ANTHEIL
EZRA·POUND

ANTHEIL

With a Treatise on Harmony

By Ezra Pound

Price $2.00

When young George Antheil's first "tin-pan" opera (we are quoting the dubious pleasantries of an adverse press) was produced in Paris some years ago, it created a literal riot. When Mr. Antheil and his work were heard recently in New York, they effected a mental but none the less real commotion.

What's it all about? That is the question which the ordinary burgher is asking—and, be it whispered, some of our bewildered highbrows and infuriated music masters, as well. And this is, precisely, the question which Ezra Pound, dean of American expatriates, has answered, with annihilating lucidity, in his book, ANTHEIL.

In his work, Pound endeavors to erect a whole novel system of harmony, one which, he asserts, has always been the true system. The attempt would be a daring one on the part of even a master of music. Coming from a literary man, it is more than likely to create recriminations.

Included with the essay on ANTHEIL are "The Treatise on Harmony," a paper on "William Atheling" and "Varia."

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ANTHEIL
AND THE
TREATISE ON HARMONY

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WITH SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

BY

EZRA POUND

CHICAGO
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THE TREATISE ON HARMONY

CHAPTER I

I

"What, mon élève, is the element grossly omitted from all treatises on HARMONY..."

at this point the élève looks up brightly...

"except the treatise now being composed"...? the éléve continues to regard me brightly... and blankly. No answer is offered me.

The answer, mon élève, is:

"The element most grossly omitted from treatises on harmony up to the present is the element of TIME. The question of the time-interval that must elapse between one sound and another if the two sounds are to produce a pleasing consonance or an *interesting* relation, has been avoided.

AND YET the simplest consideration of the physics of the matter by almost the simplest mathematician, should lead to equations showing that

A SOUND OF ANY PITCH, or ANY COMBINATION OF SUCH SOUNDS, MAY BE FOLLOWED BY A SOUND OF ANY OTHER PITCH, OR ANY COMBINATION OF SUCH SOUNDS, providing the time interval between them is properly gauged; and this is true for ANY SERIES OF SOUNDS, CHORDS OR ARPEGGIOS.

II

The limits for the practical purposes of music depend solely on our capacity to produce a sound that will last long enough, i. e. remain audible long enough, for the succeeding sound or sounds to catch up, traverse, intersect it.

III

WHY IS THIS QUESTION OF TIME-INTERVALS omitted from all other treatises on harmony?

Parenthesis for historic survey.

1. Musical theoricians are exceedingly con-

ventional, for centuries they went on quoting Franco of Cologne instead of listening to sound.

2. Harmony in Bach's time was a vigorous and interesting matter.

Why?

The answer to this question and to the main question of this section, is:

The early students of harmony were so accustomed to think of music as something with a strong lateral or horizontal motion that they never imagined any one, ANY ONE could be stupid enough to think of it as static; it never entered their heads that people would make music like steam ascending from a morass.

They thought of music as travelling rhythm going through points or barriers of pitch and pitch-combinations.

They had this concept in their blood, as the oriental has his raga and his tala. It simply never occurred to them that people would start with static harmony and stick in that stationary position.

IV

Hence it has arrived that the term "Harmony" is applied to the science of chords that can be struck simultaneously; and the directions for modulations have been worked out for chords that can follow each other without demanding a strict or even interesting time-interval between their emission.

In short, Mr. Joseph Corfe produced his

THOROUGHBASS
simplified
and laid open to the meanest capacity;

he did that over a century ago, and no one detected the fact till this year (a.d. 1923).

I am told that even Mr. Corfe's work contains errors.

But far be it, far, afar from me to contradict Mr. Corfe, or that still more illustrious professor, Dr. Schönberg. All that they have said is, or may be true, and lacking in interest.

Ernst Friederich Richter has said:

"Pure theory can not and should not concern itself with prac-

tice, for it has as sole aim the definition of the nature of the divers constituent elements of the art, without ever treating the special and particular cases which result from the employment of personal procedures."

Observation:

Aristotle was not a pure theorist.

Sauzay

"Il faut se borner à penser que J.-S. Bach écrivait la musique par certains procédés dont la loi générale nous échappe."

(Sauzay, *Le Violon Harmonique, p.* 217.)

The secret or part of it probably is that Bach, consciously or unconsciously, never thought of using two chords except as parts, integral parts, of a progression, a rhythmic progression.

I believe in an absolute rhythm. E. P. 1910 with explanations (1).

In 1910 I was working with monolinear verbal rhythm but one had already an adumbration that the bits of rhythm used in verse were capable of

(1) Preface to translation of Guido Cavalcanti.

being used in musical structure, even with other dimensions.

Treatises on harmony give you all sorts of recipes for getting from one chord to another (this is more or less reduced to a few simple mechanisms) they do not stop to enquire whether the transit by these means is interesting, or, in a given situation, expressive.

That is supposed to be a matter of creative genius. It is.

V

Any series of chords can follow any other, provided the right time-interval is discovered. The interesting sequences are probably those that DEMAND very set and definite intervals.

That is probably all we have to say in this chapter.

CHAPTER II

I

Given proper approach, the progression

is probably perfectly sound. I mean from the point of view of mathematics.

II

Fortunately this theory of harmony can never be reduced to an academicism. At least it seems unlikely that any mathematician will bother. The mathematics of the case might prove discouraging.

You can reduce the line composition of *La Nascita di Venere* to trigonometric equations; it would make a long charming series. The results might be interesting but they would not help you to draw.

. . . .

"How did you find those four notes?" said X. . . in undisguised admiration. "Gee, I wish I had found those four notes."

Answer: By listening to the sound that they made, a thing no pyanist has ever done.

That is perhaps all we have to say in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

And possibly the last; for we have probably said about all we have to say. The former treatises on harmony dealt with static harmony, they may have defined harmony as "simultaneous melody" or they may have sought some other definition, but they did not consider that the lateral motion, the horizontal motion, and the time interval between succeeding sounds MUST affect the human ear, and not only the ear but the absolute physics of the matter. The question of where one wave-node meets another, or where it banks against the course of another wave to strengthen or weaken its action, must be considered.

I

The harmony for one instrument is BY NO

MEANS necessarily the harmony for another. Good players have always "GOT THE MOST OUT OF" the compositions they played by their subtle seizing of this gaya scienca, and we have said "he has a sense of rhythm" or she "has a sense of rhythm."

II

And again Sauzay[1]: Le fameux Durante, qui a fait tant d'élèves célèbres, ne leur donnait jamais les raisons des règles qu'il formulait.

Naturally. When Harmony was alive it was merely a personal give away, it was a bundle of tricks of the trade, the fruit of personal experience, it was *A* way of getting over a difficulty or managing a turn of expression; it wasn't intended to cramp anyone's style: It was pragmatic, it worked, and each school worked its trade secrets to death with the magnificence of Bel Canto, of music up to Johann Sebastien. The mechanism was a plus thing, it worked in an open field.

The mess came when it was set up as a fence,

[1] *Violin harmonique,* p. 69.

and everyone tried to walk on the rails or climb over it.

They rotted their melodies by trying to find schemes which "harmonize" according to a concept of "harmony" in which the tendency to lifelessness was inherent.

CHAPTER IV

COROLLARIES AND COMPLICATIONS.

Continuing, mon eleve; you will probably have noticed by now a glaring omission on my part.

A SOUND OF ANY PITCH, ETC. . .

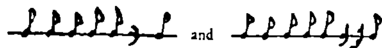
any chord may be followed by any other provided the right time interval be placed between them.

The duration of the resolving chord must also be considered; and the duration of the various chords in a sequence will be subject to mathematical computations, if people prefer mathematics to judging the sounds by ear.

THE HARMONY FOR ONE INSTRUMENT MAY NOT BE THE HARMONY FOR ANOTHER.

Again the competent mathematician could show us that the vibrations of a 'cello where the sound is steadily produced by a drawn bow will combine in a different way from those of a horn, a plucked string or an instrument of percussion.

Everybody knows this; but the time is over when we can give more reverence to a person who can detect slight variations of a pitch, than to one who can detect the difference between



It will make a difference what instrument the sounds are played on; it will make a difference if one note or several notes are played louder in the chord; it will make a difference if the next chord strikes the precedent chord while that chord is still being propelled from the instruments or if the second chord strike the other chord as it fades;

and all these things are really in the domain of harmony, that is of active, not static, harmony;

and as for the workings of the latter; this time element may upset them or reinforce them in given circumstance.

The so called "laws" of harmony were useful when they were a bag of handy tools; but if one tries to carry the whole machine shop, one's mobility will probably suffer.

To the above treatise I received four answers:

1.—Antheil: had known for some time that the duration of the notes and the duration of the time-intervals between them made a difference to the way the harmony sounded.

2.—A violinist: had not thought of the matter but tried various combinations of notes and found that my statement applied.

3.—Author of a work on Einstein: approved the treatise; thought it ought to be longer; doubted whether the statement was true for *all* possible combinations of notes.

(This, I take it, was due to his overlooking my restrictive clause.)

Perhaps I might better my statement. Per-

haps I should say: There are no two chords which may not follow each other, if the sequence of time-intervals and durations is correct.

4.—Then there was the gent who found the treatise interesting but who (as who should prefer to study the circulation of the blood from corpses exclusively) preferred to study his harmony "separate," i. e. static.

Which might be very nice if it could be done or if there were any essential difference between one part of harmony and the other.

PROLEGOMENA

To make my simple statement even simpler; let us consider the nature of the ear, and of sound.

Sound, we are told, consists of vibrations of from 16 to 36,000 per second.

The ear is an organ for the detection of frequency.

To the best of my knowledge I have always heard the lower notes of the pipe-organ not as pitch but as a series of separate woof-woofs. I

don't want to insist on what may be a personal idiosyncracy due to my being so excessively quick on the uptake. The point is that UP to 16 items per second we notice the separate shocks; after that we notice a synthesis of frequency.

Animals probably notice frequencies favourable and unfavourable to their existence. Hence the powers of Orpheus.

Music as the ancient philosophers say, arises from number.

Let us say that music is a composition of frequencies.

That definition covers all possible forms of music; harmony, melody, counterpoint, form in the fugue, etc.

Some of these combinations of frequency, very simple ones, are academically considered pleasant.

Raphael Socius in a. d. 1556 catalogues a number of them, that had long been considered respectable.

When the frequency of vibration of one note

bears the relation of 3 to 2 to the frequency of vibration of another, the combination is considered respectable.

Academicism is not excess of knowledge; it is the possession of *idées fixes* as to how one shall make use of one's data.

The time element affects harmony, sic.

You can hear a note which has 16 vibrations per second.

BUT

You can also beat (on a drum head or other object) 16 times per second.

The ear measures frequency.

If you sound a note whose frequency is 16 per second and start beating, tap, tap, etc. exactly half way between the nodes of your note 16, you will produce a combined frequency of 32, i. e. equivalent to the octave above 16.

If your beats fall 2-3 of a wave behind the inception of the note 16, you will get alternate periods, some belonging to the series 24, i. e. the fifth above the note 16; and others belonging to the series 48, i. e. the octave above that fifth.

So the negroes in darkest Africa are probably right when they say that from simple beating of their drums they can imagine other instruments.

And the proportions, even very complicated proportions can be established by simple percussion.

I have taken a very simple and understandable case of a note vibrating 16, the number low enough to be thought of easily.

The stiff-necked will say: Oh but for higher notes this beating can't matter; you can't beat 3000 times per second, or even 256 times per second.

Responsus est:

The consonances of counterpoint as outlined by comrade Raphael, or of harmony as meant by Dr. Schönberg apply to simple combinations of frequency. Obviously if one note is vibrating 600 per second, and another 1200 there can be six hundred coincidences per second, and you can not strike your drum as often as that.

(There is nothing sacred about the duration

of the second, it is merely a convenient and current measure. A note vibrating 221 and ½ times per second is just as conceivable as one vibrating 221 or 222.)

If three notes are sounded at once, the complete coincidences of their wave-nodes may be considered rarer than when only two of them are sounded. You may beat with or against the coincidence: with, to clarify; against, to complicate.

You can use your beat as a third or fourth or N^{th} note in the harmony.

To put it another way; the percussion of the rhythm can enter the harmony exactly as another note would. It enters usually as a Bassus, a still deeper bassus; giving the main form to the sound.

It may be convenient to call these different degrees of the scale the megaphonic and microphonic parts of the harmony.

Rhythm is nothing but the division of frequency plus an emphasis or phrasing of that division.

