BRITISH MUSIC CRITICISM IN A NEW ERA: STUDIES IN CRITICAL THOUGHT 1894-1945

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ABSTRACT

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The mid 1890s witnessed the start of a new era in British music criticism heralded by George Bernard Shaw. A preliminary study of the nineteenth-century critical context provides some reasons for its emergence. The new temper was defined by two critics: John F. Runciman, the self-appointed leader of the New critics, and the Rationalist Ernest Newman. Henry Hadow's *Studies in Modern Music* set a new standard and added impetus to discussion of critical theory. Several other critics associated with Oxford, including Parry, Tovey, Walker and Colles, formed a body of opinion that shared common values and continued a tradition stemming from Victorian writers such as Grove and Stainer. Discussions of critical theory, especially those of Newman and M. D. Calvocoressi, are given prominence.

Two new trends emerged after the First World War. The first, a reaction against the German repertoire, focused on Stravinsky and the composers associated with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Foremost among those who championed the aesthetic of 'objective empiricism' were Edwin Evans and Leigh Henry. A second and more conservative tendency came predominantly from two composer-critics associated with Philip Heseltine's journal of the 1920s, *The Sackbut*: Cecil Gray and K. S. Sorabji. Constant Lambert continued along broadly similar lines to Gray during the 1930s, notably in his *Music Ho!*, and is included as a member of the *Sackbut* coterie. Contrast between the criticism of Eric Blom and that of the poet W. J. Turner demonstrates the range of independent thought characteristic of the new era.

Consideration of individual endeavour rather than collective trends of critical thought provides the method of documentation. The thesis attempts to elucidate the diversity of critical views without refuting a critic or entering into a polemical discourse, while in no way shirking the responsibility of arriving at an assessment of his position and achievement. Certain recurrent issues, including those surrounding Romanticism, nationalism and the rise of modernism, reflect the primary concerns of the period.

A table showing music critics of leading British newspapers and a selected chronological list of one hundred books of music criticism published in Britain between 1890 and 1950 are contained in the appendices.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	*The Academy*
BBC	The British Broadcasting Corporation
BP	*The Birmingham Post*
comp.	Compiler
contr.	Contributor
DT	*The Daily Telegraph*
E	*The Egoist*
ER	*The English Review*
EdR	*The Edinburgh Review*
F	*Fanfare*
FR	*The Fortnightly Review*
ISCM	The International Society for Contemporary Music
L	*The Listener*
Lbl	The British Library
MG	*The Manchester Guardian*
MMR	*The Monthly Musical Record*
MNH	*The Musical News and Herald*
MO	*Musical Opinion*
MR	*The Music Review*
MT	*The Musical Times*
NA	*The New Age*
NAth	*The Nation and Athenaeum*
NEW	*The New English Weekly*
NW	*The New Witness*
O	*The Observer*
Ok	*The Outlook*
PMG	*The Pall Mall Gazette*
P[R]MA	*Proceedings of the [Royal] Musical Association*
RAM	The Royal Academy of Music
RCM	The Royal College of Music
S	*The Sackbut*
SR	*The Saturday Review*
SuR	*The Sunday Referee*
ST	*The Sunday Times*
TT	*Time and Tide*
WM	*The Western Mail*

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PREFACE

i) INTRODUCTION

As a branch of philosophy related to aesthetics, music criticism is closely connected to the history of music and the other arts, to the history of ideas and ultimately to general history. Yet to construct an historical account in which the network of connections between music criticism and socio-cultural developments can be revealed, without blurring the focus of attention, can at best be regarded only as an ideal. Before such an ideal can be approached it is imperative to study criticism in comparative isolation, for only through such isolation can a perception of this network begin to take shape. Indeed, this is actually what has occurred in the literature about music criticism, which has tended to focus either on the individual achievements of the more famous composer-critics, or on the history of specific journals. As yet, there have been few attempts to view music criticism within a wider historical perspective. Max Graf's *Composer and Critic: Two Hundred Years of Musical Criticism* (1947) is still the only volume to attempt a history of music criticism connecting that history with the cultural and intellectual developments of its period. Hindered by the uncertainty of its boundaries, this over-ambitious study fails to provide a thorough investigation of the history of music criticism within its period and is acceptable only for the general reader requiring a cursory account of the subject.

Very little has been written to date about British music criticism in the first half of the twentieth century; the only book to deal solely with the subject is Basil Maine's *Behold These Daniels: Being Studies of Contemporary Music Critics* (1928) and the only collection of specifically British writings on music is Norman Demuth's compilation, *An Anthology of Musical Criticism* (1947). The former is merely a series of brief pen-portraits of the leading critics of the day which adds little to our knowledge of their critical thought, while the latter is disadvantaged by the omission of the writings of George Bernard Shaw, Ernest Newman and Donald Tovey. There are just two theses to have dealt either wholly or in part with the subject: Mackerness (1952) and Easter (1972).

The provision of a detailed account of critical thought itself, excluding topical issues concerning the welfare of musical institutions and the day-to-day politics of musical

life, as well as those relating to specific performers and to performance in general, is not merely an intellectual prerequisite for this thesis but also a pragmatic necessity. The most suitable models for the kind of approach to criticism proposed here are to be found in the various histories of literary criticism, best exemplified by Rene Wellek's seminal *History of Modern Criticism* (1955-). These generally make a clear distinction between literary theory and the study of concrete works of art. They recognize that criticism is a process of continual rediscovery of aesthetic issues resulting in constant reinterpretation of fundamental concerns. The perennially challenging problems facing music critics are those that resist an ultimate solution.

Criticism is by its very nature a controversial pursuit. Arguments concerning its function, the differentiation between valuational and nonvaluational judgements and the relative merit of comparative methods, are just some of the persistent bones of contention involved in its practice. Such questions about the nature and aims of music criticism are inevitably readdressed by each successive generation. The desire to trace back to their source the criteria upon which value judgements are made is equally perennial, and accepting that theory arises from practice is doubtless very nearly as old as the act of criticism itself. Discussion of the theoretical aspects of music criticism, the various attempts to find the standards by means of which the quality of music may be evaluated and the problems of conflicting judgements unravelled, especially those of Hadow (1892), Calvocoressi (1923) and Newman (1925), have been given prominence. Indeed, the thesis documents the history of the theory of music criticism in Britain within its period.

In order to avoid footnotes, bibliographical sources have been cited in the text wherever possible. These are given in abbreviated form, books and articles being referred to by their date alone followed by a colon and the appropriate page numbers. Successive quotations from a single text have been referred to as page numbers only from the first edition, and for this reason a colon has been placed after the date of publication rather than after the author's name. Occasionally, when it has not been possible to trace the primary source, the source cited will be a reprinted article contained in a book of collected essays (although this has been avoided wherever possible), in which case the date of the original article may not be provided. For clarity, the month of periodicals has been given in abbreviated form without a stop. All books were published in London unless otherwise stated. Dates of critics' lives are given only if they are not readily available in standard dictionaries.

Before progressing further it is necessary to define the nature of music criticism, to consider the multiplicity of activities undertaken under its banner and to outline some of the fundamental problems implicit in such a task. While not attempting to propose a theory of criticism or to resolve the many conflicts that arise in discussions of its philosophy, this will provide a context for the history of critical thought that follows.

ii) CRITICISM DEFINED

'Music criticism' is one of those portmanteau constructs that does variant and ubiquitous service. It suggests the relatively straightforward idea of judgement on musical works together with the more complex ones of discrimination, interpretation and evaluation. Joseph Kerman's succinct definition in *Musicology* (1985) as 'the study of the meaning and value of art works' (: 16) suggests that areas of aesthetics should be subsumed under its umbrella while Winton Dean, in his *Grove* entry on 'Criticism', places more emphasis on its evaluative function when he defines it as 'the expression in words of judgments on the art of music' (1980: 36). In fairness, Dean later expands the scope of his definition when he describes the critical process as 'the translation and grading of an aesthetic experience by means of intellectual analysis and imaginative inquiry' (: 44). Whilst recognizing that critics are occupied with a wide variety of activities, criticism is here construed primarily as *appraisive thought about music.* It is a definition derived from Karl Aschenbrenner's *The Concepts of Criticism* (1974) and implies that music criticism is a process of constant revision; that with each successive generation the music of the past needs to be reassessed. Aschenbrenner argues that aestheticians, in their preoccupation with 'beauty' and 'goodness', have not paid sufficient attention to the empirical evidence embodied in actual works of applied criticism.[1] Having gathered hundreds of examples of critical or appraisive remarks, including many from music criticism, he analyses the language employed in appraisal in order to understand the concepts of criticism and their function. He concludes that 'we can do without ultimate commendation and discommendation but criticism is void unless it devotes its major effort to material characterization' (: 338). Value judgement, in the sense of an ultimate commendation or verdict on quality, tends to be more relevant to new works, while

appraisal of an interpretative-evaluative kind is directed more frequently at works that are contained in the canon. Appraisive thought addressed to works in the canon represents a far greater proportion of all music criticism than the relatively small quantity of reaction to new works. A distinction needs to be made between primary judgement - is this piece of music of quality and why? - and the more sophisticated criticism of established works which have already been given a place among what are called 'the classics'. The processes that determine the formation of the canon are complex. The continuous exchange of views between critics plays its part in establishing the musical value that is a criterion for inclusion, but there are other contributory factors, both sociological and political. No work of criticism is final because the existing canon is not a closed series; even after reaching a 'classic' status, a work does not necessarily remain in it. Yet one of the functions of a canonical work is to be in some sense normative, for its existence serves to stabilize standards and to enable discrimination within the new. New works are continually being added and the old are inevitably reassessed and their position modified in the light of the new. Criticism can never be final because it is contingent on the historical process; the critic cannot escape his historical position. The concept of musical value is generally learned with reference to the canon, and to appreciate this concept is to appreciate the broad discriminations of which the canon is an expression. But this is based on the assumption that the judgement of posterity is infallible and that permanence defines value. Hubert Parry makes this assumption when he defines quality in music as 'that which endures; that which maintains its vitality and speaks to men and arouses their interest in spite of changes of fashion, changes of taste, changes of method and even of language' (1911: 392). The assumption that 'water finds its own level' has frequently been taken for granted by those dealing with the difficult issues concerning quality and value. In music criticism, verdicts are generally avoided while the evaluative appraisal of details in characterization is under way. Having drawn the readers' attention to certain features of the composition, verdicts such as 'this is a satisfying and coherent symphony' or 'a masterpiece of exquisite beauty' become largely irrelevant. It is the appraisive thought of critics that is interesting to the reader. Value judgements in themselves generally add little new information or insight to that already contained in their discussion.

The expression of a set of arbitrary personal preferences is insufficient for the activity of appraisal which depends on the rational factor of thoughtful inquiry. The case

that personal taste should not interfere with the evaluation of music was made by Tovey:

> To certain elements of his [Elgar's] style and taste I have always been recalcitrant; and one of the elementary lessons that people must learn if they are to come to terms with anything outside the most habit-ridden contents of their own minds is that greatness in art is not a matter of taste at all. Nobody ought to say that he likes what he does not like; but it is childish to measure great things by one's likes and dislikes. And by continually taking one's temperature in likes and dislikes one develops no fine artistic sensibilities, but merely becomes a chronic aesthetic valetudinarian. (1949: 298)

It has been said that 'Evaluating is an activity, taste is not'.[2] Questions of taste are not concerned with evaluation, but, given an acknowledged masterpiece, why is it liked by one person and disliked by another? The process of appraisive thought arises from the desire to overcome the anarchy implicit in the precept *De gustibus non est disputandum*: there is no disputing tastes. However, if characterization occupies the centre of the evaluative process then it must to some extent be influenced by cultural factors or, as Aschenbrenner puts it, a 'community of values':

> It is apparent that our responses take their shape from the community of characterizing language we happen to inhabit. Ultimate appraisives will be essentially the same in any language that possesses them. But the characterizations show significant variation from one linguistic community to another...
>
> Thus, I am defending the thesis that a community which speaks a common language shares a common set of values.
>
> .. We must carefully distinguish between a *community of values* and *unanimity of appraisal.* The former is fully tolerant of a total negation of the latter. The early critics accused Schoenberg and other serialists of creating nothing but musical chaos. But there is no reason to believe that the serialists were lying when they insisted they sought to pursue a completely orderly course in their composition. Did the old and the new inhabit the same community of values? Without any doubt at all, they did, and still do. (: 16; 19)

Critics do a bewildering number of things; they describe, analyse, elucidate, compare, interpret, theorize, appraise and evaluate.[3] Discussion of the concepts of criticism frequently has recourse to the problem of defining the multitude of terms closely related to evaluation, such as estimation, appreciation, commendation, ratification, justification and explication, to name but a few. There is at present no agreed definition of the scope of the critic's activity, or indeed of his function. Francis Sparshott has argued that 'The end of criticism must be as various as the interests it serves and the uses to which it may be put, and the social function it may serve' (1967: 166). Joseph Margolis, in *The Language of Art and Art Criticism* (1965), regards the critic's function

as essentially didactic, a view shared by Edward Cone when he describes the critic as 'a teacher of appreciation at the highest level'.[4] For many, the primary function of the critic is to act as a bridge between the composer and the listener. Hans Keller, dubbing criticism a 'phoney profession', attacked this proposition in his provocative book *Criticism* (1987: 29-36). Margolis considers criticism to admit of two phases: 'giving an account of art-works and evaluating merit' (: 67). This appears straightforward enough until it is probed deeper. Questions then arise as to whether evaluation can be entailed by description or whether description can be legitimately separated from interpretation. Are values entailed by descriptions?[5] More significantly for the aesthetician, do values exist in works of art or are they projected on them by the critic?[6] Clearly such questions are a sub-class of more general philosophical conflicts and require more lengthy treatment than is available here if an attempt is to be made to resolve them. It may be remarked, however, that no actual critique segregates its description from its interpretation or evaluation. Descriptions are rarely couched in neutral or objective terms.

It has often been argued that works of art, especially such abstract ones as musical compositions, cannot be described through analysis but must instead be perceived intuitively.[7] That cognition of art is not understanding but aesthetic intuition is widely recognized. In this sense the relationship between critic and reader is to some extent analogous to that between composer and musician. Of course there are important differences - the critic has to do more than just interpret - but it is worth noting that the vocabulary employed by composers to guide performers is a language of characterization rather than of description. When Beethoven writes *mesto*, or Elgar writes *nobilmente*, they communicate a great deal more than a description of how they want the music to be played; they are in fact characterizing it. It has been argued that the critic needs to convey the value of a work verbally in the way a musician conveys it through performance.[8] In doing so he will inevitably have recourse to the use of metaphor. Discussion of music is peppered with endless metaphors. It is often forgotten that such frequently employed terms as the 'language' of music, 'organicism' and 'balance' are purely metaphorical when related to music.

The view that the most a critic can do is offer guidance for the art of cultivating the skills needed for aesthetic perception is a widely held one. Alan Walker recognized this in his definition of music criticism contained in *An Anatomy of Musical Criticism*

(1966): 'Criticism is the rationalisation of intuitive, musical experience' (: 5). Walker's theory of creative determinism is founded on the premise that value judgements can be made which entail reference to 'constant, creative principles' (: *xi*). Whereas statements of taste are usually not considered as normative statements, in making value judgements the critic places a value on things by judging them in accord with norms that lie outside his own taste. In this way it has been argued that one can acknowledge the value of a work of art without necessarily liking it.[9] Peacock argues in *Criticism and Personal Taste* (1972) that the kind of intuitive response described by Walker arises only through a synthesis of intuition and training. Such intuitive judgements 'may be made with great immediacy but only because of the habit, practice, repetition, and long experience, which have preceded them' (: 71). While the strength of Walker's theory is questionable, he must be given credit for being practically the only writer to have given attention to the British history of critical theory in music. The impetus for his own ideas was given through a close reading of earlier theorists and his consequent disregard for the attempts of Hadow, Calvocoressi and Newman to introduce criteria into criticism:

> It is the purpose of my book to show that, by the very nature of things, you cannot have critics with standards; you can only have *music* with standards which critics may observe. I think, too, that they were mistaken in an even greater respect. For them, a value-judgement was something you possessed only after you had *finished* the critical process - it was, so to speak, a prize that you won by careful, objective, intelligent effort. I regard this attitude as a major disaster for criticism. For me, a value-judgement is something you must possess *before* you can even *start* the critical process; a value-judgement is pre-conceptual; it comes across as part of the musical communication. Criticism, as I understand it, only explains something you already know on an intuitive level. (: *xii*)

It has often been asserted that everyone who listens to music intelligently and with understanding is in a sense a critic, since every response made involves some manifestation of personal taste and some element of comparison and evaluation. According to this view, the professional critic merely articulates the germinal criticism latent in all appreciative contact with music. The view that the music critic should be a fictitious 'ideal listener' is a widely-held one. While it contains a certain truth, it is nevertheless an oversimplification. All appraisive thought, as opposed to the expression of a set of individual preferences, implies theoretical premises and assumptions which belong largely to the realm of aesthetics. These premises generally concern the nature of music and the valid criteria for assessing its value. The validity of attempting to base

one's criticism on an acceptance of *a priori* principles is an issue that remains contentious. Alan Walker accepts such principles as axiomatic while John Casey has written that 'The idea that criticism is irrational if it does not, in the last resort, appeal to *a priori* standards is one of the most frequent confusions into which critics and aestheticians fall' (1966: 57). Casey argues that the kind of principles found by Walker and similar formulations, such as Monroe Beardsley's 'Objective Reasons',[10] are necessary in order to justify value judgements, but that such principles as organic unity, originality, sincerity, economy of means, balance of form and content, are vague generalities. Such generalities form a valid part of our reasons for valuing works of art, but they are not incontrovertible standards of value in themselves. His perceptive critique of the contradictory work of aestheticians Susanne Langer, Harold Osborne and Clive Bell argues that, as art is continually redefined and modified through new departures and accretions, it is impossible to rely on such principles. The fact that no principles are foolproof is attested by Nicolas Slonimsky's entertaining *Lexicon of Musical Invective* (1953). While some critics set out to consciously discover principles, others employ them without ever explicitly stating them. They may be implied by the comparisons made, by the reasons provided as support for views or by the traditions to which the critic appeals. It is one of the functions of this thesis to discover the premises and assumptions on which critics based their appraisive thought.

The dichotomy between the subjectivist and objectivist approaches is a recurrent theme in music criticism during the 1894-1945 period. Indeed, the history of critical theory can be seen as a series of attempts to resolve this perennial problem. Even in literary theory no consensus has been achieved, as David Bleich's *Subjective Criticism* (1978) and Raman Selden's *Criticism and Objectivity* (1984) amply demonstrate. In order to be meaningful, the objective judgement requires a theory of the nature of artistic excellence. For Ernest Newman, whose *A Musical Critic's Holiday* (1925) set out to overcome the anarchy of personal preference, there could be only one 'right' assessment of a musical work. Many critics found this position untenable. Cecil Gray, for example, following Oscar Wilde's view expounded in *The Truth of Masks* (1893), argued that conflicting value judgements may be equally true (*MT*, LXVII, Feb 1926: 161). The subjectivists, on the other hand, dismissed the notion of objectivity altogether and merely attempted to communicate their response to music and record preferences in a way that

would engage and entertain the reader. This style of writing, characteristic of the work of Shaw, Runciman and the New critics, as well as those associated with *The Manchester Guardian*, relies heavily on the literary merit of the critic for its success. Subjectivist criticism sets no limits on the critic's discourse and the bane of it is, inevitably, irrelevance. To some extent it records the history of taste; certainly it records as much about the critic as about the music under discussion. But at its best it does more than merely narrate the adventures of the soul among masterpieces; it goes some way towards explaining the structure and expressive character of the music under discussion.

There are fashions and trends in critical approaches which attempt to define the critically relevant.[11] Questions as to whether 'indirect data' (to use Calvocoressi's phrase), such as the intentions of the composer, should be taken into account or whether the music alone should be the focus of attention were taken up by several critics. Attention inevitably turned to issues of relevancy when, towards the end of the nineteenth century, critics had to face the problem of how to appraise programme music. Today, it seems as though the debate has run its course and that the only conclusion drawn is that there can be no proscribing what the music critic may find relevant to his discussion.

This brings us to the wide variety of activities and methods undertaken by critics which are related to the context of the world in which they worked. This will outline how they built their careers in London and the provinces; give consideration to the various categories of their literary output, their readerships and how they attempted to construct a base; show whether they regarded themselves primarily as essayists, encyclopaedists, journalists, musicologists, aestheticians or historians, or indeed a combination of these; and whether they saw themselves as independent or part of a literary tradition or school of critical thought. A more complete consideration of these points in relation to individual critics is provided in the main body of the thesis itself. It will be seen that criticism was written by men of widely differing vocations and that critics regularly undertook a wide range of literary and non-literary activities as part of a multifaceted career. The lack of standardization in critical practice is a characteristic feature of the period. The following outline will demonstrate the limitations of my approach to the history of British music criticism, which focuses on appraisive thought about music rather than the entire gamut of activities undertaken by music critics.

iii) CRITICAL PRACTICE

a) The Marketplace and the Consumer

For a majority of the public the term 'music critic' invokes the image of the reviewer whose columns appear in the daily and weekly Press. In fact, these columns represent a genre of criticism that is narrowly circumscribed, even though it preponderates in quantity. While I will provide in this preface a brief outline of the world in which the critics worked, of their careers and the kinds of approaches they took to writing about music, it must be stressed that the label of critic is a misnomer for many journalists and writers. Of course many critics based their careers on journalism, including Ernest Newman, Edwin Evans and Eric Blom. But many music journalists regarded themselves as reporters, reviewers and belletristic 'chatterers' on musical subjects who neither intended nor were expected to provide appraisive critical thought about music, while the providers of such critical thought often regarded their criticism as an adjunct to their careers as composers, teachers or performers.

The journalistic music critic satisfies public demand for information about performers, performances, compositions and a host of related subject matter. Reviews are a concession to natural laziness in that they are read largely in order that the reader may select which operas and concerts to attend, which records to listen to, and what to think about that which he hears. The reviewer often has difficulty with the demands of the critical essay - a situation compounded by the fact that in the early years of the century many covered both drama and music and spent long hours each week in the theatre and concert-hall. Reviewing is primarily a matter of description and judgement without the requirement of reasoned justification. Only when description evolves into interpretation, when summary judgement is replaced with reasoned evaluation, does it become critical thought of the appraisive kind. Journalistic critiques are rarely of much permanent value, with few exceptions, but are nevertheless a powerful influence on public taste. The difference between the reviewing and critical functions has been described by Harold Osborne (1955):

> Reviewers work satisfies a fugitive but genuine need and is consciously ephemeral. But criticism makes a more pretentious claim. It affects not merely to predict what the reaction of the public, or of some section of the public what its reaction ought to be. For the critic proposes assessments of works of art which claim to

> be 'right' in some sense other than by being correct anticipations of probable public response.. The reviewer predicts, the critic dictates. (: 133-34)

Osbourne's view significantly places the power and influence of the reviewer over public taste as being considerably greater than that of the critic. If we compare the readership of provincial newspapers with that of national periodicals it would appear that the journalistic critic, through his appeal to a considerably larger and broader spectrum of readers, will exercise an influence on public taste within his locale that far outweighs that exercised by the music critic of a literary journal or a regular contributor to a music periodical. However, generalizations about the relative influence of reviewers and critics on the formation of such an abstract construct as 'public taste' are fraught with difficulties. How can we assess the contemporary public perception of any critic, the extent of his influence, the 'effect' his criticism may have had or his relative popularity? What real evidence is there that music critics were 'influential' on anyone? These questions invite speculation and resist definitive solutions. However, the esteem which critics accord their colleagues often provides at least a signal. The fact that Ernest Newman tells us that John F. Runciman was the most widely read music critic of his day (*NW*, VII, 27 Apr 1916: 798), for example, cannot be disregarded, even though the truth of it cannot be verified. While my own view of what constitutes critical writing of historical significance may distort the overall picture by giving a seemingly disproportionate amount of attention to critics such as K. S. Sorabji and Leigh Henry, who cannot be said to have made a major contribution to British music criticism, it does provide a more representative account of the subject as a whole. Often a critic's contemporary significance far exceeds his present reputation, as in the case of Henry Hadow, while others of a relatively unimportant stature, such as Leigh Henry, may offer a unique insight into aesthetic and critical concerns of the period.

The contemporary influence of critics is just as difficult to assess with any degree of accuracy as the precise readership of any given publication. Even if it is possible to be precise about circulation and to characterize accurately a readership for a given newspaper or journal, it is still not possible to assess issues such as what percentage of those who purchased the publication actually read the music column and whether readers bought the publication solely for the arts coverage, in which case they may have been uncharacteristic of the readership in general. We can assume with relative safety that a

majority of readers of *The New Statesman* and *The New Age* would have had a political inclination to the left and that critics of those journals were broadly sympathetic to the outlook of their editors' targeted market; that the readers of H. C. Colles's column in *The Academy* were largely university men; or that readers of *The Manchester Guardian* critics had a more liberal political perspective than those who read *The Times* or the very Tory *Morning Post*; but these are only generalizations. This information may be useful in appreciating aspects of the euphemism employed by critics and their hidden agendas, but these tend to be more relevant to consideration of their views on musical life than their actual criticism of music. The analysis of readership remains one of the most intractable problems in studies of periodical literature. The extent of editorial control is equally difficult to assess with precision. Generally, editors seem to have given their music critics free rein, although not always sufficient space. While many newspaper editors had little interest in music and were more concerned with literary fluency than content, others, such as Leonard Rees of *The Sunday Times*, actually wrote music columns themselves. While this thesis makes no attempt to discover the precise character of those who read music criticism, which is a matter of sociology, it is clear that if we regard criticism in its institutional context there were certain different types of markets that critics supplied. These fall into three broad categories: newspapers, periodical journals and books.

Newspapers can be divided into those which are London-based and those which are provincial, and then subdivided into weekly and daily (see Appendix I). Criticism contained in the established broadsheet newspapers, especially *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, was more substantial than that in the more recent tabloids of the popular Press. The former tended to speak from on high and used language as a weapon of social hierarchy, whereas the latter sought directness, brevity and concision in headlines and leaders as much as in their arts columns. The music column of a weekly Sunday paper is likely to be the most substantial of all, being written with recognition that the reader will generally have time to consider reasoned argument and will have more than a passing interest in the subject. While it is the misfortune of even the most distinguished journalists that their daily work, like the conversation of the great talkers, must largely perish with them, weekly and monthly journalism must be viewed in a different light. Here, given the space, critical ideas may be developed at leisure over a period of time. Daily newspaper journalism addresses the general reader and focuses largely on aspects

of performance, while the weekly music column addresses those with more developed knowledge and specialized interest and tends to deal in more detail with the music performed. There is clearly a difference in what the consumer of daily and weekly newspaper criticism requires. The reviewer may offer a factual report of events, guidance in choice, and personal recommendation based on comparative grading of a variety of similar experiences. But people read music criticism for a multitude of reasons. They may seek assistance in appreciation of music; clarification of aspects of music that remain obscure; an evaluation that helps to stabilize their own opinion; even an aid to understanding a future musical experience.

I have tried to view each critic's thought as a whole, following ideas through his entire corpus of writings from the journalistic and ephemeral to the academic and more permanent. Generally speaking, there was a dearth of appraisive thought in the daily Press during the period, which was, naturally, intended primarily to review or preview performances. Articles appearing in the periodical press, whether in literary journals or specifically musical ones, contained a much greater degree of perceptive comment.

Of the specifically musical periodicals, Joseph Novello's *The Musical Times and Singing-Class Circular* was the most significant. Founded in 1844 as a continuation of *Mainzer's Musical Times and Singing Circular* (1842-44), it remained at the heart of English music journalism, along with *Musical Opinion and Trades Review* (1877-), throughout the period. Both of these journals were closely connected to the publishing businesses that funded them and were open to the accusation of failing to report with disinterested motives. Certainly both were targeted at the audience the publishing houses wished to serve and, as a result, suffered from what Stephen Banfield has aptly described as 'patronizing dross betraying an over-zealous approach to musical education' (1981: 465). There were also two other important journals that enjoyed longevity - *The Musical Standard* (1862-1933), owned by Reeves and Son, and *The Monthly Musical Record* (1871-1960), owned by Augener and Company. These provided the critique of Romanticism that was long overdue and prepared the way for a balanced understanding of Wagner, Liszt, Chopin and Berlioz.[12] While their survival was largely due to the financial security provided by their owners, with commercial considerations sometimes motivating their content, a high standard of criticism and reviewing needed to be maintained in order that the owners could be provided with a cost-effective means of

advertising. The number of music journals that failed to compete with the long-established *Musical Times*, *Monthly Musical Record*, *Musical Standard* and *Musical Opinion* attests to the precarious nature of the market and the extent to which it was dependent on advertising revenue. Nevertheless, in their criticism these journals remained remarkably independent of commercial pressures. Editors could exercise control over content through commissioning articles and the selection process, but while some biased their journals in favour of contemporary music, in particular *The Chesterian* (1915-1938) and *The Sackbut* (1920-34), none, with the exception of Leigh Henry's *Fanfare* (1921-2), deliberately set out to champion a specific aesthetic. Arthur Fox-Strangways provided a forum in his privately owned journal *Music and Letters* (1920-) for what may be termed 'British pastoralist propaganda' during the inter-war years, but the subject matter of his journal was always eclectic. Editors were no doubt only too aware of the limited chances of sustained success and wished to appeal to as wide a readership as possible. Whether they were run as syndicates or were privately owned, it was difficult for the new independent music journals to compete with those owned by large publishing companies.

As well as music magazines, numerous fortnightly and monthly journals of a literary or political nature which included critical writing about music flourished throughout the period. Articles addressed to the general reader were contained in *The Saturday Review*, *The New Witness*, *The Outlook*, *The New Age*, *The Nation and Athenaeum* and *The New Statesman*. The cultivated minority audience of the nineteenth century that read the old style reviews, such as the *Edinburgh* or the *Fortnightly*, increasingly gave way towards the end of the century to a massive, quasi-literate public, able to read and seeking entertainment, but lacking intellectualism and the capacity for serious cultural inquiry. The development of what is now described as 'mass' or 'commercial' culture threatened traditional patterns of British literary activity and opened up new paths for the entrepreneur. Publishers, led by John Lane and later by J. M. Dent, began to compete with one another to attract this mass market. As a result, there was an explosion during the 1880s and 1890s of periodical journals and books catering for a diverse readership. I have found the inclusion of criticism contained in journals devoted to subjects other than those specifically musical to be essential.

Expansion in the market for books on music mirrored the growing market for periodical journalism from the 1890s. This was due to a wide range of sociological

factors, including the increase of music education at all levels, the popularity of domestic music making and amateur groups, especially choral societies, the spread of competitive music festivals and the widening of audiences both in the capital and the provinces. Didactic works were especially prevalent and books covering the lives of the great composers which appealed to the amateur musician, as well as the stories of operas, became increasingly popular. Very often their meagre contents were shamelessly plundered from the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary*. Forster's Education Act of 1870 had made the rudiments of education compulsory for all and the work of men like John Pyke Hullah and John Spencer Curwen in the field of music education had greatly enlarged the musically literate public. The declining cost of books and the establishment of public libraries also played a part in creating a new readership. Music was increasingly perceived as a socially improving medium, a means through which those of lesser birth could gain admittance to the cultural world of others more privileged. In order to do so, they had to gain the necessary instruction. Readers of popularist guides to the great composers, such as F. J. Crowest's *The Story of Music* (1902), were patronizingly made aware of being initiated into a complex world which they could barely hope to 'appreciate' fully. With technological advances in the printing industry, such as the introduction of the high-speed Hoe press from America in the 1860s and the development of the Linotype machine in the 1880s, enormous savings were made in the production of newspapers, magazines, and the cheaper type of book. Publishers developed new tactics to attract readers; advertising and publicity became increasingly important. They brought out composer studies in series, such as the *Mayfair Biographies Series*, Dent's *Master Musicians* series, Methuen's *The New Library of Music* and Novello's *Biographies of Great Musicians*. These were broadly aimed at the market for popular reprints in pocket-book format, the most famous of which, Ernest Rhys's *Everyman's Library*, became an institution. They were generally edited by a leading critic, appointed by the publisher, who would commission each volume from the most appropriate author. Collections of analytical programme notes, such as Grove's popular *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies* (1896), A. L. Peace's *Programme Notes* (1901), Rosa Newmarch's *The Concert-Goer's Library of Descriptive Notes* (1928), and - most famous of all - Tovey's *Essays in Musical Analysis* (1935-9), appealed to concert audiences keen on improving their knowledge of the repertoire. As the number of music critics increased, so their status as

'men of letters' could be established through the collected volume of reprinted journalistic essays. It was common practice for a critic to select a variety of his newspaper articles or periodical essays and present them in a more permanent form. Over a quarter of the hundred books listed in Appendix II fall into this category. A volume of selected periodical and newspaper articles also became the standard posthumous tribute.

b) The Gentleman Scholar and the Belletrist Critic

With the efflorescence of music criticism from around the end of the nineteenth century there inevitably arose a multiplicity of methods and critical practices to accommodate the expanding and splintering market. It was stated in an article on 'The Literature of Music' in 1896, that 'The *belles lettres* of the musical art, until very recently, found their best cultivators not among that class we should have supposed most interested therein, but in the outside public' (*MO*, XIX, Jun 1896: 605). The chasm between the ephemeral work of newspaper journalists appealing to an amateur readership and the historical and philosophical work of men such as Carl Engel, Edmund Gurney, Frederick Niecks, William Pole, John Frederick Rowbotham, H. Heathcote Statham, James Sully and Sedley Taylor during the late nineteenth century was dramatic. The journalists tended to have had little in the way of specialized musical education, although many of them had practical experience as organists, while the scholars were dilettantes who had received a broad-based university education. The scholars contributed to the established nineteenth-century reviews and published books on a wide variety of subjects, from architecture to psychology. The clergyman, poet, and music historian J. F. Rowbotham, for example, had studied at Oxford where he gained a first class degree in classics and the Taylorian Scholarship for Italian. During the 1880s he travelled on the continent to collect materials for his evolutionary, three-volumed *History of Music to the Time of the Troubadours* (1885-7). Significantly, neither Oxford nor Cambridge universities awarded honours degrees in music until after the Second World War. The more academic critics, such as the senior members of the Oxford group, received an undergraduate education that combined Classics or Literae Humaniores with musical studies. It was a group of such gentleman scholars that had founded the Musical Association in London in 1874 'for the

investigation and discussion of subjects connected with the Science and Art of music'. (It received a royal charter in 1944.) The published proceedings of the Musical Association, with their emphasis on the cultivation of a scientific approach to musical subjects, became a platform for the discussion of acoustics, aesthetics and criticism among this class of gentlemen scholars, many of whom were regarded as antiquarians. Musical 'science' in the 1870s meant acoustics, while the 'learned' discussion of musical art tended to focus on the theoretical aspects of harmony and counterpoint, historical writing and the analysis of musical form. Through the technical discussion of music the gentlemen scholars attempted to discern influences and to demonstrate how styles and conventions changed. The Oxford critics fall into this broad category. One does not go to *The Oxford History of Music* for primary aesthetic criticism of Monteverdi or Beethoven, but as historians Parry and Hadow were able to weave into their story aesthetic impressions. Their main concern was with history, but when they offer aesthetic appraisals or place composers in conformity to an overriding philosophy of history they become relevant to our subject. The criticism of those who occupied themselves primarily with the exegesis of form, such as Tovey, was prone to degenerate in the hands of less perceptive critics into barren academicism; external perfection of form is never enough to constitute aesthetic excellence.

Those Establishment critics who revolved around the Grove-Parry axis, through their RCM or Oxford connections, maintained a powerful and dominant pro-German stronghold before the First World War. The idea that a school of Oxford critics existed is not new: Frank Howes, himself an Oxford critic, wrote of an 'Oxford school of criticism' in his 1966 study *The English Musical Renaissance* (: 355). However, attendance at the university must not be seen as a statutory requirement for inclusion in a group which shared a common set of premises and a complex of aesthetic preferences. Instead, it should be regarded as merely a common experience for a majority, including Stainer, Parry, Hadow, Tovey, Walker, Buck and Colles. There were others who made a less significant contribution to critical thought that bolstered this particular stance, including Fuller-Maitland of *The Times* and the 'appreciationists' Walford Davies and Percy Scholes. Stanford may also be counted among their number.

Stanford's occasional essays were collected in his *Studies and Memories* (1908) and *Interludes* (1922). He also wrote a short monograph on *Brahms* (1922) for the

Mayfair Biographies series and was co-author with Cecil Forsyth of *A History of Music* (1916). He shared with Parry an evolutionary approach to history which was reflected in his penchant for specious genealogical charts tracing lines of descent from composer to composer. In his review of Parry's *Judith* he wrote:

> Not one great composer, not one great sculptor or painter, has ever brought the world to his feet, who has not laid his foundations on the work already done by the best of his predecessors. The laws of evolution are as true in music as in the other arts.. (1908: 142)

Parry's music was praised for its 'distinctively English, national atmosphere, which gives it a value to this country far greater than the present generation need be expected to admit' (: 143). While Stanford's review of Verdi's *Falstaff* in *Studies and Memories* places Verdi in a position of greater historical significance than Parry could countenance, he shared Parry's low estimate of Liszt, writing that 'creatively' Meyerbeer was head and shoulders above him (: 205). As the quotation above demonstrates, he shared with the Oxford critics a view of history that placed great importance on tradition. This can be highlighted through a comparison of his description of Brahms with that of Berlioz. He regarded Brahms as 'the great master who kept the true traditions of the royal line of absolute music, and who united in himself the mastery both of design and of the purest elements of refined Romance' (: 202). That absolute music should be described as the 'royal line', suggesting a unilinear perception of history, is entirely in accord with the Oxford critics' thinking. Berlioz, on the other hand, showed no regard for tradition: 'His scheme of work was always on the largest scale, and unfortunately he was not gifted by nature with the inventive qualities which alone could be adequate to carry it out. His music, as music, is seldom satisfying' (1916: 277).

