

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

carefully will find himself equipped with such knowledge as will enable him to work things out for himself. His interest will be stimulated on almost every page. He will find that this thing is delightful and worth doing well, and that it is not really very difficult.

NOTES ON SERVICE MUSIC.

The following notes are written by members of the Committee who are themselves choirmasters. The inclusion of a work implies that it is considered to be good music of its kind. Suitability to choirs of differing types is suggested by the use of initials.

L.—Large urban choirs where a repertory more or less of the Cathedral type is maintained.

S.—Small urban choirs to which such things as the division of voice parts and the use of extreme compass of voices may prove difficult.

V.—Village choirs.

COMMUNION SERVICES.

L.

DARKE, HAROLD E.—In F. O.U.P. 1/3. Difficult, but not beyond a good parish church choir. S.A.T.B. with Organ. The important organ part requires a large instrument and finished playing. All voice parts occasionally divide for short periods. Compass: Sop. G, Alto C (D in Unison passages), Tenor G, Bass E flat. Short solos for all voices. Benedictus and Agnus Dei; no 9-fold Kyrie.

HARWOOD, BASIL. In D. Weekes. 1/6—Mod. difficult. S.A.T.B. with organ, no division of parts. 9-fold Kyrie, Benedictus and Agnus Dei. Three Offertory sentences: "While we have time," "Give alms" and "Blessed be the Man," and Post Communion, "If any man will come after me." Compass: Sop. F sharp, Alto B, Tenor G, Bass D. No solos.

IRELAND, JOHN. In C. Novello. 1/-. Mod. difficult. S.A.T.B. with organ, no division of parts. Short solos S. and B., also solo quartet. Compass: Sop. G, Alto C (optional D), Tenor G, Bass C. Benedictus and Agnus Dei; no 9-fold Kyrie. Pater Noster for voices unaccompanied in harmony.

The above three settings are suitable for use on the greater Festivals of the Church. Those which follow are in a more severe style, are without independent organ part and are more suitable to Ferial days.

WOOD, CHARLES. In the 3rd or Phrygian mode. Faith Press. 1/-. S.A.T.B. unaccompanied. Mod. difficult, but no division of parts. Few bars Tenor solo. Compass: Sop. G, Alto C, Tenor F, Bass C. 9-fold Kyrie, Benedictus, Agnus Dei and Pater Noster. Plainsong Creed; an accomp. to this is published separately (1/2).

The Sanctus, Benedictus and Gloria are written in a style of freely flowing polyphony; bar lines are only used to distinguish phrases. Organ accomp. follows the voice parts throughout.

LEY, HENRY G. In the 3rd or Phrygian mode. Faith Press. 1/-. S.A.T.B. unaccomp. Mod. difficult, no division of parts. No solos, but a few bars of (optional) solo quartet. Compass: Sop. G, Alto C (sharp in a Unison passage), Tenor G, Bass D.

This service is similar in style to the above. There is no Pater Noster. The organ accomp. is stated to be "for practice only."

S.

LEY, HENRY G. In C. Faith Press. 8d. For Choir and Congregation with organ (not to be confused with the unaccompanied Service in the Phrygian mode reviewed above). Quite easy, mostly Unison, though Boys' (or Women's) voices occasionally divide, and the Congregation is expected to maintain an independent part in certain numbers. It can only be used effectively where congregational practices with the choir are the custom. Highest note F. Easy organ part.

V.

STEWART, C. HYLTON. Very easy Unison setting, intended for congregational singing. S.P.C.K. 2d. Accompanied, can be played on a harmonium. Benedictus and Agnus Dei, no 9-fold Kyrie and no Creed.

MORNING AND EVENING CANTICLES.

L.

TE DEUM, BENEDICTUS, JUBILATE, MAGNIFICAT and NUNC DIMITTIS (together with Kyrie and Introit). H. Walford Davies. In G (No. 2). Curwen. Complete 1/6.

Mostly four part writing, occasionally all voices divide, some unison passages. There are solo and verse parts for all voices, which may be sung by a small combination of voices. The compass of the voice parts is a little greater than usual, for example, the Soprano is written from B below the treble stave to G above it. This service is of moderate difficulty for both choir and organ. There are a few free passages for the organ.

TE DEUM. Boyce. In A. Novello. 6d.

A few S will also welcome the opportunity of singing this old service. A little florid in style, and written for four independent voice parts, which are diatonic. All voice parts are within the average compass. Four part harmony prevails throughout, and for the sake of variety, verses are allotted to full choir, Dec. and Can. The service may be sung unaccompanied, because the organ part merely doubles the voices.

MAGNIFICAT and NUNC DIMITTIS. Arnold. In A. Novello. 4d.

This service was written later to complete Boyce in A, and is in the same style. Certain sections are repetitions of the music of the morning service of Boyce and the same remarks as regards difficulty, laying out, organ part and compass of voices apply to this service. The last verse of the Nunc dimittis is given to four solo voices, but it can be sung full or by one side only.

MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS. C. Wood in E flat. Year Book Press. 4d.

A second setting of the evening canticles in E flat by this composer. The earlier one, published by Novello, is perhaps better known, and has been in use in many Churches for some little time. This is a moderately difficult service; it has distinction; it includes unison singing, two-part work for soprano and tenor in unison and Alto and Bass in unison; and four-part writing. It is to be sung throughout by Full choir. None of the voice parts divide, and their compass is very little above the average. The rhythm is straightforward. A few sudden and perhaps unexpected changes of key seem to be the chief difficulties. The organ part has a certain amount of free accompaniment.

S.

TE DEUM (based chiefly on settings by Schein and J. S. Bach of the German form of the Ambrosian Chant). C. Wood. Faith Press. 1/6.

The voice parts are simple, in unison and easy three, and four parts. The compass of the voices is only slightly above the average, for example Soprano ranges from D below the treble stave to F sharp on the top line. The organ part is free, and more difficult than the voice parts. Still, it can be effectively played on a 2-manual organ.

MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS. Vaughan Williams in C. Curwen, 6d.

The composer states that this service is for V, but we should assign it to S. It is written mostly in unison with occasional four-part and two-part work. The chief difficulties will be found in the free rhythm and the unexpected turn of the melody. Any village choirs that have not been brought up on four-square tunes, and have experience of modal tunes, ought to sing this service successfully. The organ part is moderately easy.

MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS. Plainsong and Faux-bourdon by Carolus Andreas. (Italian 16th century) transcribed by R. Bridges. O.U.P. 3d.

The Faux-bourdon is an easy setting in four parts, to be sung with or without accompaniment. No accompaniment is given to the alternate verses of plainsong. The voice parts are within a small compass.

MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS. C. Wood in A flat. Year Book Press. 3d.

This is a simple unison service, and the compass of the voice part is within the 8vo. of E flat. The rhythm is quite straightforward. Obviously the organ part is more difficult than the voice part, it is possible to play on a small 2-manual or even a single manual organ.

ANTHEMS (SEASONABLE).

ASCENSION HYMN.

Words by A Russell, 1806-1874. Music by J. Schecht, 1753-1823. Arranged for voices and organ by Henry G. Ley. Novello Parish Choir Book No. 1077. 2d.

This beautiful setting begins with 4 bars organ introduction. The organ part of this hymn anthem is more difficult than the voice parts. The first verse is set in four-part harmony. The second verse is for Trebles only, their notes are exactly the same as in the first verse, the accompaniment is more elaborate, but without pedals. The third verse starts with Tenors and Basses in unison, followed by a bar or two for boys only, after that all parts sing in harmony until the end. The Amen is very simple, on one chord, but the voices are divided (6 parts). This in no way adds to the difficulty. The last page of the organ part is not so difficult as it looks (it has only two pedal notes) and is very effective. About 2½ minutes in performance.

COMMUNION.

Basil Harwood. "Author of life divine" words, Charles Wesley. Novello. 2d.

Hymn anthem. Two verses with short organ interlude between verses. First verse may be sung by Trebles only; organ interlude; second verse S.A.T.B., with or without organ. Suitable for all choirs accustomed to sing in freely moving parts. About 2½ minutes.

WHITSUNTIDE.

Tallis. "Come Holy Ghost." Short anthem arranged by W. H. Harris. S.P.C.K. (No. 27). 2d.

First verse set in four-part harmony like a hymn, for S.A.T.B. Second verse Trebles only, with an independent organ part, without pedals. Third verse, a Faux-bourdon, that is, the melody is sung by the Tenors, accompanied in harmony by the other three voices without organ. The Trebles are divided in 4 bars, and the Basses in 2 bars, but both are optional. The last verse is like the first: both these verses may be sung with or without organ, and the pace should be solemn and dignified.

Tallis. "O Lord give Thy Holy Spirit." Novello.

A short anthem, 27 bars long, for S.A.T.B. full throughout, preferably without accompaniment. If the organ is used, it should be played on one or two soft stops without pedals. A slow sustained anthem, slightly polyphonic in style, requiring delicacy and freedom, both in singing and expression.

John Amner. "O Come Thou Spirit divinest." Words Anon. Edited by Noel Ponsonby. Year Book Press (No. A. 37). 2d.

Unaccompanied motet for two Trebles and one Tenor. The words are as follows:—

"O come Thou Spirit divinest	"Unite our minds for ever
that sweetly hearts combinest.	that we in love persevere.
Alleluia."	Alleluia."

This little motet, without repeats, 1½ minutes approximately, demands clear flexible Treble voices, and is written in madrigalian, or polyphonic style.

Suitable for well trained boys, accustomed to Tudor music, but, owing to its brevity and points of imitation, it is not difficult to sing.