Why, mon contradicteur, have masters of music specified that certain compositions be played at a certain speed?

(Example, in my copy of Le Nozze, one finds: Presto; half note equals 84; Allegro, black equals 144, etc.)

If anyone is interested, or cares to speculate upon Mozart's indubitable comprehension of the matter, they might do worse than study the time proportions in the opening of the Concerto in A. major.

Dissociation A.

Percussion can enter:

1. At unison, i. e. at each incidence of nodes of the lower notes.

2. As bassus, i. e. on octaves, double octaves, 12 ths, etc., below the more frequent incidences of nodes of the higher notes.

3. (As afore noted), against the incidences, thereby complicating the harmony rather than emphasizing some other element or elements.

There is no fundamental difference between

the first two manners, or even between them and the third.

The more complicated the incidences the more interesting the arrangement of percussion may be.

The arrangement of the percussion is probably more important, or more effectively or interestingly employable in a sequence of 2nds, and 7ths than in the simpler relations (listed by comrade Raphael as safe for contrapunto).

Naturally percussion in unison can be used higher in the scale for less simple proportions, than for more simple proportions of pitch-intervals.

If I can only get the mathematics of these relations so complicated that composers will become discouraged; give up trying to compose by half-remembered rules, and really listen to sound, I shall have performed no inconsiderable service to music.

Next Section

Or: various inconvenient items which the bud

should consider before becoming too fixed in its opinions.

I

What applies to the harmony, or the "perpendicular" or simultaneous melody "microphonically," applies also to the melody, i. e. the succeeding notes of a series, to the interceptions of counterpoint, to the statement and answer in the fugue.

There is nothing whatever in music but a composition of frequencies, microphonic and macrophonic.

II

There are 40,360 possible sequences of the eight notes in the single octave, regardless of their duration; if you take eight half notes and add a quarter note, there are nine times as many combinations.

The modern musician says he can't hear a melody till it's harmonized.

This is utter atrophy.

III

Dom Nicholas, inventor of the archicembalo, thought the ear could distinguish difference up to the proportion of 80 to 81 per second, but that its power of synthesis stopped there.

It would notice a difference of 80 to 82, i. e. the proportion of 40 to 41.

The academic musician prides himself on his sense of pitch. Sir X. X. of the Royal, etc., sat next to H. in the Albert Hall, the singer sang E. "Ah C," said Sir X. X. "No, E," said H.

A little later the singer sang B. "E," again said Sir X.

So let us refrain from vainglory.

IV

Some people have a sense of absolute frequency, others of proportional frequency.

I. e. some recognize the number of vibrations of the note.

Others recognize only the proportion of vibrations of a note to some other note (pitch) already given.

This proportional sensitivity is called having a musical ear.

V

And the fight between these two kinds of auditives has been going on from the time of Aristotle and Ptolemy to the present. Thank heaven.

That is to say one party (mine) says: You can NOT transpose.. That is to say you can transpose till you are blue in the face, but the thing after transposition is NOT the same, i. e. does NOT sound the same as it did before.

Doni in the *Trattato de' modi veri* says that if "I Modi si pratichino separati da una certa e determinata tensione, perdono la meta della loro efficacita, ed anco piu."

(I beg the reader, at this point, to consider that M. Antheil and I have heard all about superpartient sesqui octaval proportion, etc. If anyone wants more mathematics let me refer him to Lemme Rossi's Sistema Musico overo Musica Speculativa. [Perugia 1666].)

VI

170 pages of mathematics are of less value than a little curiosity and a willingness to listen to the sound that actually proceeds from an instrument.

Singers transpose because they are thinking of their own throats, not of their ears, or of the ears of their auditors. Pianists think of their fingers, of the gymnastic excitement of their adrenals.

You may reduce the line composition of Botticelli's Nascita to the algebraic equations of analytics, without learning how to paint.

VII

After Dolmetsch tunes a clavicord he has slightly to untune it. Why? That is to say, the proportion of the different notes remains correct but each note is sounded on two strings, and these must *not* be in absolute accord. He says the waves "cut" each other and ruin the resonance.

One may either graph this by picturing two sound waves, the crests of which mutually bump and depress each other, or you may say that the nodes need a certain width, they must meet, but they must meet as if on the knife's back not on the razor's edge.

These prolegomena are not intended as the complete whifflepink to deaf musicians. They are a statement of points that should be considered before contradicting the author.

And to hot tempered sticklers, could we recommend dear old Lavignac's temperance:

"Nous n'entendons pas dire que ce système a été organisé par les mathématiciens ou d'après leurs calculs; il a été créé empiriquement par les musiciens, sans autre guide que leur instinct."

(P. 55, 18 th edtn. *La Musique et les Musiciens.*)

P. 52. Discussing some chanting he had heard one Easter: Le résultat était atroce *pour mes oreilles.* Words of a savant.

ANTHEIL

GEORGE ANTHEIL

(Retrospect)

I

The Vorticist Manifestos of 1913-14 left a blank space for music; there was in contemporary music, at that date, nothing corresponding to the work of Wyndham Lewis, Pablo Picasso or Gaudier-Brzeska.

Strawinsky arrived as a comfort, but one could not say definitely that his composition was the new music; he had a refreshing robustness; he was a relief from Debussy; but this might have been merely the heritage of polish folk music manifest in the work of an instinctive genius.

The article on Vorticism in the Fortnightly Review, Aug. 1914 stated that new vorticist

music would come from a new computation of the mathematics of harmony not from mimetic representation of dead cats in a fog horn (alias noise tuners). This was part of the general vorticist stand against the accelerated impressionism of our active and meritorious friend Marinetti.

There wasn't any vorticist music available and our specifications couldn't have, in the nature of things, been very exact at that time.

There had, and has, been extremely little critical examination of music; I mean detailed examination of melodic line, structure, etc; comparable to Landor's examination of Catullus; or questioning as to whether a given work contains rhetoric, padding, undue repetition, etc. There had been a great many volumes of "Lives of Musicians" (usually called "Lives of The Great Musicians") and books on the relation of music to morals, the "Problem . . . etc. . . ."

This is not to say that there haven't been intelligent musicologues; for example Fetis: Les impressions du chef (d'orchestre) ne peuvent

être bien comprises que par des signes extérieurs (Manuel des Compositeurs).

Friederich Richter; to the effect that actual composition can not be compared with studies which are merely the application of abstract theories (Traité de Contrepoint).

Sauzay on Bach, already cited, to the effect that Bach was doing something other than follow known laws.

Dolmetsch. Take the whole of his book on XVIIth and XVIIIth Century Music.

There had been Mr. Corfe's revealing title page (*vide* P. 5), a document of very great importance, but no one had noticed it.

We had also said that the organization of forms is a much more active and energetic occupation than copying the play of light on a haystack; and, elsewhere, that there is in music a fault corresponding to the fault of verbosity in writing.

There is musical rhetoric.

You may argue that Beethoven committed in one or two sonatas, all the faux pas that were

to be the fashion in the days of Wagner and Brahms; you may argue that Wagner, a great musician, in his manner of greatness, produced a sort of pea soup, and that Debussy distilled it into a heavy mist, which the post-Debussians have dessicated into a diaphanous dust cloud.

You can compare Debussy to Manet, you can say that he was an heresy, and that he is less concerned with the mechanics of music than with using music to affect the visual imagination of his hearers.

You may also disagree with any or all of the above statements.

I have found "harmony" defined as a "simultaneous melody".

Some musicians dislike that definition. Let us say that chords are like colour. They are a complex of sound occurring at a given instant of time, a minimum audibile of time, as colour is a complex of light vibrations thrown off by a given spot, or minimum visibile, of space or surface.

There remains the given succession of sounds; and the given delimitation of points, whence

lines, surfaces, volumes. Here endeth our retrospect.

II

The authentic genius will be as touchy, or perhaps more touchy, about the differences between his own particular art and all others, as, or than, he will about any possible analogies with other arts.

And it is a very good sign that Antheil is annoyed with the term "architecture" when this term is applied to music. The sensitive non-musician had been content with this term; the sensitive manipulator of verbal rhythm has been content with the phrase thematic invention; Antheil has emphasized the term "mechanisms."

He has, in his written statements about music, insisted that music exists in time-space; and is therefore very different from any kind of plastic art which exists all at once.

Just as Picasso, and Lewis, and Brancusi have made us increasingly aware of form, of form combination, or the precise limits and demarca-

tions of flat forms and of volumes, so Antheil is making his hearers increasingly aware of time-space, the divisions of time-space.

From Manet to Matisse the good painters revived and resensitized our colour sense.

Rousseau, Cézanne, Picasso, Lewis, Gaudier revived and revivified our perception of form.

The XIXth century musicians ending with Debussy and Schönberg were occupied among other things with musical colour; in Debussy's case he got it mixed up with visual colour; I mean in his own mind. The arts were in a period when each art tried to lean on some other. Notably painting, sculpture and music leant heavily on bad literature.

All of which means something more than: Picasso was a magnificent draughtsman, Wyndham Lewis is a master of design, George Antheil has a good sense of rhythm. Nobody but a fool will contradict any of these statements; but the point is that Picasso, Lewis, Antheil were or are all doing something rather different in kind from Manet and Debussy; they were or are

taking hold of their art by a different extremity.

For some years,[1] either over my own name, or over the signature William Atheling, I have indicated the paucity of thematic invention in music; that doesn't in the least mean that I anticipated Antheil. I pointed out that music and poetry had been in alliance in the twelfth century, that the divorce of the two arts had been to the advantage of neither, and that melodic invention declined simultaneously and progressively with their divergence. The rhythms of poetry grew stupider, and they in turn affected or infected the musicians who set poems to music.

That observation was natural to me, as poet, working for twenty years with a monolinear rhythm. The horizontal construction (or mechanics) of music had gone, or was, with increasing rapidity going to pot.

It was possible, by study of twelfth-century music, to see that melody wasn't mere impro-

[1] *Criterion,* spring 1924.

visation. The Hindoos have given us the terms, *raga* and *tala,* the first for toneless rhythm arrangement, the second for sequence of notes at determined pitches.

There are two æsthetic ideals: the Wagnerian, which is not dissimilar from that of the Foire de Neuilly, i. e., you confuse the spectator by smacking as many of his senses as possible at every possible moment, this prevents his noting anything with unusual lucidity, but you may fluster or excite him to the point of making him receptive; i. e., you may slip over an emotion, or you may sell him a rubber doll or a new cake of glass-mender during the hurly-burly.

The other æsthetic has been approved by Brancusi, Lewis, the vorticist manifestos; it aims at focusing the mind on a given definition of form, or rhythm, so intensely that it becomes not only more aware of that given form, but more sensitive to all other forms, rhythms, defined planes, or masses.

It is a scaling of eye-balls, a castigating or purging of aural cortices; a sharpening of verbal

apperceptions. It is by no means an emollient.

The fulcrums of revolution in art are very small, and the academic recognition of *faits accomplis* usually tardy, sic; Marchetto (of Padua, in the fourteenth century, in his *Pomerium*) "shows that the *breve* can be divided into three, four, six, eight, nine and twelve parts, but does not admit that these new values are anything but *semibreve*"; Prosdocimus de Beldemandis, in the *Tractatus Practicus*, shows that fourteenth-century Italians "*faisaient suivre a la semi-brève la minima et la semi-minima et autres notes encore dont la valeur un peu vague oscillait entre la minima et la chroma.*"[1]

To grasp the modus of Antheil's procedure one must remember that the development of musical notation has been exceedingly slow; that up to the year 1300 the written notes were *not* an exposition of the melody, they were a mnemonic device. A man who knew the tune or a man with

[1] Guido Gasperini, "L'Art Musical Italien au XVI siècle," in Lavignac and Laurencie's *Encyclopédie de Musique* (Delagrave, Paris).

a very fine ear for musical phrase could make use of them.

Couperin complains "we do not play as we write"; Dom Bedos de Celles has to warn his readers against other writers who "have not said a word about ornaments, nor of the combination of silences, held and touched notes to form articulations of the music, etc.; of the distinction between first and second quavers and of the crochets, etc., of their inequality, etc."[1]

We have all heard of tempo rubato, ad lib., and so forth. To Igor Strawinsky we owe the revelation: "No, you will *not* find any musical geniuses to execute this music. It would be better for the composer to write down what he wants the performer to play."

Strawinsky's merit lies very largely in taking hard bits of rhythm, and noting them with great care. Antheil continues this; and these two composers mark a definite break with the "atmos-

[1] Arnold Dolmetsch, *Music of the Seventeenth and Enghteenth Centuries.*

pheric" school; they both write horizontal music; but horizontal music has been written before; the Arabs have used it for a long time; the troubadours used it; you might have detected horizontal merits in Arnaut Daniel and Faidit.

