canon of Westminster. Preacher at Lincoln's Inn. Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement.
- THE REV. E. H. SWANN, M.A., Warden of St. Michael's College, Tenbury.
- THE REV. PREBENDARY F. N. THICKNESSE, M.A., Rector of St. George's, Hanover Square, London.
- THE REV. C. S. WOODWARD, M.C., M.A., Canon of Westminster (formerly Precentor of Southwark Cathedral).
- THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF BEAUCHAMP, K.C.M.G., D.L., K.G., P.C., Chairman of the Archbishops' Committee on Music in Worship. (1922.)
- THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF DYSART.
- THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, P.C., K.P., G.C.V.O., C.B.E., LL.D., President of the English Church Union.
- THE RT. HON. LORD ALDENHAM.
- THE RT. HON. LORD DARYNGTON, P.C., D.L.
- SIR HUGH P. ALLEN, C.V.O., M.A., Mus.D., D.Litt., Director of the Royal College of Music.
- JOHN B. MCEWEN, M.A., Mus.D., Principal of the Royal Academy of Music.
- SIR WALFORD DAVIES, Mus.D., LL.D., Organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Gresham Professor of Music.
- E. C. BAIRSTOW, Mus.D., Organist of York Minster.
- SIR HERBERT BREWER, Mus.D., Organist of Gloucester Cathedral.
- HENRY G. LEY, M.A., Mus.D., Precentor and Director of Music, Eton College.
- GUSTAV HOLST.
- STANLEY MARCHANT, Mus.D., Organist of St. Paul's Cathedral.
- RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, Mus.D.
- MISS ELEANOR GREGORY, Joint Secretary of the Church Music Society.
- COL. H. W. F. TREFUSIS.
- THE LATE LADY MARY TREFUSIS (Joint Secretary of the Church Music Society from 1905 to 1927).
- CAPT. FRANCIS BURGESS, F.S.A., Musical Director of the Gregorian Association.
- H. C. COLLES, M.A., Mus.B., Editor of Grove's Dictionary of Music.
- SIR W. H. HADOW, C.B.E., Mus.D., LL.D., Vice Chancellor of Sheffield University.
- COL. A. D. ACLAND, C.B.E., T.D., J.P.
- SIR HENRY NEWBOLT, C.H.
- SIR FREDERICK RADCLIFFE, K.C.V.O., Chairman of the Liverpool Cathedral Committee. Chairman of Finance and Estates Committee, Queen Anne's Bounty.
- A. HAMILTON THOMPSON, D.Litt., F.S.A., Professor of History, University of Leeds.

For a more detailed account of the proposals, see my pamphlet "Beauty in Public Worship." (The Faith Press, Ltd., 22, Buckingham Street, W.C.2. Price 1d.)

SYDNEY H. NICHOLSON,
Organist & Master of the Choristers, Westminster Abbey.

Michaelmas 1927.