In *Pages From an Unwritten Diary* (1914) Stanford wrote of the worship of colour for its own sake as 'the rock upon which modern superficial taste is in danger of splitting' (: 302). In order that the critic is not overwhelmed by the 'sheer physical sound' of modern orchestral repertoire, he proposed that the playing of orchestral scores on the piano would provide 'the one and only positive test' of the value of their content (: 303). Stanford was only an occasional essayist, but his evolutionary historical approach and his firm pro-Brahmsian stance served to strengthen the Establishment *status quo* that prevailed through the work of gentlemen scholars before the First World War.

The war has long been recognized as marking a turning point in English literature,

giving rise to a literary renaissance headed by Joyce, Eliot and Lawrence. While a similar renaissance of music criticism was not to happen, the war certainly overturned a dominant aesthetic that had emanated from the educational institutions, led by Parry and the Oxford critics. It also stirred up debate concerning the issues surrounding nationalism in British music and assisted the rise of the younger generation of 'folklorist' composers. By the end of hostilities in November 1918 Grove and Parry were dead, Stanford was sixty-six, Fuller-Maitland was sixty-two and retired from *The Times*, and Hadow was fifty-nine. Their critical thought permeated the work of the younger Oxford critics, but following 1918 it became less dominant as British musical life moved into the more pluralistic post-war era. It was however the work of these critics that laid the foundations for the rise of musicology in Britain, led by the next generation of critics, including E. J. Dent and J. A. Westrup, who turned away from journalism towards academia. As Dent wrote in a commentary on the first 100 years of the Musical Association, 'It was long before Britain could show anything in the field of *Musikwissenschaft* comparable with the contents of the *Vierteljahrsschrift* run by Chrysander, Spitta and Guido Adler' (*PMA*, C, 1973-4: *ix*). Indeed, it was not until after the Second World War that musicology as a discipline really established itself with the huge expansion and development of university education.

Music journalists in the late nineteenth century tended to start their careers as general arts reviewers undertaking a variety of reportage tasks on a freelance, piecework basis. Much of the newspaper journalism was unsigned, while in music periodicals it was common practice to use only initials or *nom-de-plumes* - a practice which continues in some quarters to the present day. When in July 1902 it was announced that the *Daily News* contemplated having its music criticism signed there was widespread discussion of the practice. 'Bombardo' of *The Musical Standard* wrote:

> None of the big dailies has ever inserted signed criticism as a general rule, but signed articles are not uncommon. For instance the *Daily Telegraph* has over and over again had signed articles. Sir Edwin Arnold, Mr. Clement Scott, Mr. Joseph Bennett, Mr. Bennett Burleigh, Mr. Leonard Courtenay and others have signed their own articles. Even the *Times* sometimes departs from strictly anonymous journalism. But I cannot call to mind any morning paper, except the *Morning Leader* and the *Daily Mail*, that has had signed criticism as a regular feature. (*MS*, LXIV, 18 Oct 1902: 238)

A critic such as R. A. Streatfeild, who earned a living as an assistant in the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum and wrote anonymously for *The Daily Graphic*

(1898-1912), had little opportunity to display his knowledge in the limited space offered by a newspaper that required concert notices to be sent in more or less straight after the performance. Should he wish to discourse more volubly he had either to contribute to periodicals or publish a book. Often, in discussion of critical practice, critics themselves would accuse their editors of not providing the right conditions for criticism to flourish. This became something of a recurrent theme. Stanford's historically significant essay 'Some Aspects of Musical Criticism in England' (*FR*, XXXV, Jun 1894: 826-31) provided one of the more sustained indictments of the British Press, which was compared unfavourably with that of other European nations and found to be hindering 'the great renaissance of music in England which is becoming every day more marked' (: 829):

> There are two baneful oppressions under which musical criticism in England is now groaning. The first and the most serious is the feverish haste with which editors of newspapers insist upon the production of critical notices. In all, or nearly all, the daily papers the musical correspondent is expected to produce an article on a concert or an operatic performance within two hours of its close, which shall be printed by cock-crow the next morning. What can be more unreasonable, more destructive of cool judgment, and even of good temper, than such tyranny as this?
>
> .. The second is one more delicate to handle.. There has of late grown up in England the fashion of one critic speaking through the mouths of several newspapers. The reason for this is not far to seek. The very existence of this evil proves that the profession of musical reporting is not sufficiently lucrative to admit a man devoting his pen to any one publication.. In the present condition of finance it is not possible to expect a radical reform in this matter; and the evil is so deeply-seated that it is difficult to suggest a remedy which will redress the balance of justice without inflicting a fine upon the writers. The only method appears to me to be the adoption of signed articles instead of anonymous paragraphs; signed, that is, either by the name of the writer, after the fashion of our neighbours the French, or by a fixed *nom-de-plume* or initials which shall appear at the foot of every article he writes. It is well known and admitted that anonymous articles carry a weight wholly out of proportion with the pen that writes them. (Reprinted, 1908: 70-80)

Twenty-five years later, after the First World War, Ernest Newman was to voice a complaint against editors in the pages of *The Observer* which suggests that little improvement in the condition of newspaper music criticism had been made since the 1890s:

> Everyone admits that newspaper musical criticism as a whole, compared with newspaper literary criticism, carries little weight and is little read. Because it is rather a poor thing, editors keep a tight hand and an unfriendly eye on it. But what, in large part, has made it a poor thing is precisely this tight hand and

> unfriendly eye. The paper does not give criticism a fair chance to get going, and then reproaches it with not getting going.. At present, as everyone knows, the many able men on the London press have few chances to show the best that is in them. (*O*, 20 Apr 1919: 7)

As the market for music books and newspaper articles gradually altered during the early twentieth century, it became increasingly necessary for the music critic to have specialized knowledge. But during the late nineteenth century the belletrist who made no pretence at serious appraisive thought was able to establish himself in the flourishing literary world, so vividly portrayed in George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891), with little effort - much to the consternation of Frederick Crowest who bemoaned the situation in *Phases of Musical England* (1881):

> The present condition of Musical Criticism in England cannot be said to be remarkable either for its quantity or genuine quality. At the most, our fund of criticism is only represented by an occasional notice in one or more of the daily journals, and by a few class papers, which latter, however, are characteristic and more famous for the zeal with which they write up the houses which they represent and the publications issuing therefrom than for any services which they render to the cause of Musical Art.
>
> .. what good is served by the untutored splutterings of the anonymous writers in our weekly and bi-weekly prints - writers who, under the garb of some high-flown *nom-de-plume*, regale their readers with flippant notes upon a subject of which such writers know comparatively nothing.
>
> .. At present a man or woman (for there are women who 'do' the music for certain papers - indeed, till lately one of the leading musical periodicals was edited by a lady who knew nothing about Music) has only to boast of a few years' drawing-room or other 'recollections' of past musicians, and to be able to talk about present-day musical doings, to be regarded as competent for any censorship that may be open. (: 1; 23)

c) Female Critics

It is interesting that Crowest refers to women critics. In the Victorian and Edwardian ages women dominated the thriving domestic musical culture. As early as 1839 Elizabeth Masson had founded the Royal Society of Female Musicians (merged with the Royal Society of Musicians in 1866), of which she became honorary treasurer. By 1850 music-teaching had become pre-eminently a female occupation and between 1890 and 1910 many towns witnessed a huge increase in the number of women music

teachers.[13] Many of the music journals, reliant on the income generated through advertising, were clearly geared towards the domestic market and made a deliberate appeal to self-employed women music teachers in order to attract advertisers to their pages. From the late nineteenth century women were recruited to the expanding London colleges of music in increasing numbers and inevitably began to take a more active part in musical life than had previously been possible. Nevertheless, married women were not expected to work if their husbands could support them and even if they had gained a qualification at a music college and had entered the profession, they would normally leave regular employment as soon as they had the opportunity to marry. The quantity of brief essays on music and related subjects that was contributed by women to the musical press around the turn of the century attests to the fact that it was not considered inappropriate for educated ladies to write professionally about music, although they had to overcome the kind of social prejudice implicit in Crowest's remarks. The number of these writers who were unmarried and the extent to which they regarded their literary work as a valuable source of income or merely a genteel leisure pursuit remains uncertain. Music criticism was not professionalized in any sense and so the exclusion of women on grounds of qualification was not applicable in this area of employment. But few women seem to have held positions as regular music critics, either in the newspaper or periodical press, and few wrote books on music. Brown and Stratton (1897) cite a Mary Louisa Armitt, born in 1851, who was music critic of the *Manchester City News* and who contributed to a wide variety of periodicals, including *The Musical Standard* and *Musical News*. Eva Mary Grew, wife of the Birmingham-based critic Sydney Grew, wrote for a variety of journals, including *The British Musician*, *Musical Opinion* and *The Musical Quarterly*, from the early years of the twentieth century. As mistress of the proprietor of *The Sackbut*, the seventeen-year-old soprano Ursula Greville needed little qualification to succeed Philip Heseltine as editor of that journal from 1921.[14] She continued to develop her singing career alongside this position as editor and occasional contributor, which she held until the journal's demise in 1933.

The most prominent of female writers during the period was Rosa Newmarch. She settled in London in 1880 and began to contribute to a provincial newspaper[15]and various journals, including *The Musical Standard*. She was a highly skilled linguist and following several visits to Russia and Czechoslovakia was able to write authoritatively on Russian

and Slavonic music. Her books on Russian music were valuable sources of information for British musicians which supplemented the work of Montagu-Nathan. She wrote analytical programme notes for over 700 works, mainly at the invitation of Henry Wood for the concerts of his Queen's Hall Orchestra between 1908 and 1927. She also worked as a translator, poet, and editor of John Lane's series of monographs entitled *Living Masters of Music*, which contained a volume on *Debussy* (1908) written by another female critic, Mrs. Franz Liebich (later to become Mrs. 'Frank' Liebich). Through her informative and well-written articles Newmarch was among the first in England to champion several relatively unknown composers, including Sibelius and Janáček, but her writing tends to be either factual or purely descriptive. In writing of a new work she made it a principle 'to avoid *criticism* of a kind which might in the smallest degree check or cool the enthusiasm of the public, who are not yet familiar with it' (*MT*, LII, Apr 1911: 227). Occasionally in her programme notes she would allow her descriptions to evolve into mildly poetic interpretations couched in evocative prose, but the dryness of her analytical style is generally relieved only by abundant use of adjectives.

As the twentieth century progressed it became increasingly common for women to develop musicological interests as they were integrated more fully into the higher education system. While there had been some women concerned with historical writing, including the pianist Florence May, pupil of Clara Schumann, who wrote *The Life of Brahms* (2 vols., 1905) and *The Girlhood of Clara Schumann* (1912), most women were disadvantaged through a lack of academic training and the pervasive social prejudice. It was not until 1894 that Marion Miller became the first woman to gain a Bachelor's Degree in music at a British university.[16] Women could not graduate from Oxford until 1920 or from Cambridge until 1921. Opposition to higher education for women was strong because it developed support from many groups, especially the traditional professions, each of which used their own arguments.[17] The organist Margaret Glyn became one of the earliest authorities on Tudor keyboard composers and wrote *About Elizabethan Virginal Music and its Composers* in 1924. She also published books on the evolution of musical form which attempted to develop the ideas of Parry. Marion Scott was one of the most prominent female musicologists who undertook valuable research on Haydn during the inter-war period and contributed scholarly articles to several journals, as well as writing the volume on Beethoven (1934) in Dent's *Master Musicians* series.

But throughout the 1894-1945 period female critics tended to remain on the periphery, working as infrequent contributors to periodicals. No female critic wrote a sufficient volume of criticism, or made sufficient impact through sustained critical thought, to warrant inclusion in this thesis.

d) The Journalist Critic

The career of Herman Klein is characteristic of how the music journalist could gradually establish a base in the late nineteenth century and rise to a position of some prominence. During the 1870s he studied singing, taught dancing and through the influence of his uncle Philip Soman (part-owner of the newspaper), wrote occasional articles on music and drama for *The Norwich Argus* (1875-7). In 1877 a firm of engravers had just started a small-scale monthly publication called *The Operatic and Dramatic Album* which contained only pictures. Klein suggested to the owner that his publication would benefit from text. The owner had just sold it to a major-general who appointed Klein sole editor, literary contributor and manager. The magazine contained brief reviews of musical and theatrical events, as well as short biographies of the artists whose pictures appeared within its pages. In 1878 James Mallett, editor of a rising literary paper *The Citizen*, offered him a regular salary to write music and drama reviews. During the two years he spent in this position he also acted as occasional music critic of *The Examiner* (1879-80). With the increase of profitable journalistic work he abandoned his attempts at a singing career. In the late summer of 1881 *The Sunday Times* changed hands and the new editor fired all the existing literary staff. When September arrived and the paper required a critic to report on the Norwich Festival the new editor wrote to Klein's uncle for advice. Klein was duly requested. A few weeks later, in October 1881, he joined *The Sunday Times* as its regular music critic. He continued to write both music and drama reviews for that newspaper until November 1901. Between 1902 and 1909 he was in America as critic of *The New York Herald.* He then returned to London and succeeded Runciman as critic of *The Saturday Review* (1917-21). In the later years of his time on *The Sunday Times* he had assistants, three of whom rose to some prominence in the field of music journalism: E. A. Baughan, Gilbert Webb and Alfred Kalisch.[18]

The practice of leading national papers employing a chief critic who would then choose his assistants has been maintained to the present time. Assistants covered the more mundane concerts and those in the suburbs, generally with the view to eventually becoming chief critics themselves. Many journalistic critics, including Robin Legge and Basil Maine, began their careers in this way. It was also not unusual for one man to cover both music and drama reviews. In *Musical Opinion* of July 1902 it was stated that 'no less than three prominent morning papers expect their musical critics to notice dramatic performances, and one of the three throws in all kinds of general work' (XXV: 107). In his autobiography *Musicians and Mummers* (1925) Klein described the widespread lack of qualification among critics during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the impact on the younger generation made by the appointment of Francis Hueffer to *The Times* (1878-1889):

> My education as a musical critic was, I admit, rather of the practical, rough-and-ready order. Still, I have good reason for thinking it to have been neither better nor worse than that which was common to the period wherein I graduated as a musical journalist. Not until much later was a University training regarded as an essential preliminary for the young man who aspired to follow this branch of the profession.
>
> .. The day of Chorley on the *Athenaeum* had passed, and though James Mortimer, when he started his *London Figaro*, had strong dramatic writers (the brilliant Clement Scott, followed by the logical William Archer), he trusted his musical columns to the previously unknown Percy Betts ('Cherubino'), who was then an amateur at the business. Later, when Percy Betts went on the *Daily News*, he had earned his experience and developed into an excellent critic. It was in the mid-'70s, when papers of the type of the *World* and *Truth* came into existence, that the character of musical and dramatic criticism on the prominent weeklies began to undergo the most striking change.
>
> .. With his [Hueffer's] advent in 1878 the ultra-orthodox attitude of *The Times* towards music underwent a complete *volte-face*, the effect of which was not only startling in itself but remarkable in the extent of its influence over the rank and file of the rising critics and, indeed, over general musical thought throughout these islands. (: 83; 86; 104)

Hueffer was an enthusiastic Wagnerian who hated Italian opera as much as his predecessor, J. W. Davison, had loved it. Unlike Klein and his reviewing colleagues, he had received a thorough musical education. He was a contributor to the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary* and author of *Richard Wagner and the Music of the Future* (1874) and *The Troubadours: A History of Provençal Life and Literature in the Middle Ages* (1878). His appointment marked a shift in editorial attitude towards the music critic; no longer

could a dilettante serve the increasingly discerning readership of a leading national paper. Through his enthusiastic reviews, Hueffer took an important role in the advancement of the British Musical Renaissance which was continued by his successors Fuller-Maitland and H. C. Colles. It is significant that both these Establishment critics contributed to *The Oxford History of Music* (1901-5) and became editors of *Grove's Dictionary*, the publication that did most to establish composers of the Renaissance and which, in Fuller-Maitland's words, 'gave new impetus to musical literature in England' (1902: 138). Fuller-Maitland, chief critic of *The Times* between 1889 and 1911, was on the periphery of the Oxford group of critics whose critical thought dominated the pre-1914 era. He had close connections with both Stanford, who had taught him at Cambridge, and Parry, through their mutual teacher Edward Dannreuther. His *The Music of Parry and Stanford* (1934) significantly contained a preface by Hadow. He represented 'a dynamic voice within and on behalf of the Renaissance. He lined up with the RCM men in the Schumann-Brahms camp; and his interest in folksong, Purcell and the Tudor composers sealed this affinity'.[19] Before becoming critic of *The Times* he had worked on *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1882-84), *The Guardian* (1884-89) and *The Globe* (1886-9). He had independent means and undertook a considerable amount of historical research, aided by the definite periods of the London musical seasons that prevailed before the First World War: 'From the end of June until the autumn festivals began the music critic was a free man' (*MT*, LXXVII, May 1936: 420).

Many contributors to the musical press were organists, for there were few other salaried positions for musicians around the turn of the century and the position allowed time for literary activity. Music journalism was also a popular pursuit among composers and performers. Arthur Hervey, composer of the operetta *The Fairy's Post-Box*, various symphonic poems and a large number of songs, also wrote a weekly review for the society magazine *Vanity Fair* (1889-92) before becoming music critic of *The Morning Post* (1892-1908). He wrote several books,[20]including *Masters of French Music* (1894) and *French Music in the Nineteenth Century* (1904), and contributed to numerous journals. The Australian George Clutsam was another composer of limited ability who wrote regular criticism. Following extensive tours throughout New Zealand and Asia as a child-prodigy pianist during the 1890s, he settled in London where he established himself as an accompanist. Alongside his work as critic of *The Observer* (1908-18), for which he was

initially paid £3, 10*s* per week and allowed to write for as many daily papers as he wished,[21]he enjoyed some success as a composer, especially with his one-act opera *A Summer Night*, produced by Beecham in 1910. Hervey, Clutsam, Klein, Joseph Bennett (see Chapter 1), and a host of lesser talents such as Herbert Antcliffe, were able to contribute anonymously to several journals simultaneously, especially as 'correspondents' to provincial or London newspapers. Antcliffe began his career as a critic in 1895 at the age of twenty when he became Sheffield correspondent of *Musical News* and had his first article accepted by *The Organist and Choirmaster*. *Grove 5*, which describes him as a musicologist and composer, states that for some years he was second music critic to *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* before 1916, when he was appointed critic of *The Evening Standard*. He wrote several books, including *Living Music* (1912), and, like many critics of his generation, also worked as a freelance lecturer.

The most important of the provincial newspapers were *The Birmingham Post* and *The Manchester Guardian*, both of which had a large circulation and were able to pay their music critics a regular salary. Others included *The Yorkshire Post*, whose music and art criticism from 1886 to 1936 was written by Herbert Thompson,[22]*The Liverpool Daily Post* and *The Glasgow Herald*. Largely through the work of the conductors Charles Hallé and Hans Richter, musical life in the Midlands from the late 1890s thrived. An efficient railway service provided relatively easy mobility for musicians and critics between the provincial centres and the capital. The position of music critic on any of these provincial papers was one that carried considerable prestige in its locale and often served as a stepping stone to more lucrative employment on one of the larger national papers.

The salary of a critic on a provincial newspaper was relatively meagre, but to the critics themselves the position seemed to carry a prestige that was highly attractive. Cardus wrote, 'To serve the *Manchester Guardian* as music critic during this period [1896-1904] - and later, if it comes to that - was not a profession but a vocation, hieratic, sacerdotal' (1957: 294). Very often the critic would supplement his income through writing articles for a variety of periodicals as well as concert programme notes, especially if he was not active as a performer or composer.[23] Practically all provincial music critics wrote annotated programme notes at one time or another and many, such as Newman, Evans and Blom, amassed an enormous number of them. As critical evaluation is dependent on description, they served a valuable function in the pre-critical process. It

was particularly advantageous for the provincial critic to have articles published in music and literary periodicals if he wished to build a reputation on a national basis or if he aspired to writing for a national newspaper. Sometimes articles would be commissioned by editors, but more frequently they were sent in on an *ad hoc* basis. In his *Autobiography* (1947), Cardus wrote that for years, at the start of his career, he sent articles to newspapers and magazines which were returned unpublished (: 50). Similarly, Havergal Brian was known to have offered articles to a variety of journals, both in England and the USA, often without success.[24]

A. J. Sheldon is typical of the critic who remained in the provinces.[25] He succeeded C. F. Kenyon (who also wrote as Gerald Cumberland) on *The Manchester Courier* (1913-16) and went from there to *The Birmingham Post* (1919-1931). He was a contributor to *Musical Opinion*, writing a regular series of 'Stray Musings' under the pseudonym 'Schaunard',[26]and from 1920 earned a regular income writing programme notes for the City of Birmingham Orchestra. He travelled to the provincial music festivals and occasionally visited London, but the bulk of his work was concerned with music in Birmingham. Apart from a posthumous collection of his writings on Elgar published in 1932, he wrote no books and made relatively little impact outside the Birmingham area. His successor on *The Birmingham Post*, Eric Blom, was not content to remain in the Midlands however. Blom began his career as a critic unusually late in life when he was invited by Rosa Newmarch to write programme notes for Henry Wood's Promenade Concerts in 1919. At this time he was working for the publishers J. W. Chester. It was not until he was thirty-five that he became London correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* (1923-31). The position of a London critic contributing to a provincial newspaper had its limitations, as Blom wrote to G. Parker with some frustration:

> I am given a free hand as to the choice of concerts that need covering, but at the same time they will not as a rule take notices of London recitals unless a novelty or some other unfamiliar work is performed. The point is that all the important people visit Manchester and are criticised there, while the others don't matter anyhow. (Blom to Parker, 13 Apr 1927: *Lbl* Add. MS. 68943)

Following the death of Sheldon in 1931 Blom was appointed critic of *The Birmingham Post* and in 1949 he returned to London in the more prestigious role as critic of the national Sunday paper *The Observer* (1949-59). He also regularly contributed to the leading music periodicals throughout his career and wrote monthly for the BBC's *Listener*

magazine from March 1931 until December 1945. Alongside his journalism, he published several biographical and critical books, wrote *Everyman's Dictionary of Music* (1947) and also worked as an editor of Dent's *Master Musicians* series, the periodical *Music and Letters* (1937-50; 1954-9) and the fifth edition of *Grove's Dictionary* (1954).

Blom's early career progression followed roughly in the footsteps of Ernest Newman. Fortunately in Newman's case we have some rare insights into the financial and contractual affairs of the critic through information contained in his wife's memoir.[27] He began his working life as a bank clerk during which time he devoted his leisure hours to writing articles on a variety of musical and non-musical subjects. Having published many essays and two books on musical subjects, at the age of thirty-seven he became critic of *The Manchester Guardian*, at a salary of £300 a year. A year later, in September 1906, *The Birmingham Post* offered him a three-year contract at a salary of £375 a year. As he was unwilling to shackle himself with the necessity for attending daily concerts which characterized the life of a London critic, the requirement of a weekly article was found congenial, for it allowed time for musicological research. He remained there until August 1919 when he joined *The Observer*. The editor of *The Observer* considered Newman too old at fifty-one to begin a new full-scale career as a London music critic and did not issue him with a contract, a decision he undoubtedly was to regret - for in January 1920 Leonard Rees of *The Sunday Times* offered Newman a five-year contract which he accepted at a salary of £850 a year. Little did Rees suspect that Newman would remain with that newspaper for thirty-eight years until his retirement at the age of ninety. Through steadily building a reputation in the provinces and making wise career decisions, Newman was able to build a position that carried considerable weight and prestige throughout Britain.

The Manchester Guardian had a long tradition of excellence in its music criticism. It also had a literary tradition, for there is a certain way of writing about music common to the work of Arthur Johnstone, Samuel Langford and Neville Cardus. Johnstone was an Oxford graduate who joined the paper in January 1896 following the death of its former critic, George Freemantle. He was a cultured writer who, in his descriptive concert notices, frequently found connections between music and the other arts to elucidate the impression made upon him by the musical experience. He gave persuasive critical support to the interpretations of Richter. It has been written that 'As a critic his

first object was to explain the qualities and scope of the music (in Pater's words 'to disengage its virtue'); to show, if a classic, why it had attained its position, if modern, why it should command serious attention.'[28] With A. J. Sheldon, he was one of the first British critics to realize the importance of Elgar in the early years of this century. It is significant that recognition for Elgar came in the first instance from provincial critics in the Midlands, for the Oxford critics based in the capital with an allegiance to the 'Grove-Parry' school deliberately underplayed Elgar's burgeoning genius for political reasons.[29] Both Johnstone and Langford received the tribute of a posthumous volume of selections from their newspaper articles, but they published very little outside the newspaper and were little known in London. When the Langford volume appeared in 1929 a reviewer noted:

> To many readers in the South of England the book will probably be a first introduction to Langford's name. Yet in the North, during all those years, he was a celebrity. On the continent, needless to say, he was unknown. Such is musical journalism. (*MMR*, LIX, Sep 1929: 261)

Langford's writing, as prose, has been overrated by his admirers Cardus and Sheldon, but while it was often inelegant and diffuse, his appreciative and frequently eulogistic concert notices were widely admired.[30]

Cardus's career has been documented in his *Autobiography* (1947) and by Christopher Brookes (1985). He started regular music criticism in 1913 for the Manchester *Daily Citizen* and joined *The Manchester Guardian* in 1917, although it was ten years before he succeeded Langford as music critic. He was also, of course, a highly acclaimed cricket correspondent. From Johnstone and Langford he learnt to translate the musical experience into prose of an interpretative and descriptive style. This description of the first movement of Sibelius's Fourth Symphony is characteristic:

> The colour is mostly stark; the orchestra is at one moment a mass of string vibrations; then suddenly we hear a remote call on the horn, a waif in the woodwind, or a brass crescendo, short and savage. Themes are suggested rather than stated; now and again we feel the advent of song, bardic in sweep. But little comes of it; the wind whistles again, darkness and vacancy return. (*The Manchester Guardian*, 14 Mar 1935: 11)

Such descriptions, resulting from Cardus's attempt to collaborate in the creative act, were a tradition of the newspaper to which he contributed. Newman characterized this prose style with an analogy from photography: 'sensitised plate' criticism. For Cardus, the

material of criticism was 'the recollection in comparative sanity of what happened to one while under the spell' (1988: 5). As the last distinguished music critic never to have received any formal musical education, he inevitably took a non-technical approach. He believed critics should delight readers and make them want to hear the work. His 'overnight' notices of the 1930s, some of which were collected in *The Delights of Music* (1966), were brilliant recreations of the previous night's Hallé concert. It was this ability to evoke an occasion that marked him out as both a supreme music journalist and cricket commentator. He was allowed space, generally as much as around 1000 words, to develop a train of thought, to digress grandly and often valuably, and to speak with finely stylized, fresh and compulsive prose. His attention was given predominantly to performance and while he did much to advance the cause of music in this country, especially in his championing of Mahler, he did not write the kind of appraisive thought about music that concerns this thesis. As one admirer wrote in an obituary tribute:

> Neville Cardus was a writer of beautiful prose, a preserver for all time of the beauties of the English language, and he had a poet's appreciation of music's beauty. He was not a music *critic*. Yet perhaps he was more. (*MR*, XXXVI, Apr 1975: 143)

In view of Cardus's widespread popular recognition, his exclusion from the thesis may seem extreme, but it must be borne in mind that concert reporting, however skilled the literary exponent of such reporting may be, is not appraisive thought about music.

e) The Appreciationists

Without independent means or a salaried position on a newspaper, the freelance critic would have to contribute to many publications if he were to earn a living wage from his pen, even if he worked as an editor. The vast majority of contributors to the musical press had other means of financial support. Half of the critics named on the contents pages of this thesis had compositions published and many held salaried positions as teachers. For some, their educative work was linked to their literary production, particularly for those who regarded their function as primarily to teach music appreciation. Foremost among the leaders of what became known as the 'Appreciation movement' were Stewart Macpherson,[31]author of *Music and its Appreciation* (1910) and numerous

pedagogical works, Walford Davies,[32]and the prolific Percy Scholes. These men regarded themselves as educationalists first and foremost, although they participated in a wide range of activities. Both Davies and Scholes had been pupils of Parry and can be regarded as allies of the Oxford critics, especially in their allegiance to Bach and Beethoven and their rejection of modernism. They were among the first to realize the potential afforded by the new broadcasting and recording industries which supplied fresh opportunities for the critic. As well as record reviews and the establishment of magazines devoted to the new industry, such as *The Gramophone* (1923-), there were the annotated notes that accompanied the records themselves. The BBC's magazines, *The Radio Times* and *The Listener*, initially included much material that was broadly similar to the concert programme note. Many critics, including Davies and Scholes, also broadcast talks about music.[33] The increasing availability of records and the ascendancy of the BBC as a forum for criticism from its inception in 1922 was to have a marked effect on the music critic's role, especially in the provinces. The launch of the Third Programme in 1946 came at a time when salaried positions for provincial music critics had practically vanished.

Davies's popular series of broadcast lectures, 'Music and the Ordinary Listener', begun in 1926, led to the publication of his book *The Pursuit of Music* (1935). His biographer, H. C. Colles, wrote that Davies set great store by it: 'It was the sum of his musical thought and the product of his teaching *per aethera sine filo*' (1942: 162). It is in fact a dry, protracted, and self-consciously popularist text which seeks to explain to the inquisitive amateur 'what music is about'. Speaking directly to the reader in a familiar schoolmaster-like fashion, Davies's rather stunted prose utilizes a wide range of analogies to communicate frequently over-generalized pronouncements, such as the assertion that:

> Many a symphonic poem to-day is as realistic as Fleet Street. It is not music, in the hitherto accepted sense. It puts a new strain on the listener. But no imaginative listener, who goes to meet it, need ever be unentertained in the presence of a crowd of tones with so much bustle and novelty about them as we hear to-day. We need only be offended, and even insulted, if and when the composer fails to keep a promise - that is, fails to deliver certain musical goods, to fulfil expectations which he raised in vain. Now in music, as in all art, the only (tacit) promise made is duly to take and render delight in natural and loveable forms in a wholly loveable way. This is the normal expectation raised by normal music. (: 10-11)

Scholes wrote the first history to be supplemented with recordings - *The Columbia*

History of Music (1930-39). This idea was later taken up by Oxford University Press who in collaboration with HMV issued *The History of Music in Sound* (1957) as a supplement to *The New Oxford History of Music* (1957). As critic of *The Evening Standard* (1913-20) and *The Observer* (1920-27)[34], the BBC's appointed music critic (1923-28), and author of the very popular *The Listener's Guide to Music* (1919), Scholes exercised a significant influence over music appreciation in Britain.[35] As critic for the BBC he gave a regular fortnightly radio talk. During his six years as University Extension Lecturer at Manchester University (1905-11) he formed the Home Music Study Union, a forerunner of the Open University, in connection with which he based tasks on texts such as Parry's *The Art of Music* and edited its publication *The Music Student* (1908-21) which became a forum for Oxford critics. Parry was at one time President of the Home Music Study Union and included on the editorial committee of *The Music Student* were Percy Buck and H. C. Colles. Scholes was to concur with many of the Oxford critics' assessments and *The Listener's History of Music* (1934) significantly contains a chart of the 'Evolution of Music' (: 100). From 1912 he worked as an Extension Lecturer at the University of London, as well as at Oxford and Cambridge. As these were not full-time appointments he was able to work as a music journalist and proprietor of journals such as *Youth and Music* and *Musical News*. He was dedicated to making music accessible to a broader audience and regarded his newspaper columns and his editorial work as essentially a part of his mission as an educationalist. The most striking aspect of his criticism in *The Observer*, however, is the highly negative response to the music of Stravinsky and Schoenberg.[36] With his move to Switzerland in 1928 he developed his interest in musicology, writing *The Puritans and Music* (1934) and *The Great Dr. Burney* (1948). He also worked as an encyclopaedist, producing *The Oxford Companion to Music* (1938), the most famous of one-volume dictionaries, and editing *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (1952) and *The Oxford Junior Companion to Music* (1954). Through the popular appeal and wide diversity of his books, Scholes probably earned more in royalties than any other writer on music during the first half of the twentieth century.[37]

The careers of Davies and Scholes exemplify the diversity of activities undertaken alongside music journalism. Many critics shared their peripatetic lifestyle and regarded writing about music as a part of a multifaceted career. Ralph Hill was later to continue their work as popularizers through his radio broadcasts and editorship of *The Radio Times*

(1933-45). His book *Challenges: A Series of Controversial Essays on Music* (1943) contains a valuable essay on British music criticism (: 11-25).

iv) CRITICS AND THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The multifarious ways in which individual critics were able to construct their base and attempt to mould British taste varied according to their own perceived functions as writers. For Ernest Newman, criticism was an art of persuading other people that his preferences were worth emulating. He attempted to do this by inventing reasons coherent with one another and supporting them by reference to certain repertoire through the medium of newspapers, periodicals, books and broadcast talks. While some saw their role as broadly educative and embraced new technology in their attempt to appeal to a mass audience, others, such as the poet W. J. Turner and the composers Cecil Gray and K. S. Sorabji, engaged in polemics against the mass media and found the notion of 'popularizing' classical music distasteful. The widespread hostility towards the Press, broadcasting, and the phenomena of mass culture during the inter-war period among the British intelligentsia pervaded music criticism. Turner considered the idea that anybody could be taught to appreciate music to be 'nonsense' (1933: 26-7). In the pages of *Radio Times* he argued, against Walford Davies, that the broadcasting of music was deplorable (1933: 42-7). In *The New Statesman* he wrote:

> What the role of a daily newspaper should be in the opinion of society again depends upon the nature and ideals of that society. But if our aim is civilization - as civilization has been understood, expressed and modified by the best minds from age to age - it is clear that our existing newspapers are not directed to that end, but to an entirely different end, an end suggested by the word I have coined and put at the top of this article - *drivelization*. (1928: 194)

Sorabji wrote of the 'monstrous fungoid growth of wireless' (1947: 95) and similarly held the work of Davies in contempt (1947: 19-20). He shared Clive Bell's view, expressed in *Civilization* (1928), that civilization depends on the existence of a small group of people of exquisite sensibility - a 'civilizing élite'. One of the primary functions of criticism for him was to champion composers he regarded as unjustly neglected. As a composer-critic who firmly believed in the aristocratic principle he inevitably wished to write for publications that offered no compromise to a mass market readership.

Contributing to *The New Age* and *The New English Weekly*, journals of small circulation, he intentionally limited his readership to those broadly in sympathy with his views, or at least able to find them stimulating. Gray shared the idea of a natural aristocracy, consisting of intellectuals rather than those with an advantage in property or breeding.[38] As Stradling and Hughes (1993) point out:

> An unashamed élitist, his psyche was permanently inflated by the conviction that his association with music made him effortlessly superior and wonderful. A typical example of the new priesthood, he lived a life of ease and conspicuous consumption on the proceeds of his father's metallurgical factories in Scotland. Not surprisingly, he was one of a vociferous minority of English critics who admired Delius (Stradling 1989). Like Delius, Gray believed High Art to be the repository of everything worth having and knowing, and that anything else was mundane and sordid - indeed, despicable. (: 233)

That both Gray and Sorabji were largely rejected as composers strengthened their polemic against what they regarded as the vulgarity of the masses. For these aesthetes, music was the expression of the intellectual aristocracy which could only be properly appraised by the élite. Élite culture represented the best in civilization in part because it originated within the transcendental faculties of human nature, whereas mass culture originated as an expression of the baser human instincts. For these critics, appeal to a mass readership was not only futile, but degrading.

At the other end of the spectrum is Edwin Evans, who embraced commercial culture and sought to gain a wider audience for contemporary music through prolific journalism. It is no coincidence that he wrote several enthusiastic articles about cinema music during the 1920s and 1930s. Largely through restricting his attention to modern works and aligning himself closely to Franco-Russian modernism, he forfeited his appointment to a major London newspaper until very late in his career, although he had contributed reviews to *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1914-23). As a consequence he had to write for some thirty different journals and newspapers during his career, sometimes contributing to several simultaneously, and to edit his own journals *The Dominant* (1927-9) and *The Music Lover* (1931-4) in order to support himself financially through writing. He was also active as a freelance lecturer, both in Britain and abroad, and concert organizer.[39]

Clearly, music criticism is an activity undertaken by a wide range of people with very different literary intentions. Like literary criticism, it is not a single unitary activity.

Critics set their own agendas. They do not contribute to a general debate so much as interrupt with their own questions. For this reason, consideration of individual achievement rather than collective trends of critical thought provides the most suitable manner of historical documentation, although shared viewpoints, such as those of the Oxford critics or the *Sackbut* coterie, clearly need to be identified. While it is theoretically possible to trace the multiplicity of critical reactions to various repertoires and to trace strands of critical thought throughout a given period, there is the danger that in doing so one implicitly acknowledges an evolutionary continuum that must be discountenanced. Being by its very nature an individualistic activity, criticism does not in any case lend itself to this kind of historical treatment. Having sifted through a vast quantity of material, much of which was found to be of little integral value, I have made my selection primarily on the grounds of quality and historical significance. A more rigorous and scientific method of assembling criteria on which to base the selection process could not be maintained. While my initial exploratory research included reading a large proportion of all criticism written during the period, many practitioners are barely mentioned within the thesis itself. There are several reasons why this might be, as a brief account of some of the more significant examples will show.

Firstly, there are critics whose contribution has been found to be focused on too specific a context, as in the case of Ferruccio Bonavia and Francis Toye and their work on Italian opera, or J. B. Trend and his work on Spanish music. Bonavia had played for ten years as a violinist in the Hallé Orchestra under Richter before gaining employment as assistant music critic for *The Manchester Guardian* in 1908.[40] He joined the staff of *The Daily Telegraph* in 1920, but contributed only occasional articles. He was also active as a composer. His books on *Verdi* (1930) and *Rossini* (1949) were valuable additions to the literature on Italian opera. Toye also worked as a newspaper critic. In the early 1920s he became critic of *The Daily Express*; in 1925 he joined *The Morning Post* (1925-37) and moved to *The Daily Telegraph* (1937-9) when the two papers were amalgamated in 1937. Like Bonavia, he published books on *Verdi* (1931) and *Rossini* (1931). Trend was an inveterate traveller who had become a correspondent of *The Athenaeum* in 1919, following war service in Belgium and France. When T. S. Eliot launched *The Criterion* in 1921 he very early appointed Trend as his music critic. *The Criterion* was a cultural periodical of limited circulation - apparently there were 'never more than a few hundred'

subscribers.[41] Trend's fascination with the music of Spain, both old and modern, dominated his writing and led to many articles and several books on the subject, including *Manuel de Falla and Spanish Music* (1929). In 1933 he was appointed Professor of Spanish at Cambridge University. These critics were largely concerned with historical documentation and developed only a limited quantity of critical work which was addressed to a narrowly circumscribed repertoire.

