

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, COLLEGE OF ST. NICOLAS, ELMSTEAD LANE, CHISLEHURST, KENT.

No. 5.

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WORK BEGINS AT ST. NICHOLAS.

We started work without any formality other than the Dedication of gifts to the Chapel and of the Choir School, of which an account is given below. Our company consists of ten choristers, three resident men students (all we have room for), one non-resident woman student, the Secretary, the Master of the Choristers, the Chaplain and the Warden.

The work on the main house is now practically completed ; the Students and the Secretary have been in temporary quarters in a cottage in the grounds, pending the completion of the Students' Hostel which will be ready about Easter ; we shall have room for about 12 to 14 additional students next term, which starts on April 26.

The organ has been overhauled, modernised and revoiced by Mr. Arthur Harrison, and was used for the first time on March 14. It is a small two-manual instrument with a charming tone and is admirably suited to our needs.

In the Chapel we have kept up our two regular daily Church services at 7.30 a.m. and 7.0 p.m. ; fortunately amongst us we have all four parts represented, so we are able to do a good deal of unaccompanied music ; we are trying to make our service lists comprehensive, and aim at doing about one-third plain-song and two-thirds Anglican music. We have been enormously helped by the generous way in which all the music publishers whom we have approached have given us sufficient copies of all the music we want entirely without charge. Our Chaplain has been with us about three days a week, through the great kindness of the Dean and Chapter of Winchester, where he is still Precentor ; on other days the services are taken by the Warden, who has received the licence of the Bishop of Rochester. On Sunday mornings as a rule our choir has been joining with the regular choir at the Parish Church of St. George's, Bickley. Besides taking part, in various capacities, in the Services and Choir practices, the students have had two lectures each week.

In spite of burst pipes, the failure of heating apparatus, arctic cold through constantly open doors and such discomforts as are inseparable from the presence of workmen, we have escaped the ravages of the " flu " and our bill of health has been remarkably good, thanks largely to the unremitting care of our excellent Matron.

Perhaps the most far-reaching and important development has been the appointment of our Chaplain, the Rev. G. H. Salter, as Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, Holborn, with the definite intention that the work of the School of English Church Music should be linked up with that Church, and should find a centre for its practical activities in the very heart of London. Exactly how this connection will work out in actual practice it is too early to say, but it must be obvious that the opportunities afforded by a noble Church seating 1000 people, in a commanding position within little more than half an hour's journey from the College, and possessing an extremely fine and interesting Renatus Harris organ (now, alas, in total disrepair), furnishes a wonderful

opportunity of expansion, and of bringing the work of the School right into the heart of London. Further it is felt that by means of this connection a valuable use will be found for one of the most prominent of the City Churches where, at present, a congregation is almost non-existent.

As to the future, we hope next term to have our full complement of resident students, and also to begin some of our external activities. One of these will probably be a Summer School, which is being organized by the Church Music Society, to be held at the College from August 12 to 15. We are getting many applications from clergy and others seeking for choirmasters and organists; some of these posts we have been able to fill, and in all cases we are making efforts to find the right sort of candidates, and are offering to test them at the College. This development is welcome evidence that those who have appointments to offer are looking for people who have the kind of training that the School can give.

So far all is going well, but (and it is a large BUT), we have not nearly enough financial support to enable us to carry out the developments that are contemplated, and until things are more secure the present anxiety under which we have to work must continue. So it is urgently necessary that all who wish the School to go on and prosper should make it their *personal* business to interest those able to help substantially, and to urge choirs all over the country to become affiliated. We greatly value good wishes, but these do not pay bills! and we badly want money *now*, not only for future needs but to meet our present obligations.

THE OPENING SERVICE.

A small company, including members of the Provisional Council of the School of English Church Music, assembled at St. Nicolas College on January 16 for the service in which the Bishop of Truro dedicated the Chapel and its ornaments. The choristers from Clumber had arrived only the day before and the music of the service was necessarily simple, but with the help of ex-choristers from Westminster Abbey a full choir was formed, and the first principle of the School was well illustrated in their singing. Let Church music be as simple as circumstances require; it may still be good. A second principle was illustrated in the fact that the small congregation had not come to listen to the choir but to take part in a service of prayer and thanksgiving. At last, that which had been hopefully yet anxiously planned had come to the first stage of realisation.