I am inclined to think that the horizontal merits faded from music, and from the rhythm of poetry, with the gradual separation of the two arts. A man thinking with mathematical fractions is not impelled toward such variety of *raga* as a man working with the necessary inequalities of words. But the verbal rhythm is monolinear. It can form contrapunto only against its own echo, or against a developed expectancy.

Here we must emphasize the relation of *raga, tala,* and harmony. Any note can follow any other, any ten notes can follow each other in any order you like, but if their arrangement, I mean their *tala,* their tone sequence, is of any interest it will *lock* their time intervals, i. e. their individual durations and the rests between them.

When counterpoint slumped into harmony, Lutheran chorals, etc., and progressively into

Schönberg, this fundamental drive in music was obscured. The harmonists gave their attention to the perpendicular values, ending in a technical morass, undefined rhythms, tonal slush.

A purist and an archæologist might have revived the precision of *raga;* he probably would have agreed with Dolmetsch's verbal grumble, "No, music didn't begin with Bach, it ended with Bach." (Mr. Dolmetsch didn't mean this literally, but he got something off his chest, and mine, when he said it.)

Antheil has not only given his attention to rhythmic precision, and noted his rhythms with an exactitude, which we may as well call genius, but he has invented new mechanisms, mechanisms of this particular age.

1. His large concerto for piano and orchestra is early work. I have not heard it with orchestra, but the piano part contains at least one good mechanism.

2. In "The Golden Bird" he was not wholly freed of Debussy, but he did succeed in making the "solid object". This term suggests sculpture

and is intended to, just as Debussy intended to suggest apparitions in mist.

By solid object "musically", I suppose we mean a construction or better a "mechanism" working in time-space, in which all the joints are close knit, the tones fit each other at set distances, it can't simply slide about. This new quasi-sculptural solidity is something different from the magnificent stiffness or rigidity of Bach's multilinear mechanism.

3. In the "Mechanisms" there are distinct innovations of musical action. An electric power-station has recurrences, differing from those of the minuet.

4. In the series of six piano pieces called "Sonates Sauvages" Antheil gives us the first music really suggesting Lewis' "Timon" designs.

Numbers 3, 4 and 5 are interesting experiments. Much of this music is still in the experimental stage, but this does not mean that there are no definite results. Numbers 1 and 2 are accomplished facts. The first of these sonatas "does it," the base is really a basis, the music

rises and acts above it, like a projectile carrying a wire and cutting, defining the three dimensions of space.

The sixth of these sonatas seems, after the others, a retrospect. Every solid artist having made an advance by emphasising some cardinal element, returns to examine the other elements of his art. This sonata is, by comparison with the others, soft and "feminine," by its title.

Antheil has purged the piano, he has made it into a respectable musical instrument, recognising its percussive nature. "It is like the xylophone and the cymballo."

5. In the magnificent violin sonata, the most recent of his works, he has tried something of the same sort with his violin, I mean he has made the piano sound like a pianoforte, he has used the violin for sounds that you couldn't make as well or better on the flute.

The thorough artist is probably more sensitive to the difference between his own art and other arts, than to their resemblances. One of the marks of Antheil's authenticity is his disgust

with the term "architecture", and his insistence on the term "mechanism".

Antheil is probably the first artist to use machines, I mean actual modern machines, without bathos.

Machines are not literary or poetic, an attempt to poetise machines is rubbish. There has been a great deal of literary fuss over them. The Kiplonians get as sentimental over machines as a Dickensian does over a starved and homeless orphan on a bleak cold winterrrr's night.

Machines are musical. I doubt if they are even very pictorial or sculptural, they have form, but their distinction is not in form, it is in their movement and energy; reduced to sculptural stasis they lose *raison d'être,* as if their essence.

Let me put it another way, they don't confront man like the *faits accomplis* of nature; these latter he has to attack *ab exteriore,* by his observation, he can't construct 'em; he has to examine them. Machines are already an expression of his own desire for power and precision; one man can learn from them what some other man has put

into them, just as he can learn from other artistic manifestations. A painting of a machine is like a painting of a painting.

The lesson of machines is precision, valuable to the plastic artist, and to literati.

Prose is perhaps only half an art. The medium of poetry is words, i. e. human symbols, conventions; they are capable of including things of nature, that is, sound quality, timbre, up to a point.

They have interior rhythm, there can be rhythm in their arrangement, even tone leadings, and these with increasing precision; but you can not get a word back into the non-human.

It is redundancy, and therefore bad art, to use them where a less conventional humanised means will serve. Words are superfluous for certain things and inadequate for others; we have already said that a painter about to paint a sunset needs to know more about it than an author who describes or refers to it.

I am perfectly aware that you can imitate the sound of machinery verbally, you can make new words, you can write

pan-pam vlum vlum vlan-ban, etc.,

there are also mimetic words like *bow-bow* and *mao, miaou,* in Greek, Chinese, Egyptian, and other tongues, imitating the noises of animals; but these are insufficient equipment for the complete man of letters, or even for national minstrelsy. The mechanical man of futurist fiction is false pastoral, he can no more fill literature than could the bucolic man. This is perhaps an aside.

I take it that music is the art most fit to express the fine quality of machines. Machines are now a part of life, it is proper that men should feel something about them; there would be something weak about art if it couldn't deal with this new content.

"Every concept, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form, it belongs to the art of that form."[1]

Machines acting in time space, and hardly existing save when in action, belong chiefly to an

(1) Essay on Gaudier-Brzeska and Vorticicm, 1914.

art acting in time space. Antheil has used them, effectively. That is a *fait accompli* and the academicians can worry over it if they like.

I take it there is another habit of thorough artists. They are constantly searching for the permanent elements in their art. This is a very different thing from being interested in embroideries and emollients and wanting to keep up electroplates.

The thorough artist is constantly trying to form the ideograph of "the good" in his art; I mean the ideograph of admirable compound-of-qualities that make any work of art permanent.

I think, too, that all thorough artists at the outset try to put down their ideas about this, verbally, and that their notes are usually in a fairly unintelligible jargon, having a meaning for themselves, and for a very limited number of other people.

This metaphysic doesn't always get printed. Its chief characteristics are extreme seriousness, and *reiteration:* n.b. reiteration of certain sentences which obviously mean more to the artist

than to the reader. This mass of verbiage must be taken rather as evidence of mental activity than as exposition of ideas.

The difference between this utterance and similar statements by lunatics is that the artist does attain precise utterance in his own medium. And from that precise utterance the interested reader may interpret, more or less, the artist's ambiguous, or more than ambiguous, verbal statements about life, cosmos, being, non-being, time, eternity, etc. (These are, often, no worse or no more ambiguous than the general and considered statements of professed philosophers.)

From such fragmentary and confused writing the intelligent observer will induce the fact that the artist is very gravely concerned with the bases of his art, and with the relations of that art to *everything else*. This is very different from preciosity; archæological preciosity; emollients; trimmings; connoisseurship; traditions regarding superfices, or the customs or fashions of the moment.

Hence the permanent resemblances of master-

work, the "revolutionary" nature of genius, the returns to the primitives, and so forth.

Antheil is supremely sensitive to the existence of music in time-space. The use of the term "fourth dimension" is probably as confusing in Einstein as in Antheil. I believe that Einstein is capable of conceiving the factor time as affecting space relations. He does this in a mode hitherto little used, and with certain quirks that had not been used by engineers before him; though the time element enters into engineering computations.

The x, y, and z axes of analytics would appear to me to provide for what Antheil calls the fourth dimension of music, the "oblique", but technical mathematical language is almost as obscure as Antheil's. The first of his piano sonatas shows perfectly clearly what he means. And a gang of African savages would probably illustrate what he means by the 'hole in time-space'.

As indication of his attempt to form the ideograph of the art, and *de quoi rêvent ces jeunes gens,* we turn to Antheil's criticism of other com-

posers, the turns of phrase, the abruptness recalling Gaudier's manifestos:

Despite his great admiration for Strawinsky we find (*Der Querschnitt*, Sommer, 1923): "the failure of Strawinsky, the only man who seemed rhythmically and musically gifted enough to reorganise the machineries of music".

". . . event of Strawinsky necessary, . . . antipode to the anæmic and unmusical but marvellously vertically-calculated music of Schönberg".

"In accepting Satie as a master, we see that he [Strawinsky] was nothing but a jolly Rossini, a real musician of terrific verve and musicality in whose hands every musical machinery had to undergo a transformation . . . a brave and jolly Rossini in an age where composers were occupied with improvising rhapsodically on music paper after the manner of Bartok, Ornstein, Szymanowski, Bloch, and the too-late-Rachmaninoffs, . . ." etc.

So much for your idols, and the china shop. There is in Antheil's notes a constant tirade against improvisation.

Then we come to appreciations, tempered: "Debussy great destructionist, evolved new musical locomotion of time; genius of French salon, inhabitant of pages of Madame Bovary   ease in which he passes from the ribbon on her dressing-table to the quietness of outdoors, never more than a mile from her house."

"His piano [Debussy's] breathes and undulates with ancestral tinkle . . . but soft and persuasive . . . can music be 'impressionistic'? is it not a term for painting alone?"

"Debussy is new and forever a great landmark in musical composition," i. e. because of his "new propulsion of time-spaces." "A what's-his-name Italian and the juggler Satie discovered and unfolded most of his nuances beforehand."

I take it this "what's-his name Italian" is Fanelli (*Tableau Symphonique,* 1883, etc.), to whom justice has long been overdue.

"Debussy, soul of ardent virgin, clear and sentimental implanted in great artistic nature."

Les Six "charming and fickle people. Everything they imitate with the utmost freshness and

understanding."

"Cataclysms: Wagner, Scriabine, Bloch. It is all a little fat. Bloch however has the memory of other things. He wants to be without fat."

"Sound vibrations are the strongest and most fluid space vibrations capable of a tangible mathematic."

(There are a number of pages full of such abstract statements which are interesting only after one has heard Antheil's music.)

" . . . in musical history names of great men, *eventually discerned only through the necessity which they have apart from others to create a new locomotion for their musicality*."

"Music, the adventure of time with space."

"Architecture static . . . impossible term in musical criticism . . . impressionism, still more imbecile term."

"Has anyone beyond Strawinsky brought forward a new propulsion of time-space, a new comprehension of musical mechanism?"

"Two men who resemble each other in mechanism but are total opposites in sensibility (1):

Ernest Bloch . . . Debussian-Javanese-Mongolian tonalities . . . essentially Jewish, voluptuous without being sentimental (2)." "Szymanowski . . . [his music] ranges from being infinitely precious to the soul-shattering, fat iridescence of Scriabine."

"Now, emphatically necessary to break forever from the fatness of Wagner."

" 'Afternoon of a Faun', despite his professed enmity toward Wagner, crammed with marvellous alchemised 'Tristan.' "

"Bartok, while sense of time-space in the violin sonata is essentially masterful and probably his own, has done much bird-stuffing with folk-songs of Hungary."

"Two ways music can not go: first, purely vertical—one is no longer satisfied with static sensuality that lacks adequate machinery to move it. Second, the purely horizontal, organisation of time-spaces in single plane no longer interesting."

Schönberg "whose musical machinery is based fundamentally upon Mendelssohn".

All of which appears to me to be very good sense. As to background and general æsthetics, limiting biography to a minimum: George Antheil, born Trenton, N. J., July 8, 1901, of Polish parents; taken to Poland at age of four, returned to America at fourteen, already composing canons and fugues, studied with Von Sternberg and Bloch; performing his own compositions with Berlin Philharmonic and other mid-European orchestras in 1922. Possibly the first American or American-born musician to be taken seriously.

If America has given or is to give anything to general æsthetics it is presumably an æsthetic of machinery, of porcelain baths, of cubic rooms painted with Ripolin, hospital wards with patent dustproof corners and ventilating appliances. Only when these spaces become clean enough, large enough, sufficiently nickel-plated, can a sense of their proportion and arrangement breed a desire for order, τὸ καλόν, in that arrangement; from which perhaps a beauty, a proportion of painting and architecture. There we must leave it.