Secondly, there were several 'critics' who did not attempt to write criticism of the appraisive kind outlined above. The most noteworthy of these is Basil Maine, who was active as an organist, novelist, historical biographer, actor and priest in the Church of England, as well as a *littérateur*. His writings on music were essentially amateur (in the best sense) and while his literary musings were informative and generally stimulating, they did not attempt to provide appraisive thought. Similarly, the organist Harvey Grace who edited *The Musical Times* (1918-44), wrote a regular column in that periodical under the pseudonym 'Feste'. A selection of these columns was reprinted in *A Musician at Large* (1928) but, as his obituary stated, 'Feste did not much concern himself with music criticism; he drew his themes rather from musicians and their ways, their schemes and failures, their organization and politics, their human side, and from many aspects and outcomes of musical life that cannot be put in a category' (*MT*, LXXXV, Mar 1944: 75).

There are some writers whose contribution to British music criticism consists largely of just one significant book. These included Richard Capell, the composers Bernard van Dieren and George Dyson, and the scientist J. W. N. Sullivan. Capell was critic of *The Daily Mail* (1911-33) before he joined *The Daily Telegraph* (1933-54), in which capacity he acted more as an editor than chief contributor. He also edited *The Monthly Musical Record* (1928-33) and *Music and Letters* (1950-54). While he published a biography of Holst (1928) and *Opera* (1930), his lasting contribution was a masterful study of *Schubert's Songs* (1928) which remains valuable even in the light of recent scholarship.

Van Dieren can be regarded as a member of the *Sackbut* coterie, mainly because he acted as mentor to Philip Heseltine and Cecil Gray, but also because he was particularly concerned as a critic to champion neglected composers. He settled in London in 1909 as music correspondent of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, but wrote very little in the British Press. His book *Down Among the Dead Men* (1935) remains valuable

for its perceptive essay on Busoni, but much of the criticism in other chapters, especially that on Meyerbeer (one of the Dead Men of the title), is weakened through a lack of positive material for a revaluation and a highly negative response towards composers now more highly esteemed. Van Dieren's mannered prose style, so obscurely allusive as sometimes to be unintelligible, made no concessions to a mass market readership. In this respect, and through his determination to advance the cause of neglected music, as well as through his idiosyncratic extremes of prejudice and enthusiasm, his writing can be seen to share a commonality with that of Sorabji.

George Dyson's *The New Music* (1924) was published in the same year as Gray's *Survey of Contemporary Music*.[42] The lives of the two authors shared many similarities. Born within two years of one another in the early 1890s, they worked as composers as well as music critics during the inter-war years and both took active roles in the wider dissemination of contemporary music. A comparison of these two books, central to an understanding of British music criticism in the 1920s, reveals that the most obvious difference between the two authors - that is their relationship with the Establishment - is actually of little significance in their critical thought. They shared an overriding conservatism and both feared the chaos they saw resulting from the abandonment of tonality. Significantly they also shared an enthusiasm for the music of Delius and Sibelius. Dyson regarded contemporary music as 'predominantly a development of texture' (: 56) and outlined three tendencies: 'the evolution of classical harmony, the multiplication of tonalities, and the search for a more complete chromaticism' (: 115). As a product of the RCM, it is not surprising that Dyson should use the term 'evolution', for although he was never formally taught by Parry, echoes of Parry's *The Art of Music* (1893) abound (see Chapter III). Dyson was a firm believer in musical evolutionism, as the title of his second book, *The Progress of Music* (1932), suggests. As such, he placed emphasis on the environment in which music develops, for only through consideration of its context could the critic 'retain a sense of perspective that may hope to appraise novelties by virtue of standards that are of more than local or momentary importance' (: 18). The four chapters of *The Progress of Music* - 'The Church', 'Castle and Chamber', 'The Stage', and 'Men and Machines' - represent an attempt towards a method of history that links music to its social and cultural environment; a tentative and lightweight forerunner of what was later to become 'systematic' musicology. Both Parry and Dyson

also delighted in abundant use of aphorism.

Very little of Dyson's book actually considers the 'new music' in detail. He described Schoenberg as 'initially gifted' (: 110), and having given two short extracts of his atonal piano music wrote:

> They are chosen for quotation because they are simple, restrained, coherent, even expressive in a vague way. They have everything indeed but meaning, as we have tried to define it. There is no interval or chord in them that cannot be found in works of classical derivation, but the definite orientation of an intelligible context which alone can give a system expressive values is to all appearances completely absent. (: 112)

Stravinsky fared only marginally better, for Dyson's fear of revolt could not countenance music of such dynamism: 'The intuition of the cultivated music-lover has indeed always told him that rhythmic violence must in the end defeat itself' (: 41). Following a short quotation from Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for String Quartet*, he wrote:

> Now if this type of passage has any proper place in the art of the string quartet, then the end is near. It is not here a question of a new idiom, or of an unfamiliar arrangement or concentration of ideas. There are no ideas, musically speaking. It is neither melody, nor rhythm, nor part-writing, nor harmony. It is just so much noise. (: 129)

Unable to maintain a focused discourse, Dyson digresses widely to discuss all manner of subjects, from the technique of conducting to Wagner's theory of music-drama, before concluding with a brief assessment of Delius's position in contemporary music. His manuscript was originally submitted to Macmillan's in 1917 and they sent it to Parry for his critique (it was published seven years later by Oxford University Press). While it is not certain to what extent Dyson may have revised his text, Parry's response nevertheless accurately discerns its flaws:

> The thought is sadly confused and incoherent, and stress is laid on things which are quite unimportant. One of the conspicuous drawbacks is that whereas he calls it 'the New Music', the consideration of the New Music is relegated to a short chapter at the end, and most of the rest of it has no bearing on any conclusions - and when he gets these it is very tentative and inconclusive. He does not know what it means and what makes it new, and merely thinks in generalities and absurd speculations on the possible extension of the scale, which are really beside the point. (Parry to Macmillan, 11 Dec 1917: *Lbl* Add. MS. 55239)

For Arnold Whittall to describe Dyson's attempt to reconcile innovation with precedent as 'a landmark in the evolution of twentieth-century musical criticism' must be regarded as special pleading (*ML*, XLVI, Jan 1965: 35).

J. W. N. Sullivan was a largely self-educated musician who was encouraged in his literary work by Middleton Murray. It was Murray who linked him with T. S. Eliot, Conrad Aiken, Aldous Huxley and others in his band of brilliant contributors to *The Athenaeum* between 1919 and 1921. He later developed his interest in mathematics and published several books on scientific subjects. His single book on music, *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development* (1927), deals with philosophical issues and relates general aesthetic questions to the study of Beethoven's personal experience. The introductory section concerning the nature of music provides a critique of Gurney's *The Power of Sound* (1880). For Sullivan, art ranks with science and philosophy as a way of communicating knowledge about reality. His philosophical propositions are very similar to those of W. J. Turner, which is no coincidence as both men were members of the Georgian literary scene and regular visitors to Lady Ottoline Morrell's Garsington Manor, where members of the 1920s intelligentsia, including Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, and Wyndham Lewis, regularly discussed the arts and philosophy. The importance which Sullivan gives to music in *Gallio or the Tyranny of Science* (1927) is also reminiscent of Turner's general philosophical assessments.

Lack of standardization in the critic's working practice exacerbates the problems of selection for, as it has been shown, critics occupied themselves with a wide variety of activities and their writing does not fall into convenient categories. Some, like Parry and Gray, made their contribution almost solely through books while others, such as Edwin Evans, wrote for dozens of different journals and newspapers throughout their careers without leaving a critical book of any lasting significance. Many worked as newspaper critics, editors of journals, essayists, historians, biographers, encyclopaedists and broadcasters. In summarizing a critic's approach throughout his diverse literary activity it has been necessary to examine the influence of philosophical constructs, to consider prose style and to some extent dialectical strategy, even though music critics were not involved in the kind of sustained discourse that characterizes philosophical debate. In this process of systematization there lies the danger of putting words into the critics' mouths. In order that they may be allowed to speak for themselves, it has been found necessary and unavoidable to make use of, at times, extensive quotation.

By focusing on a wide variety of critics, this thesis hopes to provide a survey of the critical thought of the period. It is not, nor in the nature of things could it ever

satisfactorily be, a comprehensively thorough account. Its most important function is to expound the diversity of appraisive thought about music in an elucidatory manner, without being argumentative in terms of refuting a critic or entering into a polemical discourse, while in no way shirking the responsibility of arriving at an assessment of his position and achievement. It follows a broad chronological outline. However, the history of ideas is quite distinct from the history of events and any attempt to fit various critics and critical trends into a preordained sequence would clearly be erroneous. Conflicting ideas coexisted and the dominance of a particular school of thought was always limited to specific circles. The chronology is therefore approximate and determined for the most part by the publication of books listed in Appendix II.

1. It would seem likely that this criticism was directed primarily at F. E. Sparshott, whose book of a similar title, *The Concept of Criticism* (1967), is a detailed philosophical account of the subject in abstract terms with little reference to applied criticism.

2. Margolis, J., (1965): 126.

3. For a discussion of the differences between evaluation and appraisal see Diffey, T. J., 'Evaluation and aesthetic appraisals', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, VII, 1967: 358-73.

4. Cone, E. T., 'The Authority of Music Criticism', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XXXIV, Spring 1981: 5.

5. For discussion of the problematic relationship between description and appraisal see Kaplan, A., 'On the so-called crisis in criticism', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, VII, (1948-9): 42-8. Casey, J., (1966) devotes a chapter to 'Values' in which he discusses the descriptive and evaluative uses of language. Sparshott, F. E., (1967) also devotes a chapter to the relationship between description and evaluation.

6. See Russell, C. T., 'The Analysis and evaluation of Music: A Philosophical Inquiry', *MQ*, LVIII, Apr 1972: 161-184.

7. See Carmichael, P. A., 'The Aesthetic Seer', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XXVI, 1967-8: 231-40.

8. See Macdonald, M., 'Some distinctive features of arguments used in criticism of the arts' in Elton, W., ed., (1970): 127.

9. See Knight, H., 'The use of 'good' in aesthetic judgments', in Elton, W., ed., (1970): 154.

10. See Beardsley, M. C., (1958).

11. See Dutton, D., 'Criticism and Method', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XIII, 1973: 232-42.

12. See Niecks, F., 'The Early Years of the "Monthly Musical Record"', *MMR*, L, Jan 1920: 3-6.

13. See the statistics provided by Ehrlich, C., (1985): 53; 105; 236.

14. For Philip Heseltine's reaction to her appointment see Smith, B., *Peter Warlock: The Life of Philip Heseltine* (1994): 185.

15. This is recorded in an anonymous article: 'Rosa Newmarch', *MT*, LII, Apr 1911: 225-229. It has not been possible to discover to which provincial newspaper she contributed.

16. See Brown, J. D. and Stratton, S. S., (1897): 280.

17. See Burstyn, J. N., *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (1980).

18. Like Klein, E. A. Baughan was both music and drama critic. Some of his articles were collected in *Music and Musicians* (1906). Gerald Cumberland wrote of him in *Set Down in Malice* (1919):

> E. A. Baughan is not, I think, a musician in the true sense of the word, nor does he claim to be, but I imagine that, being musical and having the itch for writing, he took the first journalistic work that offered itself. That work was the editing of *The Musical Standard*. Subsequently he went to *The Morning Leader* as a musical critic, and then to *The Daily News* as dramatic critic. He is sane, level-headed, honest, but not conspicuously brilliant. His musical work, judged by a high standard, was poor. He had not sufficient knowledge to guide him to a right judgment when faced by a new problem. (: 145)

Gilbert Webb wrote for *The Standard*, *The Referee* and *The Sunday Times*. Alfred Kalisch began writing in 1894 as music critic for *The Star*, *The World* (1899-1915) and *The Morning Leader*. In 1912 he was appointed music critic of *The Daily News*. In *Behold These Daniels* (1928), Maine wrote that 'The practice of journalistic criticism during many years has almost completely fixed Alfred Kalisch as a "technician." The faculty of interpretation I find almost wholly absent in his writing' (: 56). The same might well be said of Webb.

19. Stradling, R. and Hughes, M., (1993): 34.

20. See 'Writers on Music: Arthur Hervey', *MS*, CI, 27 Mar 1920: 108.

21. Gollin, A. M., (1960): 152.

22. Thirty-two volumes of Thompson's criticism, as well as much other material including his diaries, are in the collection of the Brotherton Library, Leeds University: MS 361. See Linstead, G. F., 'Herbert Thompson (1856 - 1945)' *MT*, LXXXVI, Jul 1945: 207-8.

23. The history of the annotated programme note has yet to be written. For a brief account see Scholes, P. A., (1935): 22-8. The RCM has an extensive collection of programme notes and Westminster Central Music Library has a collection of examples by Edwin Evans. Neither is catalogued.

24. See MacDonald, M., (1986): 15-16.

25. For an account of Sheldon's career see his obituary in *MMR*, LXI, Aug 1931: 230.

26. See in particular his obituary of Langford, 'Samuel Langford', *MO*, L, Jun 1927: 883, and 'On Criticism', *MO*, XLVIII, Aug 1925: 1113-15; Sep 1925: 1211-13; Oct 1925: 44-5; Nov 1925: 151-2.

27. Newman, V., (1963).

28. Reece, H. and Elton, O., (Manchester, 1905): *xcvi-xcvii*.

29. See Stradling, R. and Hughes, M., (1993): 58-60.

30. See Sheldon, A. J., 'Samuel Langford', *MO*, L, Jun 1927: 883, and Cardus, N., (1970): 10-23.

31. See Scholes, P. A., 'Stewart Macpherson', *MT*, LXXXII, May 1941: 239.

32. For a biography of Davies, which also contains a complete bibliography, see Colles, H. C., (1942).

33. Material relating to broadcast talks and the publication of music articles in *The Radio Times* and *The Listener* is held by the B.B.C. at their Written Archives Centre at Caversham.

34. Many of Scholes's articles from *The Observer* are reprinted in *Crotchets* (1924). Those of his successor, Arthur Fox-Strangways, are reprinted in his *Music Observed* (1936).

35. Scholes's extensive library, assembled over a period of some fifty years of his life as an active and prolific writer, is held by the National Library of Canada in Ottawa, Ontario. This includes his research files, including over 4000 folders and boxes containing a vast quantity of newspaper clippings, programme notes and index slips referring to information in periodicals and monographs in his library.

36. For Scholes's critique of modernism see 'The Curtain Falls', *O*, 25 Jul 1920: 9; 'Bliss and Stravinsky', *O*, 10 Jul 1921: 10; 'The Death of Modernism', *O*, 29 Jan 1922: 8; 'Making a Noise in the World', *O*, 27 Jul 1924: 9; 'Five Years' London Music',*O*, 23 Aug 1925: 7.

37. Details of the number of his books sold and the royalties gained are contained in the Scholes section of the 'Society of Authors' collection in the British Library: *Lbl* Add. MS. 56799-56800.

38. See Carey, J., (1992): 71-90.

39. During June and July 1929 Evans was guest professor at the State University of Iowa. The only reference I have found to his work as a concert organizer is in *The Queen* (CXXXVIII, 3 Jul 1915: 37), which states: 'Congratulations to Mr. Edwin Evans, the well-known music critic, on the attainment of his centenary - not in years, happily, but in a series of excellent concerts he has organized to cheer the Belgium refugees at Earl's Court.'

40. See Ayerst, D., (1971): 333.

41. Symons, J., *Makers of the New: The Revolution in Literature, 1912-1939* (1987): 155.

42. For an anthology of Dyson's writings and talks on music see Palmer, C., (1989).

CHAPTER I

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY CRITICAL CONTEXT

> To be at once sound and sparkling is rarely given to the wine of musical criticism; and in separation, while the body of fact is specially dry, the bubbles of fancy are specially innutritious.
>
> Edmund Gurney, *Tertium Quid*, Vol. 2, 1887: 7

To understand why a new era in British music criticism was begun towards the close of the nineteenth century it is necessary to examine the critical context prior to its emergence. It was not until well into the nineteenth century that music criticism became properly established in Britain with the advent of the periodical journal devoted solely to discussion of the art. The relatively small quantity of criticism written during the previous century had closely followed the psychological and ethical concerns of its age[1]and although there had been some periodical criticism of music, as well as publication of several magazines containing music supplements, until the nineteenth century no specifically musical journal managed to survive for more than a few months. Music criticism as a profession only became possible with the establishment of a regular and secure musical press. The first music journals of substance to be established in Britain were *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* (1818-28) and *The Harmonicon* (1823-33).[2] Of greater significance, however, was *The Musical World* (1836-91), a journal based on French and German models which contained a wide variety of critical and historical articles.

The history of nineteenth-century British music criticism and aesthetics has been usefully outlined by Stephen Banfield (1981). The century was dominated by two men - Henry F. Chorley, critic of *The Athenaeum* (1831-68), and James W. Davison, critic of *The Times* (1846-78). Although they were notorious enemies, both shared broadly similar critical views and represented the forces of Victorian conservatism. Their adoration of Mendelssohn and Rossini was as extreme as their intolerance towards the new musical ideas of Chopin, Schumann, Liszt and Wagner. Chorley certainly had a more cosmopolitan perspective but was nevertheless the more conservative of the two. Between 1836 and 1868 he regularly visited Europe in order to hear music that could not be heard

in England (Hewlett (1873), vol. 1: 303). His notable *Music and Manners in France and North Germany: A Series of Travelling Sketches of Art and Society* (1841) was the result of extended tours between 1839 and 1841. He was more or less musically untrained and only with regard to the old schools of Italian opera and Italian singing could he be regarded as a competent judge. Indeed, Chorley was something of a connoisseur of vocal art. The performances of Italian opera that he attended at the Royal Italian Opera, Her Majesty's Theatre, and Drury Lane accounted for much of the music he heard during his career and concerns a large percentage of his total literary output. Albano's reconstruction of Covent Garden, opened for the first time as 'The Royal Italian Opera House' in 1847, provided a highly fashionable platform for Italian opera and it was not until the 1870s that its vogue began to decline. It is indicative of the position accorded to Italian opera in England that when *Lohengrin* eventually reached London in 1875 it was sung in Italian - still regarded as the natural language for grand opera. Although Chorley officially retired from the staff of *The Athenaeum* in 1868, he continued to pen occasional articles for the journal until 1871.

As John Warrack has noted, Chorley was 'a perceptive reviewer with a good reporter's observation and a sensitive music lover's enthusiasm, rather than a critic with a deeper cast of mind' (1980: 340). Nevertheless he must be given credit for obtaining a wider recognition in England for French music, especially that of Gluck, Auber, and Gounod.[3] While his position on *The Athenaeum* formed his only permanent occupation he also wrote art criticism, plays, novels and poetry. Davison, however, having given up earlier aspirations to compose, dedicated himself solely to the writing of music criticism. In doing so he became the first professional music critic to work in Britain. Having gained valuable experience as the editor and publisher of the short-lived journal *The Musical Examiner* (1842-44), he took over the editorship of *The Musical World* in 1844 and held the position for some forty-one years. In 1845 he made the acquaintance of Charles Kenney, a music and drama critic of *The Times* who, owing to illness, gave Davison his musical work. In August 1845 Davison was appointed as the permanent music critic of the paper and it was in that capacity that he exercised his influence on British musical life until his resignation in 1879. His two composer friends, William Sterndale Bennett, Professor of Music at Cambridge University (1856-75), and G. A. Macfarren, who succeeded Bennett at Cambridge, held much sway over his critical

opinions. Both composers attempted to give English music a distinctive voice and Davison in turn consistently accorded supremacy to contemporary British composers over foreign ones. Both his brother's biography, *From Mendelssohn to Wagner* (1912), and Charles Reid's more recent biography, *The Music Monster* (1984), provide detailed accounts of his highly opinionated criticism as well as much information concerning the critical scene in London during the Victorian era.

The cult of Mendelssohn worship in which the composer became the victim of the same kind of romantic homage paid to Byron, fuelled by these forces of conservative opinion, was at its peak around the middle of the century. It was at this time that the level of artistic enterprise in Britain began to drop towards its very lowest. Mendelssohn's position in the affections of the English musical public was intimately bound up with Victorian views on morals and continued to influence critical opinion well into the Edwardian era. As a man of obvious integrity, an adherent to Protestant Christianity and a family man, Mendelssohn was regarded as a perfect and exemplary human being. The writings of Ruskin persuaded many that good art could only be the product of the moral life, that it could in some way serve as a moral reformer. Such ideas, stemming from Plato's thought on art and its educational influence, were expounded by several other writers, including the popular clergyman Hugh Reginald Haweis, critic of *Truth* during the 1880s, and Hubert Parry. Haweis's two popular works, *Music and Morals* (1871) and *My Musical Life* (1884), both considered the understanding of music as a moral discipline and its discussion was approached with a quasi-evangelical fervour which was no doubt responsible for their extraordinary popularity.

The acceptance of Mendelssohn's music after the first of his seven visits to England in 1829 is taken to inaugurate the 'Germanisation' of English musical taste. Some indication of the position accorded to Mendelssohn in Britain during the second half of the century can be gleaned from the fact that in the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1878-1889), four columns are devoted to Donizetti, seven to Joachim and his quartet, sixty-five to Wagner and one hundred and thirty-five to Mendelssohn. George Grove, the eminent Victorian who for upwards of forty seasons contributed analytical programmes for the Saturday Concerts at the Crystal Palace, was one of the most confirmed admirers of German music. His programme notes on the works of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Schumann were read by thousands and

established a new standard for such musical exegesis. From 1870, the year of Beethoven's centenary (celebrated with a large festival at the Crystal Palace), he became increasingly preoccupied with analysis, especially with regard to the structural procedures of Beethoven. His assessment of Beethoven was to become a shared article of faith for Parry and the Oxford critics.[4] His analyses of Beethoven's symphonies were published in book format in 1896 and in just two years reached a third edition. They became a model for future analytical writers and in particular for Tovey's seminal *Essays in Musical Analysis* (1935-39), which also dealt predominantly with the German repertoire.[5] As with Tovey, Beethoven was at the heart of Grove's musical experience, but while Tovey had little concern for biography, Grove considered the understanding of a composer's life to be of considerable relevance to an appreciation of his music. Beethoven was accorded such a high place in Grove's critical estimation that he became a kind of moral preceptor, a man who could do no wrong; an estimate that was to be strongly reaffirmed by the Oxford group.

The first edition of Grove's *Dictionary* exercised a considerable influence over musical taste and understanding in Britain. Its publication reflected both the increasingly high position accorded to music in Britain and the relative esteem in which contemporary composers were held. It must be regarded as one of the most outstanding literary feats of the Victorian era; no general music dictionary of any substance had appeared before it in England and no other since has overshadowed its dominance in the field of music lexicography. It was not entirely above contemporary criticism, however; Grove's own entry on Schubert, in particular, inspired a protest in *The Edinburgh Review* against 'the creed of Sydenham' (*EdR*, CLVII, Oct 1883: 482) - Sydenham being the location of the Crystal Palace.

Among Grove's achievements as a critic was his early recognition of the importance of Schumann's music at a time when the composer was assailed by the influential Davison clique. From the 1860s there was a growing interest in Schumann in Britain. Marie Wieck, Clara Schumann's stepsister, had given the first performance in England of Schumann's Piano Concerto at the Crystal Palace on 5 March 1864. The following year Grove met Clara Schumann in Paris and by that time he was already among her late husband's most enthusiastic champions. He was also foremost among those who supported the achievements of Joachim and Brahms, thus again presaging the

contribution to British music criticism made a generation later by Tovey. Neither critic was committed to the Wagnerian aesthetic and made little effort to disguise it, although they rarely expressed an open antagonism in print. In fact it was Grove's inability to express any misgivings that became his greatest failing as a critic. He was far more concerned with exposition and elucidation of musical works than with the expression of judgement. While his dedication to the German repertoire was counterbalanced by a mistrust of what he considered to be the tawdry and superficial quality of much French music, attested by the numerous quotations from his diary found in C. L. Graves's biography (1904), he rarely expressed a criticism that could be construed as in any sense negative. Percy Young, in his biography of Grove, has provided a perceptive assessment of his status as a writer:

> As a writer, in an absolute sense, Grove is not to be reckoned among the greatest. He was neither profound nor particularly stylish, and his defects in respect of style were continually in his mind. His predecessors and some of his contemporaries in the field of musical criticism and journalism for the most part pursued literary elegance, often at the expense of veracity. The engineer in Grove always urged him to consider the exact measurements of a situation. He was dogged in the pursuit of facts. A prototypical late developer, he had neither intuition nor brilliance on which to depend; only the mass of material quarried from many repositories of learning, and tenacity of purpose. He wrote down all that he observed. But he had a genius for often seeing what others did not see, as well as a conviction that nothing was too insignificant to be written about. In his finest work - in the field of music, notably the biographies of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Beethoven - there are frequent touches of the commonplace which give a setting to what is generally taken to be genius. In a sense, it is from his commonplace qualities that Grove's own kind of genius, which finally rendered him the most influential figure in English musical literature, sprang. (1980: 112)

With the rise of Wagner, British music criticism reacted with extreme caution and not a little hostility.[6] Davison regarded Wagnerian music-drama as subversive to the principles of art and along with his followers, such as Edward Taylor and Desmond Ryan,[7]he combated the new art-movement with considerable force. The two notable exceptions to this early anti-Wagnerianism, both of German descent, were Francis Hueffer, who was appointed to share the music criticism of *The Times* with Davison in 1877 and later succeeded him, and Edward Dannreuther, the founder of the first Wagner Society in Britain and the author of the sixth volume of *The Oxford History of Music* (1905) on the Romantic period. Hueffer settled in England in 1869 and immediately began to express an evangelical passion for Wagner and Schopenhauer. Early admiration for Wagner in

England was closely bound up with admiration for the philosophy of Schopenhauer, especially in the writings of David Henderson Irvine (1856-1930) and William Ashton Ellis (1853-1919), editor of the Wagner Society's magazine *The Meister* (1888-95). On 15 March 1871 Hueffer published in *The Academy* a long article on the composer which is taken to be the first public declaration of the English Wagnerians.[8] In 1874 he published his highly influential *Richard Wagner and the Music of the Future*. He also established a new periodical, *The Musical Review* (1863), but this was not to make a significant impact. It was largely through his book and Dannreuther's series of articles on 'Richard Wagner: His Tendencies and Theories'[9]that Wagner's art first began to be disseminated in England. These prepared the way for the Wagner Society's orchestral concerts of 1873 and led to a general public acceptance of the composer's music by the middle of the decade, although the first stage performances of *The Ring*, *Meistersinger* and *Tristan* were not to take place in England until 1888. When the composer visited the country for the third and last time, in 1877, he found a large and well-informed public, although it was some years before Wagner worship reached its zenith with the socially fashionable pilgrimages made to Bayreuth and Munich in the 1890s.

Foremost among those who took an interest in the theory of criticism in the late Victorian period was John Stainer, one of the most industrious and widely read musicians of his day.[10] As Hubert Parry's predecessor as Professor of Music at Oxford from 1889 to 1899, Stainer can be regarded as a senior member of the Oxford group. With the intention of steadying what he considered to be the contemporary oscillation between the two extremes of 'dogmatic conventionalism and unblushing nihilism' in British music criticism, he set out in his second address to the Musical Association some 'Principles of Musical Criticism' (*PMA*, VIII, Jan 1881: 35-52). His fundamental premise was that 'the standard of merit in music is, and ever will be, determined by the *consensus* of that body of educated listeners and thinkers whose intellect and emotions are equally trained and refined, and who are silently elected to a sort of "board of taste"' (: 46). From a late nineteenth-century perspective aware only of a relatively narrow range of music history, there doubtless existed something approximating this general consensus of opinion as to the merits of various strands within the inherited German tradition summed up in Wagner and Brahms. However, by his 'board of taste' analogy Stainer seems to contradict an earlier statement in which, defending 'scholastic' criticism against the objections of those

who wrongly take pleasure or taste as criteria for judgement, (presumably implying Edmund Gurney, see below: 53), he proposes that certain basic questions be answered before any attempt is made towards evaluation. The first and most important of these is that the purpose or function of a composition must be ascertained in order that the connection between the composer's conception and its fulfilment can be appraised. Ultimately, of course, these two considerations should be indistinguishable within a single creative process. The method of measuring a work's merit as a representative of its class is then questioned. By reasoning that its aesthetic importance is determined by the point of time at which it was composed with relation to the actual development of that class at that time, and also by its merits when compared with contemporary efforts of the same kind, Stainer falls into the trap of defining value with reference to a time continuum. His belief in an evolutionary process active throughout the history of musical thought misleads him to the conclusion that the merit of a composition is dependent on its date - a perception that was later to pervade Parry's seminal *The Art of Music* (1893). The absurd extension of this position is that the pronouncement of critical judgement on an undated work would be an impossibility.

Stainer considered merit in a work of art to be of two kinds; merit of conception of initial design and that of treatment or fulfilment. The first proceeds from the inherent creativity of the composer, the second from artistic education. Both are based on the criterion of originality. Merit of conception combines it with excellence of structure while merit of treatment includes the conservative notion of excellence as an example of accepted method. Eventually, definition of terms becomes the Achilles' heel of this theory. Originality is defined as 'the stamp of individuality left by a composer on his work' (: 40); individuality being 'the special bias and intellectual bearing of a creative genius' (: 41), at which point the definitions end. Having developed the idea that criticism should examine the relationship between the composer's initial conception and its fulfilment, along with the matter of form of conception and treatment, Stainer then proceeds to find a principle whereby a composer can be said to have 'entered into a high walk of art' - the highest being the one that provides the most opportunity for the free use of the most varied materials. Unsurprisingly, a definite principle is not forthcoming. While much of Stainer's thesis is wrongheaded, he must be given credit for tackling aspects of critical theory that remain of enduring relevance. His thinking was muddled,

yet it had a significant influence on later Oxford critics. In particular, Henry Hadow's theories discussed below can be seen to owe much to the early work of Stainer, especially in the emphasis given to elucidating principles based on the importance of originality.

Some improvement in the general level of musical enterprise in Britain began to take place towards the end of the nineteenth century. This was due to numerous factors, among them the founding of music colleges such as The Guildhall School of Music (1880) and The Royal College of Music (1883), the opening of the Queen's Hall in 1893 and the establishment of a permanent orchestra there, the influence of conductors such as August Manns and Henry Wood, the results of the Bach, folksong, and Tudor revivals, the increasing prominence given to music at the universities, and not least the burgeoning of a new creative spirit in British music. The proliferation of London concerts during the 1890s was such that newspaper critics complained that they could not be expected to 'cover' them all. Ehrlich (1985) states that 'In June 1893 the *Daily News* and the *Saturday Review* separately estimated that there were about fifty concerts a week during the season' (: 61). In order to cater for the demands of a new body of enthusiastic amateur musicians created by various popular movements, such as the establishment of competitive festivals, the brass band movement, and the widespread dissemination of the Tonic Sol-Fa system of music notation for singers, the quantity of literature about music increased dramatically as the nineteenth century progressed. This was especially apparent in the increasing number of periodicals devoted solely to music which could now survive financially through the creation of advertising revenue. The article on periodicals in *The New Grove* (1980, XIV: 407-535), the most comprehensive list of British music periodicals, records just twenty-seven new titles between 1880 and 1890, while during the following decade there were at least sixty-three. With these more recent journals there entered a new spirit that was a reflection of their times; the influence of scientific positivism and the Victorian philosophic concerns of Darwin, Huxley and Herbert Spencer began to have an impact on literature about music. The origin and nature of music were subjects that were taken up with considerable enthusiasm. Spencer's long essay on 'The Origin and Function of Music', later to be forcibly denounced by Ernest Newman (see below: 143), appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in October 1857 (LVI, Oct 1857: 396-408).[11] Darwin also dealt with music in *The Descent of Man* (1871). With the lead being given by philosophers, writings about music by musicians and *littérateurs* took on

an increasingly academic nature. Ebenezer Prout, critic of two literary weeklies, *The Academy* (1874-9) and *The Athenaeum* (1879-89), and the first editor of *The Monthly Musical Record,* was also a prolific music theorist and other writers such as George Alexander Macfarren took up the now discredited harmonic theories of Alfred Day which had stemmed from Rameau. The theories set out by Hermann Helmholtz in his treatise *On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music*, first published in London in 1875 translated from the German by the writer on musical science Alexander John Ellis, were highly influential among gentlemen scholars. Not only did Helmholtz greatly amplify the acoustical theories of Rameau, Wheatstone, Corti and others, but he also provided a framework for future discussion of the laws governing the mental perception of music. William Pole's *Philosophy of Music* (1877), for example, elaborated many of Helmholtz's central propositions and Edmund Gurney's substantial dissertation *The Power of Sound* (1880) also made exhaustive use of his work. Moral philosophy attempted to work out the metaphysical ramifications of contemporary advances in science, but it did not abandon the psychological investigation into human behaviour. The kind of intellectually rigorous discussion of aesthetics which brought together a range of disciplines from philosophy to acoustics that characterized Gurney's *The Power of Sound* and his rationalistic discussion of music in the second volume of *Tertium Quid* (2 Vols., 1887) became increasingly widespread.[12] While Gurney primarily set out to employ scientific and evolutionary theories for the purpose of investigating 'the aesthetics of hearing' (1880: xvii), he ranged over a very wide area covering matters which are fundamental to critical theory. Unfortunately the chapter on music criticism in *The Power of Sound* is not particularly enlightening, for Gurney admits of no other criterion for the judgement of music than pleasure:

> This impossibility of marking off *good* and *bad* by objective tests and rigid lines in the particular sphere of art is manifestly nothing more than a corollary from the argument which was applied in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth chapters. If pleasure is the criterion of music's essential worth, we cannot refuse to consider both surface and depth in our measurement: it seems as impossible to deny the epithet *good* to the music which can give some degree of durable enjoyment to large numbers of human beings, as to that which can give a greater degree of more durable enjoyment to a smaller number. Bad music is bad in the comparative sense that it can give, at best, a small sum of pleasure, and either has not sufficient individual impressiveness for any one to feel a longing for its exact recurrence, or is rapidly tired of when it recurs; which means that it lacks any element of

> durability. The criterion is so safely applied in an immense number of cases that we need hardly distress ourselves at the existence of a debateable region where its application is uncertain and difficult. (1880: 538-9)

Philosophical positivism and scientific evolution gave new impetus in the second half of the nineteenth century to the old idea and belief in progress. The theory of evolution outlined in Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) took its place alongside the earlier Newtonian theory of gravity as one of the seminal ideas in the history of thought. The extent to which it influenced music criticism is nowhere more clearly to be seen than in Parry's literary works (see Chapter III). Both Spencer and Darwin had stressed the psychological approach to discussion of aesthetic issues during the late nineteenth century. Their philosophy, their faith in the efficacy of scientific method and the whole tradition of thought that they represented - positivist, analytical, logical, and objective - had a widespread influence on music criticism from the 1890s. It will be discerned in the writings of Oxford critics, as well as in those of Ernest Newman, for whom the success of an objective method of inquiry, based on precise and detailed observation and in the painstaking collection and collation of data, held considerable appeal. Parry, Hadow and Newman were widely read and spent their formative years studying disciplines other than music during the last decades of the nineteenth century. As well as an interest in philosophy, along with most other critics of their time, they also took an interest, if perhaps on a dilettante basis, in the relatively new sciences of sociology and psychology. Although the joint volume by Freud and Breuer, *Studies in Hysteria* (1895), is usually taken as marking the beginning of psychoanalysis, two earlier volumes, James Sully's *Sensation and Intuition: Studies in Psychology and Aesthetics* (1874) and William James's *Principles of Psychology* (1890), had greater impact in Britain along with Freud's *magnum opus*, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). The manifold ways in which the influence of Freudian psychology pervaded music criticism were often subtle, although certain writers, such as Leigh Henry and Newman, made clear their desire to explain musical characteristics in terms of psychological manifestation. The most notable examples are to be found in Newman's biographical works, especially *The Unconscious Beethoven: An Essay in Musical Psychology* (1927) and his psychological study *The Man Liszt* (1934).

