

# School of English Church Music

## QUARTERLY NEWS SHEET

*Edited by a Committee appointed by the CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY and issued from the office of the SCHOOL OF ENGLISH CHURCH MUSIC, 105, GOWER STREET, W.C.1.*

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### THE SCHOOL AND THE PARISH CHURCHES.

The School is now fairly launched, and, as will be seen from the accompanying Appeal, all that is needed to bring it to port is a determined effort of those who are really interested in Church Music.

This initial number of the "QUARTERLY NEWS SHEET" is the first definite outcome of the project; subsequent numbers will be sent (without charge) to those who give us their support, and will chronicle the progress of the School besides giving practical advice on the choice of music.

It is often asked, "How will the establishment of a School of Church Music in London affect those who live and work at a distance?" and it seems that at the very outset some justification may be desirable when we are making an appeal for support from all over the country.

The School will, in the first place, form a centre from which all the various activities will emanate, but without such a centre any widespread activity is impossible.

The centre having been established, every effort will be made to supply the kind of practical help that is needed, and primarily of course to those who help in the foundation and maintenance.

The following points should be noted:—

1. Individuals may associate themselves with the School by becoming annual subscribers of at least One Guinea, and Choirs or Parishes that remit an annual contribution of not less than One Pound may become affiliated.

2. Associates or Representatives of affiliated Choirs or Parishes will have—

(a) A prior right to attend courses of training at the School at reduced fees, and to attend the Chapel Services when visiting London.

(b) A free copy of each issue of the "QUARTERLY NEWS SHEET."

3. It will be possible for an affiliated Parish to send its Choirmaster for a course of training at a reduced fee, and it is hoped that it may often be possible for the School to supply a substitute to take his work in his absence.

Arrangements for Students to be put up in the resident hostel at a very moderate cost will be a feature of the scheme.

It will also be possible to send members of Choirs for short courses of training in choir work, and it has been suggested that this would be particularly valuable in the case of Choir Boys, for the care of whom, special arrangements will be made.

4. It is particularly hoped that Parish Church Choirs will become affiliated to the School: this should be understood to imply that they not only give it material support, but that they wish to stand for the cause of good Church Music throughout the country.

5. In order to promote a spirit of fellowship amongst those who have the cause of Church Music at heart, Badges will be issued on application. These will be of three kinds:—

(a) "Associates' Badges"; (b) "Choir Badges"; (c) "Students' Badges."

These Badges are not to be regarded as any criterion of efficiency, but only as tokens of active membership and sympathy with the aims of the School.

6. No "degrees" or "diplomas" will be issued by the School. Students will be encouraged to present themselves for the Choir-training examinations of the Royal College of Organists.

7. Students on completing their course will receive a certificate stating exactly what branches of study they have pursued, but no testimonials for general use will be issued.

8. Clergy having vacancies for Organists or Choirmasters will be invited to apply to the School for candidates.

9. It will be possible for Clergy to attend the School for short courses, and opportunity will be given for those who desire it, to take occasional Services in the Chapel, and to receive advice on such matters as voice production or elocution.

SYDNEY H. NICHOLSON.

### PLAINSONG ACCOMPANIMENT.

By J. H. ARNOLD. O.U.P. 12/6.

This interesting book deals with Plainsong as specially applied to the accentuation of the English language. The author strikes the keynote of his subject at the outset by insistence on the fact that Plainchant is complete as it stands to be sung by voices in unison, and needs no help from instrumental accompaniment. On no account, therefore, must any accompaniment be allowed to hamper its "freely flowing melody." He who would accompany with sympathy and understanding must first of all be "able himself to sing the melodies" in the right way. To this end he must master the elements of the Plainsong system from the very beginning, and before coming to the question of accompaniment at all, the author in the first three chapters takes the reader with him through the mysteries of Plainsong notation, rhythm and tonality. Mr. Arnold has a happy power of lucid explanation, and in his hands much which may have been expected to be difficult becomes quite simple. This is especially true of Chapter III. on Tonality, where the Modal System is dealt with from an original point of view.

Simplicity of texture and economy in its use are shown to be the main features of a good accompaniment. The material available is very slender. Only common chords formed from the notes of the Mode and their first inversions may be used, and discords must be prepared or otherwise accounted for. The flow of the melody will be interrupted by few changes of harmony. Many of its notes will thus be set free to form passing notes, auxiliary notes, and the like.

Much of this will be familiar ground to the student of counterpoint and the laws of harmony as applied thereto, but no such knowledge is presupposed in the reader, and everything is carefully explained in detail. Especially happy is the way in which the author takes one or two well-known examples of Plainsong melody and builds up an accompaniment to them, leading the reader on with him step by step as he discusses what may best be done at every point.

The latter part of the book is devoted to Psalmody. Here there is no demand for any different treatment from the rest. In all Plainchant, the approach to the art of accompaniment must be a personally vocal one, and every care will have to be taken that the addition of instrumental matter causes no violence to the progress of verbal rhythm in the singing. A dictum made earlier in the book that "the chord ill selected is less harmful than the chord ill placed," would seem to have special force in this connection.

The beginner will find an admirable Tone Table of suggested harmonies at the end of the book, and there are examples of the harmonization of a number of complete melodies in more or less common use.

While this book deals thoroughly with the theoretical side of things, it is written from an extremely practical point of view. He who has read it