But Antheil has made a beginning; that is in writing music that couldn't have been written before. "Interpreting," as the awful word is, his age, but doing it without the least trace of rhetoric. He is not local. His musical world is a world of steel bars, not of old stone and ivy. There are his analogies to Lewis's "Timon", to the "ice-blocks" of Picasso. There is the break from the negative (in the geometric sense) or suspended, fluid quality of Chopin and Debussy. There is edge. There is the use of the piano, no longer melodic, or cantabile, but solid, unified as one drum. I mean *single* sounds produced by multiple impact; as distinct from chords, which are in sort chains or slushes of sound. That the fifth sonata is built up on memories of peasant violins in Poland doesn't in the least break the unity of this series, or turn the work into romanticised reminiscence. It is the actual sound, time-spacing of this violin playing, i. e. the proper musician's content of it, not its literary associations, that George Antheil has utilised.

POSTSCRIPT. *July 1924.*

1. The old harmonists made a wire work, Antheil wants slabs of sound to construct his active time-machines. It may be necessary to fill in the gaps between the wires (the sacrosanct 1sts, 3ds, and 5ths,) even if it cause pain to some ears avid of succulence and insensitive to the major form.

2. "Rhythmic reiteration" as one objector has called it, is of course M. Strawinsky's personal property?

3. Postscript to the treatise, etc. The unsynthesized sub 7th.?

WILLIAM ATHELING

ATHELING

"William Atheling" wrote fortnightly in the *New Age* from 1917-20; he sympathised with Arnold Dolmetsch' opinions, he might very well have thought that music ended with Bach. He existed in order that I might study the actual sounds produced by performing musicians. He wrote in the hope of making it possible or easier for the best performers to do their best work in public rather than their worst or their middling. By this he meant that he liked hearing Moussorgsky, he preferred Russian bareness to the upholsteries of XIXth century Europe. He liked music with a strong horizontal action, preferring it to music which seems to steam up from the earth. He shared my interest in the fitting of *motz el son;* i. e. the fitting of words and tunes.

He found the Kennedy-Fraser's Hebridean re-

search of great interest, he approved of Le Roi Renaud; and of French folksong, if rigorously selected, as late as Le Pauvre Laboureur, and La Carmagnole. He regretted the lost culture of Henry Lawes. He enjoyed without much audible, though with a good deal of mute, opposition, the writers of Bel Canto: Caldara, Durante, and Carissimi.

In 1922 his marginalia were submitted to a "qualified musician" with the request that any general criticism therein, might be separated from the paragraphs dealing only with the success or failure of particular concerts (à la "Herr Wintergarten im Bechsteinsaal trat auf und wieder ab.", or "At this point the composer has drawn his inspiration from the soda-water font of Mendelssohn, in fact several cuckoos have laid their eggs in Mr. Elgar's nest, and he has patiently hatched them all", or; M. Mark Hambourg's playing presented no points of interest.")

In 1923 the siftings were submitted to George Antheil with the request that he mark any passages with which he violently disagreed, or which

seemed to him far too imbecile to be tolerated.

His scribblings on the edge of my typescript were intended for my eye alone; but it is sometimes more interesting to know what a man thinks than to know what he thinks prudent to say at a given moment. At any rate both M. Antheil and myself are so fed up with the alleged critics who try ever to appear omniscient, and who work not to express their thoughts but to establish their critical position; that we have preferred this extreme imprudence.

The notes can stay here as a manifesto of our angle of attack. There is the result of my twenty years work with monolinear verbal rhythms, my study of mediaeval music; and Antheil's solid fugal, contrapuntal, and harmonic training. There are certain forms of musical padding and rhetoric and mushiness with which we are both equally bored.

Atheling's notes are badly written; heaven knows they are in places platitudinous; but this platitude and the necessity for this platitude may be taken as a measure of certain very simple

things which contemporary performers, and not by any means the worst of them only, so often, and often so amazingly, do not know.

NOTES FOR PERFORMERS

by William Atheling, with marginalia emitted by George Antheil.

I. *The Piano,* February 1918

Why indeed the Piano? Apart from bickering over the tempered scale, though one can hardly accept the argument that it is no use bothering over inaccuracy of pitch that only one person in two hundred can perceive, people without absolute and pitch sense do, and do very often, get a certain very definite pleasure from correct playing, even if they are incapable of detecting a single error, or even a series of errors save by a vague dissatisfaction or by an even slighter and more vague diminution of pleasure.

All keyboard instruments tend to make performers of people not born to be musicians; and the very fact that one can play a keyboard in-

strument quite correctly without in the least knowing whether a given note is in tune or is correct in itself, tends to obscure the value of true pitch. This perception, the first requisite of any player upon strings is therefore left, perhaps, wholly unconsidered by the piano student. The piano tuner is responsible for all that. His services are inexpensive. This argument might be used also against the earlier keyboard instruments although they were never sufficiently loud to drive out, or predominate, over the rest of the instruments. And they did not fill the building.

From initial carelessness about pitch, piano-playing has gradually progressed to a carelessness about actual sound. The attention that was centered in earlier music upon purity of tone, upon sound-quality, has been weakened and weakened till I have seen a composer of no small talent utterly impervious to the quality of the noise he was making.

(I presume the "timbre" is meant. G. A.)

The notes were in the right order; they followed each other as he intended; he was satisfied.

I long, perhaps not too vainly, for the day when the piano shall be as the hansom, which vehicle it not a little resembles, and when the pianist shall be as the cab-driver, so far as the concert hall is concerned. The instrument will abide with us yet, for there is the pianola attachment, and if, for some time, it is necessary to train acrobats to play Bach-Busoni for pianola records, surely human invention will lead to, and has already discovered, a means for making the records direct. The future composers will do his work, not with a pen but a punch. "You couldn't pack a Broadwood half a mile," says Mr. Kipling, but there is always the gramophone.

(I bow gracefully. Several years. G. A.)

At least "it took me back twenty years." Have we not all, with the shades of Murger, with the well-known death mask gaping at us, and with the plaster cast of the drowned girl hanging in

the other corner, have we not all of us known the charm? (The Schumann quality that has been read into Chopin by generations of conservatoire young ladies; to the obscuring of Chopin's austerity.)

It was the studio "mood" opposed to the piano of Sir Frederic Leighton and the Leightonians, the instrument at which the very young mother sits with her numerous well-washed, fresh offspring clambering about her, receiving the cultural rudiments.

I do not say that I am above the studio manner; that I would not willingly recall the past; forget my bald spot. "Four and forty times would I," as Mr. Kipling has it, listen to the wailful note as the more reserved couple wait until it's time to walk home, and the less reserved, or more "bohemian" couple hold hands under the sofa cushion,—Jugend, Jugend, Jugend! and the inefficient illustrator (aged sixty) who once hoped to paint like Raphael, looks at the ceiling or the performer.

But what has all this to do with the concert-

hall? A certain crop of female pianists always hoped to produce in the concert-hall the atmosphere of the studio; to bring to the hoarse old gentleman from the Thames valley and to the large-waisted lady from Roehampton a "breath of the real meaning", to "show them that life " and sometimes the female pianist succeeded After the final uncalled for encore, when all but her dearest friends had left the building. Nevertheless the concert-hall is not the studio. Some musicians may actually play better in studios, they may derive force from the "atmosphere", or the company may blur the critical senses, but these things do not concern the concert-hall. The magnetic theory is invalid.

(In fact the concert-hall has nothing at all to do with the studio. It is its enemy, thank God. I prefer the excusable boredom of the classics to the young gentleman who "sketches" Chopin out with the new knowledge of a Cyril Scott. G. A.)

The magnetic theory is invalid. No performer can rely on emotionalising the audience.

(One must try as hard as Brancusi's bird. Finished! Why worry? The hysteria is there. G. A.)

Music in a concert-hall must rely on itself and the perfection of its execution; it is, as it were, under glass. It exists on the other side of the footlights, apart from the audience. With apologies to the language, the audience are spectators, they watch a thing of which they are not part, and that thing must be complete in itself. They may be moved by the contemplation of its beauty, they are not moved—or at least can be moved only in an inferior and irrelevant way—by being merged into the action of the stage.

(Push this a little further and you have my theory of absolutism, ffff *and* pppp *are as sentimental as the insufficient painter nuancing up his messes. G. A.)*

Hundreds of musical careers have been muddled because performers have not understood how entirely the music must lead its own life;

(My dear E. P. hundreds of musical careers have been ruined because there was no such thing in the people. G. A.)

must have its own separate existence apart from the audience; how utterly useless it is to try to mix up audience and performance.

(Which all reminds me that I once had a friend who always said "I might have become a great pianist if . . ." Tommyrot! G. A.)

March 1918

A concert in a concert-hall is a performance, a presentation, not an appeal to the sympathies of the audience *(Yes. G. A.)* It is, or should be, as definitely a presentation or exhibition as if the performer were to bring out a painted picture and hang it before the audience *(Yes, yes, why not? G. A.)* The music must have as much a separate existence as has the painting. It is a malversion of art for the performer to beseech the audience (via the instrument) to sympathise with his or her temperament, however delicate or plaintive or distinguished.

(By the way that reminds me that the emotionalism you speak of is the performer's dramatic disguise. When listening to music why not listen for *music. Musical art assuredly can come*

only out of the very inmost secrets of musical line. Why not come out and out with it and say that music is no Goddamn circus. G. A.)

From the "studio" manner (in concert-halls), from the domestic manner.

(Great mistake to confuse it with music. G. A.)

from the rural church manner, and from the national festival manner,

(Ditto. Politics is no field for a music critic. G. A.)

may the surviving deities protect and deliver us! They have not, they do not, but we do not cease to pray that they may achieve it.

(The studio manner is the kindergarten method for young radical ladies. G. A.)

An era of bad taste probably gathers to itself inferior matter from preceding periods. An indiscriminate rummaging in the past does not help to form a tradition.

(A splendid turn for Mr. Casella, Malipiero, Prokofieff, and the Six. G. A.)

A sense of rhythm covers many defects.

(One might say almost all. G. A.)

The pain caused to the ear by occasional horrid sounds is quickly obliterated in the succeeding flow of the music. Singers hoping for platform success will do well to notice this.

(This is the whole thing in a nutshell, not only of singers, but of all platform artists. Ninety per cent of failures are due to absolute incapability in the primary rudiments of music—rhythm! How can they hope to be musicians—not even an excuse! Printed notes laid before them and keyboard instruments. Everything laid out and planned for the unmusical! Back to the troubadour! I mean ninety per cent are not musicians, trained, born or anything. G. A.)

A drag, a lack of the wave force, deadens, tires, utterly wears out the audience. Rhythm-sense is not merely a tempo measure, it is not merely a clock-work of the bar-lengths. Measured time is only one form of rhythm; but a true rhythm-sense assimilates all sorts of uneven pieces of time, and keeps the music alive.

Lawes' work is an example of how the words

of a poem may be set, and enhanced by music. There are different techniques in poetry; men write to be read, or spoken, or declaimed, or rhapsodised; and quite differently to be sung. . .

(By the way, most songs are written for the wrong kind. G. A.)

Words written in the first manners are spoiled by added music; it is superflous; it swells out their unity into confusion.

When skilled men write for music then music can both render their movement, as Lawes does often, tone by tone, and quantity by quantity; or the musician may apparently change the word-movement with a change that it were better to call a realisation. Music is not speech. Arts attract us because they are different from reality. Emotions shown in actual speech poured out in emotion will not all go into verse. The printed page does not transmit them, nor will musical notation record them phonographically.

(Ha! The famous Antheil notation to the rescue! G. A.)

But for all that, a certain bending of words or of syllables over several notes may give an emotional equivalent.

This is an art by itself, differing from poetry, and from the art of harmony or of counterpoint. Nevertheless, it has occasionally and triumphantly appeared in the world, and is well worth an effort to recover.

(Yes, it is an end to which both arts are struggling. The future is too dark for a prophecy. G. A.)

Lawes was English of the English, he was no obscure man in his day, being a King's musician and a man lauded of poets. He did not fall a prey to the pigheaded insularity of the British Association of Musicians; he did not shun foreign competition.

He set a poem of Anacreon's in the Greek, and he set songs in Italian and Latin. He was, for all I know, the last English composer to know Greek. Our decadence may be due to the fact that the educated are now too stupid to participate in the arts. This lack of lineage

shows in modern art in all its branches. As a French singer said to me yesterday: "When those people (English artists, composers, etc.) have done (i. e., written, painted, composed) anything, they seem to think that that is the end, and that there is nothing to be done about it."

October 1918.