The growth of modes of knowledge like psychology, as well as the increased emergence of rational and scientific tactics of thought, reflects the concerns now

recognized as predominantly those of the twentieth-century mind. They can be seen in all the systematic thought of our time and are contained in most arts of the period. While their influence served to invigorate music criticism, in certain respects it led critics away from central concerns. This is most noticeable in a characteristic kind of quasi-scientific writing about music that became prevalent during the early years of the twentieth century, typified by William Wallace's *The Threshold of Music* (1908). In attempting to document the cerebral processes that had operated throughout the history of music, Wallace accounts for progress in terms of evolutionary psychology. Ironically, this type of writing, once considered to represent the height of intellectuality, is now the least stimulating of all older music criticism:

> In every age the composer unconsciously aids the development of the musical sense of those with whom he comes into contact, but all that is transmitted from one generation to another is infinitesimal. Now, just as in remote ages the brain had come to acquire certain endowments, not after the lapse merely of generations, but of centuries, and just as the specialisation of one function led to the quickening of another, so, in estates and communities of mankind, the establishment of one phase of mental energy upon a definite basis perpetuated it, not in its fulness but in an increase, slight, yet substantial enough to carry on the process of development. In other words, the acquired characteristics of one generation are not passed on complete to the generation succeeding it, but a minute fraction of these characteristics alone is preserved and transmitted, as it were, in an arithmetical progression, in which the unit is so small as to be almost intangible.
>
> We may go further and put forward the hypothesis that cell-proliferation may take place on such a scale that it exhausts its energies, and is compelled to sustain itself by a system of autophagy, consuming itself by the effort to exist, and leaving only a few surviving cells to repeat the process. If we accept this as a feasible explanation, the imperceptible development, not of one faculty alone, but of all, can be accounted for. (: 243-4)

While the older generation of composers associated with the universities and colleges of music, such as Stainer, Stanford and Parry, aligned themselves with a classical, Brahmsian tradition in their writings as well as in their music, a younger school of composers came to the fore towards the turn of the century which tended to take its inspiration from what was then considered to be more radical sources, particularly Wagner and Strauss. This is not to suggest that the older generation either set themselves against Wagner or were not influenced by his music; Parry had studied with Dannreuther and acknowledged Wagner to be a supreme modern master; Stanford utilized Wagnerian techniques of orchestration in his music and employed leitmotif technique in his early operas. However, the younger men, such as Granville Bantock, Havergal Brian, Rutland

Boughton, Joseph Holbrooke and Cyril Scott, embraced late nineteenth-century developments wholeheartedly and took the aesthetics of late Romanticism as their own personal creed. Each of these composers also took part in some kind of literary activity. Bantock established a very high-quality periodical, *The New Quarterly Musical Review* (1893-6), which published Newman's first articles on music. Brian wrote prolifically for *Musical Opinion* and several other journals from 1904, much of his work being purely journalistic although providing an important and fairly comprehensive documentation of the period. Boughton also wrote for a variety of journals and published several books and pamphlets including *The Music Drama of the Future* (1911), written with the poet Reginald Buckley, and *The Reality of Music* (1934), in which his earlier Wagnerian ideas concerning the universality of the arts had been transformed into extreme left-wing political concepts which emphasized the overriding importance of folk-music. Holbrooke wrote almost exclusively on contemporary music and in particular on British music, whose importance he tended to over-estimate, in three literary journals - *The Saturday Review*, *The New Age*, and *The English Review*.[13] Scott wrote miscellaneous essays and several marginal books which relate music to the occult sciences, including his *Philosophy of Modernism* (1917). A later work, *The Influence of Music on History and Morals: A Vindication of Plato* (1928), proposes that music has exercised such an important influence on history, morals and culture that 'an innovation in musical style has invariably been followed by an innovation in politics and morals' (: 8) - a typical example of the author's predisposition to put the cart before the horse. He particularly inveighed against jazz, which he considered to have its basis in Satanic contamination. Of these composer-critics, Brian was certainly the most significant in literary terms. He wrote for around a dozen publications between 1904 and 1949, but his most productive period was between 1927 and 1940 when he worked as deputy editor of *Musical Opinion*. His career as a critic has been traced in some detail by Malcolm MacDonald, who has also provided a useful portrait of *Musical Opinion* in its heyday between the wars.[14] None of these composers, however, considered himself as a music critic first and foremost: criticism merely provided a useful adjunct to their composing activities.

While serious writing about music was increasingly becoming the domain of intellectuals and academics during the late nineteenth century, there was also a new school of belletrists catering for the ever-growing middle-class interest in music. Relatively new

to concert going, the middle classes were forming the audiences that packed the orchestral and choral concerts taking place at the Crystal Palace, the Monday Popular Concerts of chamber music at St. James's Hall and the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts that had begun in 1895, as well as the important provincial festivals that took place across the country.[15] The middle classes were hungry for information and demanded a popular, readable criticism that was at their level. The doyen among critics who wrote for this non-specialist, essentially middle-class readership was Joseph Bennett.

Bennett began writing regularly in 1865 when he was invited to contribute music criticism to *The Sunday Times*. He became the youngest member of the clique that centred on Davison. In his autobiography, *Forty Years of Music* (1908), he recalled the situation in the early years of his career:

> There seemed in those days to be an extraordinary lack of candidates for the critical chair. The trouble was for an editor to find any young man worth engaging, and it must be said for the young men that they showed no desire to be engaged. How great the difference in this respect, as in so many others, between then and now! The London journals of that day were comparatively few, and there seemed to be, together with a lack of opportunity for candidates, a deterring absence of financial attraction. The pay was by no means great, and the living to be got from this branch of journalism allowed few luxuries. The general conditions, however, rather favoured me than otherwise. I stood almost alone as representing a new generation of musical critics, and the result, though not surprising under the circumstances just described, often gave me a sense of bewilderment - it seemed too good to be true. Yet the fact is - so much was a new pen desired - that within five years from the appearance of my first concert notice, I became critic of the *Sunday Times*, the *Graphic*, the *Pictorial Times*, and the *Daily Telegraph*, as well as being a regular contributor to the *Musical Standard*, the *Musical World*, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*. (: 27)

From 1874 until 1908 Bennett wrote exclusively for *The Daily Telegraph*, although contributing articles to the musical press, and it was largely as critic for this paper that he exercised his considerable influence. He had a facile pen, yet his verbose literary style could not disguise the poverty of his critical thought. Although he dissented from Davison's opinion of Schumann (*PMG*, 30 Nov 1868: 7), in almost every other instance he took a similar line, most notably in his worship of Mendelssohn and his unenthusiastic attitude towards Wagner. Bennett disapproved of Wagner's use of mythology and preferred more straightforward plots based on human interest. He argued that pagan myths were unable to speak to modern man and that Wagner had focused on their more fantastical elements at the expense of expressing their essential humanity. His writing

serves to exemplify the kind of conservative opinion, expressed in dull prose, that dominated the critical scene during the 1880s and continued to appear well into the twentieth century. The extent of his influence is attested by the critic Gerald Cumberland, who, in his semi-autobiographical book *Set Down in Malice* (1918), wrote:

> As a commercial asset, Joseph Bennett must have been invaluable to the proprietors of *The Daily Telegraph*. For, like Davison, he had great influence. People read him. Even in my own time, when an important new work was produced, we used to question each other: "What does Old Joe say?" And, most unfortunately, it mattered a great deal what Old Joe did say, though anyone who knew much about music was very well aware that nine times out of ten Bennett would be wrong. If he damned a work - well, that work *was* damned. No musical critic today wields such power as his, though there are at least a score of writers on music who have ten times his gifts. His present successor, for example, Mr. Robin Legge, is incomparably a finer musician, a much more open-minded man, and a student of infinitely more culture, than Bennett. Yet his influence, I imagine, is not so great as that of his predecessor. One cannot say that Bennett stooped to his public, for Bennett could not stoop; if he *had* stooped, he would have disappeared altogether. No: he *was* the public: the people: the common people. He had the point of view of the man in the backstreet.
>
> But today things are changed. The musical critic is no longer primarily a raconteur, a gossiper, a chatterer. (: 143-44)

It was inevitable that with the rapid expansion of the reading audience there would arise a conflict between the quality of critical thought and the commercial considerations of achieving a high circulation. In the middle of the century, when Davison and Chorley dominated the critical scene, there was a general uniformity of critical perspective and the readers of music criticism were a relatively small and clearly defined sector of society. There was only a handful of actual sources for such writing which reflected a general sense of shared culture that in musical terms centred on Germany and to a lesser extent on Italy. With intellectual and literary culture becoming both more proletarian and more metropolitan, new roles opened up for journalistic 'chatterers' such as Bennett. As a more socially varied and musically literate reading public developed towards the close of the nineteenth century, there became a need to cater for the multiplicity of musical interests at a variety of different levels. By the 1890s, England had become a land in which music was heard by audiences with a considerable social range; there was space for the 'ordinary listener' at the Crystal Palace concerts, while the Philharmonic Society and the opera catered for the more informed and wealthier audience. The opening of the Queen's Hall in 1893 gave a new impetus to music in the capital through the establishment of a

permanent orchestra with a regular conductor, Henry Wood, who was keen to champion new music, especially that emanating from Russia and France. This splintering effect is clearly reflected in the enormous expansion of periodical literature dealing with music that occurred in the 1890s and which was a key factor in the emergence of a new era in British music criticism at that time. This diversification was very much in line with general literary trends, for the old literary-cultural critique of the Romantic artists had given way to one of two general tendencies - either towards a political critique, usually Socialist, or towards a heightened aestheticism - both finding support in a range of periodicals. Fuller-Maitland wrote of the latter in his autobiography, the title of which, *The Doorkeeper of Music* (1929), suggests that the critic of *The Times* regarded himself as a masonic guardian of enduring values:

> The 'nineties saw a great improvement in people's behaviour towards music, as towards the other arts, and here came in the value of the "aesthetic craze." Was it, I wonder, in spite of, or in consequence, of the continuous attacks of *Punch*, and the vogue of *The Colonel* and *Patience*, that the cult of beauty made the progress it undoubtedly did make, which endured even after the career of Oscar Wilde, its chief apostle, had ended in an inferno of ugliness? (: 96)

This division into two lines of advance, the essentially Fabian and the 'aesthetic', may be an over-simplification, and no doubt certain figures such as William Morris can be placed on either side, yet there was a definite move towards greater plurality throughout English artistic culture in the 1890s that affected music criticism, although it was not until after 1914 that the Establishment *status quo* could be seriously threatened. Indeed, it can be seen as part of a much broader social and cultural upheaval that took place throughout Western Europe as a whole. The critic who most clearly defined this new temper in British music criticism was George Bernard Shaw. More than any other critic of his time, Shaw effectively counteracted the stultifying atmosphere that had pervaded British music criticism to such widespread effect during the 1880s.

Shaw's contribution to British music criticism is well known. He began his career as a critic in 1876 when he penned his first review, 'ghosting' for Vandaleur Lee in *The Hornet*. After a break of several years, he returned to music criticism in 1888 and the following year began writing under the pseudonym of Corno di Bassetto for the daily *Star*. This brought him much public acclaim and later, with his four years as critic for *The World* (1890-94), he established his position as a leader of critical thought. While his journalistic stints have been fully documented by Dan H. Laurence (1960), the content

of his writings has been analysed by many, including Irvine (1946), Williams (1951), Mackerness (1952), Shenfield (1958) and Crompton (1978). Historically, his position is of the utmost importance, for he put into reverse the whole critical momentum of the late Victorian era, attacking the cult of Mendelssohn worship and placing Wagner as heir to the Beethoven tradition and redeemer of opera through the introduction of social themes. His championship of Mozart came long before the reawakening of interest in that composer's works heralded by E. J. Dent's masterly and influential *Mozart's Operas: A Critical Study* (1913). For Shaw, aesthetic judgements were closely allied to political and social concerns; individual composers were criticized in the light of his own rebellion against the values prevalent throughout his youth. In *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), the only book he wrote on a musical subject, published four years after he had given up regular music criticism, he interpreted *The Ring* as a political allegory dealing with the socialist ideals of the German revolutionary movement of the late 1840s. For Shaw, blind devotion was 'no true Wagnerism' - the Wagnerite must comprehend Wagner's ideology. He forwarded the notion of operatic art as a distinct epistemology that should properly seek not to mirror the world so much as to actively recreate it. The influence of Wagner's writings, first read by Shaw in Ashton Ellis's translations published serially in the Wagner Society's quarterly *The Meister*, can hardly be underestimated. Williamson (1958) contrasts the achievements of the two men to provide a fascinating comparative study and Crompton (1978) also suggests that the extent to which they naturally shared common ground was considerable:

> Both exalt Mozart and Gluck, deprecate Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn, decry fashionable virtuosity, and prefer music drama to conventional opera. Yet it is arguable that Shaw would have been a "Wagnerite" if Wagner had never been born. Everything in his make-up impelled him in this direction - his contempt for academic art (whether literary, plastic, or musical), his political radicalism with its anti-aristocratic and anti-bourgeois slant, his humanitarian free-thinking and his vitalist approach to religion and morals - even his vegetarianism, anti-vivisectionism and teetotalism. The fact is that Shaw and Wagner shared a complex of ideas common to the radical left in nineteenth-century Europe. (: xix)

Shaw's distaste for academicism and falsity in art, especially apparent in his rejection of oratorio, his dislike of technical writing about music, as well as his antipathy towards Brahms, placed him in direct opposition to those university-based composers such as Parry and Stanford who were held in high public esteem and whose work, both literary and musical, dictated to a large extent the prevailing taste. Indeed, he attacked Parry,

Stanford and Mackenzie as a mutual admiration society. His position was anti-academic because he accepted as valid the old antithesis between knowing and feeling. A natural combatant, he was the ideal critic to shake the complacency from British musical life in the early 1890s, and in doing so he laid the foundation for the new era in music criticism that followed in the wake of his resignation from *The World* in 1894. His propaganda for Wagner, his insistence on the vital connection between art and life, and his manifest discontent with the settled order of late Victorian values, all provided the momentum for change.

The awakening in all departments of cultural life during the 1890s found one of its most characteristic expressions in literature. As Holbrooke Jackson suggests in his classic work on the period, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (1913), it was essentially a period of experimentation, not one of actual achievement so much as of effort. The relative status of music and literature within the spectrum of English culture in the early twentieth century is reflected in the fact that Jackson's retrospective critique of the 1890s makes no reference to music. Criticism has now settled for some variant of the word 'modern' to identify this period of literary experiment in which *fin de siècle* Victorianism gave way to an era of high aesthetic self-consciousness. The function of the word 'modern' is served also by the word 'new' - a word which became so frequently employed in the marketing campaigns of the famous periodicals that began publication around that time that its meaning and impact were practically eroded altogether. Like the phrase '*fin de siécle*', the use of the word 'new' to identify an art movement had originated in France with the phrase '*l'art nouveau*'. By the time it became descriptive of a movement in British music criticism it had done useful service as a publicity tool for practically every trend imaginable. The phrase 'The New Criticism' was first employed in relation to British music criticism in 1894. This year represents something of a watershed, for not only was it the year in which Shaw gave up regular music journalism, but it was also the year in which Newman's first articles were published in Bantock's *New Quarterly Musical Review* as well as the year in which John F. Runciman began his career as a music critic for *The Sun*. It was Runciman who transplated the phrase 'The New Criticism' and who became the self-appointed leader of the New music critics.

Chapter I - Notes

1. Charles Avison's *Essay on Musical Expression* (1752) is perhaps the most important critical document of its time, setting out the doctrine of music as imitation and expression. During the eighteenth century there was much speculative discussion of the reasons for musical pleasure and the doctrine of the association of ideas was employed as a basis for the evaluation of music, although with little success. For an account of British music criticism in the second half of the eighteenth century see Schueller, H. M., 'The Pleasures of Music: Speculation in British Music Criticism, 1750-1800', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, VIII, Mar 1950: 155-71.

2. See Langley, L., *The English Musical Journal in the Early Nineteenth Century* (unpubd. Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1983). For titles, publication data and content of the thirty journals dealt with by Langley see the second section of the work, entitled 'A Descriptive Catalogue of English Periodicals Containing Musical Literature, 1665-1845'. See also Langley's article 'The Life and Death of *The Harmonicon*: an Analysis', *RMA Research Chronicle*, XXII, 1989: 137-63.

3. See Mackerness, E. D., 'Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808-1872)', *MMR*, LXXXVII, Jul-Aug 1957: 134-40, 181-88.

4. The intensity of Grove's desire to understand the unifying elements of Beethoven's compositions and to explicate their organic coherence can be discerned from his notebooks deposited in the RCM Library: RCM MS: 2135.

5. With reference to Grove's programme notes, C. L. G [raves], his biographer, wrote in his obituary notice that 'He rarely indulged in the dangerous practice of attempting to divine the mental picture from which the composer worked. The adjustment of the story of Phaethon to the Finale of Schubert's C major Symphony may be taken as militating against the accuracy of this remark, but we would not easily spare this fascinating exercise in parallelism' (*The Spectator*, LXXXIV, 9 Jun 1900: 808-9).

6. For a detailed account of English Wagnerism see Sessa, A. D., (1979).

7. Edward Taylor (1784-1863) was music critic of *The Spectator*. Michael Desmond Ryan (1816-68) was music critic of several London publications, including *The Morning Post*, *The Court Chronicle*, *The Morning Herald* and *The Standard*. He was also for a time sub-editor of *The Musical World*.

8. Hueffer's article was later expanded to form the essay 'Richard Wagner', *FR*, LXIII, Mar 1872: 265-87.

9. Dannreuther, E. G., 'Richard Wagner: His Tendencies and Theories', *MMR*, II, Apr-Jul 1872: 49-52, 66-69, 81-83, 93-96. See also 'Richard Wagner: His Life', *MMR*, II, Aug 1872: 108-110, and 'Richard Wagner: Minor Writings', *MMR*, II, Sep 1872: 123-26.

10. Stainer's *Dufay and his Contemporaries* (1898) is a landmark in the history of British musicology, containing the first exposure of palaeographic enquiries, and it was largely through his efforts that the (Royal) Musical Association was established in 1874.

11. This was reprinted in Spencer's *Essays on Education and Kindred Subjects* (1911).

12. For two critiques of Gurney's achievement see Mackerness, E. D., (1956) and Gatens, W. J., (1982). Carl Stumpf discussed Gurney, along with Sully, Spencer and Darwin in a substantial article entitled 'Musikpsychologie in England', published in Guido Adler's *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, Leipzig, I, Jul 1885: 261-349.

13. Apparently Holbrooke also wrote under a variety of pseudonyms, including 'The Raven', 'Phoenix', 'Saint Joseph' and 'Ixion'. For an account of Holbrooke's contribution to British music criticism see Lowe, G., *Josef Holbrooke and his Work* (1920).

14. See the introduction to MacDonald, M., *Havergal Brian on Music. Volume One: British Music* (1986): 11-26.

15. See Weber, W., (1975).

CHAPTER II

OLD SCORES AND NEW READINGS: JOHN F. RUNCIMAN AND *THE SATURDAY REVIEW*

Although John Finlay Runciman (1866-1916) hailed from Northumberland, he began his career as organist of St. Anne's, South Lambeth, in London sometime during the late 1880s. Like so many in his profession, Runciman also had aspirations as a composer, but he abandoned both his career as an organist and his compositions when he found that he was able to support himself financially solely as a critic.[1] Through his sharp wit, assertive manner, Fabianism and crusading spirit, he inherited much from Shaw's musical-literary legacy. Closely associated with the coterie that centred on Shaw during the 1890s, he penned his first important article in Frank Harris's *Fortnightly Review*. In a letter to R. Golding Bright, dated 11 January 1895, Shaw wrote:

> The worst of this paragraphing business is that it deals so much with persons and brings you across all manner of personal dislikes and quarrels which cause your work to be thrown aside through no fault of your own. For instance, Runciman, the musical critic of the Saturday, who is perhaps the best of recent editorial finds in the way of a critic, was for a time working for the *Sun*. They actually dismissed him out of sheer inability to know a good man when they had got hold of one. Being a good man he has character enough to make enemies. (Shaw, G. B., *Collected Letters, Volume I: 1874-97*, ed. Laurence, D. H., (1965): 476)

It appears that Shaw took a paternal interest in Runciman's career. In 'How I Discovered Frank Harris'[2]he took the credit for teaching Runciman how to write and it would seem probable that he assisted in securing Runciman's position on *The Magazine of Music* as well as *The Saturday Review*. It was Frank Harris who appointed him to the latter position on becoming editor of that paper in November 1894. Runciman soon became Harris's personal assistant and in October 1896 he was appointed assistant literary editor of the journal, a position he held until Harris sold it at a handsome profit in 1898. Although Runciman was at political odds with the new management and gave up his editorial role, he remained music critic until his death in April 1916.[3] His position on *The Saturday Review* during Harris's ownership established him as a leading critical authority and provided him with an important literary platform. In a letter to his father, dated 31 January 1899, he wrote:

> I am making use of the Saturday and my powerful position there as a platform: I can do all manner of things from it that I would be unable to do were I merely

> earning my living by writing for whatever papers would accept my articles; with that platform gone a great part of my influence would be gone and a great part of my income. I can now command £5 for every 1000 words I write; without the Saturday I would not be able for some years to command more than [Vernon] Blackburn, or any of the other chaps. (In the private collection of Mrs. Catherine Affleck)

The initial impetus for a widespread discussion of critical practice in 1894 can be traced back to a review of a concert that took place in March of that year. The Bach Choir, under the direction of Stanford, had given a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* that had not met with the approval of *The Pall Mall Gazette* (*PMG*, 16 Mar 1894: 3), whose critic at the time was Vernon Blackburn (1867-1907).[4] The most severe criticism was directed at Stanford's conducting which, in the critic's opinion, had resulted in an 'exotic languor' pervading the music that was totally unsuited to the context. Five of the most eminent members of the musical Establishment (A. C. Mackenzie, George Grove, Otto Goldschmidt, Walter Parratt and Hubert Parry) took exception to such comments and responded with a controversial letter to the Press. The final sentence of their letter stated: 'The falsity of his remarks is so patent to every musician who was present at the concert that they might be ascribed to wilful malice did not experience of the writer's style prove them to be merely the result of his profound ignorance' (*PMG*, 20 Mar 1894: 3). The offending music critic refused to retract his remarks and attempted to justify them by arguing that his was an aesthetic criticism that might well be at odds with the technical viewpoint of the academics. Many letters on the subject were subsequently published and the issues concerning standards in criticism provided copy for a considerable period of time. Later in the year Stanford himself wrote an article (quoted above: 20) in *The Fortnightly Review* entitled 'Some Aspects of Musical Criticism in England' in which he discussed the problems besetting criticism at that time.[5] In his opinion there were two 'baneful oppressions': the speed with which newspaper editors demanded receipt of critical notices and the practice of a single critic speaking through the mouths of several newspapers. He argued that a remedy for the latter could only be achieved when all articles were signed by their authors. Runciman responded in *The Fortnightly Review* the following month by asserting that Stanford's two 'baneful oppressions' were 'just the least burdensome under which musical criticism in England is now groaning'. He regarded the evils touched on by the notorious 'protest' as far more insidious (*FR*, LXII, Aug 1894: 170). In fact, by giving the death-blow to much insincere

criticism, Runciman regarded the protest as inaugurating a new era and first put forward his interpretation of the history of British musical criticism which provides a unique perspective on the subject:

> To rightly understand this criticism it must be borne in mind that broadly speaking, and apart from the peculiarities of individual critics, there are in England two 'schools,' the 'old' and the 'new.' The latter is not so very new nor the former so very old. Indeed, musical criticism of any sort is a comparatively recent innovation. The late Mr. J. W. Davison is the first critic who - so far as I can trace - earned a 'living wage' by the exercise of his profession, and he was appointed to *The Times* in the forties. His criticism, and indeed most other of that day, is beneath contempt... For thirty years this, the 'old criticism,' hung like a millstone round the neck of English music. Shortly after Mr. Davison retired from *The Times* (late in the seventies) a new school began to put forth feelers, and since then it has steadily gained in strength and number of exponents. This new school, we are frequently told (by such survivors of the old as Mr. Joseph Bennett) is 'vulgar, ignorant, irresponsible and dishonest'; in a word, it is not to be compared with the school of the 'good old times.' The truth is that, whatever the defects of the newer school, it is in no respect worse, and in many much better than the school it is rapidly superseding. This was to be expected. A good many things occurred between 1840 and 1880, and not the least important was that music ceased to be regarded as altogether an art with which it was disgraceful to be connected. By the later date any journalist might write about it without fear of being taunted with the desecration of his facile pen. Some small knowledge of music was spreading, and even journalists got their share of it. With its spread a demand grew for more and better criticism; and the latter became a lucrative business, no longer to be left, as in the early days, to the dregs and drunken failures of journalism... The taking up of a new point of view was entirely due to the literary men who began to write upon music. One of the first, and certainly the best, was Mr. Henley... The late Mr. Hueffer, once critic of *The Times*, did so to an extent... Mr. J. A. F. Maitland, his successor, though not, I believe, an avowed apostle of that criticism, is at heart one. The same may be said of Mr. E. F. Jacques, who did much to 'make the pace' while editor of the defunct *Musical World*, and has since exercised a healthy influence on the younger generation of critics as the most brilliant editor the Musical Times has had. Mr. Bernard Shaw's column in the *Star* did most of all to send the old criticism out of date, and with his appointment to *The World* the fact that the new criticism has 'come to stay' may be taken as recognised. (: 171-2)

In Runciman's opinion, the older criticism of the 1880s mistakenly based its judgements on certain fixed canons of art derived essentially from the work of Mendelssohn. Certainly this was true in the case of Davison, as Charles Reid's biography of that critic clearly demonstrates. Broadly speaking, critics of the 1880s esteemed Handel, Mendelssohn and Haydn as the three immortal gods of music; Wagner was generally regarded as a mere impostor. The critics did little to widen the narrowly

circumscribed repertoire that gave rise to a criticism based on German standards. Only in opera was any other criterion recognized, the Italian. But the indictment brought against the older criticism covered a variety of areas:

> that endless discussion of minute technical points in infamous English is not criticism as we understand the word when speaking of literary and dramatic criticism, and thinking of Lamb, Coleridge, Hazlitt and even Lewes; that appeals to authority are futile in art matters, seeing that we can like only what we are so constructed as to like, and that the fact of our grandfathers having liked a certain thing has no more power to make us really like it than it has to alter our tastes in food and wines; that it follows from this that an impersonal judgement in art matters is an utter impossibility, and the pretence of an impersonal judgement a sham; that an impersonal judgement being impossible, the impersonal mode of expression is ridiculous: the judgement being the result of art playing upon a certain personality, we must know something of the critic's personality to know the value of the art. (*SR*, LXXXVII, 28 Jan 1899: 108)

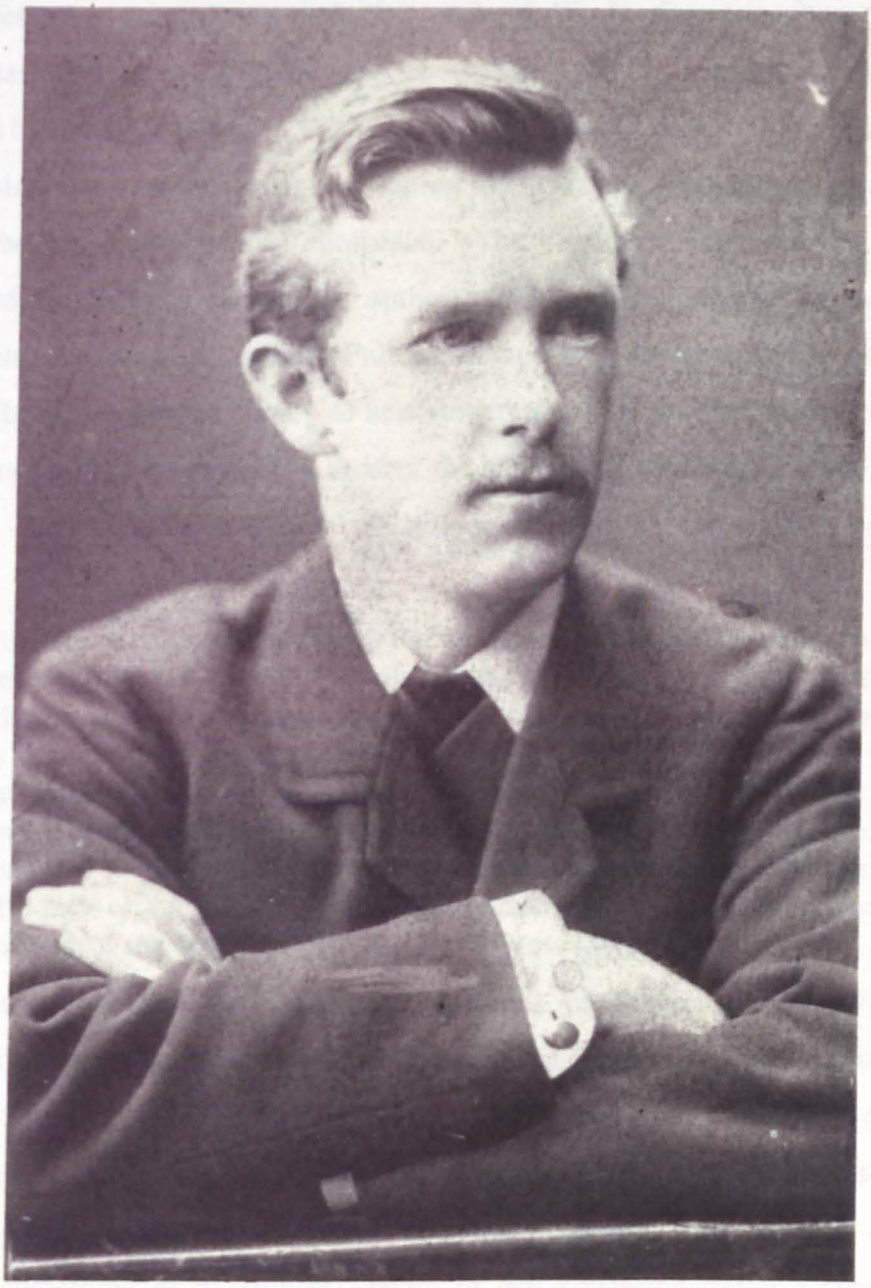
This was clearly in line with Shaw's approach to criticism that went against the 'Art for art's sake' aesthetic of the 1890s by positing that art can only exist in relation to life, that it is inextricably bound to political, religious, and moral values. What Runciman demanded from the new school was fine literature expressing a personal response to music that would not have recourse to technicalities. Echoing Anatole France's famous dictum, he wrote in the preface to his collection of essays, *Old Scores and New Readings* (1899) that he valued above all the impressions of a fully-endowed man, with full technical knowledge and a sensitive aesthetic sense, in the presence of great music. However, through his determination to sweep away pretentiousness and speak plainly he often became merely abusive. Even his relatively mild attack on the old criticism quoted above was regarded by *The Saturday Review* as counterproductive: 'Mr. John F. Runciman has lost a fine opportunity for silence; for if it is not the exaggerated moderation of Dr. Villiers Stanford that will bring about an era of reforms in musical criticism in England, the end will certainly not be attained by such excessive abuse and so much tactless scolding as form the manner and matter of Mr. Runciman's onslaught' (*SR*, LXXVIII, 11 Aug 1894: 155-6).

As well as holding the position of music critic of *The Sun* and *The Daily Chronicle* during the early 1890s, Runciman also wrote for a variety of specifically musical publications, including *The Magazine of Music, The Weekly Critical Review, The Musical Standard, Musical Opinion* and *The Musical Quarterly.* He also established his own periodical, *The Chord.* This was the musical twin of *The Dome*, described as 'A

Quarterly containing examples of all the Arts', which was published and edited by Ernest J. Oldmeadow.[6] The bulk of his writing, however, was undertaken for *The Saturday Review*. Under Harris's predecessor, Philip Harwood, the paper had seen its influence wane and its circulation dwindle. Harris brought to it his experience gained as editor of *The Fortnightly Review* and through the achievements of his new staff, whose brightest luminary was undoubtedly Shaw although Max Beerbohm, D. S. MacColl and H. G. Wells also contributed, it witnessed a dramatic change of fortune.

On 6 February 1895 Shaw took Runciman to meet Arnold Dolmetsch at his studio in West Dulwich.[7] Dolmetsch had by that time just begun to establish a reputation as an instrument restorer and maker in his own right as well as performer of early music. Here was a man of vision coupled with a knowledge of the pre-Bach repertoire that was probably unmatched by anyone in England at that time. Runciman, already an enthusiastic admirer of Purcell, became under his influence the most outspoken champion of early music and supporter of Dolmetsch's attempts to re-establish this repertoire in the mainstream. Their relationship was mutually advantageous, for while Dolmetsch kept Runciman informed of his new discoveries and ideas about matters such as performance practice, Runciman in turn not only provided him with much needed publicity but also introduced prospective customers for his instruments.[8] Dolmetsch was able to convince Runciman that ignorance of the real sound of much early music largely accounted for its low esteem in critical consideration. Runciman lost no time in advocating a return to authentic performances. In this he was to continue the crusade first begun in the musical press by Shaw, with whom he shared the view that Dolmetsch was to do for music what Ruskin and Morris had already done for the plastic arts:

> A knowledge of the old music is as essential to a musical man as a knowledge of the poetry before Shelley and Keats is to a literary man; for, lacking that knowledge, one is apt to talk, as some of the critics of the daily papers and the professors in the music-schools do talk, about music beginning with Bach or even with Haydn. By reconstructing the old instruments and playing the old music as it was intended to be played Mr. Dolmetsch has shown us to what an astounding extent our musical history is compact of fibs begotten in ignorance; and if only in the interests of truth he should be supported by those whose business it is to educate the young idea. In Germany Mr. Dolmetsch would long ere now have been appointed a professor or lecturer in one of the big music-schools and directed to tell all that he knows about the facts of musical history. Our English schools, wishing to preserve a simple faith in Burney, Macfarren, Hullah and all the old gang, offer him no appointment, though it is probable that one would quickly be



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offered if he would give an undertaking not to discredit the gods of English music. (*SR*, LXXXV, 2 Apr 1898: 461)

The music of Purcell was Runciman's particular enthusiasm in the early years of his literary career. Purcell's music had been all but forgotten during the first half of the nineteenth century, and only through the work of W. H. Cummings[9]was his music gradually reassessed in the late 1880s and early 1890s. When an edition of *King Arthur* was prepared by Fuller-Maitland in 1897 for the Birmingham Festival, Runciman launched an attack against the editorial procedure, stating that it was an incompetent piece of work that should be withdrawn by the publishers. The conductor Hans Richter, who had commissioned the edition, consequently authorized Dolmetsch to rewrite the harpsichord part.[10] Runciman's invective against Fuller-Maitland was brought about less through malice than through a genuine desire to hear this music in its original form. He felt that if Purcell's music was ever going to receive the attention it deserved, it must be played authentically - an opinion that was in radical opposition to the performance practices of the day:

> Than the Golden Sonata there is in the whole range of chamber music no lovelier, daintier, more tender piece of art. One plays (or listens) to it with breath held lest a shade too much of colour here, an accent or a rallentando lacking there, should utterly rob it of its entrancing exquisiteness. And this is the work which the sapient Philharmonic directors determined should be converted into a Handel overture by the delightfully simple process of playing the parts, intended for two violins and a single bass, on full orchestra, and the harpsichord part (written, with plentiful lack of musicianship, from the figured bass) on two grand pianos. I will say nothing of the result... (*SR*, LXXX, 30 Nov 1895: 727)

Runciman admired the picturesque qualities of Purcell's music, finding its simplicity and directness a healthy corrective to the 'complexity, muddy profundity and elaborately worked-out multiplication sums' (1899: 47) of the Germans. When discussing Purcell's music he frequently referred to images from nature: 'Sometimes his melodies have the long-drawn, frail delicacy, the splendidly ordered irregularity of a trailing creeper, and something of its endless variety of leaf clustering round a central stem' (1899: 40). It was the outdoor, open-air and secular character of Purcell's music that appealed to him. Only with Wagner did music, in his opinion, return to this equity with nature.

Later, in 1899, Runciman turned his attention to Byrd's music which was then being reintroduced to the public through the work of his cousin, Richard Runciman Terry,

and William Barclay Squire. Terry's work with the choir at Downside Abbey was pioneering and Runciman was virtually alone among music critics in giving serious attention to his achievements. He wished to correct the view that Byrd's significance lay in his position as a forerunner of the 'great English school of church music', and suggested that this music was neglected because it had been misjudged by the academics in the light of the eighteenth-century contrapuntal tradition, applying to Byrd Artemus Ward's joke about Chaucer - "he couldn't spell."

Largely in response to innovative performances, the music of the Baroque was discussed at significantly greater length by Runciman than by other critics around the turn of the century. The rediscovery of Handel's operatic output, for example, previously neglected through the Victorian obsession with his oratorios, was an artistic conquest in which his informative articles played an important part alongside the more practical achievements of Dolmetsch, Terry and Squire. In speaking out against the famous Crystal Palace Handel Festivals, which involved massed choruses of quite unsuitable proportions, he employed a strong analogy, writing that 'they are inartistic orgies, these boasted festivals of ours, indecently gluttonous feasts where inartistic and even anti-artistic people may gorge themselves, to a musical accompaniment, upon false sentiment and grocer's piety' (*SR*, LXXX, 13 Jul 1895: 42). Handel's influence in England was seen as a curse responsible for ruining the chances of fame for native composers from Purcell onwards. To make matters worse, the true qualities of his music were not even properly understood, the reasons for his popularity being only that his choral music had sacred texts and was relatively easy to sing. Whereas the equally disastrous later influence of Mendelssohn was considered as inherent in the music itself, this was not seen to be the case with Handel. Runciman's interpretation of the history of late nineteenth-century English music, which suggested that a fatal wrong turning was taken when the English went exclusively after choral music at a time when the Germans were developing instrumental music, was characteristic of the New Criticism and one which, although controversial in its time, has been reaffirmed in more recent years.

It is perhaps Runciman's discussion of contemporary trends in British music and his documentation of British musical life during the so-called 'renaissance' that will be seen as the most valuable aspect of his critical writing. The emergence of a new attitude in both British music and British music criticism that began to take hold during the late

1880s gave Runciman and the younger generation of critics reason to be optimistic. It was essentially for them a fight against academicism, for in order that a new school could develop, nothing short of a musical revolution would be necessary. Part of this revolution would have involved a rewriting of musical history. Typically, in an 1895 review of J. S. Shedlock's *The Pianoforte Sonata* (1895),[11]Runciman wrote: 'Compare Mr. Shedlock's book with any of Macfarren's or Hullah's lectures, and it will be felt that an entirely new spirit has come into music, a spirit which not only makes it imperative that the modes of teaching that were common recently and still survive in some places, should be abandoned, but makes the work of rewriting much musical history and reversing the judgements of Hullah and Macfarren an absolute necessity' (*SR*, LXXX, 12 Oct 1895: 472). The enemies of progress were the theorists such as F. A. Gore Ouseley, Frederick Corder and Ebenezer Prout, for they were held responsible for the academic nature of the majority of British compositions. Runciman had an important point but, as was so frequently the case, the way in which he expressed it marginalized his position. He could be abusive and insulting, especially to members of the musical Establishment. When he wrote that Sir A. C. Mackenzie, then director of the Royal Academy of Music, 'first allowed himself to be kicked back and forwards like a football between the late Hueffer and the present humble servant of the Philharmonic Society, Mr. Joseph Bennett; and he ended - practically ended - his career by accepting the post he now holds - and abuses' (*SR*, LXXXI, 4 Jan 1896: 12), he laid himself wide open to libel charges.[12] Mackenzie was also involved in another libel case brought about in the following year by further offensive remarks of Runciman's, this time in connection with his oratorio *The Dream of Jubal*. The costs incurred in defending the action, which Runciman subsequently lost, were such that in January 1898 he was declared bankrupt. The public examination was reported at considerable length within the pages of *Musical Opinion* (XXI, Feb 1898: 326-7) as well *The Musical Standard* (LIII, 13 Nov 1897: 312-15). This bankruptcy precluded the reimbursement of the plaintiff's legal costs and in August 1898 a circular letter signed with many influential names was issued in order to raise the £200 costs which he was unable to pay. The much publicized scandal gave Runciman an infamy from which, perhaps, he never fully managed to recover.