The choir entered the Chapel singing the hymn "Christ is our Corner Stone." The Bishop first said a prayer of general dedication of the Chapel and then proceeded to the special dedication of the Altar, beginning with the "Sursum Corda." The Altar, hitherto bare, was then vested by the Chaplain, while the hymn "Hosanna in the Highest" was sung. Next the Bishop received the gifts; the Chalice and Paten brought by the Bursar of the Society of the Faith, the Cross and Candlesticks brought by an ex-chorister of Westminster Abbey. The antiphon "I will go to the Altar of God" and Psalm, "O send out thy light," was sung.

These simple ceremonies completed, the Bishop gave a short address in which he emphasized the age long association of music with the evangelistic functions of the Church. The Monks of Augustine came singing. Their song, perhaps more than their preaching, converted Britain. The Church in England had always been a musical church. We must not only uphold the high tradition of the past but must strengthen it with the best this generation can bring. This was his message. After the hymn "Love Divine," the clergy, choir and congregation went to the entrance of the choir school, where the Bishop prayed for

God's blessing on the work of the choristers. The Chaplain offered prayers for benefactors and commemorated particularly Harold Hall Wright and the seventh Duke of Newcastle, and the Office concluded with prayers and hymns in the boys' dormitory, and the blessing given by the Bishop.

THE SUNG COMMUNION.

It must, of course, first be decided whether the Service is to be sung by the Choir or the Congregation; as the choice of music will depend upon this decision. It cannot be urged too strongly that if the singing is to be confined to the choir, nothing but really good music, well sung, must be tolerated. There is so much fine Church music, old and new, that there is no excuse whatever for the feeble trash which is far too frequently allowed to be heard. It is hoped that the lists of Services of varying kinds and degrees of difficulty given in the previous issues of the "NEWS SHEET" (Nos. 1-4) will be found useful. They will be continued in subsequent issues. For the moment they are suspended in order to draw attention to some points of style in the singing of the Holy Communion on which the published "Service" offers no direction.

The Introit.—The words of the ancient Introits, for every Sunday and Holy Day throughout the year, are given in the English Hymnal, and the music is obtainable from the Community of St. Mary the Virgin, Wantage. This is, however, rather elaborate and difficult Plainsong, and should only be attempted by very capable choirs. A short anthem or motet is often sung as an Introit, and the following may be found useful:—

Byrd—Ave verum (Hail, true Body) <i>Oxf. Univ. Press</i>	Vittoria—Glorious in Heaven (for Saints' Days) <i>Novello</i>
„ Then did Priests make offering „ <i>Novello</i>	Walford Davis—Bread of the World ... <i>Curwen</i>
Ancrío—Jesus once for our salvation ...	„ The hour cometh ... „
Palestrina—We adore thee, Lord Jesu (for S.S.A.T.) „	Mozart—Jesu, Word of God Incarnate... <i>Novello</i>
„ Very Bread, Good Shepherd <i>Faith Press</i>	Elgar—Jesu, Word of God Incarnate ... „
	Bullock—O most merciful ... „

The above are of varying degrees of difficulty, but all of them need a good choir. A psalm or hymn is frequently used as an Introit.

If the Nine-fold (or Three-fold) Kyrie is sung, there is always Marbecke, and, if more elaborate settings, to be sung by the choir, are wanted, a volume can be obtained from the Faith Press, which will probably meet all requirements.

The Priest will probably prefer to say the Lord's Prayer and Collect for Purity in a low speaking voice; if he does this, the choir should say the Amen to the Collect. If, however, he monotones, the choir should sing the Amen.

If he monotones the Commandments, it will be necessary for the Organist to give him a note which will fit in with whatever Responses are to be sung. The effect is quite satisfactory if the Commandments are spoken without note. In that case there is something to be said in favour of treating the Responses similarly.

The Gloria Tibi before the Gospel can be sung in 4-part harmony or in unison: if the latter, care must be taken that the key is not too high; B flat or A are convenient. Many people prefer to omit the Laus Tibi after the Gospel; there is no ancient authority for it, and the creed can follow at once. A hymn may very well be sung between the Epistle and Gospel. Bishop Gore says that there is more authority for the insertion of a hymn here than anywhere.