The second season must be worse than the first for any critic who designs impartiality. If a performer has once bored you to death it is, in the first place, very difficult to drag yourself to hear him again; and if this reluctance be overcome it is still difficult not to carry with you a touch of resentment for the initial annoyance. Conversely, it is difficult when one has been delighted by a player not to arrive at his second performance with a certain readiness to attribute all his faults to chance. Even so we may take it as unlikely that any performer over 45 is likely to receive a wholly new musical intelligence or to develop a new and ravishing charm. If a man is going to change from an egoistic tem-

peramental impresser of schoolgirls to a serious musician the change should happen before he is much past thirty-five.

(I do not think that young virtuosi should follow the spirit of the older virtuosi either. For instance, the young virtuoso, B., is playing Chopin romantically with both public and critics wildly acclaiming him. Chopin with heavy neo-German-Russian romanticism! Chopin à la Schumann! Chopin in the grand manner! Synthetic calculation that the largest and most colossal manner is the finest! We cannot expect a young man to develop a new characteristic if he is recreating masterpieces, sure-fire, by synthesis. G. A.)

The aim of this present musical criticism[1] is to make it possible for the best performers to present their best work; for them to give concerts under present conditions without making any concession whatsoever to ignorance and bad taste. Beyond that one might have ambitions,

[1] i. e. Criticism contained in notes on current concerts.

both of developing the discretion of a possible public, and of actually enlightening young or untrained musicians (or even elderly amateurs) concerning their own shortcomings, and their possible avenues of improvement. Do bad musicians attend good concerts?

(Yes, but they don't like them. A bad musician will only admit a name so well-known that there can be no question about it. He is a bad musician because he has no "guts" anyway. G. A.)

In several cases where great proficiency and obviously great experience in public performance are coupled with overmastering dulness, one would suggest that every piece of music worth presenting in public has a *meaning*. The composer presumably felt something, and equally wished to express something by his fugue, étude, or sonata. My statement is simple, and platitudinous; but correct detail and even that rarer thing, correct architectonics, will not hold the better attentions unless the performer have, beyond a concept of the composer's style and

a style for representing it, some intention of expressing the unifying emotion or emotions of the particular piece. It is by no means necessary that these emotions be the same as were the composer's, but the performer must think both "Bach" and "Ciaconna" if he is to give the piece with effect. He must unite his general feel of the composer to his particular concept of the piece to be given.

(I misread this word for "contempt" at first. Why a "style" and "intention"? Why not, instead of an "emotion," a dynamism, a vitality? G. A.)

We might almost lay it down as axiomatic that a song must be sung in its original language. . . the perfect union of word and note is so subtle and rare a thing that, once attained, no substitute is likely to give satisfaction unless the translator be a great technician, able to support treble the technical difficulty which faced the original poet.

(Yes, once the words are polished into the music. G. A.)

Moussorgsky has his place beyond all the other Russians. You cannot compare Music since Beethoven with the early thin music which is like delicate patterns on glass. Since Beethoven people have thought of music as of something with a new bulk and volume. Beyond all the floridity and pretence of Wagner are these Russians, and beyond them Moussorgsky, like the primordial granite.

(I think Moussorgsky is the connecting link between Wagner and Strawinsky. Debussy existed somewhere out of the connection, like Chopin. G. A.)

There is a certain satisfaction in a concert which knows its own mind and which gives you some one thing in sufficient bulk to provide basis for an opinion; thus in Rosing's all-Russian programme we had Russia, from Nevstruoff who is "so Russian," who is so the bleak spirit of the steppes that he makes you understand the Russian reaction towards all sorts of gew-gaws and floridities, bright colour for costume, admiration of Wagner, Parisianism; we had Russian music

from this bleakness of Nevstruoff to Moussorgsky who, to my mind at least, lifts Russian music above all other music of the epic tone, Moussorgsky who is of the "heroic" mould without any sham heroics, without Wagnerian padding and rhetoric. We had Russia from the steppes to the part of Russia which is oriental, a landlocked people in the main.

November 1918.

The Kennedy-Frasers in the Hebridean music gave us equally an epitome of a whole racial civilisation (with whatever deprivation of luxury you like, the people who produced such art must be termed a civilised people). This music is full of sea-splash as the Russian is of plain bleakness and winter-bleakness. It has the wave-pull and wave-sway in place of the foot-beat of the hopak. It has also its mouth-music for dancing (Hin, hin halla lal a) to match any present-day Jazz that Afro-America has sent over to us.

(I am beginning to get annoyed with Americans who tell me that jazz will be the music of the future. Young prodigy-composers from the

U. S. writing classic jazz in four-four beat throughout. My God, the African negroes have the American negroes stopped a mile for every kind of rhythmic and musical effect. American whites must have a bad effect upon their negroes, don't you think? G. A.)

It has its rhythmic validity and variety in labour songs, not to be read by the metronome, but which have their diverse beats and pauses determined by the age-lasting rhythm of the craft, cloth-clapping, weaving, spinning, milking, reaping. And in this connection damn the young gentleman who said to me: "I don't go in so much for rhythm. I'm temperamental." Another chance phrase in a corridor, "Very interesting, but it needs the Kennedy-Frasers to sing it."

These phrases are a fair summary of the blight of English music since it has been a genteel, suburban accomplishment.

(That is exactly what is the matter with American music. Even jazz has lost its bite, the negroes are upon Broadway and in the Little

Review, and everything is becoming genteel. G. A.)

I have walked about London streets before, during and after "peace night." The sense of rhythm is not dead in this island. I have heard costers singing not only with rhythm but also with true tone, as true as you would find among boasted continental singers. An "artistic" nation would have taken its singers from the donkey-barrows and coster carts. Even La Duse still calls herself "contadina," and once wore the Venetian black shawl. But no, the black curse of Cromwell, and the anathema of Victoriana and genteelness have put a stop to that sort of permeation in England, and the concert-performer is chosen from the exclusively eviscerated strata of the community.

(How funny it must be in England. G. A.)

The result is that these women come down here from "North Britain" and drive one to learning Gaelic. These Hebridean melodies are the only "English" music possessed of the needful vigour. Mrs. Kennedy-Fraser's settings are

not the vegetarian school of folk-song.

We have in these Hebridean songs a music which has escaped the mediaeval ecclesiastical enervation.

(So has the music in Africa, but should you bring the negroes to Paris in numbers you would either have them in church or putting little frizzes upon the little French tunes at the "Casino de Paris." Voilà, look at America. We have to look for the corners in our own music. G. A.)

Other modern music in western Europe has had to work its way slowly and in attenuation from the dominance of "harmless" and innocuous modes.

And even now the academies which resurrect South-European mediaeval melodies furnish them with proper four-square under-pinnings à la the most approved Johann-Sebastian.

These Hebridean songs, like such Russian songs as Rosing gave us, have subject-matter. They are not cooked up for a concert hall. Every song is about something. Thus there is

a difference between one song and the next.

For the auditor seriously concerned with music this question of "performance" is a trifle, but for meeting the practical question of giving the best possible music under today's concert hall conditions these details are worth considering. It is the artist's and critic's place to see that the best can compete advantageously with the vulgarest.

(Dear E. P. Everybody knows that the business of critics of the great music trade journals is to push the vulgarest music possible. They stop only when the game is taken out of their hands by the ragtime publishers. Criticism, musically, is politics and business. G. A.)

For all its virtues, the modern French school of song will not hold its own when sung with really good art of good periods. It glows by comparison with modern Italian and modern English settings.

. . .In especial we note in the oriental quality of Moussorgsky's "*Foire de Sorotchinsky,*" the light that never was on sea or land, the Cole-

ridge-Keats ambition, the casements on seas forlorn. Moussorgsky has always some mastery to distinguish him in whatever company he is found.

Nevstruoff's *"Poor Wanderer"* is excellent, but from it one comprehends the Russian desire for foreignness, for French neatness, and even German upholstery. Russian music is not all of music. It has a greater place in world-music than is yet accorded it.

February 1919.

Tchaikowsky: a certain cheapness is imminent in this composer. He is not cheap all the time, or even, perhaps, most of the time but he keeps one in a state of anxiety.

(Strawinsky imitates him but then one loses all anxiety: as S. says "music need be neither good nor bad." It must be one thing or the other—sic: good or bad. G. A.)

*A concert lasts an hour and a half; it is not an organic composition like an act, or the

* Paragraphs preceded by * are deleted from Mr. Antheil's typescript copy.

whole, of an opera or a symphony. The element of main form must be supplied. I have already written about various means for variety. Beyond them, one should introduce a certain number of songs with more or less symmetrical wave lengths; something with a discernible and regular metre... The element of "regular" rhythm is often (probably without consciousness or design) supplied by the "classic" numbers familiar at the beginning of concerts.

*...one cannot be expected to sit through the poems of E. Wheeler Wilcox whoever set them or sing them.

*The weakness of these modern French musicians is that their music rises and falls in value exactly in proportion with the literary quality of the words; these composers cannot hide or improve a banality of the poems which they use.

This is not a fatal defect, but it demands a double care for literature on the musician's part. You can always tell from words on the programme whether the music will be interesting.

*"It will be safe to assume" that a KENNEDY-

FRASER concert will have certain glorious moments, moments unique in the season's concert-hearing. M. Kennedy-Fraser has, definitely, genius. I do not overwork that word in these columns, and I use it to denote a certain profound intuition and emotional knowledge of the subject.

The music of free period, of a constantly varying phrase-length and rhythm-length is a freedom from fixed lengths, but the symmetry must underlie, and the sense of this symmetry must be kept fresh and vivid, if not in the consciousness, at least in the subconsciousness of the performer... The pitfalls of enthusiasm, particularly of irresponsible other-people's enthusiasm are numberless, numberless, and ubiquitous.

(The fine great-chested virtuosi are never enthusiastic without a system. G. A.)

April 1919.

If there is a literate class in England, it does not go in for music. And if there are English musicians with anything like general culture,

they are screened assiduously from the public gaze.

Thematic invention in music has coincided with periods when musicians were intent on poetry, intent on the form and movement of words. Thematic invention is the weakest spot in contemporary music *everywhere*. The rhythms of French are less marked, but only in France do we find a careful study of the verbal qualities. I do not think I have shown any delirious or unbalanced appreciation of the modern French, but among their song-setters are practically the only contemporary song-setters whom one can respect.

English contemporary poetry is, I suppose, very dull, and there is very little rhythmic invention in it; but even so, writers intent on melody would, if they were serious in their technical intention, make greater effort to combine with musicians, and musicians would attempt to learn something from authors about the meeting-points of the two arts. As it is, the musicians' attitude towards the lyric is too apt to be "Get

me something that I can end on a high note. Got to make some money." Players will not practice for trios and quartettes; there is no place or company where any number of writers and musicians meet to try new experiments of an "unpractical nature." I recently met a poet who wanted a poem set to cymbals and cello in order to develop or illustrate the tonality of his words. The man is "of course" a lunatic. No Chappell-Ballad-minded aggregation would tolerate such departure from suburban custom. A "song" is words set to py-ano music. It doesn't matter what words.

(The difficulty of getting even "revolutionary" musicians to reinstate certain instruments once in good standing, is also of interest. E. P. seven years later.)

It is not the business of the business-like song-setter to express anything, or to find poems worth further musical developments, or poems in which the verbal rhythm contains the germ of larger musical structure. All of which is very lamentable.

The artist must have a faint touch of fanaticism *somewhere* in his nature. Heaven knows that fanaticism in excess is worse than garlic in excess, but...

*...we noticed also how STUPID Liszt was, and how little he knew about chords.

Stupidity is not an asset in the arts. Passion is as blind as you like, and it sweeps over intellectual subtleties in the drive upon its own truth, but there is a fundamental stupidity in some natures, composing and writing natures, against which no perserverance or labour is any avail. Liszt was stupid. You can make impressive sounds on the piano while playing Liszt, but you can not completely conceal his fundamental and congenital and ineradicable lack of intelligence, his lack of susceptibility. He would try to make a watch go by beating it with a potatomasher.

(I am tired of fire-eaters, ten cent stores, cheap vaudeville.

Sheer brilliance alone is about done in for. Witness Liszt's tone poems, Strauss' "Salomé"

and Strawinsky's "Oiseau de Feu." We are gradually tiring of old whisker'd Rimsky-Korsakoff dressed in Johnny's knickerbockers and rolling a hoop. G. A.)

...*the easy tolerance of the operatic era is waning. Opera is a diffuse form; it was made to cover light afterdinner conversation; the exigeant audience which concentrated its attention on careful Mediaeval canzoni had given way to eighteenth century fluster.

...*let us admit that it is a good thing for singers to get off the beaten track and hunt up music that is lying in desuetude.