The continuation of an oratorio tradition in British music, assisted by the continuing popularity of choral festivals, was regarded by Runciman as one of the greatest

hindrances to the development of national music. Under no circumstances would he attend a provincial festival, for he felt that an excessive quantity of music-making, largely imported from the capital and taking place during a very short period of time, could only do harm to the quality of local musical life during the rest of the year. As he wrote in 1901: 'A rendering of a cantata by Mr. Coleridge Taylor may be an important event for Mr. Coleridge Taylor, it will not save England, musically speaking... as I have never seen in their work any indication of a desire to get away from well-worn tracks, it does not seem to me worth while waiting for, in Schumann's phrase, a Messiah in an English provincial town' (*SR*, XCII, 28 Dec 1901: 795). He considered the oratorio and cantata to be worn out conventions. A work such as Parry's *King Saul* was purely imitative and although it followed neither Handel's example closely nor that of Mendelssohn or Wagner, it went some way in each direction: '"King Saul" is an extraordinary hybrid, showing Wagner in the "leit-motiv," and partial abandonment of detached movements, Spohr and Mendelssohn in the lullaby music of the third act and elsewhere, Handel in the directness, not to say plainness, of some of the choral writing' (*SR*, LXXIX, 16 Feb 1895: 219). The only English oratorios worth the name since *Elijah* were, in his opinion, Mackenzie's *Rose of Sharon* and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, neither of which he rated very highly since they both attempted to combine two incompatible modes of expression, narrative and dramatic; the Handelian tableau form and Wagnerian operatic style. They were neither essentially lyrical nor wholly dramatic, neither opera, concert music nor conventional oratorio, but a bastard form - British Oratorio. This could never be entirely satisfactory, for music of an operatic nature did not for him belong in a church or concert-hall.

As a new national identity began to be felt in British music during the early years of this century, the question of distinctive national traits was widely discussed. Runciman's criticism throughout this period reflects the gradual awareness that a new spirit in British music was emerging and although his response to much contemporary music was cautious, he nevertheless remained optimistic for its future. Whereas many critics hailed Elgar as the pre-eminent composer of the day, Runciman considered his attempts to galvanize the form of oratorio to be futile and much of his instrumental music to be thematically weak. Typically, in writing of the finale of Elgar's Violin Concerto he expressed the view that the themes displayed 'zigzagism gone clean mad':

> Throughout the movement Elgar indulges in his favourite trick of carrying out a sequence at such intervals that what is simply a phrase sounds for the moment like a good strong subject: a certain deceptive roughness is got by the forced accents; but when the trick has been done two or three times the ear wearies. The second subject here, for instance, consists of a figure of three notes repeated one degree of the scale lower every time; and as the piece is in four-four measure a strong accent falls at every repetition on a different note of the figure. This way of building a subject is barren in its results: the subject has been developed, practically to the fullest extent possible, in the course of its delivery: there is nothing left to be worked out. Besides, it is mechanical and inexpressive. (*SR*, CXIV, 28 Dec 1912: 795)

If English music was to become truly national, it was imperative, in his view, that it should give up imitating German models and drive all the influences of academicism underground. Only through seeking inspiration in the opera could an expression of contemporary national thought be concretely established, for he believed that only through opera could tangible ideas be adequately expressed. He was persistent in demanding a permanent national opera house and devoted considerable space in his columns to discussion of new English operas, especially those of Joseph Holbrooke. Both Holbrooke's *Dylan* and *The Children of Don* were considered to have gone some way towards a national opera, although their faults were numerous, whereas the operas of Stanford and Ethel Smyth demonstrated no idiomatic advance on the year 1880. In 1901 Ernest Newman was of the opinion that if Bantock and Elgar were adequately supported they would develop into mature symphonic composers, but for Runciman they were on the wrong track altogether. Symphonic composition was not able to offer a way forward, for, until British composers had learnt what they wished to express in opera, they would continue to write good imitations of the German classics. Whereas the symphony combined the decorative impulse with emotional expression, modern opera was able to infuse these with an intellectual content. It was not so much a question of eliminating the Germanic influence as nourishing national music with literature and poetry. The form of the symphonic poem, however, was an anathema to him, being merely opera music without any regard for the exigencies of the stage. Over the general question of programme music, a much discussed subject around the turn of the century, he took issue with Newman by suggesting that Strauss, in giving his music a philosophical basis for interpretation, was attempting the impossible:

> Mr. Newman says "No: his programmes merely explain what the music is about". That is to say Strauss is as a child who draws something and writes underneath -

> Strauss' explanations, by-the-by, are written on top - "This is a cow". Or, if the literary or philosophic idea be the main thing, the music is merely incidental music to a story or to a discourse. There is a proper medium for the utterance of literary ideas - literature, to wit; and there is no reason why music should be used, while there is every reason why it should not. Music can convey moods, it can create an atmosphere.. more than that it cannot do, has never done, will never do. Mr. Newman's analogy between the symphonic poem and the music drama is utterly fallacious. Nothing is spoken outside the actual music-drama; words, acting, scenery, music, are integral parts of a whole, the thing is self-contained. Strauss' programmes are comparable at best to a series of magic-lantern pictures which might be thrown on a screen as the music progresses. (*SR*, XCV, 3 Jan 1903: 13)

Neither Berlioz's, Dvořák's nor Liszt's symphonic poems held much appeal for Runciman, who regarded the bulk of their music as highly superficial. He considered the influence of Berlioz on later French music to have been disastrous: 'He did not precisely prepare the way, but at any rate he showed the road, to a thousand minor French composers; and he gave the Strausses, Mahlers and other Germans a hint which they have found useful' (*SR*, XCVI, 12 Dec 1903: 729). However, it was not just the new trends in German contemporary music during the transitional period before 1914 that met with his disapproval, for most of the new developments throughout Europe were considered to be merely a striving after effect, an attempt to shock. While he was able to perceive the serious intentions and craftsmanship of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, he freely admitted to being baffled by their music. Skryabin was different in this respect, for here was music that was far from unintelligible: 'His piano compositions are Chopin diluted with Henselt and water, and slightly flavoured at times with Russian folk-tune' (*MQ*, I, Apr 1915: 153). He could not detect structural cohesion in this new music, which was axiomatic, for he frequently stressed architecture to be a truer analogy to music than painting. Demanding music that would appeal to the intellect as well as to the emotions, he found much Russian music, especially that of Borodin, to be more satisfying than, for example, the less obviously formal music of Debussy: 'Instrumentation is a wonderful thing: it is colour in music; but, so to speak, to lay the colour on your fresco before you have a fresco, before you have a building in which to place your fresco - this is to do something quite as absurd as this sentence' (*SR*, CXII, 30 Sep 1911: 427).

It was the music of Wagner that Runciman championed above all others, and his book *Richard Wagner: Composer of Operas* (1913), became the standard book on Wagner's operas for many years. It was regarded by Ernest Newman in 1914 as the best

of all accounts of its kind, though he dissented from Runciman's highly negative view of *Parsifal*.[13] By the late 1890s the critical battle between the Wagnerites and anti-Wagnerites had been fought and won long since, but that is not to say that Runciman played an insignificant part in what may be called the pre-Newman era of English Wagnerism, for he established a middle-ground position that was to be taken over in all essentials by Newman himself. He described his position as that of 'an out-and-out Wagner man, but no Wagnerite' (*MMR*, XXV, Jun 1895: 126). At odds with The Wagner Society in being unable to accept the composer's framework of ideas *in toto*, he regarded those who took the theories as seriously as the music to be Wagner's worst detractors. Commentators such as David Irvine, Houston Stewart Chamberlain and those he described as 'the whole crowd who go to take tea at Villa Wahnfried' made the composer appear ridiculous and undermined a full appreciation of his music. Runciman was able to put the brakes on the uncritical idolatry that had been gaining momentum since the death of J. W. Davison, the leader of earlier anti-Wagnerite opinion. Each time a volume of Wagner's prose appeared, translated by his most prominent English acolyte, Ashton Ellis, Runciman would expound his view that not only were the translations barely readable in Ellis's style of 'German-English', but that the content itself was only just worth the effort - so much of it being utterly trivial. Discrimination was required and that was precisely what the Wagnerites lacked when it came to evaluating the achievements of Bayreuth.

At the turn of the century there were broadly two kinds of Wagnerites: those who stressed the social implications of Wagner's works and those who stressed spiritual, esoteric or inner meanings. The former group consisted of men like Shaw (Fabian socialist), David Irvine (Liberal) and Rutland Boughton (Communist), while among the latter could be found those whose interpretation of Wagner's work drew on religious or occultist metaphors, such as Ashton Ellis and, slightly later, Cyril Scott, both of whom were members of the Theosophical Society. Runciman belonged to neither camp and took an independent position that opened up the middle ground and drew attention away from the ideologies and towards a balanced assessment of Wagner as musician. The view that the music of Wagner's operas contains almost all the aesthetic weight and should therefore be at the centre of critical attention was later forcibly re-endorsed by Newman, whose rational, anti-metaphysical bias was always to the fore. In this sense neither Runciman nor Newman were Wagnerians, for they refused to accept an ideological

framework or to view Wagnerian music-drama as a cultural adjunct to social or political reform.

Although it is now a commonplace to assert that the genius of Wagner as artist triumphed over the aberrations of the prophet-philosopher, whose theorizing was a means of either earning money, pure propaganda or simply the results of an acute defence mechanism, in the 1890s it was an unusual view to be held by a pro-Wagner critic. Runciman was unable to claim this triumph for Wagner's music *qua* music without also acknowledging the defeat of his grandiose philosophic programme. For him, Wagner's theory was a thing quite apart from his practice and it was always essentially the music that carried the drama through, although in *Tristan* and *The Mastersingers*, which he regarded as the summit of Wagner's creative achievement, the two were inextricably bound together. It is hardly surprising that such a position should be reflected in a variety of Runciman's historical perspectives. This is particularly noticeable in his estimation of Nietzsche. The picture he paints of him is one of a man who never at any time understood Wagner's greatness as sheer musician, whose philosophical influence was irrelevant, whose criticism was that of a dilettante, and whose later influence on composers such as Strauss and Delius was wholly detrimental to their music. He even went so far as to suggest that Wagner and Nietzsche's relationship was never genuinely sympathetic:

> Nietzsche was attracted to Wagner for a time, but, even if he had not been so very wise as to get rid of all the troubles of the unfathomable world by going mad, he would have taken his own road again as soon as he found that his road was not Wagner's, or that Wagner's road was not his. They were as two planets of different orbits which touched for a moment. Fortunately the collision did not result in any serious casualties... Nietzsche believed in the cultivation of the intellect. His Above-man, were he possible, would be merely an analytical monstrosity, a sort of walking microscope or telescope of tremendous power. Wagner believed in many different things at different times. Being a German of the Germans, he of course started with the undreamed-of woman as the 'redeemer.' In *The Flying Dutchman*, suffering humanity is redeemed by the love of Senta, who is faithful to death. The notion is farcical; for what is it to the Dutchman that a woman loves him if he does not love her? (*SR*, XC, 13 Oct 1900: 453)

The whole notion of redemption and renunciation was repellent to Runciman, who took Nietzsche's line, although much vulgarized, in criticizing *Parsifal* in an essay which opened with one of his most arresting and memorable lines: '"Parsifal" is an immoral

work' (1899: 211).[14] For Runciman, it was the creation of a broken and exhausted man. Lacking virility and essential verity, he found the parody of the Lord's Supper deplorable, Klingsor's magic music to display Meyerbeerian theatricalism and even Kundry's account of Parsifal's mother to be ineffectual compared to the corresponding scene in *Siegfried*. Whereas the central idea of *The Ring* is obscured by the subsidiary ideas, in *Parsifal* there is nothing superfluous and nothing to divert attention away from its main theme, which he regarded as glorifying the denial and negation of life, an evil counterpart to *Siegfried*:

> Siegfried and Parsifal are both untaught fools; each has his understanding partly enlightened by hearing of his mother's sufferings and death; each has his education completed by a woman's kiss. All this may seem very profound to the German mind; but to me it is crude, a somewhat pointless allegory destitute of any essential verity, a survival of windy sentimental mid-century German metaphysics, like the Wagner-Heine form of the *Flying Dutchman* story and the Wagner form of the *Tannhäuser* story. However, I am willing to believe that Siegfried, when he kisses Brunnhilde on Hinde Fell, and Parsifal, when Kundry kisses him in Klingsor's magic garden, has each his full faculties set in action for the first time; and then? And then Siegfried, with his fund of health and vitality, sees that the world is glorious, and joyfully presses forward more vigorously than ever on the road that lies before him, never hesitating for a moment to live out his life to the full; while Parsifal, lacking health and vitality - probably his father suffered from rickets - sees that the grief and suffering of the world outweigh and outnumber its joys... There is only one deadly sin - to deny life, as Nietzsche says: carefully to pull up all the weeds in one's garden, but to plant there neither flower nor tree; and this is what *Parsifal* glorifies and advocates. (1899: 211-12)

Attempts to find meanings or explanations of events in Wagner's operas along the lines developed by Shaw in his *A Perfect Wagnerite* were consistently held by Runciman to be unnecessary. He felt no need to tie up any of the loose ends in the *Ring* cycle, for example, but to accept them as reflecting a vision of life itself. On the contrary, he felt Wagner's desire for dramatic unity to be very nearly responsible for an artistic calamity; the central theme of Wotan's dilemma was found to become so submerged beneath the all-absorbing dramas of Siegmund and Sieglinde, or Siegfried and Brunnhilde, that Wotan's recapitulations demonstrating the relationship between events represented a serious limitation. Shaw's allegorical interpretation stretched the political ideas too far and applied them too rigidly, especially in relation to *Gotterdammerung* which Shaw had condemned as irrelevant to the rest of the cycle and purely operatic as opposed to true music-drama:

> What I object to in Mr. Shaw's book is that it leaves off where Wagner began. Undoubtedly Wagner looked on life, weighed it, surveyed its puzzles, and found

> it to be not unlike life as Mr. Shaw states it; but he wrote the "Ring" not to advance certain views, but to express the emotions, by means of drama and music, with which life filled him; and in thus expressing himself he involuntarily kicked to pieces the scheme he first thought out. When thought and artistic instinct war, depend on it, instinct is right. In spite of this Mr. Shaw wants to see the "Ring," to receive its emotions, and then to work back to the workaday world sights which first stirred Wagner; and he says that unless one does this it is not possible to realise the full effect of the "Rhinegold." This I emphatically deny: I assert, on the contrary, that while looking at the "Rhinegold" you can only think of its allegorical or symbolic meaning by abstracting yourself from the play going on before your eyes. And to do this means to turn a mighty and beautiful work of art into an instructive Fabian tract. (*SR*, LXXXVI, 10 Dec 1898: 780)

In 1895 he lamented the fact that in an England given over to Wagnerism, in a London where only Wagner concerts were profitable, it was not possible to get *The Ring* put into the repertoire. The reason he suggested for this situation was that opera was kept alive chiefly by people who regarded it as a social affair, and unfortunately Covent Garden subscribers happened to like Italian opera. For him, this was wholly disastrous. Although he accepted that 'the old Italian opera form is laughed at to-day as an absurdity by Wagnerians who see nothing absurd in a many-legged monster with a donkey's head uttering deep bass curses through a speaking-trumpet' (*SR*, LXXXI, 16 May 1896: 499), he was unable to accept that dramatic truth could be conveyed through what was for him an essentially undramatic form. That form was satisfactory for the purpose it was devised to serve; Mozart, for example, was able to employ it to combine dramatic truth with 'eartickling'. But when composers attempted to impose elaborate plots and a sincere portrayal of human passion on the form, he felt it was unable to withstand it. While Gounod's *Faust* avoided the pitfalls, being regarded as an unpretentious series of scenes involving only two central characters and 'charged with the one feeling which Gounod appears to have felt very strongly or had the faculty for expressing,' his *Romeo and Juliet* failed because he could give none of the many characters a personal language ('they are the merest Italian operatic puppets') while developing the plot in a continuous fashion (*SR*, LXXXI, 16 May 1896: 499). It was a hybrid form that was neither the old Italian opera which existed purely for the sake of its songs, nor the music-play in which the songs existed for the sake of the drama, but an unsuccessful attempt to combine songs with the continuous working out of the dramatic impulse. Many of Verdi's operas were condemned on similar grounds, although Runciman considered *Aida* to be one of the best of its kind and certainly the one by which Verdi should stand or fall. This was largely

due to the compatibility between the libretto and Verdi's individual range of expression, focused here on Amneris and the cruelty of erotic passion. He discounted the love between Aida and Radames as being merely the love of a prima donna for a tenor - and an Italian tenor at that - finding Radames' first aria, 'Celeste Aida', trivial and untouched by any real passion: 'When I look at the score I have an immediate vision of a minute tenor standing over the prompter's box, making swimming motions with his arms, bleating like a goat with its mouth full of salt water, and throwing appealing glances at the ladies in the boxes for a round of applause after the final high B flat' (*SR*, XC, 20 Oct 1900: 489). But if Verdi came off badly, Puccini was damned outright. After the first British performance of *Tosca* in 1900, Runciman dismissed the work entirely:

> "La Tosca" is all beginnings. It is an interminable series of false starts... Each scene is constructed in precisely the same way as every other scene. The orchestra delivers a little unimportant phrase; the voices are given something; the orchestra comes out with yet another phrase... but there is never a passage, never a fragment of tune that is in the slightest degree memorable. When the bells commence in the cathedral scene Puccini really tries to carry on the movement; but he can do no more than repeat incessantly a most trivial figure; of development there is none... any one phrase might take the place of any other. In spite of its scenes of torture, love-making and bloodshed, "La Tosca" is hopelessly dull. (*SR*, XC, 14 Jul 1900: 46)

When Runciman used invective it was generally supported by considered judgement and detailed argument. On occasion, however, his combative Northumbrian nature led him to voice inconsistent opinions with an uncritical lack of constraint. Perhaps it was because he was writing for a literary journal and not a specifically musical one that this was editorially overlooked. In certain respects this situation was unfortunate, for had he been picked up on his more extravagant and less judicious comments his critical thought as a whole would undoubtedly have been expressed in a more reasoned manner, with a clearer focus, and would have consequently received a wider recognition from the musical community at large. Self-contradiction never seemed to worry Runciman, for it was far more important to him that his column acted as a stimulant. His articles were always informative and frequently peppered with examples of a bright Shavian wit, but perhaps his greatest qualification was that he instinctively wrote of music as something saturated in life; an attribute that was discerned by Neville Cardus when he placed him among those critics who were the first in this country to discuss music humanely and relate it to a broad way of living.[15] Early in his career he paid the price

for abuse and subsequently, although many of his opinions were overstated, he wrote with a persuasive skill based on a deep understanding and thorough knowledge of the repertoire. This was acknowledged by both the undisputed leaders of critical thought whose work chronologically flanked his own on either side - Shaw and Ernest Newman. It is particularly interesting to note Newman's estimation of his position in the history of British music criticism, for in a 1901 article for *The Contemporary Review* entitled 'English Music and Musical Criticism' he wrote:

> One or two musical critics do make a gallant effort to lift the discussion of the art to a higher plane; and one of them at least - Mr. Runciman of the *Saturday Review* - deserves to be in better company. Mr. Runciman, unfortunately, does not always do himself justice; at all events one feels that he could, if he chose, produce better work than we sometimes get from his pen... He is more sinned against than sinning, inasmuch as we are so glad to get really good, brainy, musical writing that we do not feel sufficiently murderous towards him when he perpetrates his worst eccentricities. But these will have to be weeded out of him before he gives us the best he is capable of. When he calls Robert Franz, for example, an intolerable dullard, or when he writes thus of César Franck - 'He was an industrious schoolmaster and nothing more; he had no invention nor any original impulses to drive him to invent; and nothing he wrote possesses any qualities beyond a certain mastery of the technique that has been evolved by the great and small composers preceding him, and a certain perfectly individual clumsiness in applying that technique' - when our best critic becomes so wildly uncritical as this, we have an unpleasant reminder that English musical criticism is really only in its infancy. (Repr. in *Testament of Music* (1962): 58)

Runciman undoubtedly had the defects of his qualities. His passion and humanity led him to the expression of both penetrating insights and complete blindness. Starting his critical work at a time when England was dominated by the university and conservatoire, he showered vituperation on conservative forces with a vigour that was more appropriate in the 1890s than it became later in his career, by which time his fulmination against what he regarded as academicism was unwarranted. His highly personal and impressionistic criticism was governed by a forceful temperament expressed with a literary vivacity that marked it out from the frequently dreary writing that posed as criticism during the early years of the twentieth century. Ultimately it was this marked degree of temperament that gave his best criticism its incomparable force and vigour.

Chapter II - Notes

1. Runciman was also employed as organist at St. Stephen's, Lambeth, from which he resigned in 1891. Many of his compositions are in the possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Catherine Affleck. They include numerous songs, arrangements and the sketches for an opera.

2. Shaw, G. B., *Collected Letters, Volume III: 1911-25*, ed. Laurence, D. H., (1985): 454.

3. Runciman contributed a regular weekly article between 1894 and 1916 apart from the period between April 1906 and July 1911, during which time the music column was written by Harold E. Gorst and Filson Young. The reason for Runciman's absence is unknown.

4. For obituaries of Vernon Blackburn see *MO*, XXX, Mar 1907: 411 and *MT*, XLVIII, Mar 1907: 178. The former records that 'Vernon Blackburn had a naturally good ear for music and he had a sensitive temperament. He was to some extent, however, the victim of his qualities. The exuberance which made his writings of great interest often led him astray, and some of his swans were often geese. Of recent days his malady made him unreliable; but during his short life he penned some very beautiful thoughts on music and expressed what is really criticism because it did attempt to interpret music.' He published three books: *The Fringe of an Art* (1898), *Bayreuth and Munich: a Travelling Record of German Operatic Art* (1899) and *Mendelssohn* (1904).

5. Stanford, C. V., 'Some Aspects of Musical Criticism in England', *FR*, LXI, Jun 1894: 826-31. This is reprinted in Stanford's *Studies and Memories* (1908): 70-9.

6. As director of the Unicorn Press, which published both *The Chord* and Runciman's *Old Scores and New Readings*, Oldmeadow continued a tradition of publishing based on the aesthetic ideals and practices of William Morris and his circle. He occasionally wrote about music himself and published a short biography of Chopin (1905). Through his position as editor of *The Dome*, which printed articles on music by Blackburn and Runciman, he gave generous support to young composers, particularly to Elgar and Delius whose early works appeared in his magazine. It was no doubt largely the expense of publishing *The Chord*, which was lavishly printed on high quality paper, bound with hard covers, and which also included plates and facsimiles, that led to its early demise. It lasted for just five issues, between May 1899 and September 1900.

7. Runciman gave an account of the visit in *The Scottish Musical Monthly* (II, Mar 1895: 137). His early championing of the authentic performance movement is particularly noteworthy. He wrote, '.. the clavichord is the instrument of my choice. It costs only fifty pounds, and you can play Bach for the rest of your life as he ought to be played. I have often scoffed at the enthusiasm of Mr. Dolmetsch's friends, but it is a fact that after you have heard the Chromatic Fantasia on the clavichord it sounds barbarous on the piano.'

8. One such customer was Frank Harris, who was taken to Dulwich to see a clavichord that had been painted by Helen Combe. Harris wanted to buy it and, on hearing that it was a special commission, insisted that Dolmetsch make a similar instrument for himself. Some months later, when the clavichord had been completed, Harris's enthusiasm cooled. Realizing that he could not get out of his bargain, he impulsively gave the instrument to Runciman. This is recounted in Philippa Pullar's *Frank Harris* (1975): 179.

9. Cummings, a singer, composer and music antiquarian, was instrumental in founding the Purcell Society. He edited the first publications of this society and published the first biography of Purcell in 1882.

10. In his autobiography *A Door-Keeper of Music* (1929) Fuller-Maitland wrote of this incident: ' I was given a free hand as to the interpreters, and chose to support the orchestra with two harpsichords to fill out the harmonies when necessary. As ill luck would have it, I had to correct the proofs while I was fishing in the north of Scotland, and it chanced that a bad misprint, exhibiting even to the least trained eye some appalling consecutive fifths, remained uncorrected, so that I was exposed for many weeks to personal attacks in the *Saturday Review*, which only just came short of libel that could be called criminal.'

11. Shedlock was among the more prominent members of New critics. He was critic of *The Academy* from 1897 to 1901 and of *The Athenaeum* from 1898 to 1916. From 1902-12 he edited *The Monthly Musical Record*, continuing to write for it until January 1918.

12. Although an apology for his remarks was issued the following week, Mackenzie successfully claimed damages of the order of £400 against Frank Harris (as the proprietor) and Messrs. Spottiswoode and Co. (as the printers) of *The Saturday Review*. For a detailed report of the court proceedings see *MO*, XIX, Sep 1896: 825.

13. Newman expressed this opinion in the preface to *Wagner as Man and Artist* (1914): ix. It was no doubt Runciman's attempt to depict Wagner as he lived and to describe his artistic achievement in a purely factual manner, without recourse to either an unreserved acceptance of Wagner's theories or the adumbration of his own theory, that appealed to Newman, as well as the fact that Wagner was regarded as a developer rather than a reformer of opera.

14. Runciman was renowned for the provocative first lines he gave to his articles. One of his most memorable opened a review of the first London performance of Puccini's *Tosca* - 'The pianoforte score of "La Tosca" now slumbers peacefully in my waste-paper basket' (*SR*, XC, 14 Jul 1900: 46).

15. Cardus made this comment in *Talking of Music* (1957): 295. The other critics he included in this category were Shaw and Arthur Johnstone.

CHAPTER III
THE OXFORD CRITICS

i) HUBERT PARRY

Parry's connection with Oxford was a close and long standing one. Between 1867 and 1870 he studied there as an undergraduate and in January 1884 the Vice Chancellor invited him to become Choragus. In 1889 he was awarded an honorary doctorate and on Stainer's resignation later that year he became Heather Professor of Music, a position he held until 1908. We know from the reading lists contained in his diaries that he was well read in the works of Oxford thinkers, including historians and philosophers as well as literary critics and musicians.[1] While the familiar image of him as archetypal traditionalist and Establishment figurehead has been reassessed to provide a more complex and complete picture of his character and position in British musical life,[2]the important contribution he made to music criticism clearly reflects his Oxford education and the intellectual temper of the late Victorian age. His rejection of religious belief in the wake of post-Darwinian science, his political radicalism and fear of encroaching materialism, as well as his personal austerity and unsympathetic attitude towards the aristocracy, can all be regarded as general characteristics of his era. Many of the persistently advocated notions of the period, such as the relationship between art and morality, the issues surrounding nationality, race and culture, and above all the importance of evolutionary concepts, were embedded in his thinking. He read Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) in 1877 and in the following year *The Descent of Man* (1871). He admired the controversialists T. H. Huxley and J. S. Mill and was well acquainted with the dissatisfactions and rebellions of such representative Victorians as Carlyle, Dickens, Ruskin, Morris, Samuel Butler and George Gissing. That he became an enthusiastic disciple of Herbert Spencer is apparent from the fundamental premises of his critical thought appropriated from the Synthetic Philosophy. But before Spencer's ideas took their hold in the early 1870s, the most influential doctrine was that of the 'morality of art', vigorously propounded by John Ruskin.

As an undergraduate Parry attended Ruskin's inaugural lectures as Slade Professor of Fine Arts, which addressed the relation of art to religion and ethics.[3] Shortly after

graduating he read the lectures on Greek mythology published as *The Queen of the Air* (1869). Both made an enormous impact on him. In the latter, Ruskin made the case that music was the most directly ethical of the arts, writing that:

> Exactly in proportion to the degree in which we become narrow in the cause and conception of our passions, incontinent in the utterance of them, feeble of perseverance in them, sullied or shameful in the indulgence of them, their expression by musical sound becomes broken, mean, fatuitous, and at last impossible; the measured waves of the air of heaven will not lend themselves to expression of ultimate vice, it must be for ever sunk into discordance or silence. And since, as before stated, every work of art has a tendency to reproduce the ethical state which first developed it, this, which of all the arts is most directly ethical in origin, is also the most direct in power of discipline; the first, the simplest, the most effective of all instruments of moral instruction; while in the failure and betrayal of its functions, it becomes the subtlest aid of moral degradation. (: 58-9)

While many of his Oxford contemporaries, including Oscar Wilde, rejected Ruskin's principles, Parry maintained his allegiance to the 'moral aesthetic' throughout his life. For him, the notion that music should aim to express great and noble traits of character and arouse healthy and exalted emotions became an essential evaluative criterion. He shared Ruskin's belief that the music of any society was the exponent of its social and political virtues. As the embodiment of a culture, music could provide evidence about the moral and spiritual state of its creators and the society in which they lived, becoming 'a sort of symbol of the spirit of the world'.[4] That Parry considered himself to have a moral and social obligation as a composer is reflected in the texts he chose for his ethical cantatas: *Beyond These Voices There is Peace*, *The Love That Casteth Out Fear*, *The Soul's Ransom*, and especially *The Vision of Life*. In the course of his first book, *Studies of Great Composers* (1887),[5] he took up the idea that art is born of a distinct social milieu, writing that music history reflects the 'average mental and even moral state of society' and invariably illustrates in some way 'the condition of thought of the people among whom it is produced' (: 156). It was under the influence of Ruskin that the importance of sincerity and genuineness of expression was emphasized. This can be seen in his view of sacred choral music, for the quality of such music was deemed to be wholly dependent on the sincerity with which the theological content was expressed, which in turn reflected the ethical state of contemporary society:

> If an age can boast of the existence of simple and sincere religion among the classes which are sufficiently cultivated and civilised to produce native art, then

> religious music like Palestrina's and Bird's and Gibbons', may come of it. If religion becomes a sham, and merely a kind of social entertainment among a large portion of the public, flimsy and theatrical religious music comes of it. (: 157)

Parry accepted that there must be music for all levels of understanding; a perspective that allowed the work of second-rate composers to be upheld 'on the grounds of its leading to something higher and helping people to understand what is better; or of doing something really worth achieving in the way of *technique* or expression, or presenting in an interesting form some new phase of art or national style' (: 359). However, the conclusion to *Studies of Great Composers* emphasized the serious nature of artistic endeavour in an attempt to counteract the prevailing attitude of the Victorian aristocracy which tended to regard music as little more than a pleasant pastime. Class consciousness is never far from the surface in Parry's writing. His views on the upper class attitude to art were shared by Matthew Arnold, one of the most considerable literary figures of the mid-Victorian period and Professor of Poetry at Oxford between 1857 and 1867. In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), which he read in 1873, Arnold spoke out against the 'external culture' of the aristocracy. For Parry, the mission of democracy was to 'correct the false estimate of Art as an appendage of luxury'.[6] His reading in literature reflects an interest in social justice and class issues with Dickens, Zola, George Eliot and George Gissing featuring prominently in his reading lists, alongside much historical writing, including Froude, Hallam, Lecky and Carlyle, and the works of the Greek philosophers.

It was partly concern with the moral aspect of music that led to the condemnation of all florid song and nearly all forms of opera and programme music. Opera was a particular bugbear for Parry as a composer and the failure of his one attempt at the genre, *Guinevere*, dating from the mid 1880s, may well have influenced his negative reaction to opera in general. This view is certainly held by Dibble (: 243). During a press interview that appeared in *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* in September 1892 it was reported that:

> Dr. Parry evidently does not think the great growth of what may be termed the operatic school has a healthy tone, or is calculated to advance our musical future as a nation. Operatic treatment was, he said, often vulgar, frequently vicrous [sic] and the least pure of all music. (Shulbrede Priory; page unknown)

Parry seemed to regard all forms of ornamentation, especially coloratura, as abhorrent. The popularity of Italian opera stemmed in part from the occasions for emotional display

afforded by florid vocal pyrotechnics. In *The Art of Music* (1893) ornament was described as 'the part of anything which makes for superficial effect' (: 59). Decorative ornamentation in Victorian art of all kinds, from graphic design to poetry, had become highly intricate and by the 1890s was becoming increasingly outmoded. Opposition to those 'tasteless and senseless excesses of vain show which disfigure certain types of modern opera' (: 132) was the musical counterpart of Ruskin's opposition to Whistler and 'the modern schools which suffer the object of art to be ornament rather than edification'.[7] Whereas Lullian opera was praised for its lack of 'superfluous ornament or of passages introduced for the purposes of pure executive display' (: 141), coloratura and the artifices of nineteenth-century French and Italian opera were considered essentially insincere.

The premise that the greatest music must refer only to man's inner emotional workings and not to any external stimuli is implicit in the use of phrases such as 'pure unadulterated instrumental music' (: 182). Luxury and sensuality, most frequently associated with Italian vocal music, were degrading to the ideals of high art and were associated particularly with the colouristic use of chromaticism. Spohr's music, for example, is found distasteful 'through excess of sweetness, and a want of directness and decision, which arises from the affection he had for rather languid harmonies, and an excessive use of chromatic notes' (1887: 375). Great art was marked by earnestness, sincerity, nobility of thought, the power to do without formularies and padding, organic coherence and a welding of old methods with new - all of which were found in the work of Brahms (: 361-63). While Parry shared with the Oxford critics the placing of Brahms at the summit of contemporary activity, he did not do so at the expense of a full appraisal of Wagner. Indeed, through the teaching of his friend and mentor Edward Dannreuther, founder of the London Wagner Society and translator of several of Wagner's literary works, Parry was a knowledgeable and enthusiastic Wagnerian. Along with Stanford, he went to the Bayreuth Festivals in 1876 and 1882. While other critics such as Shaw and Newman placed him firmly in the Brahms camp as a composer, and by implication as a critic, he himself was critical of the view that admiration of both Brahms and Wagner was untenable.[8]

During the 1870s Parry was a member of an informal Essay and Discussion Club, comprised of several Oxonians, which met to discuss the latest developments in the arts,

philosophy, politics and the social sciences. Evolutionism had by that time become strongly entrenched as the prevailing orthodoxy among intellectuals, not only in England but throughout Europe and America. It was inevitable therefore that their debates should centre on the 'social Darwinism' of Herbert Spencer. Spencer's application of scientific methods to the study of human behaviour, seeking to fit social and cultural phenomena into a mechanical framework, heralded the start of sociology as a serious study in Britain. The reading lists contained in Parry's diaries demonstrate that he followed closely the progress of Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy from 1871 when he read *First Principles of Philosophy* (1862) and *Social Statics* (1850).[9]

Evolutionism influenced Parry in three essential ways. First, the widely held conviction that the principles of evolution evident in man's biological past could also be found in his intellectual and social past encouraged his belief that music grew and changed according to the natural laws of the universe. This conception gave rise to a range of metaphors which characterize not only Parry's writing, but that of all the Oxford critics. There are two main categories of metaphor: the hydrological - 'mainstream', 'source', 'well-springs' and 'current' - and the biological - 'growth', 'organicism', 'seeds', 'grafting' and 'roots'. The process of change was a slow and gradual one, as Parry wrote in his diary of 1894: 'Progress is never made by violence'.[10] In 1915 he asserted that while 'fashion in arts mainly concerns itself with phraseology', the 'things that are vital take ages to change'(*MQ*, I, Jul 1915: 316). The condition of music at any given time could be understood only through an examination of its development from its previous condition. This view stressed the importance for composers to continue an inherited tradition and tended to undervalue the role of experimentation. The music of Monteverdi and Purcell was harshly assessed in this respect. In a lecture on 'Curious Experiments in Early Choral Music', delivered at Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society in 1901, Parry wrote:

> The only people who venture on wild experiments are those who are not bothered by laws and traditions; or do not know much about them. Sometimes things happen which look like experiments because people who are fully occupied with one class of phenomena overlook possible combinations of other kinds of phenomena, which lead to something apparently quite new, such as Wagner's great achievements in the domain of musical drama. But when we examine the facts of the past more carefully, we find that after all their seemingly bold experiments had antecedents like other things, and are only an exceptional adaptation or combination of artistic resources which had been piled up in the ages preceding

> in a manner which only a man of the greatest genius could attain to. Wagner's great achievements would have been quite impossible without centuries of development of various kinds of artistic resources and methods, and though in a sense his aims were experimental, they ultimately fall into line with the normal progress of art, though his genius made art seem to leap forward in an exceptional manner. (MS, Shulbrede Priory: 1-2)

Secondly, evolutionary ideas supported the emphasis on environmental conditions as an explanation for the development of musical style. The circumstances and conditions in which composers lived, the traits of their national and individual character and their historical position in relation to the genre in which they chose to compose, were all brought to bear on their music:

> People commonly speak and write as if they thought that works of art and imagination, and all products of what they call genius, sprang by inspiration from nowhere, and were the independent creations of their originators. They can understand how natural laws work elsewhere; that a plant will not grow unless the seed is put where it can germinate, and that it requires light and heat and moisture and nourishment to bring it to mature perfection. But they seem to think it is quite different with art, and things which grow in the human mind; as if it was a pure matter of chance whether a genius made his appearance; and that everything depends upon such a chance, and nothing upon previous experience and development. (1887: 322)

This aspect of environment could not only be applied to individuals, as when Parry writes of Berlioz that 'If he had been brought up under more favourable conditions he might have been among the greatest composers' (: 373), but also to the forms of art themselves. As he wrote in his monograph on *Bach* (1909), great works of art can come into existence 'only when a strenuous temper of mankind, a high standard of sincerity and of mental energy happen to coincide with great accumulation of artistic methods and adequate solutions of artistic problems' (: 4). The chapter on Schubert in *Studies of Great Composers* contains a comparison between German and Italian songs in which an attempt is made to analyse the conditions under which perfectly artistic songs can be produced. A genuine song is found to require 'a well-developed national style, and a treatment of melody which is perfectly adapted to the language' (: 224). This comparison presages the notions of national hierarchies that dominate *The Art of Music*. Indeed many of the ideas briefly touched upon in *Studies of Great Composers* were later developed at considerably greater length.