The Priest can, if he prefers, read the prayer for the Church Militant rather than intone it, and the Invitation, Confession, Absolution and Comfortable Words should undoubtedly be said, not sung. At the Sursum Corda the Choir's Responses should be sung softly, in unison, and at the pace of clear, distinct reading. Far too often they are sung slowly and loudly with 19th century vocal harmony of the most undesirable kind. Like the responses at morning and evening prayer, the choir should say their part at exactly the same pace as the Priest says his.

Regarding the music to the Sursum Corda and Prefaces, a handy and inexpensive edition of both the Roman and the Sarum versions has recently been issued by the Faith Press; unfortunately however, the choir's Responses at the Sursum Corda are omitted.

After the prayer of Consecration, before the Agnus Dei, there may very well be a short space of silence. From thirty seconds to a minute is quite enough, but this period of silence is profoundly impressive. It is also good, if Marbecke's Agnus Dei is sung, to have a few seconds' silence between each repetition of the words. This is far better than the common custom of having a few bars played on the organ. If there is a Communion Hymn, the choir should sing it very quietly and reverently. The Organist may play softly, between the verses, if time permits, but must be careful not to play anything that conflicts with the mood of the hymn.

The Lord's Prayer may be sung to its traditional melody, or to Marbecke's version of it, at the pace of clear and distinct reading. Vocal harmony is again to be avoided, as being out of keeping with the style of the melody.

After the Blessing a hymn of thanksgiving is very suitable, or (for a good choir), Stanford's setting of the 150th Psalm. The report of the Archbishop's Committee on Music and Worship refers to the common custom of adding an evening Canticle, the Nunc Dimittis, at the end of the Communion Service as "a bad fashion." It says (p. 37), "the music director must know enough about the principles of worship, and about the structure and rationale of the Prayer Book services, to be able not only to withstand bad fashions, but also to explain to all concerned why they are bad."

NOTES ON SERVICE MUSIC.

The following notes are written by the members of the Committee appointed by the Church Music Society. Suitability to choirs of differing types is indicated where possible by the use of initials: L (large urban choirs), S (small urban choirs), V (village choirs).

MORNING AND EVENING CANTICLES.

L.

"TE DEUM" and "JUBILATE" (1/-). "MAGNIFICAT" and "NUNC DIMITTIS" (6d.) in D minor. John Farrant. Tudor Church Music, edited by E. H. Fellowes. Oxford University Press. S.A.T.B.

This service is a good and useful example of Tudor music by a little known composer, John Farrant of Salisbury. It is modal (mostly Dorian), and written in free rhythm. The words of the canticles are set without

repetition, and voice parts move together although polyphonically written, in the style of a "short service," like Tallis in the Dorian Mode. The service should be sung unaccompanied. A moderate compass is required for all voices, yet occasionally the alto touches G below the treble stave. Tenors are given G on the second line on the treble stave once, but here the editor suggests that the altos and tenors may interchange parts if desired. The whole service is transposed up a tone, and may be put up another semitone if the tenors are equal to the task. There is one misprint on page 3 of the Magnificat, the treble should read C sharp on the word "fear." Any larger parish church choir, which is familiar with the Tudor idiom, will find in this a service of moderate difficulty.

"TE DEUM" and "BENEDICTUS" in G. Martin Shaw. Cramer, 1/- S.A.T.B.

This service is written in the 7th mode. The Te Deum has strength and dignity, and is only of moderate difficulty both for organ and voices. The voice parts are allotted many unison phrases, alternated with four-part homophonic writing, and two short sections in polyphonic style, preferably sung unaccompanied. S.A.T.B. throughout except for 5 bars in which the trebles divide. All parts are within a moderate compass, alto lowest note is A below the treble stave. A casual glance at this Te Deum will probably convey an impression that it is difficult, because of the many changes of time signature. In actual practice this difficulty will soon be overcome, when it is fully realised that the crotchet unit beat is approximately at the same speed throughout and the words flow easily according to their correct stress and verbal accentuation. The Benedictus is written in a free chant style, mostly in unison with two short sections in four-part harmony. The singing of this setting of the canticle will present no difficulties.

"MAGNIFICAT" and "NUNC DIMITTIS" in E flat. Harwood. Novello, 6d.

A moderately easy service for the voices, with an organ accompaniment slightly more difficult, and playable on a one or two manual instrument. The service is laid out in unison passages for voices, (S.A.T.B.) four-part writing, and occasional two-part work (tenors doubling sopranos, and altos doubling basses). A moderate compass for all voices is required, alto lowest note is B flat below the treble stave.