Opera was best in court conditions. It is for an audience that drifts together for social reasons and which wishes the social pressure to be loosened, the necessity for conversation to be diminished. Concert conditions are much more the condition of song-competition, "Preislied."

(Today the swifter young crowd are taking up vaudeville in the same way. The most fashionable way is according to the guiding principles in "The Seven Lively Arts.")

...the blunt-wittedness of contemporary musicians, and their general incapacity for literary choice and selection.

"Music in stucco" is certainly the proper designation for a great and damnable category.

May 1919.

*It requires a certain nerve to appear in religious dimness with a futurist lampshade and to play from the printed page.

*Memory is not, however, the supreme faculty; and if a performer can use printed notes instead of memory without detriment to his or her performance I see no reason against it. [horror of all academic and established heads of musical seminaries!]

...personality—a quality more apt to enrich one's private life than to draw swift and easy public success.

(Anyone with a capacity for grinning has a "pleasing stage personality." G. A.)

I have before propounded the theory that Chopin was *not* the De Musset of music.

Then Franck ran near to the danger zone where music verges into noise.

(Yes, a kind of silvery, angelic, unbearable noise. G. A.)

One remarks his ability, and then, to get one's estimate into some sort of scale and proportion, one thinks that Chopin would have expressed an equal amount of whatever this series was intended to express with half the number of digital impacts.

*Neither Prudhomme nor Victor Margueritte were poets of first rank; and the modern French composers are utterly at the mercy of the poets whose words they set.

Debussy as I have indicated before, was a glorious heresy. He writes for the excitement of phantasmagoria, for the evocation of visual imaginations, and in just so far as he does this his work is unorthodox and off the true track of music. It is definitely an heresy, a beautiful and bewildering heresy, which should have its own converts and enthusiasts; but it is no mortal use trying to play his music as if it were "pure", as if it

were simply "sound" arranged into time and pitch patterns for the expression of emotion. And if the player be not initiate into this realm of evoked images, he or she will never play Debussy as anything but an outsider.

(Bravo! G. A.)

*Dupin was an engine-wiper. His work does not take one on first hearing, I am inclined to think that it was a vigour more apparent when taken in contrast with his etiolated contemporaries than when contrasted with authentic wild music.

Tinayre, Stroesco, and Rosing are all, as I have indicated repeatedly, worth hearing and totally different.

*Mendelssohn put some sort of melodic line into "Recit" of "Rend your Hearts" and a deal of sentimentality into the arts and *anyway* he might be left to the Albert-Hall.

We have already said that there is no reason why Johann Sebastian Bach's processional should be saddled with words stating that he has lost his Jesu. The song results in a fine, jocund,

robust proclamation that the obviously *bien portant* and untroubled protagonist is brought "to despair". Every note calls the author a liar. Bach of course had to play his music in church, and it was but natural that he should enjoy himself... I can still recall a village organist in similar plight doing "Lamb, lamb, lamb!" at choir practice, it was not the celebrated "paschal" lamb either. Rag-time is quite fine on a pipe organ. Still the ecclesiastical censorship does not pertain to music performed in Bond Street, and one might have some honest secular words set to that Guards' march.

...The best poets have been nature poets only incidentally. Nature appears here and there in their work, but is not singled out for their subject-matter. Whatever "religion and Christianity" may still mean to the populace and to the modern heath-dweller, religion as exploited by artists of the last century has been mostly exploited as convenient furniture and not from any inner necessity.

The *first* artist to take up any neglected folk

element has, historically, nearly always scored a success.

"Le Pauvre Laboureur" said to be of the XVIth century, a finer pre-Marseillaise, with a detached or impersonal, dispassionate passion, a stasis inciting to no action, yet with deepest feeling in its melody.

Le pauvre laboureur
L'a deux petits enfants,
Ils mènent la charrue,
N'ont pas encore quinze ans !. . .

And the magnificent finale:

Il n'est ni roi ni prince,
Ni ducque ni seigneur,
Qui n'vive de la peine
Du pauvre laboureur.

The poignancy and the simplicity of poetic statement are matched with the formulation of the music and when I compare this with the utter

tosh of sentimentality in four out of five of the lyrics set by Brahms I can but wonder again at the vogue of XIXth century favourites. I have been forced to look anew at Brahms' songs during the past few weeks, and I can only suppose people have accepted them because they have always heard them in a foreign tongue and taken no account of verbal meanings. But they are really much worse than I had ever suspected... with exceptions which can be very fine.

The Laboureur song dated the XVIth century reminds us, or might remind us, that democracy did not begin with the French Revolution; and that earlier authors had thought of the labour problem, for this song is not a song by a labourer, but by an observing and indignant poet of no mean attainment. Even Spain was not always a land of inquisitions, and there was democracy south of the Pyrenees, before the suppression of the Cortes in the ill days of Charles V.

I return again to the apparent insensitiveness of the modern audience to the word value of songs. Since Lawes and Waller collaborated, the

technique of English setting has been appalling. German, with its capacity for taking extremely heavy musical accent on thick and heavy syllables, has furnished the "lieder" and the lieder were emotionally effective... at least people adored them, and I don't know that anybody has taken the trouble to make a critical examination of their construction. A few fine poems, folk songs, poems of Heine, served as a cover for the rest. The modern French ran a counter movement, but were reputed to suffer etiolation. We want more discontent with our lyrics, and a stricter examination of claims.

June 1919.

Perhaps the critic's most difficult problem is the treatment of music which is not outrageous enough to merit condemnation nor yet quite good enough to stir interest. The finer shades and varieties of this mediocrity are more bother to the critic

(Yes! they bother the "ultra modern" critics fearfully. G. A.)

than either the execrable or the excellent.

. . . the music was played as most of Schubert deserves to be played, namely with that art of the "better" restaurant or "usual" theatre orchestra, more or less brisk and more or less tearfully sentimentalish . . . with food, or under some propitious emotional circumstances, the music might have assisted in keeping one stationary.

(One must never be suddenly jarred in either a restaurant or a concert hall. One eats food in the first and digests it in the second. Imagine the effect of the Sacre on "The old gentleman who must be careful."

The average concert and "better" restaurant music are identical. Food represents the basic problem of the race. G. A.)

*The whole *lieder* school is wrong, and it needs only a slightly unfavourable condition to rub in the fact. The whole *genre* is wrong. This does not prevent there being a certain number of acceptable lieder, but the more one examines them the less satisfactory they appear. The Victorian ballad is the natural and lamentable result of trying to bring the lieder into English.

To be popular a song must not only appeal to the silliness of the populace but it must be doable without skill or effort.

(One in the eye for 99% of the "great" public and their "Great" virtuosi. G. A.)

There is no copy of Henry Lawes' three volumes of "Ayres and Dialogues" at the little second-hand music shop in Great Turnestyle, but the kindly proprietor is good enough to look up old sale catalogues. The last set went for £49. Dolmetsch' arrangements of some of this old music are out of print. Only in a nation utterly contemptuous of its past treasures and inspired by a rancorous hatred of good music could this state of affairs be conceivable. I have bought Waller's poems for a shilling. Yet Lawes' position in English music is proportionally much more important than Waller's position among English poets.

This condition of things is more eloquent of the debasement and utter contemptibility of British music publishers and the slovenly igno-

rance of British so-called musicians than the laws of libel permit me to attempt to express in these columns.

This whilom "next of singing birds" is apparently on its last roost.

*The value of the old instruments, harpsichords, spinets, clavicords, viols da gamba, is more in that they induce the player and hearer really to listen to the quality of sound produced than in that they render the old music with veracity. This latter advantage is, however, far from negligible. No one really understands counterpoint who has heard it only with the blare of modern instruments or the plugging of the piano. Neither is there any means so effective for developing a pianist's sense of sound-quality as practice on the clavicord.

*Chopin presumeably excels all piano-composers of the nineteenth century because his memory embraced the sound of the earlier keyboard instruments. A person *learning* piano-playing on the piano is simply ignorant of a great many kinds of sound, *some* of which can be ren-

dered on the piano by a person whose mind and imagination contain them.

*The advantage in ensemble playing is that the harpsicord and spinet "go with" the strings, whereas the piano does not, but is practically always an inruption.

October 1919.

... a fair test of the real art of the ballet, as distinct from fortuitous conflict of several arts in one performance, is whether one does hear the music.

(The dancing ought forcibly to draw attention to the music—or else it is a social affair. G. A.)

The perfect song occurs when the poetic rhythm is in itself interesting, and when the musician augments, illumines it, without breaking away from, or at least without going too far from the dominant cadences and accents of the words; when ligatures illustrate the verbal qualities, and the little descants and prolongations fall in with the main movements of the poem.

Were there a really critical audience, it would

insist on each performer doing the thing he does best—at least in public. (One does not wish to interfere with people's private diversions.)

This limitation of one's art is perhaps a French gift; the artist should find himself in some mode in which he can use all or nearly all his gifts to the best advantage, and where his limitations will least affect the complete presentation of the subject-matter.

Shakespeare put in "Hey-nonny-nonnys", so that the musician might have his fun without upsetting poetry. Mozart was much more important than his librettist (even when he had Metastasio to write words for him). But there is a certain kind of emphasis and there are certain effects of veracity which cannot be given by music of this school.

December 1919.

*There is a wealth of fine English poetry[1] unset, there is crying need for a musician who can think more of the beauty of the poem than

[1] *Erasure very vigorous at this point.

of his pustulent egoism and of his desire to be the leading "modern British composer".

*A freedom of detail can only be durably effective if the sense of inner form is strong; one cannot hammer upon this too often; the musician or verse-writer who has the sense of form ingrained may take liberties in some safety, liberties which are fatal if the sense of form is not imminent, hovering, present without being obvious, but still present

January 1920.

The Pye-ano, Ge-entlemen, the PYE-ano is the largest musical instrument known to man, with the possible exception of the Steam Calliope whistle or Fog Signal and the three-barrelled pipe-organ; of which the pipe-organ has one chief and especial merit, namely and to wit, its stability. I mean, "Where it is thare it rests", whereas the pye-ano may, with four fat men and considerable difficulty, be moved from one spot to another (Mr. Kipling to the contrary notwithstanding); all of which is no reason for pye-ano recitals outnumbering all other concerts three to

one, or seven to one, or seventeen to one in the damp season.

(There is no more fun being a virtuoso. G. A.)

The future of piano music lies in the Jazz, and we may soon expect a much louder and more varied contraption with xylophone, whistle, and gong attachment in the treble octaves and solid steel bars in the bass. This new and forthcoming implement should, from present indications, present most of the advantages over the pye-ano that the original forte-piano did to its predecessors.

(Naturally. The one who screams the loudest is the greatest genius according to the new American standards—but don't get out of four-four time ever—my God. G. A.)

. . . rhythm is made not merely by a correct division of music into bars of equal time-length, but also by a pluck and impact of accent.

(We MUST *have something we can understand and that is* MODERN. *Paint over the tin-lizzy like a Rolls-Royce. G. A.)*

*Berlioz was indubitably competent, and one

might be interested in his technique if Wagner hadn't buried him full fathoms fifteen.

*Piano concertos! At its birth the forte-piano seems to have turned people's heads; even so sensible a man as Thomas Jefferson ordered a forte-piano. Apologists claim that the earliest pianos preserved some of the qualities of the harpsicord.

*The present instrument[1] is a sort of cheap substitute for the orchestra, the only instrument with enough variety and range to give a sort of shorthand account of music too complicated for a fiddle or 'cello or cornet. But to play a piano *with* an orchestra is anathema. It is the sum total of fatuous imbecility and to prove it there is in Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto, in this Commodus of music, not one motif or melody or salient line given to the piano which would not be more effective if it were played on any other instrument in the orchestra. Violon, oboe, flute, 'cello, tympani, any, absolutely *any*, of these instruments lifting a significant phrase from the body of the orchestral sound would be more ef-

[1] Ditto.

fective; and there is demonstration of it whenever any other instrument or instruments is or are given a phrase to itself or themselves.

Piano soloists are praised for their "varied *orchestral*" effects; but why use these substitutes when the richer medium is at hand? If a mania for pianos swept over Europe during an unfortunate period, can we not forgive, or at any rate forget, and let the piano concerto go to the proper scrap-heap of experiment, meritorious in its day, but no longer fit for conversation?

Arne's precision came[1] as an improvement on Schumann. Conventions he had, but after the "conventionalities of the operatic" etc., there was no eighteenth century convention of Arne which was not dew-fresh and full of pleasurability.