Preoccupation with environment led Parry to take a genre approach to the writing of music history in which the contribution of individual composers was subservient to the

stage of development of the genre. The genre became in a sense analogous to the species. Such an approach diminished the Romantic cult of genius that was finally overthrown in British music criticism by Ernest Newman. However, it also permitted the idea of qualified greatness in which composers were seen to have suffered from the immaturity of their art. This feature of Parry's criticism has been lambasted by Raymond Leppard in his book *Authenticity in Music* (1988). Leppard found flaws in Parry's method of 'assessing composers by a scale of ten in the Progress chart':

> The steps by which music progressed, a real *gradus ad Parnassum*, produce a whole series of over-simplified musical sequiturs: *opera seria* and the intermezzi; French overtures and the suite; Italian overtures and the symphony; the *da capo* aria and theatrical perdition; Haydn into Beethoven; Weber into Wagner; Schumann into Brahms. Few of these connections feature large in present-day musical thinking or education, but they once did and it is hard for us to believe it, so enormous is the gulf between our forefathers' philosophy of life and ours. (: 20)

Parry shared with Matthew Arnold the belief that the work of artists reflected the 'intellectual climate' of their age, that they were influenced by the times in which they lived. This *Zeitgeist* theory is a convenient fiction because it condones failure through encouraging a view of history which can be manipulated to regard environmental conditions as being unsuitable for the production of masterpieces. As George Boas wrote in his *A Primer for Critics* (Baltimore, 1937):

> works of art are not expressions of an age; they help make up the age. They are not what they are because of the age; the age is what it is because of them. (: 49)

The third way in which evolutionism affected Parry's criticism is that it encouraged a conception of the music critic and historian as an analogue to the scientist - as an analytical observer of musical specimens rather than a belletristic entertainer or an arbitrary determiner of value. (It is incidentally interesting to note from Parry's diaries that he was a keen amateur botanist and mycologist who was practised in using a microscope.) This is certainly one of the most significant differences between the Oxford critics and those of a more journalistic persuasion. It is significant that *The Art of Music*, later entitled *The Evolution of the Art of Music*, appeared in the *International Scientific Series* published by Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner and Company Limited (as Volume LXXX). Other contributors to this series included distinguished scientists and philosophers such as Spencer, Huxley and Romanes. Like them, Parry sought a truthful description of the phenomenon under study and demonstrated a similar desire to classify

and to present the relation of past and present as a steady growth, a chain of cause and effect related in accordance with discoverable natural laws. T. H. Huxley's *Science and Culture* (1881), read by Parry in 1886, emphasized the value of transferring scientific methods to fields of inquiry other than those of physical science. Parry was also familiar with the scientific investigations into the physical basis of music made by Helmholtz in *On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music* (1875) and by William Pole in *The Philosophy of Music* (1877), which he read in 1878 and 1890 respectively. The force of Darwin's theory and the impact of the works of philosophers such as Mill and Huxley was such that, along with so many of his contemporaries, he rejected orthodox theology and became a supporter of Utilitarian rationalism.[11]

Although Spencer was most influential in guiding the ideas of Parry, other evolutionists such as Edward Burnett Tylor, author of *Primitive Culture: Research into the development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom* (1871)[12]and the first Reader in Anthropology at Oxford, were also important to the formation of his critical thought. It is probable that Tylor's work, which addressed the problem of the development of culture as a branch of ethnological research, inspired Parry to study the music of 'savage races' in order to provide data for his theories on the origins of music - a subject that had already concerned the leading evolutionists of the day.[13] Tylor formulated a theory of survivals which maintained that savage tribes represented stages of culture through which our own ancestors passed. The laws and customs of such 'lower nations' were found to explain otherwise anachronistic elements of contemporary social life as relics of past states of society. Through the study of savage music Parry deduced theories of the origin of music, for such music represented a lower stage of the evolutionary process. Other writers he admired were the evolutionists Meredith, George Eliot,[14]G. H. Lewes and the psychologist James Sully. He derived much from Sully's *Sensation and Intuition: Studies in Psychology and Aesthetics* (1874) in which the development of music is regarded as a gradual expansion of musical form. Parry was to concur with Sully and others that the development of art was progressive from a standpoint of value. Sully's argument, taken from Spencer, that art fulfils an important social function through arousing sympathy was later subsumed into the opening paragraphs of *The Art of Music*. Here the ultimate origin of music is described as direct expression of feeling and the appeal to sympathetic feeling in others.

In July 1875 Parry was invited by Grove to contribute an article to his *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the prospectus of which had been issued in January 1874. Five months later he became sub-editor. His numerous articles for the dictionary, listed by Dibble (: 525), included some substantial contributions to contemporary musical scholarship and criticism, especially those on 'Form', 'Sonata', 'Symphony' and 'Variations'. They covered wide areas of repertoire and displayed an impressive capacity for synthesis and generalization. Underpinning them was the premise that the history of music could be explained better in terms of the development of formal structures than as the result of the actions of great men; that tracing the evolution of fundamental principles, from the most basic formal organization to the complexity of Beethoven's mature instrumental works, could best account for the way in which music evolves. The development and expansion of musical forms was found to be intimately connected with that of man's 'artistic instinct' which in turn reflected his internal mental condition:

> The progression of artistic instinct is at present an unexplained phenomenon; it can only be judged from observation that the children of a later generation are born with a predisposed facility to realise in perfect clearness the forms which preceding generations have been wandering and dimly striving after. It is possible that the affinity between genuine music and the mental conditions of the race is so close that the progress of the latter carries the former with it as part of the same organic development. ('Sonata': 569)

It is likely that Parry had read Spalding's essay on 'Instinct' in *Macmillan's Magazine*, February 1873 (XXVII: 282-34). The force of human and animal nature was a subject that concerned him throughout his life and formed the basis of his last unpublished work, *Instinct and Character*.[15] It provided a fundamental way in which the actions of men could be found accountable within an evolutionary context. Man's motivating forces could range from straightforward animalistic and physical reactions to the 'higher' instincts having a moral basis in providing not only for the continuance of the race, but for individual lives being more significant and more worth living. In this way, human behaviour is conceived as a category not distinct from subhuman behaviour. Parry concurred with Darwin that man, through his kinship with animals, is part of nature and not outside it. His ideas concerning instincts have been summarized by C. L. Graves in Chapter XVI of his *Hubert Parry* (1926), which is a useful and concise précis of *Instinct and Character*.

The dictionary articles on 'Form' and 'Sonata' illustrate the extent to which Parry

had begun to transfer evolutionist theories to the realm of music in the 1870s. They attempt to trace the development of form from its 'crudest beginnings' in the seventeenth century to its culmination in the works of Beethoven. The structural developments of the Romantics were ignored, for Parry wrote: 'There can be no object in following the development of the system of Form further than Beethoven, for it can hardly be said that there is anything further to trace' (vol.1: 552). The progression was seen as continuous and essentially unidirectional, so that the development of sonata form passed from Haydn and Mozart to Clementi and on to Beethoven. The greatest musical works were those displaying 'the classical principles of abstract music' perfected in sonata structure. This was not merely a structural principle but one which Parry elevated to a spiritual dimension. In doing so he was obliged to denigrate the early examples of Mozart and Haydn in order to account for its evolution towards the masterpieces of Beethoven: ' It seems not improbable that the vapid and meaningless commonplace which often offends the sensitive musician in the works of Haydn and Mozart, and appears like so much rubbish shot in to fill up a hole, was the result of this strong new feeling for form as paramount, and that it remained for Beethoven to reestablish definitely the principle of giving equal intensity to every part of the piece in proportion to its importance' (: 546). Ultimately it was Beethoven's organicism that warranted his position at the summit.

It was Parry's special pleading on behalf of Beethoven in *The Art of Music* that Shaw criticized in his review for *The World*. Shaw also drew attention to Parry's method of paired comparison which was a feature of his dialectical strategy from the dictionary articles onwards. Generally such comparisons were undertaken for appraisive purpose:

> In the later chapters I find, along with a great deal of criticism with which I agree, and a mass of information which my position as a critic obliges me to pretend that I knew all along, certain observations which smack, to me, of the commoner sort of analytic concert programme. Most of these are due to the disturbance of Dr. Parry's judgment by his love for Beethoven, which sets him pointing out as choice merits of that composer such features as "insisting on his key," and "often casting his leading idea in terms of the common chord."
>
> If this be a mark of genius, let us not ignore it in Donizetti's choruses, in our comic songs and army trumpet-calls, and in such pretentious platitudes as the first movement of Rubinstein's Ocean symphony.
>
> .. The very interesting contrast made in it between Beethoven's first pianoforte sonata and the finale to Mozart's G minor symphony is spoiled by an attempt to represent the difference as a superiority on Beethoven's part. (*The World*, 4 Apr 1894)

Parry shared with Spencer and Tylor an optimistic belief in evolution as 'progress'[16] from the lower stages of savagery through barbarism and eventually leading to the higher stages of civilization. It affirmed his thesis that the arts, along with other branches of civilization, were becoming better; that the history of music mirrored the history of man in its upward development. Tylor, in tackling the problem of the development of culture as a branch of ethnological research, set out his theory as a series of evolutionary 'stages' in an attempt to demonstrate the connection between savagery and modern civilization. He wrote that civilization should be regarded as 'the general improvement of mankind by higher organization of the individual and society, to the end of promoting at once man's goodness, power, and happiness' (Ibid.: 24). That such an ethical attitude to evolution was shared by Parry is shown most clearly in his *Instinct and Character.* Spencer's essay *Progress: its Law and Cause* (1857) had outlined a universal tendency towards increasing complexity. His formulation, taken from Karl Ernst von Baer (1792-1876), that evolution represented a movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity and from indefiniteness to definiteness was one that became fundamental to Parry's whole philosophy of history. It is significant that the first time Parry publicly attempted to set out his ideas on 'Evolution in Music', in the 1890 lecture delivered at the Royal Institution, he began by quoting Spencer's formula:

> As far as I can discover, not much has been said on the subject before us as yet; and as there is a great deal to be said, my only preliminary will be to remind you of one of Mr. Herbert Spencer's definitions of evolution, which happens to be most apt to our subject.
>
> The formula in question is as follows: Evolution is a "change from indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity," accompanying the dissipation of motion and integration of matter; which, for present purposes, I may expand into - a change from indefinite chaos to an aggregate of clearly-defined separate entities or organisms, each with functions well determined. (MS copy, Shulbrede Priory)

In outlining the extent to which evolutionism could be applied to every aspect of music history, including the history of genres, forms, harmony and orchestration, this essay served as the basis for *The Art of Music.* That Parry continued to base his historical method on von Baer's fundamental principle of increasing complexity well into the twentieth century can be seen in the opening paragraphs to the first series of terminal lectures given at the RCM during the Christmas term 1908 (RCM MS. 4329: 18) in which he reaffirms the importance of this formula.

Parry wrote very little for the periodical press. Around the period 1880-83 he contributed reviews to *The Saturday Review* and in October 1882 he was invited by John Morley to contribute to *The Pall Mall Gazette*.[17] As these reviews were anonymous it is difficult to be precise about dates, but it is likely that he finished reviewing for Morley by the end of 1883. Diary entries for 19 June, 1881, 29 December, 1882 and 27 December 1882 refer to the writing of articles for *The Saturday Review*.[18]

From early in 1883 he was employed as Professor of Musical History at the newly opened Royal College of Music. His lectures were a comprehensive survey of music history from the medieval period to the contemporary music of Brahms. They attempted to place music in its broad social and historical context and were structured along similar lines to *The Art of Music* and the *Summary of Music History and Development of Medieval and Modern European Music*, both published in 1893. They cover separately the 'more or less independent histories of the great forms of art, such as instrumental music'.[19] Biographical details were considered of little importance except in so far as they could shed light on style and compositional method. The artwork itself became the focus of attention. *The Art of Music* summarized Parry's philosophy of music history, largely a product of his years as a lecturer at The Royal College, and became his most significant literary work. By 1931 it had reached its tenth edition and it was then supplemented with additional chapters by H. C. Colles. In the introduction to this enlarged edition Colles described Parry's work as 'one of the foundations of English musical literature' (: *xv*) and continued to speak of the 'process of evolution'. The additional chapters were not written to bring Parry's book up to date but rather 'with the object of discovering how far his philosophy may be applied to problems which had not presented themselves at the time he wrote' (: *xx-xxi*). Colles had already extended Parry's philosophy further in *The Growth of Music* (1912-16).

Parry had begun work on *The Art of Music* in 1884 but, as he explained in the preface, its publication was delayed for nine years by 'the increasing mass of data and evidence about the music of savages, folk music, and medieval music; and by the necessity of exploring some of the obscure and neglected corners of the wide-spread story of the Art' (: *v*). Since Spencer published his essay 'The Origin and Function of Music' in 1857,[20]the origin of music was a subject that had been widely debated by evolutionists and others, including Edmund Gurney in *The Power of Sound* (1880), read by Parry in

1881. In order to support his contention that music originated through man's 'instinctive desire to convey impressions and enjoyments to others, and to represent in the most attractive and permanent forms the ideas, thought, circumstances, scenes, or emotions which have powerfully stirred the artists' own natures' (: 2), Parry proceeded to provide a study of 'the music of savages'. By this means he set out to demonstrate how the origin of music was not, as in the other arts, initially a process of man's imitation of his external surroundings, but instead a direct expression of his internal experience. Music was found to have developed from vague wails and grunts to fragmentary figures of two or three notes which led in turn to 'barbarous scales' and ultimately to the tonal system. Material for the chapters on scales and folk music was derived to some extent from the work of Carl Engel whose books *The Study of National Music* (1866) and *The Music of the Most Ancient Nations* (1864) had been read by Parry in 1888 and 1889 respectively. The two 'great orders' of rhythm and melody were found to have first developed independently, the former through dance and the latter through singing. The two elements interacted early in the evolution of music, for as Parry observed with characteristic pomposity: 'Savages all over the world combine their singing and their dancing; and they not only sing rhythmically when regular set dances are going on, but when they are walking, reaping, sowing, rowing, or doing any other of their daily labours' (: 9). Antagonism between melodic and rhythmic impulses was fundamental to the evolution of music and ran through its entire course; rarely were they held in perfect balance. As an evaluative tool it was applied to individual composers as well as to entire nations.

The evolution of music was described as a process of maturity, a succession of 'stages' implying a conception of history as a genetic, continuous progression. In his RCM lectures Parry spoke of 'the long procession of artworks'[21]as if this continuous progression was along a single line. The history of folk music, dealt with in chapter three of *The Art of Music*, provided an epitome of the principles that guided this progression. Again we see the use of catchwords that recur with regularity throughout Parry's writings - 'stages', 'phases' and man's 'instinct':

> The savage stage indicates a taste for design, but an incapacity for making the designs consistent and logical; in the lowest intelligent stage the capacity for disposing short contrasting figures in an orderly and intelligent way is shown; in the highest phase of the pattern-type of folk-tune the instinct for knitting things closely together is shown to be very remarkable; and the organisation of the tunes becomes completely consistent from every point of view. A still higher phase is

that in which the skill in distributing the figure in symmetrical patterns is applied to the ends of emotional expression. (: 76-7)

The idea that great works of art contain a perfect balance between expression and design, between means and ends or form and content, was fundamental to Parry's critical method. Indeed, the consideration of form as a generative process which grows from the content of musical works was later to become a predominant feature in the work of all Oxford critics. Tovey, for example, spoke of Beethoven's forms 'as arising from the inner nature of his materials instead of being imposed from without'.[22] Chapter twelve of *The Art of Music* is subtitled 'The Perfect Balance of Expression and Design' and begins by outlining how these two elements interacted throughout the centuries before the ultimate balance could be achieved in the sonata structures of Beethoven:

> A man who has a genuine impulse to say something beyond common thought has generally to enlarge the phraseology of the art of language in which he speaks; and those who cannot wait for the development of the phraseology required by the nature of their thoughts, must inevitably remain at least partially unintelligible to their fellow-creatures.
>
> In music the case is very clearly illustrated by the results of the many attempts to achieve ideal expression before the means were adequately developed. Human nature is liable to be impatient of the slow development of resources, and often breaks out into resentment at having to wait so many centuries for the consummation of obvious aims. Monteverdi, Purcell, and Gluck are types of those eager spirits who are impatient of the slow march of things, and want to find a short cut to their artistic ideals - just as impatient political enthusiasts long to establish a millennium before they have organised their human beings into a fit state to live in it. Such ardent and genuine composers as they were saw rightly that art is not an end but a means, and having much more natural feeling for expression than for the purely artistic side of things, they tried to make sluggish time move faster, and to attain their ideal artistic region without the preliminary of following the long road that led there. (: 250)

Following the lead given by Spencer in proposing racial explanations for certain cultural features, Parry attempted throughout his criticism to place individual composers into a broad racial context. Today, the idea that a valid connection can be made between biological race and artistic traits has been rejected by geneticists, anthropologists and cultural historians. But Parry subscribed to the idea of a definable national character and the notion that observable differences between racial groups accounted for stylistic aspects of their music. This hypothesis had been suggested by Carl Engel in *The Study of National Music* (1866) when he wrote that 'The peculiar character of the popular music of a nation appears to be in great measure determined by the climate of the country, by

the occupation and habits of the people, and even by the food upon which they principally subsist' (: 168).

There was a great deal of discussion about race and national character during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Earlier, during the middle years of the century, Darwin had given the old idea of polygenesis, or separate origins for the different races of man, a new importance in scientific circles. Anthony Froude, Regius Professor at Oxford 1892-94, and his brother-in-law, Charles Kingsley, both authors much read by Parry, formulated theories about the origin of the British race and the blending of racial stocks. In 1886 Parry read Charles Elton's *Origins of English History* (1882) which presented evidence 'as to the different peoples with which the English nation in any of its branches is connected by blood and descent' (: *v*). Others argued that the British 'race' had a single base. Matthew Arnold had taken up the subject in *The Study of Celtic Literature* (1866) which attempted to determine the Celtic element of the English national character. In a diary entry for 18 May 1868, while Parry was at Eton, he mentions writing an essay 'on the physical effects of nature on the formation of Character of Nations' (MS. Shulbrede Priory). With the rise of the British Empire and Commonwealth it was hardly surprising that ideas of racial hierarchies should be expounded. Parry's ethnocentrism allowed him to think in terms of cultural hierarchy, in which Germany occupied first place, followed by other European nations, and at the bottom the East and the 'savage' cultures of Africa and the Pacific. This is particularly clear from his discussion of scales and folk music in *The Art of Music*. With such a firm allegiance to the music of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, it was inevitable that the Germans should be regarded as racially superior to the Italians and French.

This issue of race and national character was conveniently linked to the concept of 'instinct': the racial musical instincts of Teutons, the Latin and Gallic races were fundamentally divergent. In *The Art of Music* he wrote of the Italian 'native indolence and dislike of strenuous concentration' (: 160), describing the race as 'very receptive and quickly excitable' (: 307). The Italians lacked 'high artistic ideals' and 'sufficient persistence of character' to bring to maturity all the forms of art that they initiated (: 163) and were lamentably prone to succumb to 'inartistic sophisms' (196-7). The French were found to have a 'dangerous susceptibility' to 'specious show and mere external effect' which was liable to mislead them when it came to great or imposing occasions (: 311).

The French failed to show 'any talent for self-dependent instrumental music' (: 276), but 'being a nation particularly given to expressing themselves by gesticulation, have shown a most singular predilection for dance rhythm in all branches of art' (: 10). The French were a theatrical race and 'all the music in which they have been successful has had either direct or secondary connection with the stage (: 277). The Germans, by contrast, were a 'stronger and more deliberate race' (: 162) than the Italians and had 'a greater feeling for direct expression in the music itself' (: 163). A study of German folk-tunes implied a race 'that takes things more seriously, and instinctively makes for something that will stand the test of close and frequent scrutiny and endure' (: 71), whereas the 'light-heartedness and excitability of southern races makes them care less for the element of permanence which is one of the essential objects of art' (: 71-2). The Germans always had more feeling for harmony, which represented 'the higher standard of intellectuality in mankind' than the southern races (: 74). They were 'slow-moving as well as tenacious' (: 318) and their nature contained a 'mystic emotionalism' (: 174). The essential divide was between north and south. In *The Music of the Seventeenth Century* (1902), published as the third volume of *The Oxford History of Music* edited by Hadow, Parry made a characteristic comparison between how northern and southern races respond differently to the stimulus of musical elaboration:

> The Northern composers, dwelling with intense and loving concentration on every detail of their work, brooding on its deeper spiritual meaning, and glorifying it by the full exercise of intellectual as well as emotional qualities: where the Southern composers, taking things more lightly and with little exercise of self-criticism, fall into trivialities, conventionalities and purely mechanical artifices, and in a branch of art which requires any copious exercise of intellect, are speedily left in the lurch. (: 118-19)

Racial influence on musical style is a subject dealt with in some detail in chapter nine of *Style in Musical Art* (1911). In the introductory chapter of this book a comparison is made between the aesthetic tastes of southern and northern races. The former are found to 'enjoy their art with indifferent promiscuity rather than with love and reverence' while the latter 'treat their art with more respect, and look for qualities of virginal purity'; they 'love to make every part of their artistic work vital and interesting, so that nowhere shall commonness and the insincerity of indolence or convention be visible' (: 10). The difference was illustrated with reference to the respective styles of Bach and Handel in which the 'poisoning' Italian influence was inaccurately assessed to favour the work of

Bach. Britain and its empire may have stood supreme in the political arena, but Germany reigned supreme in artistic matters - that is, until 1914. In an address to students of The Royal College of Music made in January 1916, reprinted in *College Addresses* (1920), Parry stated:

> I have my own confession to make. For I have been a quarter of a century and more a pro-Teuton. I owed too much to their music and their philosophers and authors...
>
> But we are painfully disabused. (: 222)

Parry's broad racial generalizations were as much a reflection of the Victorian desire to categorize by class and race as his assiduous promotion of the moral nature of music reflected the Victorian idea that such promotion of morality provided an explanation for contemporary economic and social success. The fact that the Italians were found to be unable to bring to fruition their musical innovations due to a native indolence reflected one of the most persistently advocated notions of the period: the need for hard work or, as it later became known, 'the Victorian work ethic'. Linked to this was the necessity for adequate education. Those who lacked proper training were found to be unable to produce music of the first rank, largely because they could not develop the tradition adequately. Schubert's passion for composing was allowed to 'luxuriate untrained' and Parry wrote in his *Summary of Music History* that his 'works of the sonata order are often obviously redundant and imperfect in design and bear cutting without much injury' (: 75). Similarly, Weber's musical education was 'very imperfect' and as a consequence his sonatas illustrated the tendencies of modern instrumental music, including 'the predominance of sentiment over closeness and concentration of design' (: 74). Bach and Beethoven 'only developed artistic powers commensurate with their aims by persistent and indefatigable labour' (1902: 409).

Parry's inaugural lecture as Professor of Music at Oxford was entitled 'Style in Musical Art'. It was delivered on March 7, 1900 and shortly afterwards published in pamphlet form by the Clarendon Press. The theme of style became the basis of his lectures at the university which were later revised and collated with material from lectures he had given at the Royal Institution and elsewhere to form his book of that title published by Macmillan. By coincidence it appeared the same year as Guido Adler's *Der Stil in der Musik* (1911) which covered similar ground. Parry's book was a musical counterpart to Walter Raleigh's *Style* (1897) which he read in 1900. Raleigh's work is

a review of literary method dealing with the problems and functions of style, its meaning and its elements. Parry follows Raleigh in considering the relation between the creator and his audience and agrees with his conclusion that 'the public is a vile patron' (: 68). Raleigh also takes sincerity as a criterion for correct poetic diction in the way that Parry regards it as a guarantee of stylistic quality. Raleigh's discussion of the value of synonyms and metaphors, of variety of expression and the dualism of Romantic and Classic ideals in art, seem to have suggested to Parry a range of equivalent musical considerations.

Parry regarded style as an external attribute and not a reflection of the content or meaning embodied in works of art (: 14), serving only as a criterion of whether the content was well expressed. Nevertheless, it could be employed as a means of estimating the 'genuineness' (: 2) of the composer and composition; qualities of style could serve as a means of assessing sincerity of artistic intent (: 11). Stylistic differences resulted from 'the instinct for adaptation' with the result that the most perfect style was that 'most perfectly adapted to all the conditions of presentment' (: 2). It was to the study of these multifarious conditions, such as the differences between vocal and instrumental resources, sacred and secular functions, the circumstances under which the music was to be performed and the influence of audiences, that Parry addressed his work. The chapters are arranged in a broadly chronological sequence so that the book becomes, 'virtually a historical compendium of musical technique analysed from this point of view'.[23] Many themes of his earlier criticism reappear, including his distaste for opera and his placing of the 'purer' style of absolute instrumental music in a higher order, the contrast between races, the emphasis on the moral nature of art, the necessity for consistency in style and discussion of human instincts. Style, as in all things, was subject to the laws of progress (: 74). The simpler problems posed by its physical conditions, such as the need to find an idiomatic medium appropriate to each instrument, had to be solved before the finer adjustments to special conditions, such as more complex combinations of instruments and voices and adaptation to special types of audiences, could follow.

Style had to remain true to the conditions which gave rise to it. The methods of Wagnerian opera were inapplicable to independent instrumental music (: 9) and similarly the methods of instrumental composition could not be successfully transplanted to the opera (: 97). Parry also asserted that certain forms were suitable only to certain genres.

Sonata forms were only suitable for instrumental music (: 92). The relationship between form and style was a particularly thorny issue and one which he went to considerable lengths to address:

> In each case the style which was developed in attendance on the different methods of organization was differentiated more and more as progress was made. Wherever the style of stage music resembled the style of instrumental music it was immature, and *vice versa*. The difference between the styles of different kinds of music was as inevitable as the difference between their methods of organization. When thinking without sufficient deliberation it would be easy to be misled into the opinion that a thing could be well organized and yet styleless. That is because a thing can be well organized and yet aesthetically unattractive. It is only a part of style to be attractive. It combines the aesthetic qualities which attract with the practical qualities which appeal to the mind. In this sense style appears in the light of being the general flavour or aspect of the characteristics of organization. It is the outward effect of form in detail and in general; inevitably associated with form, and yet not form but something which subtly emanates from it. (: 104-5)

In the two chapters dealing with the influence of audiences on style Parry wrote with moral indignation against the popular music of his day which represented 'all the brazen effrontery, the meanest grossness, and the most hideous inanity and blatant repulsiveness which our queerly compounded humanity is heir to' (: 112). He took two specific stylistic features to be indicative of how music was being degraded: the 'cavalier treatment of the leading note' (: 116) and the consecutive fifths formula found in 'the music-hall cadence' (: 119). Such degradation was due to the uncultured state of the music-hall audience which was responsible, if rather obliquely, for the deterioration of the higher branches of art. This could be detected in the contemporary vogue for programme music:

> Where the wide contemporary audience exerts a powerful influence on art the effect is to induce a type in which lack of power of continuous attention is no drawback. It induces a kind of music which becomes intelligible by referring to something concrete outside music, whether of the programme or the rhapsodical order. The undeveloped mind, which has no real musical intelligence, likes to be helped by being told the music represents something it can understand, even by realistic suggestion of an obvious kind... The art which is highly organized, closely knit, and finely developed is of no use to it. It requires intrinsic effects rather than the fineness of relations which are appreciated by the higher type of mind. The results are perceptible in all directions; and one of the worst of them is that the undeveloped and unstable mind is especially subject to be imposed upon, and to fall a prey to the devices of commercialism. (: 146-47)

Parry's attitude towards commercialism was similar to that of Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites. He wrote in a lecture on 'Music and Democracy', delivered before the

Authors' Club in 1909, that the most obvious effect of commercialism was 'to eliminate the element of personality which is a vital quality of every art work, and of anything which is artistically treated'(MS, Shulbrede Priory: 10). Commercial culture played to the crowd or, as Parry would have it, the 'herd'. The ephemeral popularity of music appealing to the herd was due to its homogeneity and its lack of personality. In *Character and Instinct* he wrote that 'The principal herd-drivers of modern life are the newspapers' (: 67). He responded to the development of mass culture, represented by the growth of tabloid newspapers which measured success only by popularity, with considerable dismay. His view that low, vulgar, common culture played upon baser instincts, whereas superior culture emanated from higher, more subtle and integrative faculties, was common among intellectuals of his generation.

Chapters on texture and the functions of thematic material dealt with the craft of composition. The development of texture was found to mirror social evolution so that, for example, Haydn's 'tendency to give individual life to subordinate details' (: 198) reflected the fact that 'Like society, art becomes more completely organized, by recognizing more fully the sphere of usefulness of the humbler ranks of its components' (: 197). Von Baer's principle of increasing definiteness and the movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity was applied to the development of thematic material as it had been to structure and harmonic resources in *The Art of Music*: composers 'first defined melody by rhythm, then gave it clearer form and greater interest and meaning by welding it to harmony, and then enhanced it by modulation and colour' (: 211). This process was illustrated with a historical outline of the development of thematicism from the medieval period to the contemporary music of Strauss.

In 'The Sphere of Temperament' Parry elaborated Tylor's theory of the development of civilization in order to account for the development of music. Tylor proposed a tripartite structure: savagery (the phase of unconscious spontaneity), barbarism (the phase of consciousness) and civilization (the phase of maturity). Temperament is most apparent in the final mature phase, when artistic methods are most plentiful:

> The first phase is that of unconsciously uttered folk-song, when temperamental peculiarities are in evidence, though not much differentiated, because the resources of art at that stage are so limited. The second stage is the conscious period when principles are being unravelled, during which theorists run riot and conventions rule supreme, and art is not infrequently stupefied; and the third is the stage when methods and principles have been mastered and the composer becomes free to

> express what really is in him. The second and third periods frequently overlap, because one type of art is so often just beginning its existence when another is just coming to perfection. While Palestrina and Lasso were illustrating the culmination of one kind of art, Cavaliere and Caccini were just delving at the elements of another kind. While Handel and Bach were putting the coping-stones on another type the earlier writers of classical sonatas were just babbling their infantile twaddle in sonata forms; and when Haydn was just beginning his wonderful series of quartets and symphonies a great part of the world was delighting in such childish programme music as "The Battle of Prague". (: 254)

Much of the second chapter on 'The Functions of Thematic Material' is taken up with the issue of programme music, a subject much discussed in the years prior to 1914. The early composers of programme music went astray because they abandoned the principles of form inherent in absolute music in favour of the form dictated to them by the programme. They went against the lessons learnt through the processes of evolution and strayed from the path of tradition. The 'ideal' type of representative music takes the achievements of the great classical composers into account and uses them 'as the basis for the extension of the domain of art' (: 295). Programme music should not attempt to elucidate the external aspects of the programme objectively, as in the work of Liszt, Berlioz and the earlier programme composers (: 303), but should discourse in terms of thematic material 'the working of human feelings which are associated with the idea or subject represented' (: 298). This is a subject returned to in the later chapter on 'Realistic Suggestion'. Here the matter is linked to audience response. It is found that the 'spaciously developed mind is concerned with significances of which the externals are mere transient symbols', whereas 'The mark of the undeveloped mind is that it is more susceptible to external appeals than to appeals of true feeling' (: 369). The 'undeveloped mind' was a characteristic implicitly linked to the British upper classes. Parry's distaste for what may be described as 'the upper class view of art' was again made apparent. The habit of using music for 'mere trifling and fooling' was degrading to art and was 'bound to produce deterioration of the standard of appreciation, and a lowering of the intention and faculty of composers' (: 13); fashionable, trivial art was 'as poisonous and degrading as any other kind of triviality' (: 394). The theory of ethics to which Parry subscribed, in the generalized form known as Utilitarianism, was able to surmount the private character of individual pleasure by adopting as its criterion of goodness the principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The decadent, dilettante upper classes tended to overestimate the importance of superficial aspects of style at the expense of a

true evaluation of quality:

> Apart from the prime responsibilities of dress, this class spends its existence in an unbroken circle of daily amusements, pleasures, and indulgences; and it keeps at bay some of the penalties the mind exacts for being neglected by cultivating excessive vivacity in mere talk; in the art of presenting everyday occurrences in amusing lights, and also by developing pure sensibility to the highest pitch compatible with the average standards of public decency. As a rule, the minds and imaginations of people in such society become atrophied.. Everything which implies mind is prohibited, and anything which required real sustained attention would be useless. The happy habit of sipping here and sipping there, which by false analogy is thought so pretty, makes the mind incapable of realizing any connection between points which are a short distance apart. (: 399-400)

Discussion of quality in music forms the conclusion to *Style in Musical Art*. This sets out the fundamental assumptions on which Parry based his value judgements. For him, quality was synonymous with permanence - the result of surviving the critical scrutiny of successive generations; a process of natural selection which echoes Spencer's famous phrase 'the survival of the fittest'. Great music portrays permanent truths and thus becomes timeless whilst second-rate music is destined for oblivion; the judgement of posterity is infallible. Admitting that 'it is not in the least degree probable that any such simple and universal touch-stones of quality will be found' (: 376), he was nevertheless able to offer some general guidelines similar to those of Hadow contained in the first volume of *Studies in Modern Music* (1892) which he had read in 1894.

Firstly, the central idea of the entire book, that the style of the composition must be suited to the manifold conditions of its presentment, was the most significant factor in assessing quality. The guarantee of the sincerity of music was to be found in its style, but the excellence of its style was a matter of the sincerity of its content. This subtle formulation of the relation between form and content was one that Parry perhaps derived from his reading of Matthew Arnold, for Arnold similarly introduced a moral criteria into criticism in linking truth and seriousness to style and manner, especially in *The Study of Poetry* (1880). Secondly, it was fallacious to estimate any new departures in art by anticipatory speculative standards (: 376). The technical complexity of a work could offer no guide to the value of the ideas which it embodied (: 378; 420). Originality was, of course, an essential quality of greatness, but as has already been shown, tradition was equally important. The artist must 'build upon the work of his predecessors', but build 'wider than mere individual example' (: 387) in order to express his own personality, for

without this personal definition it was useless to hope for quality. While the stylistic tradition of music, the inherited practices and values of previous generations had to be maintained, a work that said nothing new was merely a repetition or shallow imitation. This criterion of originality led Parry to link the idea of the new with that of a predominant new contemporary feeling and style common to composers of the same generation which reflected the evolution of society. The fact of social change and the habit of Parry's historical interpretation disposed him to adopt the view that the personality of the composer 'must of necessity be the sublimated essence of the essential qualities of his time' (: 390). This puts the cart before the horse as no one knows what the 'essential qualities of his time' are until that time is past or passing. Proof of the composer's sincerity was found in the consistency of his personality, and 'the most absolute and indispensable requirement of the very highest quality is sincerity' (: 424). He must address the 'higher type of mind' which is 'that which can think of the greatest number of things at once' (: 413). This echoes Ruskin's view that the greatest art was that which conveyed 'the greatest number of the greatest ideas'.[24] His work must contain 'perfection of economy' (: 398) so that his thoughts are expressed in the most intense way possible (: 412). This economy, 'which packs the utmost meaning into the fewest possible words' approximated a 'guarantee of quality' (: 398). The artwork must be genuine and live in itself, or in the fresh things which people continue finding in it (: 419). In conclusion, Parry asserted the moral and spiritual value of music as an antidote to materialism and summarized, in rhetorical fashion, his definition of quality in music:

> For quality is that which justifies itself to countless various types of mind and endures, - by ideas that are true and sincere, by texture that is honest and characteristic, by style that is apt, by organization that is convincing, by individuality that is interesting, by diction that is pure, by gaiety that is not blatant, by melancholy that has hope in it, by consistency of thought, by scope of imagination, by humanity that is generous, and by strength that is kindly to weakness. Such quality proves ultimately to be the appeal of the finest and most ardent spirits to the spiritual ears of such as can meet them on the highest ground; and by such converse humanity threads its way through its bewilderments towards the light. (: 426-27)

Parry saw the history of musical style as an integral phase of cultural evolution, not a series of bolts from the blue. The idea that each artist has to create an entirely new language for himself was totally anathema to him, for his narration of the temporal sequence of styles emphasized the importance of inherited practices and values. From the

1920s anti-evolutionists argued that art is not culminative, that it is constantly 'beginning at the beginning' and that it does not transmit its innovations or retain a residuum of cultural traits. It has been shown that shifts in musical style are not indubitably continuous and gradual; they sometimes involve abrupt breaks, direct leaps to an opposing aesthetic persuasion. Parry's broad generalizations certainly tended to oversimplify the processes of change, but his theory nevertheless retains some valid and suggestive ideas, if couched in a rather verbose and prolix Victorian prose style. Certainly for many critics during the early years of the twentieth century it provided a convenient framework within which to conceive the development of musical language.[25] The influence of his ethical puritanism was certainly widespread and longlasting. While his attempt to provide an all-inclusive formula which could link music with all other realms of thought has been rightly attacked, no general theory of music history has been found to replace evolutionism in modern times, or to subsume it into a wider and more complex philosophy of history.

ii) HENRY HADOW

The arrival in 1892 of Henry Hadow's first volume of *Studies in Modern Music* is of considerable importance in the history of British music criticism. It was written, apparently, with the express purpose of breaking through what its author called 'the Joseph Bennett ring'.[26] Certainly it succeeded in markedly raising the literary and intellectual standards of criticism that prevailed in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The fact that it reached its seventh edition by 1908 reflects both the general poverty of similar critical studies and the increasing public demand for such material. Percy Buck, a former pupil of Hadow's at Oxford and an Oxford critic himself, went so far as to suggest that it marked the starting point of a renaissance of musical understanding in England:

> Those who can recall the early 'nineties' will remember the difficulty of getting together a musical library. Text books there were in abundance, most of them incredibly bad; a few histories, quite unreliable since few represented even an attempt at research; and no 'critical' books, save Gurney's *Power of Sound*, for such as could afford it. Then suddenly there arrived the first volume of *Studies in Modern Music*, which came to the students of those days like rain to parched fields. It brought us the assurance of a man versed in all the philosophy of the schools that the laws of music were at one with the laws of all art, that the laws of art were the laws underlying the whole of life, and that in the study of those

> laws, not in the fostering of our own tastes and idiosyncrasies, lay the science of musical criticism. From that day forward there has been a renaissance of musical understanding in England, and there has arisen an ever-growing band of earnest and able writers who have ministered to the demand for critical work. But through the whole period one and all of them have looked to Sir Henry Hadow as their head. (*The Dominant*, II, Mar 1929: 22)

Hadow was educated at Worcester College, Oxford, which he entered as a scholar in 1878. Having graduated four years later, he then spent the following few years continuing his musical education in Darmstadt while also teaching and travelling throughout Europe.[27] In 1885 he became a lecturer at Worcester College, where three years later he was appointed Fellow and Tutor in classics. That year he penned his first review, which appeared in *The Leeds Mercury*.[28] Although he had been requested to apply for the position of music critic to *The Times* in 1889, following the death of Francis Hueffer, he felt unable at that time to leave his work at Oxford and the post fell to Fuller-Maitland. Hadow was in fact never regularly employed by the Press and made his mark on British music criticism almost entirely through his books and occasional articles for music journals. In 1890 he began lecturing in music at Oxford for the Professor, John Stainer, whose critical thought was to exercise a significant influence over him.