"MAGNIFICAT" and "NUNC DIMITTIS" in F. for women's or boy's voices. Emily Daymond. Year Book Press, 4d.

This service cannot be classified under any of the letters, L. S. or V., because it is only suitable for Women's Colleges, Girls' Schools or Boys' Schools where there is an experienced choir in which the voices are "well sorted and ordered." It is written in three parts, S.S.A., occasionally both the 2nd soprano and alto divide, but this happens only for three or four notes in a phrase. It should be sung unaccompanied. It is only of moderate difficulty as regards pitch and time of notes, but it requires very careful part singing to make it effective. The vocal writing is contrapuntal and parts cross freely, a good balance of voices, true intonation and individual phrasing of the parts is essential. The highest note for the treble is G above the treble stave, and the lowest note for the Alto is G below the treble stave, except for one optional low F.

ANTHEMS, ETC.

Ascension and Whitsuntide.

MOTETS BY PALESTRINA AND HIS SCHOOL, translated from the Latin and arranged for anthem use by the Rev. H. G. Bainbridge and Sir Frederick Bridge, published by Bosworth, 4d. each. Numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

No. 5 "O KING OF GLORY." Motet for Ascensiontide by Luca Marenzio, short, fairly easy, compass moderate. Organ part for practice only.

No. 6 "I ASCEND UNTO MY FATHER" Motet for Ascensiontide by Jacob Handl in 6 parts (two sopranos and two bass), short, moderately difficult, compass moderate. Organ part for practice only.

No. 7 "WITH OTHER TONGUES SPAKE THE APOSTLES," Motet for Whitsuntide by Palestrina, in four parts, moderate in length, difficulty, and compass. Organ part for practice only.

No. 8 "THOU ART PETER." Motet for St. Peter's Day by Palestrina. In six parts (two soprano and two tenor). Rather difficult. Moderate length and ordinary compass. Organ part for practice only.

No. 9 "ALLELUJA, PRAISE THE LORD." Motet for Festivals generally, by Orazio Vecchi. In five parts (two tenors). Moderate length and compass. Fairly difficult. Separate organ part.

All the above have only the English translation of the Latin words.

CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY'S REPRINTS No. 24. "Come, thou Holy Spirit Come." Motet by Palestrina, S.P.C.K., 3d. Mainly four-part but occasionally going into eight parts. Moderately difficult. For unaccompanied voices only. Without organ part. Ordinary compass.

For General Use.

"GO NOT FAR FROM ME, O GOD." Anthem for S.A.T.B., unaccompanied. Noel Ponsonby. Cramer, 4d.

"TO THE NAME OF OUR SALVATION." Anthem for the Feast of the Circumcision or for general use. C. Hylton Stewart. Cramer, 4d.

The above form respectively Numbers 1 and 2 of a new series of Church Music published by Messrs. J. B. Cramer. The late Mr. Ponsonby's little anthem is simple in design and compass, with interesting movement of parts. These is an organ or piano part for practice only. It is quite short.

"To the name of our Salvation" is for full choir, with treble or tenor solo. It is quite easy to sing. Variety is obtained by occasional change of key and time. The opening phrase is treated as a "motif" and is developed in the course of the composition. It is of moderate length. The treble part has a high A on the last page; it is, however, approached easily from below. The compass is generally of moderate range.

Hymns.

Winchester Hymn Supplement. Revised and enlarged edition, issued by the Winchester Diocesan Church Music Committee. Music edition: 3/- cloth, 2/- paper; Words only: 1/- cloth, 6d. paper. Published by Warren, High Street, Winchester, 1928.

This collection of 153 hymns and carols would make a useful supplement to any hymn book. With hardly any exception it keeps a very high musical standard. It is divided into general and seasonal hymns. Use has been made of recent collections, such as *The English Hymnal*, *Songs of Praise* and the *Second Supplement of Hymns Ancient and Modern*, and other collections such as *The English Carol Book* and the *Cowley Carol Book* have been drawn upon. The book also contains descants, original and selected.

A very useful addition at the end of the book is Merbecke's music for the Communion Office.

The book, originally intended to raise the standard of hymn singing in the Churches, especially the village Churches of the Winchester Diocese, has now been enlarged and revised. It contains nothing beyond the capabilities of the average choir.