The last movement of Korsakov's Scherazade suite is a triumph of orchestration. The mastery is everywhere present, one notes the perfect scale and graduation from one instrument, from the delicacy of the solo violin to the massed thunder

[1] *i. e. in the concert in question.*

of the whole ensemble of instruments; here for once one has the whole demonstration of causes why the orchestra has superseded chamber music, why this huge instrument has swept away so much of the fine work made for instruments of smaller calibre.

Scriabin, "Poème d'Extase"... Coates showed his realisation of the capacities of his orchestra, but the *extase* is senescent, it is manifestly not the *extase* of youth; the long beginning is like the prose of its era, heavy as Henry James or as Charles-Louis Philippe, fin de siècle, of an extreme and laborious sophistication, Coates doing admirably, Scriabin conscientiously avoiding the obvious in everything save the significance, and treating one of the oldest topics with anatomic minuteness, though possibly unconscious of his humour, anatomic even to the notes given on the triangle, spurring one to quotation from Gautier's "Carmen". The double basses superb, but one longed, possibly, for the older spirit of English May-day. It is too late to emend the title; we quarrel with no work of art because of a title

lightly or sarcastically given, but we think Scriabin would have been kinder to his audience if he had labelled this poem "Satire upon an Old Gentleman", or possibly "Confessions of an old gentleman in trouble", supposing all the time he "knew". We entertain doubts, however, as to just how far his awareness extended.

While the public can find orchestral concerts (price the same) it is a little difficult to discover why they go at all to piano recitals, and with the flow of time one rather wonders at young men taking up the piano as a profession. The onus upon the solo-pianist is very heavy; if he divides his concert with a vocalist, he becomes, at once, second fiddle; and to entertain an audience for an hour or more with nothing but a piano is exceedingly difficult, and it grows more and more difficult as the public becomes more and more familiar with piano repertoire.

... the maximum emotional effect of singing is gained by presentation and not by sentimentality.

The Marseillaise is possibly the only na-

tional anthem that can be raised to the status of music by competent singing.

Psychological speculation, or, rather, pathological: the pleasure of *playing* a piano with orchestra, as opposed to *hearing* a piano played with orchestra, is explicable on the grounds of exhilaration. The feeling that one is being so accomplishedly agile, so ripplingly and dashingly efficient as to get one's fingers onto all the notes in good time with the conductor probably sustains the *player;* he gets the same physical pleasure as he might from quick and clever use of the foils in a fencing bout; he has no attention left for auditory sensation. Parallel case: that of the inebriated or excited talker who imagines he or she is being "brilliant" merely because of rapid trajectory.

February 1920.

It is probable that bar-ends should be clearly marked, but this line of demarcation is geometric; it should have no thickness; above all, it should not be a dead stop stock-still, requiring

each time a subsequent heave to "start 'er agayne".

As a record of what things have existed, two or three pieces of Mendelssohn's should be played annually by Cernikoff[1] at the Royal College of Music, for the enlightenment and warning of students. This would be quite enough Mendelssohn for one year, and even a demonstration in alternate years might be sufficient.

The Schumann "Carnaval" was given as literature, and it has the durability of literature . . . one definitely sees the "given concentration of knowledge on the given portion of surface". (Put aside quibbles on terms "Knowledge", "intelligence", etc., one does not get the needful *concentration* of these without emotion or passion either present or foregoing.)

In estimating the piano (not as played by pyanists, but in its capacity) one must admit that it is the only modern instrument upon which the

[1] This from a full article in appreciation of Cernikoff as a connoisseur. E. P.

solo player can exercise so much musical knowledge and comprehension. It is louder than the spinet or clavicord, it has mechanical advantages over the harpsicord, and is probably less trouble to keep in order. It will reign supreme in the parlour until the pianola and the gramophone have democratised it out of existence. It is, from the auditor's point of hearing, inferior to the orchestra. Public demonstrations of the instrument are in great part incubatorial, designed for and attended by people who wish to pianise. A great artist can get music out of this instrument. So can some players from a brass string and a cigar-box. A few piano recitals each year are worth hearing.

March 1920.

The average of this modern French stuff is poor; now that the novelty is worn off, one is soon bored with the eternal hurry and slow-up, the continued waste of musical means employed by this school.

The labour lilts illustrate at each Kennedy-Fraser concert the value of some rhythm-base

more diversified than English accentual prosody made in not very inspired imitation of mediaeval degenerations from the Latin imitation of Greek quantitative metres. The Oriental and African division of music into raga and tala, i. e. rhythm-tune and pitch-tune, is probably more fecund in diversity. The churn, the loom, the spinning-wheel, the oars, all give splendid bases for distinctive rhythms which can never degenerate into the monotony of mere iambs and trochees. They keep their essential differences as even dance tunes cannot. Even so the real feel of moving feet which is so often the soul of thematic invention in Bach and Mozart, is increasingly rare in music.

Words help thematic invention only so long as the musicians are sensitive to shades of different verbal quantity. The charm of Mozart, if one can analyze it, seems often to lie in a rare combination of notes which have musical structure, musical line, but which suggest, beyond these and simultaneously, dance steps and language.

Now if it is imbecile to sing ring-a-round-a-

rosy words with a serious meaning, it is doubly imbecile to sing such words when they do not even give good, open vowel sounds for the long notes and ligatures. In the "Ich habe genug" one might, so far as the notes are concerned, sing, "Two scones and butter were seen on the plate"; the auditory pleasure would be equal to that of hearing "There I too with Simeon the joy," etc. If we were to respect tradition as some people understand that word, we should have to preserve every idiocy of mankind. People have got used to cantatas and therefore they are, for some people, "good". They remind people of their lost youth. All right; but there is no reason why succeeding generations should not be reminded of different lost youths.

The stupid and customary traditionalist always stops at a set year, i. e., the year where his teacher taught him to stop. The customary traditionalist never goes to history when history is likely to trouble his stagnation. We presume that the Sequaire is the ancestor of the Cantata. Mediaeval choirs sang in descant on "amens" and

"hallelujahs," these descants got longer and longer, it became difficult to remember the long series of notes on mere vowel sounds, various writers, notably Goddeschalk then wrote in words to *fit* the notes of the descant. This produced the Sequaire and the fruit was a justification. But after the lapse of seven centuries it is no justification of the English translation of "Ich habe genug", which has no merits and does not fit the music. The statement that the protagonist "has enough" is doubly true of the auditor before the singer has forty-seven times bade him "softly sleep". As it is Bach there is, naturally, staunch melodic line and fine music.

Rounds and part songs are another matter altogether. In them the word-phrase holds the musical phrase in the minds of the different groups of singers. The cantata is merely a superstition, a keeping of structure after its function is gone.

April 1920.

I have never been able to determine how far various alleged oriental melodies, as concocted for example by Borodine or "recorded" and "ar-

ranged" by Salvador Daniel, have been mis-written in our notation, or how far the writing is really sound and *would* indicate the right manner of presentation. Salvador Daniel, if I remember rightly, scouts the idea of quarter tones, and argues that what insensitive ears have mistaken for quarter tones are really the odd pitches of Greek modality, modalities perhaps a little worn away with the centuries.

In especial one notes the "extraordinary" length of the rhythm pattern units, comparable to the medieval rhyme-scheme of Provençal canzos, where, for example, one finds a rhyme pattern which begins its six-ply repeat after the seventeenth different terminal sound. In this Arabian music, as in the Provençal metrical schemes, the effect of the subtler repetitions only becomes apparent in the third or fourth strophe, and then culminates in the fifth or sixth, as a sort of horizontal instead of perpendicular chord. One might call it a "sort of" counterpoint; if one can conceive a counterpoint which plays not against a sound newly struck, but against the residuum

and residua of sounds which hang in the auditory memory.

In the two cases, Arabian music and Provençal verse, where there was no musical "harmony" and no counterpoint in Bach's sense of the word, this elaboration of echo has attained great complexity, and *can* give great delight to ears which are either "trained" to it or which have a natural aptitude for perceiving it. In Europe this aptitude or perceptivity lasted at least until Dante's time, and prompted in him several opinions on the relative merit of Provencal artists, which have puzzled thick-eared "modern" philologists.

For the normal concert-goer the first impression of Arabian singing is that a cat is being strangled in the vicinity. After the "fool in the outer ear" has been put to sleep by the rhythm; after the ear's rebellion against the first *shock to its habit* has worn off, the little whiskers of the ear's interior "miniature piano" begin to wave quite nicely in the ebb and flow of this different sort of sound current; a nostalgia of the sun overtakes one; the music is, and is rightly, an en-

chantment, and would to what gods there be, that European musicians might return to that concept of music.

. . .the difference between art and life; the necessary scale and proportion required in the presentation of a thing which is not the photograph and wax cast, but a re-creation in different and proportional medium.

One would like the ability to express verbally the exact difference between this "sort of presentation" which is art, and the other sort of presentation, which is just Miss Jones of Peckwell singing a song—being half the time Miss Jones, and half the time something, rather indefinite, but more or less en rapport with the music.

Again I emphasize the value of these different rhythm-roots as above that of a tired and mechanical accent-metric.

May 1920.

I know only too well that the concert platform is crowded, and that the crowd upon it is nothing to the multitude who do not even get on to it,

and that, in this multitude, 90 per cent start with something they consider "feeling".

One must, perhaps, find one's ideal artist in fragments, never whole and united.

October 1920.

French sentiment is perhaps more sentimental than English sentiment, and one never feels it has quite the same excuse (i. e. in unavoidable mental muddle.)

November 1920.

A rhythm unit is a shape; it exists like the keel-line of a yacht, or the lines of an automobile-engine, for a definite purpose, and should exist with an efficiency as definite as that which we find in yachts and automobiles.

December 1920.

In the finest lyrics the music so comes from the words and enriches, reinforces, illuminates them. We will recapture this art of illuminating only when we have musicians capable of literary discrimination, capable of selecting *cantabile* words, and of feeling the fine shades of their timbre, of their minor hurries and delays.

VARIA

VARIA

I

Breviary (in parenthesis) For Composers

Nothing but the main form of a work will resist the vicissitudes and calamities of presentation. For your detail you are at the mercy of the executant, and the executant is at the mercy of his endocrines; your melody is at any gland's mercy, but your main structure defies even an orchestra or an operatic soprano.

Sharp-cut rhythm is at the mercy of a singer who fails to observe the exact duration of one note, or who misplaces an ictus; a poor estimate of a carefully figured direction can reduce the whole line to banality.

II

On the Reading of Music

The young violinist stood here beside my chair

playing arie from Le Nozze, and adding such accompaniment as the instrument permitted.

I thought of the horror of concerts; both for the audience packed into rows; and for the performer tortured to the point of perfect production, the bother of memorizing; and for the starting musician the, so often false, public examination, the accidental collapse. To say nothing of the financial bother, etc.

And I thought that here was a perfectly simple way for intelligent musicians to earn a small independence from people who are interested in the extent of music, but who are as stupid as I am about playing an instrument or who read the music page slowly and painfully as a child reads a primer. Lord X used to pay. . . S. to read him books and the morning paper.

III

What is a musician?

1. An instinctive musician?

An instinctive musician is one who knows the

shape of things, i. e. musical things: to wit; a melody, a raga.

2. A trained musician (i. e. in the contemporary sense) ; what are these marvelous executants who appear so often to have no intelligence apart from their amazing faculty for synchronized playing?

A trained musician is one who knows the *size* of musical things. They have this marvelous millimetric training; they can count the infinitesimal fractions of the time-inch.

Having been hopelessly bewildered in childhood by idiotic teachers, it has taken me years to find out this simple fact. I used to ask Dolmetsch to write a manual for beginners, seeing how amazingly he had taught his own children to play the delicate ancient music.

He never gave them scales or exercises, they learned the music; i. e. the tunes, the shape of the tunes, and the size seemed to come perfectly and of itself.

But after a century of trained orchestral performers, and of the present system of training,

we find "musicians" who are solely sensitive to size. Their ability to count, their metronomic ability, has engulphed them, and they have become insensitive to shape; they don't know what one means when one talks about it; they are amazed that a musical ignoramus can feel it; can tell one form from another, can detect the slightest deformity in a beautiful line of Mozart or Faidit.

It is exactly as if one man were sensitive, amazingly so, to the line of Botticelli; and as if a set of trained painters could tell you, oh to the tenth of a millimetre, the length of Mona Lisa's nose, or of Primavera's.

And this is not to scoff at an amazing faculty in trained musicians. Without it orchestral playing is utterly impossible, and good solo playing hap-hazard.