In the first volume of *Studies in Modern Music*, Hadow dealt with the three composers he felt had suffered most at the hands of earlier British critics: Berlioz, Schumann and Wagner. Appropriately he prefaced it with a discourse on critical method containing a trenchant indictment of current practice which he felt lacked a manly and straightforward attitude to artistic questions.[29] This dissatisfaction prompted an attempt to codify the underlying principles on which music could be properly evaluated in order to effect a '*Jus Naturale*, a tribunal to which every style may be brought for equitable judgement' (1892: 17). This in turn involved adumbrating four main principles or 'psychological laws' that were able to form the permanent code by which music could be judged.

The first is the Principle of Vitality. This provides a basis for criticism only in as much as it relates to the ideas presented by the composer who 'must be the parent of his ideas not their fabricator' (: 22). A work of art must breathe life - technical assurance and imagination are prerequisite. Hadow admits the impossibility of defining this element of vitality with any degree of precision, but he does suggest an appropriate yardstick - a work of art is vital if it consistently displays the imprint of its creator's personality; it is

dead if its inspiration can be traced to an external source. The consequence of this position is a need to classify the various ways in which a composition can recall the reminiscence of an earlier work. These can be summarized as follows:

1 By coincidence - the use of a compositional *lingua franca*
2 By quotation:
  a) The use of a melody as a theme for variations
  b) The selection of a well-known melody as the thematic subject of a movement
  c) The incorporation of a single detached episode
3 By wholesale appropriation of an entire movement (Handel being the main culprit!)
4 By adaptation of another composer's structure or method

The last of these is considered by Hadow to be the worst of all, yet curiously he does not venture into questions of artistic influence. This is a serious omission.[30]

The second principle is that of Labour and states that the highest possible standard of workmanship must be effected by the composer in the presentation of his idea which should be decked with 'the utmost ornament it can legitimately bear' (: 32). The line between legitimate and illegitimate in this context has to be a matter of individual interpretation. In Hadow's case it led to a strong condemnation of Rossini and Italian opera in general. He shared with Runciman, as well as with members of the Oxford group, the view that Italian operas maintained no permanent position in the repertoire due to the laxity and indolence of their composers.[31]

There is less room for a subjective interpretation in the following Principle of Proportion. This simply expounds the idea that individual elements of a composition must be held together as members of a single organism - the law of organic unity prevailing in every living work. While Heinrich Schenker was formulating his seminal analytical theories in Vienna, Hadow was preaching the gospel of organicism in England, although with considerably less intellectual rigour.

The final Principle of Fitness states that the style of a composition must to some extent be determined by the nature of the form employed. This was a subject to which Hadow returned in two papers he read to the Musical Association in 1897 and 1923.[32] It is one which lies at the heart of his critical thought and indeed of that of the Oxford critics as a whole, whose writing frequently emphasized the interdependence of aesthetic value and structural coherence. In common with other members, especially Tovey, Hadow strongly opposed 'impressionism' in criticism while also decrying the abuses of

formalism, a position summed up in the following quotation taken from his 1897 essay on 'Form and Formalism in Music':

> Formalism means elevating convention to a level with law. Impressionism means degrading law to a level with convention. And I would venture to plead that true criticism should begin by distinguishing between the two and should end by discovering that the one consists in a series of transitory and imperfect expressions for the embodiment of the other. (*PMA*, XXIV, Dec 1897: 28)

In justifying this position he argued that only through a study of the composer's expression was it possible to infer his thought. For him, artistic form and content were inseparably bound together - a basic dogma that was also held with particular tenacity by Tovey and Walker. It may have owed something to the Oxford Neo-Hegelians such as Edward Caird, Master of Balliol College during the late 1890s - the time when Hadow's paper was written and when Tovey was studying classics and philosophy at that college. It led Hadow to the belief that music criticism must primarily concern itself with formal issues, based on the law of organic development combined with 'such study of musical history as may show how the law has been operative through the actual growth and progress of composition' (: 35). The evolutionary approach to music history embedded in such statements persisted long into the twentieth century and its implicit assumptions imposed serious limitations on the perceptions of many of the Oxford critics for a considerable period of time.

The Principle of Fitness unfortunately led Hadow into a false antithesis between sacred and secular music, one result of which was that Rossini's quartet 'Sancta Mater istud agas', from his *Stabat Mater,* was condemned as immoral. Hadow thus strongly affirmed that sacred music should be marked with dignity and a certain reticence. If a theatrical tone in sacred music was unethical then what of the reverse? In this regard theatrical power is denied to the Grail music of *Parsifal* for the sole reason that, in spite of the unorthodoxy of Wagner's belief and his intense dramatic sympathies, he was 'too great an artist to confuse sacred music with secular' (1892: 51) - a characteristic example of Hadow's inability to distinguish between ends and means which leads him into such misguided assertions.

In his essay on Berlioz, Hadow states that there are only two questions which should concern the critic: the degree of the composer's imaginative power and his command of technical resource. He disregards the critical comparison of styles altogether,

believing that the composer must be examined solely on his own terms. In relation to the first question he rejects Berlioz's idea of programme music, regarding it as an aberration of genius. For Hadow, any attempt towards descriptive instrumental music was bound to fail, for a programme could only be justified in opera, oratorio and song. The second is of greater significance and is dealt with here, as in the following essays, under four main headings: Melody, Harmonisation, Form and Instrumentation. In terms of melody, he regarded Berlioz as a man who had the defects of his qualities; the creative ingenuity that led him to vary rhythmic metre often resulted in the destruction of any sense of homogeneity: 'The villanelle in the *Nuits d'Été* begins in A major, and after two or three bars is thrown over the wall into B-flat; the Pilgrims' March in *Harold*, which opens with a magnificent phrase, is similarly spoiled by a cadence at the end of the fourth line; on many occasions a good idea is abandoned where it ought to be developed, simplicity is sacrificed for epigram, directness for ingenuity, until the whole result is as depressing as a jest book' (1892: 138). Hadow considered Berlioz to lack harmonic strength and solidity, but this was not so serious a fault as his looseness of structure. The first movement of the *Symphonie Fantastique* broke the fundamental laws of art while the opening allegro of *Harold in Italy* was 'nothing more than a fortuitous concourse of phrases, without form and void' (: 141). However, he did regard him as the supreme master of instrumentation, the guide of every composer since his day (: 143).

Although Schumann was considered altogether a greater musician than Berlioz, he was nevertheless found to share some of the latter's weaknesses, especially in terms of formal construction. Whereas Berlioz was apparently unaware of structural laws, Schumann chose to underrate their importance. Hadow found three reasons to account for this. Firstly, Schumann's greatest mentor, Bach, wrote before cyclical forms had become established and could therefore be of little help in providing structural models. Secondly, being the most abstract of all modes of musical expression, the laws of formal coherence 'constitute an inner shrine to which only the most single-hearted musicians can penetrate; and he who visits the Temple with any other prepossession - even of poetry itself - must be content to worship among the people' (: 216). Lastly, Schumann's thought was considered essentially lyrical in impulse, finding its most characteristic expression in short detached pieces. Due to the composer's preoccupation with constructing formal designs from the juxtaposition of miniatures, he became habituated

to the conditions of small scale design to the detriment of his ability to construct structures of symphonic proportions.

'The creator of *Zauberflöte* is to be judged as a musician; the creator of *Siegfried* is to be judged not as a musician but as a dramatist' (: 307). Thus Hadow stated his belief that criticism of Wagner must be based on those principles implied by Wagner's own ideals and aspirations. For him, the progression from *Rienzi* to *Parsifal* was an unbroken line of development, each successive opera representing an advance over its predecessor: 'In *Rienzi* we have an attempt to reconcile the new ideal with the incompatible method of the grand opera; in *The Flying Dutchman* the balance begins to incline; in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* it is gradually determined in favour of drama; and finally in *Rheingold* the musical conventions are discarded altogether and the principle of dramatic unity established without reserve' (: 309). The third act of *Lohengrin* was taken as the summary of the old method and as the point of transition to the new. Again, the chief criterion for evaluation was organic unity. Whereas the *Ring* fell short of the ideal in being too long and containing redundant passages (: 319), *Parsifal* was considered to be Wagner's masterpiece, not only because its emotional level was more sublime than that of its predecessors, but more importantly because it was the most homogeneous. In a 1912 essay on music and drama, Hadow developed the idea that in terms of subject matter Wagner's music-dramas traced back the history of the art almost continuously from the point at which he picked it up. That is, he first began by adopting current convention and then followed a period in which he drew his inspiration from folk-legend, after which he turned to tragedy and then comedy until the summit was reached in the religious feast of *Parsifal* (1928: 180-1).

For the second volume of *Studies in Modern Music*, Hadow was anxious to seek information at first hand and in April 1893, with an introduction from Joachim, he interviewed Brahms. Later in the year he was also able to visit Dvořák, who showed him some of his unpublished manuscripts. This original research gave Hadow's essays an undeniable authority. The format for his second volume was similar to the former and the three studies of individual composers - Chopin, Dvořák and Brahms - were prefaced by an essay on the outlines of musical form which extended his theory of criticism. The 1892 essay on method in criticism had dealt primarily with the relationship between the composer and his creative achievement. Building on the foundation of the four Principles

in order to discover the *axiomata media* which they included, the second volume contained a discussion of the relationship between the composition and its aural reception. The first chapter on 'Faculties of Appreciation' attempted to provide some answers to the two central questions of his inductive method: namely, what are the elements in our nature to which music attaches itself and what are the factors in musical composition to which our nature most clearly responds. Classifying the ways in which we are influenced by music into three areas - the purely physical, the semi-physical and the rational - he considered that only through the rational appreciation of style and structure could any definite scheme of aesthetic law be determined. Music could not be criticized on sensuous grounds - 'partly because the receptivity of the nerve differs in different temperaments, partly because even where there is an agreement the sensuous side is wholly subordinate to the intellectual' (1895: 20). Neither could it be attempted on emotional grounds, for not only are our emotions conditioned by physical states in the body, but it would be too personal and subjective to afford a satisfactory basis for discussion: 'We are only in a position to criticise when we have passed through the emotional stage and emerged into the intellectual region beyond' (: 24). This led to a discussion on style and structure in which sonata form was held up as the ultimate artistic organism combining diversity in unity to provide a perfect balance between the two. Hadow did not feel that the basic format had reached its apogee, for there were certain conventions which he felt had yet to be dispensed with. But because in its essence the form contained the presage of further growth and development, he argued that it was 'moving towards a higher and truer liberty' (1896: vii):

> Genius alone can shift the line between conventional and natural laws. We know that the second subject need no longer be on one predetermined key; we do not know whether the future will require a second subject at all... The emancipation of music has made composition more organic; it is inconceivable that further freedom should tend away from organicism. And though no doubt the instrumental work of the next century will be seriously influenced by vocal and dramatic methods, yet it is more likely to assimilate than to be absorbed. As they stand, the forms of the Sonata and the Symphony represent the highest structural types to which we have yet attained, and the same evolutionary forces which have built them up will surely remain operative in the ages to come. (1896: 183)

In his book *Sonata Form* (1896), from which the above quotation is taken, Hadow expounded the contention that sonata form did not develop from an expansion of binary structures but evolved rather from the ternary movements of the eighteenth century - an

unorthodox view that apparently caused some commotion in Oxford's musical circles. According to Simmons (1978: 42), Parry, in particular, was implacably opposed to Hadow's contention that sonata form developed from earlier ternary structures. In view of the fact that, for Hadow, sonata form was not an artificial construction but an organic growth representing the highest type of structure to which music had evolved, it is not surprising that of the three composers dealt with in the second series of *Studies* it should be Brahms that received the greatest acclamation. The historical importance of the Romantic school was seen to be twofold: it widened the range of emotional expression and it returned to Bach. However, it also neglected Beethoven's contribution to form and since 1830 the structural elements of music had been allowed to fall into neglect. Although antithetical to the earlier view that a composer must be examined solely on his own terms without reference to his position within the wider historical context, Hadow's estimation of Brahms was clearly based on his interpretation of the composer's position along an evolutionary continuum. While maintaining and developing the harmonic traditions of the Romantic school, Brahms sought to reaffirm the importance of structural considerations in a way that aligned him with a tradition stemming from late Beethoven. For this reason Hadow regarded the work of Brahms as being at the summit of contemporary musical achievement, combining Romantic expression with the organic procedures of Classical structure. The extent to which Brahms had developed existing tradition could be found in his treatment of symphonic structure, especially with regard to the way in which he related one movement to another. Such interrelationships were found to have been achieved in three ways: by unity of emotional effect, by appropriate choice of key for each movement and by the transference of thematic material. In each he was found to have made a significant advance, emancipating musical form 'not by the false freedom of anarchy, but by the true freedom of a rational code' (: 291), particularly evident in his concertos:

> He has broken down the unnecessary rule of the three movements, he has finally overthrown the tyranny of the solo instrument, he has given the whole form a free constitution similar to that of the Quartett and the Symphony. And though we be disinclined to regard our present sonata-form as ultimate; though it may some day develop into a new type, as it was itself developed from the Partita, yet the very possibility of future advance depends upon conditions which it has been the work of Brahms to secure. Hence, to call him a reactionary, as some are fond of doing, is simply to misunderstand his whole relation to musical art. In all history, there is no composer more essentially progressive. (1895: 292)



Henry Hadow

The extent to which this view differed from that of the New critics, writing under the influence of Shaw and Runciman, can be gleaned from the reviews Hadow's book received in the more progressive journals. *The Magazine of Music*, for example, stated under the heading 'Oxford Musical Criticisms' that 'The truth is that the classical form was used for scarcely half a century, and has been temporarily revived by Brahms in a pedantic spirit that will send his music out of date at a head-long pace so soon as his personal influence ceases to be exercised' (XII, May 1895: 95). Hadow nevertheless had his supporters and his enthusiasm for the works of Brahms was perpetuated most vigorously in British music criticism between the wars by those writers who shared with him a close association with Oxford.

Whereas Brahms was held to be the supreme master essentially through his successful articulation of large-scale design, Chopin was accused of a lack of 'manliness, moral and intellectual' for precisely the opposite reason. His criticism of Chopin's B flat minor Piano Sonata Op.35 is indicative of his general response to the composer:

> Schumann undoubtedly hits the blot when he declares that the great Funeral March ought never to have formed part of the work at all. As a separate piece it is of incomparable beauty; as the adagio of this particular Sonata it is wholly out of place. Its key is ill selected in relation to the rest of the movement; worst of all its form is precisely the same as that of the Scherzo; and these objections, not one of which affects the movement itself, are no less than fatal to it in its present context. The Finale, again, has neither the breadth nor the dignity requisite for its position. Its structure, though perfectly clear, is too simple and primitive to justify it as the fitting conclusion of an important work; and its persistent rhythmic figure gives it somewhat the air of an impromptu. (1895: 156)

This essay on Chopin is primarily of significance for its defence of George Sand against the prevalent assumption of her emotional cruelty, made by biographers such as Joseph Bennett and Frederick Niecks.[33] In making his defence, Hadow drew on the accounts of Matthew Arnold, Sainte-Beuve and Delacroix but, in doing so, unfortunately tipped the balance too far in the opposite direction. His suggestion that the relationship between Chopin and George Sand was 'a pure and cordial friendship, into which there entered no element of shame and no taint of degradation' (: 128) was extraordinarily naïve, and one which led the critic Martin Cooper to write in 1965 that it 'had a good deal of the provincial old maid about it'.[34]

Often, as in his defence of George Sand, Hadow's most determined criticism was a reaction to an earlier proposition he found unacceptable. This was the case in his essay

on Dvořák which provided an opportunity to discuss nationalism and music in order to discover the implication behind the statement that Dvořák's music was influenced by the character of his country, as well as to arrive at an evaluation of such an influence. He concluded that if music idealizes the language of emotion, and if emotional temperament differs from country to country, then inevitably the music will differ also. Extending the contention that Chopin's faulty treatment of tonality and structure was directly related to his lack of masculinity, he argued that not only does a composer of genius unavoidably express his individuality but also that of his race with which it is inextricably bound. It was concerning this element of racial origin that Hadow came to his most infamous hypothesis: that the assignment of Haydn's racial origin to Germany was an ethnological error and that he was in fact a Croatian composer.[35] The carefully evolved argument that was substantiated by illustrations from Slavonic folk songs and research into Haydn's family background has since been rejected, particularly since the publication in 1934 of Ernst Fritz Schmid's *Joseph Haydn* which presented a mass of evidence that Haydn was of German stock. Nevertheless, until that time there were many who were prepared to accept Hadow's theory, including Dr. Eaglefield Hull and Hadow's pupil, H. C. Colles.[36]

With his two volumes of *Studies in Modern Music* Hadow established a reputation as a leader of critical thought in British academic circles. His intellectual solidity won over the educated classes to a recognition of music as an integral part of general culture. With the completion under his editorship of *The Oxford History of Music* in 1905, his position was consolidated. To this he had himself contributed the fifth volume on 'The Viennese Period'. The historical importance of this series in relation to the dissemination of musical knowledge in Britain is immense, for it was the first major work of its kind since Burney and Hawkins published their histories in 1776.[37]

In 1909 Hadow left Oxford to become Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Ten years later he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University. His work as an educationalist and administrator took precedence over his musical and literary activities and, although he continued to write about music until the mid 1930s, his critical thought was increasingly tamed by the necessity of a purely historical approach. As the new century progressed, his critical aesthetic became progressively less able to meet the rapid developments in musical art and, as with other Oxford critics, he found himself out of sympathy with many contemporary trends of musical thought.[38] Perhaps

this is unsurprising given the weight both Hadow and Tovey accorded to technique and structure, for their aesthetic creed could not entirely encompass the achievements of Berlioz or Tchaikovsky, let alone Schoenberg or Strauss. An all-pervasive reverence for the German classic tradition infected their whole critical perception, seen in the following remarks made by Hadow during the course of a 1906 article entitled 'Some Tendencies in Modern Music':

> Berlioz's magnificent orchestration does not conceal his poverty of style; the dexterity of Liszt is often set to embroider a thin or ill-woven texture: even Wagner's 'romantic' operas alternate their wonderful strokes of genius with passages of sheer clumsiness or vulgarity. And the reason is in all cases the same... they had not acquired the full artistry which cost Bach and Mozart so many years of patient endeavour. (1928: 6)

It was Hadow's innate and deep-rooted conservatism that led him to write carelessly about modern music of which he had little understanding. His conclusion to *Music* (1924), ostensibly a summary of music history for the general reader, is particularly misleading on a number of counts. In it he suggested that Debussy dispensed with leitmotif in *Pelléas et Mélisande,* that Satie and *Les Six* were original only in the sense of 'breaking the most innocuous customs for the mere purpose of attracting attention, affecting a deliberate simplicity which is very little removed from emptiness, shaking a few comic directions from the cruets in order to conceal the fact that there is no taste in the salad' (: 229), and that composers employing atonality represented 'a growing school, attracted by the opportunities for scientific experiment, desperately in earnest, and sternly disregardful of what is customarily called beauty' (: 231). Yet in his richly allusive criticism of older music he showed that the critical discussion of music, especially in relation to 'the balance of expression and design', could be related to the wider issues of art and life. More than any other music critic of his generation he broke down the barriers that existed between music and other areas of knowledge. It was characteristic that during the course of his lecture on Beethoven, read before the British Academy in June 1917, (1928: 107-34), he should cite Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Goethe, Milton, Tennyson, Shelley, Wordsworth, Heine, Marlowe, Dryden, Johnson, Peacock, Conrad, G. M. Trevelyan and Gautier. While such reliance on allusion sought to find correspondences between music and the other arts that could assist readers in their understanding, it also restricted the appeal of his criticism to a sophisticated readership. Although his highly influential *Studies* appeared before the turn of the century, their

importance in paving the way for a more considered and balanced approach to both critical theory and practice during the inter-war period is of considerable significance in the history of British music criticism.

iii) DONALD F. TOVEY AND ERNEST WALKER

Tovey was undoubtedly the most influential and reactionary of the Oxford critics. His biographer, Mary Grierson, has provided a detailed account of his life and musical activities in her book *Donald Francis Tovey: A Biography Based on Letters* (1952). As Joseph Kerman (his chief apologist of recent times) has written, his formative years were dominated by two remarkable musicians who were both 'adherents of the musical conservative party, Brahmsians rather than Wagnerians' (1977: 172) - his mentors Sophie Weisse and Joseph Joachim. Later, he came into contact with another member of Brahms's circle - Eusebius Mandyczewski, the composer's amanuensis. The influence of German musical traditions, combined with the English heritage exemplified by Parry, with whom Tovey studied before being elected the first Lewis Nettleship scholar at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1894, predominate within his aesthetic outlook. During the early 1900s he performed extensively and composed a good deal. His compositional style displays a predominant concern with classical structural procedures and Brahmsian harmonic and rhythmic techniques. In 1914 he was appointed to the Reid Chair of Music at Edinburgh University and three years later established the Reid Orchestral Concerts, for which he wrote the extensive series of programme notes that later formed the basis of his most widely disseminated literary work - the *Essays in Musical Analysis* (1935-9).

As an authoritative academic critic of the analytical kind, Tovey's reputation was unparalleled in his day. Even in a centennial tribute, Joseph Kerman was able to write that:

> Tovey must still be the most widely read music critic in English-speaking countries. His work has been attacked; it has also been bypassed and tacitly contradicted; but it has never lost its broad appeal... Simply in terms of modernity of thought, it is very striking to compare Tovey to some of his German contemporaries, men of no less genius who were committed no less firmly to the classical tradition culminating in Brahms: men such as Schenker, Schnabel, and of course Schoenberg. That Tovey's work has been attacked, bypassed, and

> contradicted is therefore scarcely surprising. What is more surprising - what is, on the face of it, nothing short of astonishing - is the contemporary vigour of a body of criticism so thoroughly grounded in Victorian ideas, tastes, attitudes, and inhibitions. (1977: 172-4)

Although Tovey wrote for the ordinary non-professional listener, he refused to eschew the use of technical terms, attempting instead to bring their meanings within the understanding of any reader willing to grasp them through the imaginative use of colourful metaphor and analogy. This substantial use of technical terms has resulted in Tovey's placement within the interests of analysts and those concerned with the history of analytical thought. Many commentators have drawn a parallel between the work of Tovey and his German counterpart, Heinrich Schenker. Tovey's analytical method of criticism owed much to the musical précis-writing of Grove and Parry, as the author himself acknowledged in the preface to *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas* (1931). He employed the style from the very first, as his early series of articles for the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1906) demonstrate. Yet the analysis was only ever a means towards arriving at an accurate evaluation of artistic merit. In a 1903 essay entitled 'The Classical Concerto', reprinted in *Essays in Musical Analysis*, he specifically denied that the basis of his analytical method was in any sense technical. Musical analysis, he suggested, should not be about 'how it is done' but about 'what is done' in a composition. Indeed, he was openly sceptical of text-book theorists, especially their attempts to discern thematic processes in music. As Kerman has noted:

> Tovey did not like to think that music existed in which various motives, themes, transitions, figurations, and cadences might all be indiscriminately related. For some critics, a texture permeated with thematic relationships is richly unified. For him, such a texture was otiose and directionless. This must have been one of the main grounds for his antipathy towards Wagner, and one of the many things that repelled him in Schoenberg. (1977: 185)

Already in his early articles of 1906 Tovey had formulated the basic aesthetic propositions that he continued to maintain until the late 1930s. His reactionary stance was undisguised. Typically, in his article on 'Music' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, alluding to contemporary music, he stated: 'There is at present no Brahms; the twentieth century must enlarge its musical experience before another renascence of classical form can either be expected or recognized when it comes' (1944: 137). This inability to meet modern music on its own terms, combined with the excessive reverence for the German repertoire from Bach to Brahms that was characteristic of all the Oxford critics, were

prominent features of Tovey's criticism. Such dedication to German models became anachronistic.

In 1904 he presented a paper on 'Permanent Musical Criteria' to the Musical Association which set out his thoughts on critical theory (*PMA*, XXX, Jun 1904: 129-54). He argued that study of the great composers could not provide criteria for the judgement of new works but that such study was necessary for 'the formation of good taste and for the development of any sort of faculty for understanding works of which the realities may not be exhausted at a single hearing by the most indolent listener' (: 131). He defined the work of art in relation to human experience: we can derive from all works of art 'a certain sense of vividness and completeness' (: 133). The work of art must speak for itself, must make a clear and strong emotional appeal, and must be an organic whole. A great work of art, standing by its own consistency, could not be superseded. The possibility of many great works of art being based on similar material was emphasized, for originality was a feature of great art not in the sense of novelty, but in that of independence and autonomy. Organic unity, the 'universal criterion of art' (: 145), implied the principle of economy of material, for in a perfect organic whole 'no part is superfluous or inadequate for its function' (: 138-9). It was to the task of discovering how this organic unity operated, how the masterpiece 'fulfils the law of its own being' (: 146), that criticism should properly address itself, not to the 'heresy' of the comparative method. It was to this end that Tovey addressed his analytical method. In his section on 'Progress and Achievement' he provides a range of critical assessments which are clearly derived from Parry, especially in the relative placing of Monteverdi and Beethoven:

> Monteverde is a maker of history, but although it needs great artistic power to make such history as he made, the fact remains that he never produced a work of art that can stand by its own consistency. He may be said to have discovered all possibilities of modern music without discovering how to use any one of them.. [Beethoven's progress] is purely artistic and is accomplished without a trace of the chaotic struggles of Monteverde, the sketchy suggestiveness of Philip Emanuel Bach, or the touchingly modest self-negation of certain aspects of Haydn's early work. (: 141-2; 144)

In a stimulating essay on Tovey's literary output, Paul Machlin (1985) has suggested that it is possible to discern the extent to which Tovey responded to any specific piece of music with genuine insight through an evaluation of the quality of his written prose; that the vitality of Tovey's writing provides a clue to the degree of his

enthusiasm for the music he discusses. The practical application of such a thesis would be as fraught with difficulties as the attempt to systematize the principles of Tovey's criticism from a reading of his numerous analyses. Machlin's article is suggestive but of little realistic applicability. Fortunately, the problems of systematization have been greatly reduced by the posthumous publication of the Cramb and Alsop Lectures that Tovey delivered in the late 1930s.[39] Published under the title, *A Musician Talks* (1941), they provide a condensed account of his critical theory. As the book's title suggests, these lectures, delivered towards the end of Tovey's life, are in no sense a definitive systematization of his critical thought, yet they nevertheless draw together the various strands of his aesthetic formulation that had changed little since the beginning of the century. These aesthetic propositions have been skilfully summarized by Solomon Fishman (1947). Fishman draws attention to Tovey's predominant concern with aesthetic matters, outlining the premises which in his system determine the relevance of evidence to aesthetic judgements. These include the insistence on avoidance of generalizations; the reliance on analysis of individual works of art; the belief that comparison of great works of art is futile; the irrelevance of historical information to aesthetic evaluation; the overriding importance of aural reception over notational understanding; and the necessity of employing technical terms to elucidate musical phenomena.

The notion of integrity within Tovey's critical thought is of paramount importance. In the first volume of *A Musician Talks*, seven propositions are listed that succinctly summarize his views about how technical and aesthetic issues are inseparable, expanding the old idea shared with Hadow and other Oxford critics of the equivalence of form and content, the idea that structure is expression:

> Science is not art, and, if a work of art can legitimately convey scientific information, that is because its material includes matters of universal scope. Thus, for example, a whole landscape may be divided horizontally by a straight line if that straight line represents the horizon.
>
> Secondly, a correct theory of art is not necessarily a practical method of producing works of art, any more than it is an element likely to appear explicitly in the result. It concerns criticism, not creation.
>
> Thirdly, art consists of individual works of art, not a general growing body of knowledge like science. The integrity of science implies that science is pursued for its own sake and not for practical purposes. The integrity of art is the integrity of works of art.
>
> Fourthly, there is nothing to prevent a work of art from being perfect. Its perfection is only its highest standard of integrity, and its integrity can be secured

by the artist's choice of his materials.

Fifthly, if the artist has omitted no essential elements, his work will remain unaffected by changes in public opinion... The thrill given by complete artistic integrity is always the same. The only things that change are the directions and difficulties through which we approach the work.

Sixthly, a work of art exists, as Andrew Bradley said of poetry, in countless degrees. For the most part its enjoyment cannot be a single experience, but must come from the accumulation in the memory of many and varied impressions. Music cannot properly be said to exist except in performance; and in this sense the authenticity of a piece of music can be preserved only when the performance respects the intentions of the composer and is otherwise accurate. The authenticity of the autograph is not an aesthetic factor at all...

Seventhly, the integrity of art is not preserved, but injured, by the exclusion of elements which cannot naturally be separated from its means of existence. Pure instrumental music has so little reason to be otherwise than absolute that there is a strong presumption against the integrity of music that illustrates other subjects without the necessity forced upon it by the human voice or the stage. This presumption, however, is a difficulty that must be faced... (: 18-9)

As perfection of form was regarded as equivalent to perfection of expression, it is not surprising that absolute music was for Tovey the most pure medium for the expression of musical thought. However, the qualities of programme music were not undistinguished so much as subsumed under the banner of absolute expression. By this means Tovey was able to integrate programme music into his aesthetic, making no viable distinction between the two. As he remarked in the lecture on absolute music in *Musical Textures*, as well as in his British Academy lecture entitled 'The Main Stream of Music' and elsewhere, his position follows that of Andrew Bradley. Bradley's inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry at Oxford - *Poetry for Poetry's Sake*[40]- had a significant influence on Tovey's ideas concerning the absoluteness of music. Bradley's doctrine was that works of art digest their materials; that once a poem has been created its subject was no longer outside the poem but fully subsumed within it, the subject before its digestion being quite different from when it became part of the work of art. In his Deneke Lecture of 1934 entitled 'Musical Form and Matter' Tovey spoke of the influence of Bradley's lecture:

> I was most timely warned, at the beginning of the century, by Professor Andrew Bradley's inaugural lecture... a lecture which I heard him deliver, and which thrilled me by its firm refutation of the heresy that the sound of poetry could be separated from the sense. This lecture accomplished for me something more than its author's immediate purpose of emancipating the notion of 'pure poetry' from the limitations of a Persian rug. It awakened me to the folly of setting *a priori* limits to the powers of this or that art-form to digest material that can exist in a

more or less raw state outside. (1949: 163)

While Tovey's *Essays in Musical Analysis* are his most popular and influential works, his most significant criticism is contained in the two volumes of *A Musician Talks*, in *Beethoven*, and in the posthumous collection *Essays and Lectures on Music*. The latter collection of miscellaneous writings contains all the distinguishing elements of Tovey's criticism. Like most great men, the author can be seen to triumph over his own deficiencies. These are easily discernible - the tendency to digress, the impatience, the prejudice against anything that falls outside the confines of the German tradition, the implicit assumptions such as his belief in a Golden Age (as though the interpretation of the term was universally agreed upon) and the willingness to commit himself to broad generalization. He could remark with total assurance, without qualification or even a hint of unease, that 'Nobody who is capable of measuring the gulf that separates the art of Palestrina from that of Bach and Handel will be surprised at the fact that the whole of the seventeenth century was spent in pioneer efforts and small sporadic achievements before such masters could emerge' (1949: 338). His essay on Elgar is almost patronizing: 'I am not so sure about his mastery of form; that it is masterly there is no reasonable doubt, but, like the form of the Cherubinis of all artistic periods, it is apt to fill up space with sequences on figures that are not sufficiently pregnant to show well under the amount of repetition forced on them' (1949: 300).

Coolness towards the work of Elgar was characteristic of the Oxford critics who regarded him as an 'outsider' capable of undermining the work of Parry and Stanford. As a supporter of the progressive Wagner-Strauss aesthetic, he became a potential rival to those Establishment composers associated with the universities and London colleges of music. Elgar represented the most serious challenge to the leaders of the British Musical Renaissance. In ~~1930~~ 1924 E. J. Dent, who held Stanford's Chair at Cambridge, wrote an article for Guido Adler's *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* (~~1930~~ 1924) which devoted considerably more space to Parry and Stanford than to Elgar. Of the latter, Dent wrote:

> Like Mackenzie, he [Elgar] was a violin player by profession, and studied the works of Liszt, which were loathsome to conservative academic musicians. He was, moreover, a Catholic, and more or less self-taught man, possessing little of the literary culture of Parry and Stanford.. For English ears Elgar's music is too emotional and not entirely free from vulgarity. His orchestral works, variations, two symphonies, concertos for violin and violoncello and various overtures are lively in colour, but pompous in style and with a too deliberate

when the second edition of Adler's Handbuch appeared in 1930

nobility of expression.. His chamber music.. is dry and academic. (: 1047)[41] Whether or not Dent was at least as critical of English ears as of Elgar, his comments resulted in a letter of protest from several British critics and musicians, including Heseltine, Shaw, Moeran, Landon Ronald and Walton. This was sent to the Press Association and caused a furore among critics which provided copy for some weeks.

Many of the ideas expressed by Tovey also form the underlying aesthetic of his close friend Ernest Walker. Like Tovey, Walker was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, where he later became Director of Music (1901-25). Unlike Tovey, he never moved away from Oxford and was closely connected to the University for many years. As a student he frequently provided illustrations at the piano for Hadow's lectures and later combined a performing career with teaching, composing, and literary work. While Tovey came under the influence of Oxford Neo-Hegelians such as Jowett and Caird, Walker was much influenced by the philosopher Richard Lewis Nettleship. That is not to say that the other Oxford philosophers were not also an important influence; indeed, Walker's diaries testify to the interest that Jowett, the Master of Balliol, took in the young undergraduate. On at least three occasions Walker stayed with Jowett at his home in West Malvern. In her biography of Walker, Margaret Deneke wrote:

> There is no doubt that Ernest Walker was among those to whom Nettleship was a lasting power in life. The influence was intangible and Walker could associate it with no particular words, but there remained a vivid impression of complete simplicity and single-mindedness, and at the same time of a strongly passionate nature kept in firm control. The diaries tell of lectures, discussions, and meetings for music with Nettleship. Together they explored whole volumes of Brahms's songs and other music - Nettleship avoided selections - and their discoveries were often incorporated in Balliol programmes. (1951: 34)

By the time Walker had taken his final examinations he had become an invaluable asset to Balliol music and to secure him permanently Jowett made the 'innovation of a musical don'. Besides assisting John Farmer with the famous Balliol Concerts, begun by Farmer in 1885 as the first secular Sunday concerts in England, Walker also worked as an accompanist in the London concert halls and the provinces. In this way he made the acquaintance of leading performers such as Joseph Joachim.

In 1891 Reginald Carter, editor of *The Oxford Magazine*, offered Walker a guinea a term for concert and book reviews. Walker kept this work until 1924 and also contributed occasional articles to *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Times*.[42] Between



Ernest Walker

1899 and 1902 he edited *The Musical Gazette*, a high quality periodical which was only to last for ten issues. Its total lack of advertising revenue and the haphazard dates of publication undoubtedly hindered its continuance, although by its very academic nature it could only have ever appealed to a limited readership. A journal of high literary and intellectual quality, it contained Tovey's first published essays - on 'Performance and Personality' under the pseudonym 'Tamino', and an analysis of Brahms's C minor Piano Quartet, Op. 60, entitled 'A Modern Tragedy in Pure Music'. It also published articles by Hadow and Walker himself, who argued in favour of a move towards more authentic performance practices and greater editorial responsibility. The bulk of Walker's writing, however, was for *The Monthly Musical Record*, *The Musical Times* and later for *The Listener*.