I wish to heaven I had been taught it in childhood instead of having to acquire it, or at least attempt to, at an age when the pliancy of the senses is waning.

This much seems clear to me: Musical train-

ing or learning consists in refining or making accurate the sense of pitch; and of developing the inner metronome; that is about all that can be done by rote; but the pupil should be told of the existence of shape, line, form, etc. . .

He should be told to observe WHAT he is measuring with his MEASURE.

He must not cut off the noses of his subjects because they don't coincide with the marks on his foot-rule.

MONG DEW; consider these "musicians" capable fellows too, who can't "hear" a melody until it is harmonized.

When, DAMN it all, the melody contains the root of the matter. When the african's drumming contains the root of the matter.

The art of writing music, as distinct from improvising or composing on an instrument: consists in knowing what note you want; how long you want it held; and how long one is to wait for the next note, and in making the correct sign for these durations.

Loud guffaws, from the astute musicians. Mais, mes chers amis, it is for the lack of just such simple statements as this, that the misunderstandings arise between the musician and the well wisher.

Visitors come here (70 *bis*), I am writing verse. It seems a natural operation. They find me stumbling through a line of musical composition and they look at me as if I were committing an incomprehensible act. They assume expressions of awe and bewilderment. Yet I have put into writing poetry, twenty years of work which they do *not* in the least understand; and in music, apart from accommodating notes to words, I am an incompetent amateur.

PROGRESS OF NOTATION . . .

. . . from the times when written music was merely a mnemonic device, through Couperin's complaint: "We do not play as we write" to the modern "composers" who mark it: "rit," "allargando," etc., and leave their *harmony* to the feel of the players.

(N.B. *they call it movement*)

Even with the best devices there will be enough left to the feel of the great interpreter. A great performer will always have chance enough to show his superiority in the *mise au point* or in the comprehension of his authors.

European music up to Bach was usually literary. It was good literature during several centuries when verbal literature was uninteresting.

Bach, we are accustomed to say, was pure music. Hardly any other composer has been able to rely on music alone. XIXth century music is full of BAD literature. Chopin is, I suppose, the best romantic literature that we have. Mozart is perhaps the best literature of his time . . . *and* a charming musician.

One might perhaps work out one's literature in verbal manifestations and so leave the purely musical components for one's music . . . Omitting superfluous notes.

PRIERE:

Quelque chose sans chic. The opus must be

the expression of an idea of beauty (or order); this is of far more import than skill in the execution. Here fail thc clever arts.

NEW MASSES
March, 1927

Laying aside all questions of technique, new "theory" etc., there is the reason why the MASSES, new or old, should take note of Antheil. I mean that he has taken, or at any rate has found a means that can take, music out of the concert hall.

The savage has his tribal ceremonies, primitive people have their sea chanteys and labor songs. Modern man can live, and should live, and has a perfectly good right to live in his cities and in his machine shops with the same kind of swing and exuberance that the savage is supposed to have in his forest. The tenement is no more uncomfortable than the cave, and no more verminous. Neither is there any reason why the city intuition should be any deader than that of the savage.

As for the machine shop, the boiler works, Antheil has opened the way with his *Ballet Mechanique;* for the first time we have a music, or the germ and start of a music that can be applied to sound regardless of its loudness. The aesthete goes to a factory, if he ever does go, and hears *noise,* and goes away horrified; the musician, the composer hears noise, but he tries to (?) "see" (no, no), he tries to *hear* what kind of noise it is.

"Music" as taught in the academies deals with the organization of smallish bits of sound, of sounds having certain variations inside the second, organized into forms, or bits of form having differences inside a minute or ten minutes, or, in the "great forms," half an hour.

But with the grasp of the *longer durations* we see the chance of time-spacing the clatter, the grind, the whang-whang, the gnnrrr, in a machine shop, so that the eight-hour day shall have its rhythm; so that the men at the machines shall be demechanized, and work not like robots, but like the members of an orchestra. And the work

will benefit, yes, the overlords needs not worry; a half minute's silence here and there, the long pause of the lunch hour dividing the two great halves of the music, this will not diminish the output or pegiorate the quality of the product.

Say there are forty small stamping presses in a room, let them start not one at a time, raggedly, but *kk!* on the snap of the baton; and *stop,* and then the periods of sound grow gradually longer, and the rests ever so slightly longer in proportion, but so graduated that the difference of ten seconds in the rest is a sensible, appreciable division.

Needless to say each shop, each sort of work will have its own compositions; and they will be made by the men in the shops, because no outside orchestral player will *know* the sound of the shop as well as the people in it, or know what sounds lie in the nature and needs of the work.

The actual measurement of sounds, the mathematics of a new theory does not present any great difficulty, I mean it would not if one were dealing with mere theory; it is easy enough

to find out how many times an asphalt drill hits the pavement per minute, and to work out its octaves and fifths, etc.[1] But one is not thinking into a vacuum; the abstract mathematics might give a good scaffolding, or it might not. It probably would; but one is dealing with the effect of these sounds on human beings; and here as in other musical invention, the work must be done by the man who can *hear,* who can hear the time in his head. It is work for the musician *on the floor of the factory.* And the ultimate sound of this percussive music will be vastly better than the sobbing of tubas.

I have said that the germ is in the *Ballet Mechanique;* perhaps I should have said it is in Antheil's *First Violin Sonata,* but I doubt if anyone would have found it there. The sonata has still a relation to older music; but after hearing the *Ballet* one can recognize the roots in the *Sonata.*

As a simple and practical tip I suggest that

[1] i. e., octaves *lower,* for what we will come to call the "great base," vide by book on Antheil.

people who want to get what I mean (that is, to *hear* what I mean) as a further step from merely assenting to a general idea, should listen to the *Ballet* with simply the Pleyela and the "reduced sonority," that is, wood and metal buzzers, and the electric amplifier for the third movement. It may be nicer music with the attendant xylophones and pianos, but after all it was written originally for 20 Pleyelas, and until the perfect synchronization of 20 Pleyelas is obtainable, the main idea, the division of the great time-spaces, shows up more clearly from the bare, austere, rigid outline.

As for the rest: there is no use waiting for millennia; primitive man cries out to God; the proletarius cries out to Social Justice. In the meantime there are certain things that can be done, made, constructed, without waiting for a millennium.

THE NEW CRITERION

August, 1926

I

Thanks to a rare stroke of discretion, or rather two strokes on the part of two patrons of music, it has been possible (Paris, June to July, 1926) to hear most of the work of George Antheil in sequence, and thereby to revise, videlicet augment, one's estimate of this composer.

I see no reason to retract any of the claims made for him in an earlier *Criterion* notice. He has very greatly consolidated his position, and, during the past two years made important advances.

The new works demanding attention are:

1. A symphony for five instruments (flute, bassoon, trompette, trombone and alto), the

initiation, very possibly, of a new phase of chamber music, with Mr. Antheil in the role of Watteau, or some tonal equivalent.

2. A string quartette, presented by The Quattuor Krettly, rather more difficult of analysis than the symphony, unless one has biographical data as follows: in 1924 Mr. Antheil made a string quartette. It was hastily produced, the author kept tearing it to pieces and re-doing it, up to the day of the concert, and finally "reformed it altogether."

It had, at the start, what his elders (the present writer included) used to regard as form (i. e. as that element is discernible in Mr. Antheil's own 1st Violin Sonata). The said element seemed to annoy Mr. Antheil, and he proceeded to remove it in the interest of some more arcane principle of unity.

This process of elimination had begun in the 2nd Violin Sonata. It continued in the early quartette to the final effacement of same, and the present quartette, now after several performances approved by so good a musician as Mon-

sieur Krettly, is manifestly what Mr. Antheil was driving at two and a half years ago.

Krettly has got used to it. I console myself with the thought that Keats was at first considered incomprehensible because he omitted various moral fervours and axioms which the eighteenth century had got used to finding in poesy . . . in the favour of some element . . . conceivable to himself.

Technically Mr. Antheil has, in this quartette, avoided the smaller clichés. The polyphonic element in his composition continues its development in the Symphony in Fa (eighty-five instruments), and in this partially conservative work the composer shows his ample ability for dealing with the full orchestra. He avoids various habitual conclusions, and commits numerous innovations in the details of orchestration. It is a symphony on more or less accepted lines (voices from the audience murmuring: "réactionnaire sans le savoir"), a symphony with the usual slush left out, or even "a symphony debunked." We suppose this is what Mr. Koussevitzky means

when he complains that, "It is all here" (tapping his forehead), "it has no heart."

It should in any case terminate discussion of Mr. Antheil's musical competence, and has, indeed, largely done so.

If none of the above works would have "made" Mr. Antheil's reputation, they all go to making it solid, and to establish the copiousness of his talents. None of them would give a reason for discussing him in a periodical not exclusively devoted to music, a competent musical chronicle would however record an innovation in chamber music, an addition to the literature of the string quartette, and a new symphony for large orchestra, which latter is a means ready to hand, and needing, probably, nutriment.

II

With the Ballet Mecanique we emerge into a wider circle of reference. I mean that this work definitely takes music out of the concert hall, meaning thereby that it deals with a phase of life not hitherto tackled by musicians and

freighted before the act with reference to already existing musical reference.

Three years ago Antheil was talking vaguely of "tuning up" whole cities, of "silences twenty minutes long *in the form,*" etc. One thought of it as mere or "pure" speculation, the usual jejune aspiration of genius, and "one" (one, at least, of those who heard the vague talk) dismissed it from his mind.

Now, after the three years, I do not in the least regret any then seeming hyperbole, or any comparison of Antheil and Stravinsky that I then made in the former's favour.

With the performance of the Ballet Mecanique one can conceive the possibility of organising the sounds of a factory, let us say of boilerplate, or any other clangorous noisiness, the actual sounds of the labour, the various tones of the grindings; according to the needs of the work, and yet, with such pauses and durées, that at the end of the eight hours, the men go out not with frayed nerves, but elated—fatigued, yes, but elated.

I mean that we have here the chance, a mode, a music that no mere loudness can obliterate, but that serves us, as the primitive chanteys for rowing, for hauling on cables; "Blow the man down" and such like; have served savages or men of simpler ages, for labours ashore and afloat. And this is definitely a new musical act; a new grip on life by the art, a new period, a bigger break with the habits of acceptance than any made by Bach or by Beethoven, an age coming into its own, an art coming into its own, "and no mean labour."

The "Sacre" stands, but its cubes, solid as they are, are in proportion to the Ballet Mecanique as the proportions of architecture are to those of town-planning.

Technically, the fact is, that Mr. Antheil has used longer durations than any other musician has ever attempted to use . . . much longer durations.

"Noces" falls to pieces. After the Ballet it sounds like a few scraps of Wagner, a Russian chorale (quite good) a few scraps of Chopin, a

few high notes "pianolistic".

Technically, Mr. Antheil has discovered the Pleyela, and freed it from ignominy; it is now an instrument, not the piano's poor ape. (I skip the details of the innovation.)

If in the Ballet Antheil has mastered these long "durées," these larger chunks of time, in the third Violin Sonata, he has made a less obvious gain, for this Sonata thinks in time's razor edge. Whether this shows incontestably on its written pages, I cannot say, but it does show in its playing by the composer and by Miss Olga Rudge, who has borne the brunt of presentation in all three sonatas.

This is not a simple question of playing "in time" or even "in time with each other."

It means that, via Stravinsky and Antheil and possibly one other composer, we are brought to a closer conception of time, to a faster beat, to a closer realisation or, shall we say, "decomposition" of the musical atom.

The mind, even the musician's mind, is conditioned by contemporary things, our minimum,

in a time when the old atom is "bombarded" by electricity, when chemical atoms and elements are more strictly considered, is no longer the minimum of the sixteenth century pre-chemists. Both this composer and this executant, starting with the forces and iterations of the 1st Violin Sonata have acquired—perhaps only half consciously—a new precision. There is something new in violin writing and in violin playing. Violinists of larger reputation who looked at the earlier sonata and walked away, those who thought it "bizarre," will possibly awake and find themselves a little out of date, and the initiative of the first performer, may in time receive its reward. There will be a new hardness and dryness in fashion, and the old oily slickness of the Viennese school will receive diminished applause. There may even be found those of severer taste who will prefer the distinct outline of a Ballet Mechanique as shown by the Pleyela role alone, or with the meagre allowance of mechanical sound offered on June 19th, to the seduction of cymbals and xylophones (July per-

formance), or who will at least find it easier to comprehend in the former way, at the start, awaiting the composer's next move, and believing that the vitality of music is in its latteral rather than its perpendicular movement.

FINIS