Walker's criticism was founded on his experience of Brahms. Everything he judged was judged in the light of its formal coherence. By his own performance, he secured the English premiere of Brahms's Op. 117 and the Rhapsody, Op. 119 No. 4 at the Balliol Concerts. Although he wrote three books - *Beethoven* (1905), *A History of Music in England* (1907), and the collection of essays, *Free Thought and The Musician* (1946), the importance of his contribution to critical thought is of lasting account only as representing an additional strand in the Oxford group's aesthetic propositions. The limitations of his severely restricted outlook, resulting from extreme Platonic ideals, were made plain by his pupil, Frank Howes:

> To him music is music and nothing else, a self-contained system of thought, to him programme music and vocal music are definitely lower in the scale of values than abstract music; to him any attempt to relate a given piece of music to the extra-musical conditions which gave it birth or to the emotions which it may express is a kind of blasphemy. (*MMR*, LIX, 2 Sep 1929: 263)

iv) PERCY BUCK AND H. C. COLLES

Percy Buck had an educational background that shared certain features with that of Tovey; he studied with Parry at the Royal College of Music before taking up an appointment as organist of Worcester College, Oxford, in 1891. He had a distinguished career in the academic world, being appointed King Edward Professor of Music in the

University of London in 1925 and also teaching at the Royal College of Music. Although his writing was essentially orientated towards the discussion of music as a practical pursuit, he was nevertheless particularly concerned with the problems of criticism. In 1906 he presented a paper to the Musical Association entitled, 'Prolegomena to Musical Criticism' (PMA, XXXII, 1905-6: 155-77). Based on Hadow's theories and sharing his strategy of building an argument through the precise ordering of propositions, this states that the merit of a work of art should be discerned by differentiating its intrinsic and extrinsic qualities:

> Take the moment when the performance of a piece of music is actually beginning: we can then look backward at the processes which have brought the work to this moment, and forward to what impressions the audience are going to receive. Like most other things, these two classes each divide naturally into three groups. We can criticise-
>
> 1 The grammar of the work,
> 2 The subject-matter,
> 3 The manner of dealing with that matter
> - *i.e.*, Presentation, including Style.
>
> On the other hand, we can look quite separately, when it comes to performance, at -
>
> 1 The sensuous qualities,
> 2 The intellectual qualities, and
> 3 The emotional qualities of the work.
>
> Unless a radical objection is offered to my classification, I think it cannot be denied that no valuation of a musical composition is final which does not take into consideration these six aspects. (1906: 164-5)

The ideas contained in this paper were extended in a chapter on criticism in Buck's most popular work, *The Scope of Music* (1924), in which he added 'conformity to convention' to his list of intrinsic qualities, and 'appropriateness' as a further extrinsic criterion for evaluation. Buck is remembered chiefly as an educationalist rather than for his limited contribution to critical thought.

While Hadow and Tovey can be regarded as the intellectual leaders of the Oxford critics, the critic who exercised the most widespread influence on a journalistic basis was Henry Cope Colles. Like Buck, Colles had studied with Parry at The Royal College of Music before receiving an organ scholarship at Worcester College, Oxford, where Hadow was dean. Indeed, it was Hadow who encouraged him to turn his attention to criticism.

When Harold Child took over the editorship of *The Academy* in 1905 he appointed Colles as music critic, for Colles was then among the most scholarly of the younger generation.[43] His earliest articles in music periodicals, such as that on the motets of Orazio Benevoli, were primarily of musicological interest. Yet even here, Colles expressed personal views that were clearly in line with the general thinking of the Oxford group:

> we are told that the Sonata form is a thing of the past. Is this because musicians have written numberless sonatas and found the form inadequate to express their ideas; or is it that they have been in too great haste to compose to spend time in mastering the difficulties of the form?
>
> I am inclined to fear that it is the latter; for it seems probable that, were the former method systematically adhered to, we like Benevoli, should be now well on our way towards the development of some wider and more comprehensive form. (*MO*, CCCXXXVI, Sep 1905: 881)

Colles's early articles for *The Academy* were dominated by discussion of two composers - Brahms and Richard Strauss. In his review of the first English performance of Strauss's *Symphonia Domestica* he wrote of Strauss's 'freakishness' and his illogical presentation of ideas, concluding that: 'The audience is alternately insulted and patronised' (*A*, LVIII, 4 Mar 1905: 205). His response to *Don Quixote* in the following year was quite different however:

> For my own part, I have not a fine enough sense to distinguish that "rigid austerity in the choice of material" which Mr. Ernest Newman finds to be akin to Bach. Rather I should say that, like most of Strauss's work, it is made up of a variety of material, good, bad and indifferent. There is the grace of the theme before alluded to [the first theme]. Then the vein of "Straussian" weirdness in the Don Quixote theme is, of course, appropriate, whereas in the "sulky" husband of the freakish wife of the "Sinfonia Domestica" it was just annoying. Strauss has a commonplace side to him which generally comes out when he allows himself, as even he must sometimes, to be plainly and simply diatonic. This feature, so unfortunate elsewhere, is, of course, turned to most happy account for the themes of Sancho Panza and Dulcinea. In fact, this subject, not in itself of the greatest, affords just the right material for the most happy display of Strauss's powers, and the result is a work which keeps an audience interested from start to finish by its successful blending of humour and pathos. (*A*, LXX, 10 Feb 1906: 144)

Frequently, Colles found himself at odds with the most conspicuously pro-Strauss critic, Ernest Newman, especially with regard to the much debated issue of programme music. In his *Academy* review of Newman's influential *Musical Studies* (LXIX, 15 Jul 1905: 741-2) he took issue with the author, writing that, as a critic, he was looking for 'some ultimate issue for music beyond programme music, in which all the emotional

possibilities, the psychological states of feeling, which the use of a "programme" first made possible in music, shall be summed up and included in some purely musical form' (: 741). The implication was that composers should return to the compositional issues arising from the work of Brahms, the subject of Colles's first book, rather than follow the lead given by Strauss. Colles took Hadow's view that Brahms, in restoring the classical traditions, pointed a way forward that had been eclipsed through the development of orchestral resources that had distracted attention away from the accurate assessment of Brahms's achievement:

> The restorer of classical traditions must be a leader, one who not only attains, but opens the door and points the way to others. If this leadership is to be found in Brahms, it will probably be easier for us to detect it in a branch of the art in which we do not live and move daily, than in orchestral music in which at present our "ears are dinn'd with uproar rude." If we turn away into the undisturbed region of chamber music, if we slip into some well nigh deserted concert-hall and hear the great Sestett in G, divinely played, we can more fully realise the great road along which Brahms marched, and along which others shall advance further, when all side issues, such as effects of colour and expression and harmonic possibilities, shall be settled.
>
> In thus emphasising the example of Brahms I hope it is unnecessary to defend myself against the charge of prophesying that the composers of the future will rewrite him. Better an age of the wildest vagaries than one of respectable copyists! I do believe, however, that there is something, of which we now tend to lose sight, that was a vital part of Brahms's work, and is also a vital part of music at its greatest. I believe that to some extent composers must return to this standpoint, partially expressed in words to Henschel, completely and beautifully expressed in his own musical language, before the next great mountain top is reached. (*A*, LXIX, 29 Jul 1905: 789-9)

The close similarity between this view and those frequently expressed by Tovey and Walker is unmistakable. Colles was the Oxford group's front man, as it were, for in 1906 he became assistant to Fuller-Maitland on *The Times* and on Fuller-Maitland's retirement five years later succeeded him as chief critic. He retained this position until his death in 1943, although during the First World War Arthur Fox-Strangways contributed music criticism to the paper in Colles's absence while undertaking military service. The policy of the newspaper dictated that his articles were unsigned - a policy that Colles, his predecessor, and his successor Frank Howes, supported with vigour. Nevertheless, his style is easily recognizable and while various critics were employed to undertake the more routine daily work, Colles generally contributed the substantial Saturday articles. In writing of the anonymity issue in his autobiography *A Door-Keeper*

of Music (1929), Fuller-Maitland spoke for them all:

> I was truly thankful that anonymity was the rule on *The Times*, for I have always held the unpopular view that anonymous criticism is greatly to be preferred to signed notices. It is generally held by the outside public that those who sign their criticisms are more conscious of their responsibility than those who do not; but the fact is that nearly all the most irresponsible utterances of what used to be called the "new criticism" appeared over initials that were well known... it might be thought that it does not make much difference whether the writer adds his initials or not. But to the writer himself it does, in my opinion, matter a good deal; for anonymity restrains one from giving voice to the personal prejudices one cannot but possess, and obliges one to take into account the convictions of the great mass of older people than oneself. (: 130-1)

In becoming critic of *The Times,* Colles was taking on the most conservative position that existed for a member of his profession. Fuller-Maitland had given up the post from a knowledge that he was unable to appraise new music with any degree of perception. In his autobiography he admitted that it was only after the cessation of his journalistic work that he grew to accept and appreciate 'some of the modern compositions that are undoubtedly great' (: 230), of which he cited the works of Vaughan Williams and Holst, and spoke of his inability to perceive the importance of Debussy until very late in his career. Colles continued along similarly conservative lines, dismissing the work of most contemporary composers, including Bartók, Stravinsky and Schoenberg. As late as 1935 he was able to write that 'When we are told to acclimatize our hearing to the complexities of modern harmony we may comply with the reservation that modern harmony should at least accommodate itself to so apparently fundamental a law as that of tonic and dominant' (*The Times*, 19 Oct 1935: 10). In *Voice and Verse* (1928) he expressed the view that the vocabulary, the grammar, and the syntax of music had been brought into being by the expression of emotion through the human voice. Atonality represented a break with such vocal language that represented a kind of musical Esperanto - 'the universal tongue which nobody talks' (: 7).

Colles's contribution to British music criticism is centred on his appraisal of British music, especially his writings on Byrd, Purcell, Parry and Vaughan Williams, the volume *Symphony and Drama 1850-1900* (1934) that he contributed to *The Oxford History of Music* and his work for *Grove 3* and *Grove 4*. Although he was neither the profoundest scholar nor the most enlightened critic, his writing was generally balanced and judicious. His most popular work, *The Growth of Music* (1912-16), a study of music

history designed for use in schools, continued the evolutionary method of documenting music history that characterized the work of Parry. In an obituary tribute to Colles, Frank Howes drew attention to his literary inheritance:

> In literary scholarship he inherited the mantle of Grove in the Dictionary, and of Parry and Hadow, both of them major personal influences in his life... He carried on the work of converting the craft of music into one of the liberal humanities which both Parry and Hadow had recognized as the chief need of musical culture in this country at the end of the last century.. (*MT*, LXXXIV, Apr 1943: 109)

The Oxford critics represented an important strand of critical perception from the writings of Stainer in the late nineteenth century until those of Frank Howes after the Second World War. Many of their books were designed to appeal to the general reader and the enormous popularity of works such as Parry's *The Art of Music*, Hadow's *Studies in Modern Music*, and Colles's *The Growth of Music*, is attested by the large number of editions that were issued over a considerable number of years. They were able to establish their base through dominating production of reference and didactic works in the early years of the twentieth century, particularly through their contributions to *Grove's Dictionary* and *The Oxford History of Music*. Their technical, descriptive style of writing, as well as their actual critical thought, became increasingly unpopular after 1945 and was denounced by the advocates of the new music. While each member of the group naturally had his own individual perception, there was nevertheless a uniformity of agreement on several important counts. In their attempt to replace personal critical wilfulness with the law of evolution they diminished the aesthetic evaluative functions of the critic. For them, criticism must deal with formal procedures before attempting to arrive at aesthetic appraisal. Yet their historical methods served as a now discarded prelude to much that is accepted and valued in modern criticism and historical research. Their shared articles of critical faith included the presumption that absolute music represented the greatest contribution to the art; that the German masters from Bach through to Brahms represented the true classic tradition; that sonata form was the highest structural ideal yet achieved and that contemporary music needed to take up the formal expansion of sonata structures where Brahms left off. The importance they gave to sonata forms was bound up with the fact that, for them, drama in music resulted from the interplay of tonalities. This highly conservative position which prejudiced them against music not rooted in classical ideas of key relationships, is summed up in the concluding remarks of Tovey's *Encyclopaedia*

Britannica essay on sonata forms:

> The sonata style belongs to the sonata time-scale and to the classical key-system. Music in the Wagnerian time-scale, or in 'atonal' or other new harmonic systems, has no more to do with it than Greek prose...
>
> The quality most conspicuously absent in sonata work since Brahms is movement. The fundamental mistake of Bruckner was in associating his Wagnerian style with sonata forms at all. Sibelius solves Bruckner's problem, and takes and leaves the sonata style as he pleases, and always with clear purpose, whether convincingly or not. Reger's meticulously regular forms are hard to accept as the really proper vessel for his strong chromatic brew... The art of movement is the crux of the sonata problem; and the classical solutions of it from Haydn to Brahms are the greatest things in pure music. (1944: 230)

While the Oxford group's criticism of the German classics was often penetrating, it can also be seen to be at the expense of impeding the process of critical evaluation for many non-German composers, especially those of their own generation. Their criticism was inadequate in reflecting the important developments in contemporary music and gave little consideration to new music from countries other than Britain. Such myopia can also be held responsible for distorting the full understanding of many composers' total output through assessing their most Germanic works as masterpieces while failing to discuss adequately the totality of their overall achievement, particularly with regard to the work of Sibelius and Dvořák.

The historical significance of the Oxford group lies in their attempt to provide the ordinary reader with an intellectual understanding of musical structures. They maintained that criticism must have recourse to the formal description of music in order to present an evaluation of aesthetic merit and consequently they emphasized the so-called intrinsic phenomena of music: its style and form. Regarding the musical composition as an autonomous object, they encouraged their readers to experience music through an appreciation of its structural and thematic processes. They regarded music as poetry expressed through sound and in this respect the influence of A. C. Bradley was significant. In his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, delivered in 1909, Bradley described poetry as 'a world by itself, independent, complete, autonomous; and to possess it fully you must enter that world, conform to its laws, and ignore for the time the beliefs, aims, and particular conditions which belong to you in the.. world of reality' (: 5). Their academic angle on the criticism of music, which resulted in a broadly similar literary style notable for its allusive and compressed quality, their particular enthusiasm for Brahms and the

more cerebral nineteenth-century masters and the significance they attached to the continuation of an essentially German classic tradition were all central elements of their critical thought. Without neglecting the fact that they supported the doctrine of art for art's sake, they nevertheless recognized that such a doctrine concerned results and not processes. In doing so they raised both the professional credibility of music criticism and its position in the wider cultural context of British letters.

Chapter III - Notes

1. Parry's diaries extend from his Eton days until his death. They are owned by his great-granddaughters, Kate Russell and Laura Ponsonby, and are to be found at Shulbrede Priory, Linchmere, Surrey.

2. Dibble, J. C., (1992).

3. These lectures were later published as *Lectures on Art* (1870). See Dibble, J. C., (1992): 78.

4. Parry, C. H. H., (1893): 249.

5. This was a collection of short studies that Parry had originally written for Routledge's magazine *Every Girl's Annual*.

6. 'Pages from the notebooks of Hubert Parry', *ML*, I, Oct 1920: 319.

7. Ruskin, J., 'My Own Article on Whistler', *Works*, XXIX: 586.

8. Following a visit from Ethel Smyth, Parry noted in his diary entry for 6 September, 1881: 'She is the most extreme anti-Wagnerite I have yet come across.. she said "It is impossible for anyone to like Brahms and Wagner". I demurred. She answered, "Well Amateurs of course are different, but no professed musician can possibly accept the two. No man can serve two masters. They are so utterly opposed in harmonic principles, it's not possible".' (MS: Shulbrede Priory)

9. The works of Spencer were read as follows:
First Principles of Philosophy (1862): 1871/re-read 1875
Social Statics (1850): 1871
On Education (1861): 1872/re-read 1905
The Study of Sociology (1873): 1874
Data of Ethics (1879): 1879
Man versus the State (1884): 1886
Facts and Comments (1902): 1902
Autobiography (1904): 1904

10. This appears on one of the 'Cash Account' pages for October 1894 that are situated at the back of the diary.

11. The works of Mill and Huxley were read as follows:
Mill
Political Economy (1848): 1870
Utilitarianism (1863): 1872/re-read 1875
Autobiography (1873): 1873
Subjection of Women (1869): 1874
Three Essays on Religion (1874): 1874
On Liberty (1859): 1875
System of Logic (1843): 1875

Huxley
Critiques and Addresses (1873): 1873
Lay Sermons (1870): 1873
Elementary Physiology (1866): 1873
Physiography (1877): 1878
Hume (1879): 1879
Science and Culture (1881): 1886
Crayfish (1879): 1902
Zoological Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature (1863): 1902

12. This was a continuation of *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (1865). *Primitive Culture* occurs in Parry's book list for 1885.

13. For a detailed account of the debate surrounding the origin of music see Kivy, P., 'Herbert Spencer and a Musical Dispute', *MR*, XXIII, Nov 1962: 317-329.

14. That Parry had a powerful sympathy with George Eliot's evolutionist novels is attested by the fact that his two daughters were named after her characters: Dorothea (*Middlemarch*) and Gwendolen (*Daniel Deronda*).

15. Copies of *Instinct and Character* are held by the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS. Eng. Misc. d. 115.41704), the Royal College of Music (Add. MS. 4050), the British Library (K.T.C. 28. b. 26) and Shulbrede Priory.

16. Spencer used the terms 'progress' and 'evolution' interchangeably, although he preferred the latter as it was more objective and lacked the implication of improvement.

17. Parry read several of Morley's works, including, in 1886, *On Compromise* (1885). No doubt he sympathized with the moral fervour, intellectual liberalism and rationalist 'scientific attitude' of this influential Oxford thinker. It was Morley, in his capacity as editor of *The Fortnightly Review*, who advanced the work of Goldwin Smith, another Radical whose work Parry read avidly from the 1870s.

18. The latter refers to an 'article on Mozart' which must have been the review of Otto Jahn's *Life of Mozart* (Eng. trans., 1882), *SR*, LV, 13 Jan 1883: 53-4.

19. RCM Library, Parry Collection, Second course of lectures, MS. 4306: 1. There are eight courses of lectures dating from the period 1883-86 which cover the history of music from medieval times to Wagner. The RCM collection also includes several miscellaneous lectures, including some delivered at Oxford, Birmingham and at the Royal Institution. They date mainly from the late 1880s and early 1890s, although the latest dates from 1909. They are catalogued as RCM MS. 4312-4338.

20. Spencer, H., 'The Origin and Function of Music', *Fraser's Magazine*, LVI, Oct 1857: 396-408. A revised version of this article appeared in the many editions of Spencer's collected essays.

21. RCM Terminal lectures, First series, Christmas term 1908; MS. 4329: 2.

22. Tovey, D. F., (1935): 8.

23. Morris, R. O., 'Hubert Parry', *ML*, I, Apr 1920: 95.

24. See Ruskin, J., *Works*, III: 92.

25. For a perceptive placing of Parry's evolutionism within the wider context of historical writing see Allen, W. D., *Philosophies of Music History: A Study of General Histories of Music 1600 - 1960* (1939).

26. See Hadow's obituary in *The Times*, 10 Apr 1937: 19.

27. For a detailed account of Hadow's career see Simmons, J. R., (1978).

28. This was a review of J. H. Mee's *Missa Solemnis*, performed at the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford. It appeared in *The Leeds Mercury* on 11 December 1888.

29. Hadow had been interested in problems of critical theory for some time. In a letter to his mother written from Paris, dated 27 December 1888, he wrote: 'I have just come back from a lecture given by Sancery, the great French critic, on Daudet and his manner of writing. It interested me a good deal, and has taught me much about the methods of French criticism, which on the whole is far in advance of ours. We don't get much beyond saying 'this is good', 'that is execrable'; while these people approach the facts from a definite point of view, and read them in the light of a ready formed theory.' (Hadow Collection, Worcester College, Oxford)

30. One wonders, for example, how Hadow might have responded to Charles Rosen's article entitled 'Influence: Plagiarism and Inspiration' (*Nineteenth Century Music*, IV, 1980: 87-100) in which he discusses Brahms's use of the Finale of Beethoven's third Piano Concerto as a structural model for that of his own first Piano Concerto.

31. His estimation of British opera, however, differed completely from Runciman's, for he found Parry's *Judith* to be a study of the highest artistic value. As a fellow Oxford critic, it was not surprising that in stark opposition to Runciman and several other critics including Joseph Bennett, he regarded Parry as the saviour of English music. This enthusiasm for Parry was unfortunately at the expense of a serious underestimation of Elgar, who as late as 1906 had 'not yet found himself' (1928: 24).

32. Hadow, W. H., 'Form and Formalism in Music', *PMA*, XXIV, Dec 1897: 23-38; 'The Balance of Expression and Design in Music', *PMA*, L, Dec 1923: 19-30; LI, Jan 1924: 31-46; Mar 1924: 85-99.

33. Bennett began his biography of Chopin, serialized in *The Musical Times* under the title 'Great Composers', in January 1882. Niecks's *Frederick Chopin as Man and Musician* appeared in 1888.

34. Cooper, M., *Ideas and Music* (1965): 93.

35. This was first made in a short pamphlet entitled *A Croatian Composer, notes toward the study of Joseph Haydn* (1897). The fact that Hadow later reprinted this essay in his volume *Collected Essays* (1928) implies that he continued to hold his contention regarding the racial origin of Hadyn for some time, even though the evidence was clearly not in his favour. In the preface to Michel Brenet's book *Haydn* (1926) he recalled the process by which he arrived at this most original, if wrongheaded, conclusion: 'In 1894 or 1895 I discovered in the Taylorian Library at Oxford a copy of Dr. Kuhac's *South Slavonic Folk Songs*. I knew no word of Croatian, and was therefore at that time restricted to the melodic evidence, but it needed no expert knowledge to see that some of the melodies were identical with themes of Haydn and that others bore a close resemblance to his style. That summer I went to Budapest for the Exhibition, and there, in a showcase, noticed Dr. Kuhac's pamphlet on 'Joseph Haydn and the South Slavonic Folk Songs'. On my return to Oxford I procured this and had it translated. The material seemed to me of such importance that I decided to make such use of it as could be allowed: and in the next summer vacation I went out to Agram to ask permission of Dr. Kuhac. Full permission was readily and generously accorded, and a little volume of mine, published in 1897, was the result.' (: viii)

36. Both the following books concur with Hadow's thesis: Hull, A. E., *Music; Classical, Romantic and Modern* (1927); Colles, H. C., *The Growth of Music* (1919).

37. For a detailed discussion of this series and Hadow's role in its completion see Simmons, J. R., (1978): 157-165. Percy Buck's preface to his introductory volume for the second edition of *The Oxford History of Music* (1928) also provides an historical perspective on the series.

38. For Hadow's extremely conservative views on contemporary music in the mid 1920s see the third part of his essay 'The Balance of Expression and Design in Music', *PMA, L,* Mar 1924: 85-99.

39. The Cramb Lectures were delivered in the University of Glasgow during November and December 1936. The Alsop Lectures were delivered in the University of Liverpool during April and May 1938.

40. See Bradley, A. C., *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909, 2\1963): 3-34.

41. This is translated from the original German:

> Wie Mackenzie, war er Violinspieler von Beruf und studierte Lists Werke, welche den konservativen akademischen Musikern ein Greuel waren. Er war überdies Katholik und mehr oder weniger Autodidakt, der wenig von der literarischen Bildung Parrys und Stanford hatte.. Für englische Ohren ist Elgars Musik allzu gefühlvoll und nicht ganz frei von Vulgarität. Seine Orchesterwerke, Variationen, 2 Symphonien, Konzerte für Violine und Violoncell und mit einer gesuchten Ritterlichkeit des Ausdrucks.. Sein Kammermusik.. ist trocken und akademisch.

42. For a list of Walker's contributions to *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* see The Ernest Walker Collection, Balliol College, Oxford; Box 11: Album of Newspaper Cuttings.

43. This weekly review had been founded in 1869 by Charles Appleton, a young Oxford don who, through providing an English counterpart to the academic continental periodicals such as *Litterarisches Centralblatt* and the *Revue Critique*, attempted to appeal to a predominantly university-based readership. Contributors to *The Academy* were mostly Oxford academics.

CHAPTER IV

IN SEARCH OF THE ABSOLUTE: ERNEST NEWMAN AND THE RATIONALIST APPROACH TO CRITICAL THEORY

Music criticism has always been slow to respond to developments in literary theory. The dialectic between the impressionist and the absolutist, the subjectivist and the objectivist approaches to music criticism that has been described by Winton Dean as 'the great bone of critical contention in the first half of the 20th century' (1980: 46) had been well under way among literary practitioners since the 1860s. The two sides are most clearly represented in literary criticism by the work of Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater. Arnold's view that criticism should aim to 'see the object as in itself it really is' was opposed by Pater in his famous preface to *The Renaissance* (1893) in which he stated that 'the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly' (: xix). Pater's view that criticism should be 'aesthetic' or 'impressionistic' was summed up by Anatole France in his oft-quoted statement that the good critic was he who 'narrates the adventures of the soul among masterpieces'. It was not until the turn of the century that British music criticism took up this conflict. Whereas Runciman boasted in the preface of his collected essays *Old Scores and New Readings* (1899) that 'this is the first time that a critic has shut off no part of himself from the influence of music, and has kept back no part of the resulting impression, of the effect, produced by music upon his entire human soul' (: 14), the view that criticism should aim at an objective assessment of value in music was propounded by Runciman's contemporary, Ernest Newman. Following the lead given by Edmund Gurney, who had brought a scientific methodology to the discussion of music, Newman argued for an objectivist approach to aesthetic issues. For him, the good critic was he who could carry conviction to the greatest number, for he considered persuasion to be one of the primary functions of criticism. Anatole France's 'narrations of the soul' may convince some, but for Newman it could not achieve this important art of conversion. Neither could Pater's impressionist criticism reproduce the artist of the past with any degree of accuracy. Founded on a belief in the existence of objective standards by which art could be judged, Newman's criticism was a search for the absolute.

Newman himself gave only one account of his early career. It appeared in a series

of articles, published in *Cassell's Weekly* between 21 March and 9 June 1923, under the title 'Confessions of a Musical Critic'.[1] With the addition of two memoirs - those of his widow Vera (1963) and the unpublished memoir by Henry George Farmer (1962), a fairly thorough biographical account can be gained. He was born on 30 November 1868 in Lancaster, of Anglo-Cymric descent.[2] The only child of a second marriage by both his parents, Seth and Harriet Roberts, he was brought up in the Anglican faith which he later violently rejected. Christened William Roberts, it was not until 1889 that he adopted his famous pseudonym. From an early age he studied the piano and as a boy became interested in vocal music, especially opera. He attempted some composition and studied harmony and counterpoint without formal instruction.[3] The masterpieces of German Romanticism formed his earliest enthusiasm although later, as his knowledge of the repertoire broadened, he reacted against this tradition. He quickly became acquainted with a large quantity of music, including all the Wagner operas, through reading scores; a practice he later advocated with much enthusiasm. As a youth at school he secured a scholarship which took him to the Middle School of Liverpool College. He matriculated as a student at University College, Liverpool in September 1886 where he studied English literature, philosophy and art. University College, now Liverpool University, had several dons who later won considerable prestige in their fields, including the philosopher John MacCunn and the English scholar Andrew Bradley, whose ideas are occasionally quoted by both Newman and the Oxford critics. Through his lectures on Spinoza, Kant and Herbert Spencer, MacCunn, a pupil of Edward Caird, introduced Newman to the concepts of philosophical Rationalism. Newman's original intention, having completed his education, was to pursue a diplomatic career, but due to ill health he was unable to take the examinations for the Indian Civil Service before reaching the age limit of nineteen. Instead he obtained a position as a clerk with the Bank of Liverpool in 1888.

As a bank clerk Newman found that his duties were such that they afforded plenty of time for reading and other intellectual pursuits, such as the acquisition of foreign languages. He secured an award from the Liverpool Bankers' Institute for an essay on 'The Literature of Banking' and wrote an article on the commerce of Liverpool for Yves Guyot's *Dictionnaire du Commerce de l'Industrie et de la Banque* (Paris, 1898-1901). There were two formative influences on him as a young man in Liverpool, the first of which was his experience of that city's musical life. Liverpool was well served musically

in the 1880s and 1890s, especially with the Liverpool Philharmonic Society concerts conducted by Sir Charles Hallé. Newman's attendance at Hallé's concerts introduced him to the two composers who dominated his early criticism - Wagner and Berlioz. According to Farmer (: 29) his passion for the composer who became the subject of his first book, Gluck, was kindled by an 1888 staging of *Iphigenia*.

Newman's involvement with the National Secular Society was the second formative influence, the extent of which has not until now been fully recognized. In his memoir, Farmer, a Rationalist himself, consulted the official records of the society and he quotes extracts culled from the minute book of the Liverpool branch. This branch was originally led by Charles Bradlaugh and it was to Bradlaugh's journal, *The National Reformer*, that Newman offered the first of his numerous articles concerning issues pertaining to the philosophic basis of his Rationalist creed. The first, for example, was entitled 'Morality and Belief' and contained persuasive argument against the theologians' view that the rejection of religious belief gave rise to immorality (*The National Reformer*, LIV, 15 Sep 1889: 170-1; 22 Sep 1889: 188-9). It was at the National Secular Society that Newman became acquainted with John MacKinnon Robertson and initiated a friendship that was to continue until Robertson's death in 1933. As a scholar, literary controversialist, liberal politician and social reformer, Robertson was one of the most important intellectual rebels of the 1880s and 1890s. From 1884 he worked alongside Bradlaugh on *The National Reformer* which became the leading organ of radical freethinkers. On Bradlaugh's death in 1891 he became sole editor until the demise of the journal in 1893 when he started *The Free Review*, which he edited until 1895. As editor of *The National Reformer* and *The Free Review* (later to become *The University Magazine and Free Review*), he sought to shock and overturn Britain's fading Victorian values. Newman came very much under his influence and began his literary career by contributing to these publications, writing on philosophic, literary, and religious questions with all the Rationalist fervour of a radical freethinker. Robertson's *Essays Towards a Critical Method* (1889) and his later *New Essays Towards a Critical Method* (1897), in which he argued for a scientific approach to critical theory following the precept of Hennequin's *La Critique Scientifique* (Paris, 1888), exercised a decisive and crucial influence on the young Newman. Although critical of certain of the author's views, it was undoubtedly to a large extent on account of these books that he was spurred to study the intellectual

and cultural influences on composers.[4] He began by collecting material for his first book, *Gluck and the Opera* (1895), in 1889. This research occupied a considerable amount of time and consequently he was compelled to abandon work as a freelance journalist. It was three years before he resumed his articles for *The National Reformer*, by which time Bradlaugh had handed over the editorship to Robertson.

It is only by taking into account Newman's social, intellectual and cultural surroundings in the 1890s, before his emergence as a music critic, that it is possible to arrive at an accurate and full understanding of the forces that shaped his critical thought. The extent of his involvement with Rationalism was a key factor; in 1894 he was elected President of the Liverpool branch of the National Secular Society. It was undoubtedly here that he fulfilled his apprenticeship as a skilled dialectician. His uncompromising and anti-religious articles in *The Truthseeker*, a radical journal devoted to 'mental freedom and progress' that was published in Bradford and edited by the staunch advocate of Free Thought, Chapman Cohen, are keenly argued with considerable verbal dexterity. The debating techniques of orators such as Bradlaugh, W. G. Foote and Robertson are undoubtedly reproduced in his writings. The dialectic strategy of gradually and persuasively drawing together a series of facts which are brought to bear on a final conclusion which was only dimly previsaged at the start was one that Newman was to employ with considerable panache. The extent of his admiration for Robertson can be gleaned from a statement he made in an 1896 article in which he referred to him as 'my intellectual pastor and master, my guide, philosopher, and friend' (*The Free Review*, V, Mar 1896: 602).

On achieving prominence as a music critic, Newman distanced himself from his Rationalist background. Although it is probable that he continued to support the aims of the National Secular Society, he apparently felt that a widespread knowledge of his intimate involvement with a movement that alienated a majority of the population would be detrimental to his professional standing. His discretion concerning his early career has no doubt led many commentators to underrate the importance of his early writings dealing with literary and philosophical subjects. John Russell, for example, in his otherwise excellent article on 'Ernest Newman, Manchester and the Hallé Concerts', mistakenly assumes that Newman lacked an academic education and served his literary apprenticeship as a writer on *The Manchester Guardian* (*Fanfare for Ernest Newman* (1955): 150, 155).

Although Neville Cardus knew better, even he was never very precise about Newman's Rationalism and never made reference to the numerous articles published in *The National Reformer*. Gerald Abraham wrote in his obituary:

> [Newman] did not (so far as I know) *talk* of his early days or of himself much at all. He would not - oddly for a practising biographer - have approved of too deep probing into his own being. (*L*, XXXIX, 23 Jul 1959: 153)

Cardus, as Newman's chief apologist after his death, was also surprisingly unaware of his treatise *Pseudo-Philosophy at the End of the Nineteenth Century* (1897), dedicated to Charles Darwin and published under the pseudonym Hugh Mortimer Cecil.[5] This was an extremely hard-hitting and destructive criticism of three philosophical works which at the time of their publication had caused a literary sensation in England: Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution* (1894), Henry Drummond's *Ascent of Man* (1894) and J. A. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* (1895). It was a penetrating and cogent refutation of pseudo-philosophy, mock-scientific writing and subjective theological speculation, in which Newman refuted the claims of 'the irrationalist trio' with caustic, belligerent invective. It displayed the three most prominent characteristics of his critical thought in large measure - scepticism, dialectic skill and passion for accuracy. Newman could certainly match Robertson's rather vague definition of a true Rationalist: 'a person who in certain directions carries the processes of doubt, analysis, and judgment further than do persons of a different habit of mind' (1912: 21). Whereas other philosophers took the claims of the three most important champions of religion with utmost seriousness, foremost among them Lord Farmer and Herbert Spencer,[6]Newman saw through their sophistry to reveal false foundations.

It was not until 1894 that Newman began to write regularly on music, although he had often referred to music in his writings on other subjects. His first attempt at music criticism appeared in Granville Bantock's journal *The New Quarterly Musical Review* in November 1894 (I, Nov 1894: 105-112). Entitled 'The Difficulties of Musical Criticism', it was written both as a response to the skirmishes that had taken place earlier in the year between the New critics and members of the Establishment, and as a critique of Hadow's first volume of *Studies in Modern Music*. Although he described the latter as 'the best *vidimus* of the whole field of music that has appeared since the lamented Edmund Gurney enriched the world with his brilliant and suggestive writing' (: 105), his critique was nevertheless highly destructive. Hadow's historically important essay on criticism was

found to have failed to provide any valid principles that could be employed in a scientific manner. More significantly, Hadow could not account for the diversity of opinion held by equally conscientious critics - a key problem for Newman. Newman's critique was the first to undermine Hadow's theory with any degree of intellectual rigour and to indicate some of the psychological and physiological conditions of scientific criticism.[7] By the former he referred to the study of the critic's own mentality, writing that:

> we may entertain the reasonable hope that with increasing knowledge of the mental diathesis of the critics in any individual case, we shall be able to set aside that part of their judgement that is plainly the product of their own peculiarity of structure or training or temperament, and thus have a residuum that will fairly well answer to a normal judgement of the work in question; and... by observing how critics themselves have been led into aberrations by not applying the personal equation, we shall learn to apply it to ourselves... [making] our judgements more impersonal than they otherwise would have been, and more likely to be accepted by those who represent normal conditions of appreciation. (: 109)

By the latter he implied a study of the creative mind which would provide insight into the value of the artistic product, suggesting for example that 'The strange impulsions and deflections of Berlioz's ordinary actions ought to be sufficient to persuade any physiologist that his was an organism of high nervous potential, badly controlled by the higher centres; and when we find that just as he was in the actions of his life so he was in his music, the correlation between physical structure and mental manifestation is immediately suggested' (: 112). Such concerns are unmistakably derived from Robertson, whose *New Essays Towards a Critical Method* proposed precisely this study of mental and physical structure as a vital prelude to the estimate of value or meaning in works of art.

The emphasis on psychological and physiological conditions was to some extent a by-product of the Weissman-Lamarck debate, following Darwin's precepts, concerning the transmission of acquired characteristics. This debate was widely disseminated among intellectuals of the 1890s. Many commentators joined the argument, including Spencer and Romanes in *The Contemporary Review* of 1893,[8]but none expressed a more acerbic opposition to Weissman than Robertson and Newman in the pages of *The National Reformer*. Newman argued, in particular, that Weissman's use of the term 'environment' was based on a fundamental misconception, writing that, for him, environment was simply a name for the sum of internal and external conditions under which an organism lives. While external conditions could be seen to preponderate in the case of most organisms, in the case of such a highly organized and self-conscious being as man, these external

conditions were practically of no importance in comparison with the internal.[9] The practical application of such belief later found fruition in Newman's *A Study of Wagner* (1899).

In May 1895 an article of Robertson's appeared in *The Free Review* entitled 'The Problems of Publishing' (IV, May 1895: 97-112). While drawing attention to the problems experienced by new authors in finding suitable publishers, Robertson suggested the idea of a subscription plan to facilitate the publication of three books which he considered needed this system for their presentation; his own *Buckle and his Critics* (1895), Arthur Lynch's *Human Documents* (1896) and Newman's *Gluck and the Opera* (1895). The article also included detailed synopses of each of the books. Two months later it was announced that Bertram Dobell, an ardent supporter of the Rationalist movement, would be publishing Newman's book (*The Free Review*, IV, Jul 1895: 376-8).

In the introduction to *Gluck and the Opera*, dedicated to Robertson, Newman again called for a scientific and rational approach to criticism. Here, Wagner's metaphysical, Hegelian criticism and his *a priori* historical writing is unfavourably contrasted with the comparative method. Employing such a method, Newman sought to represent music history less as a continuum in which form is developed and described anatomically and more as a physiological study: 'as in every other department of knowledge, it is synthesis that illuminates; it is the spectacle of one mental phenomenon bound up causally with another that widens knowledge and gives it certainty and coherence' (: 15). Much of this introduction is clearly derived from Robertson's critical theory and from the work of Richard G. Moulton, whose *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist: A Popular Illustration of the Principles of Scientific Criticism* (1885) argued for precisely this physiological approach. In the introduction of this work Moulton makes a plea for an inductive science of criticism which would examine the facts of art in a spirit of investigation: 'The criticism of taste analyses literary works for grounds of preference or evidence on which to found judgment; inductive criticism analyses them to get a closer acquaintance with their phenomena' (: 2). While Newman clearly derived his introduction from Moulton and Robertson, the importance of his own contribution should not be underestimated. The text of the book itself is written with an insight into eighteenth-century aesthetics and Gluck's relation to his cultural surroundings that was quite exemplary for its time.

From the very start of his career as a music critic, Newman tackled head on the

most perplexing aesthetic issues of his day. He was able to challenge, convincingly, widely accepted notions, as in his 1897 essay 'Walter Pater on Music' in which he refuted Pater's famous statement that 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music' (*The Musician*, I, 29 Sep 1897: 396-7). Equally, he challenged the opinions of renowned philosophical thinkers. During the course of his second book, *A Study of Wagner* (1899), he denounced Herbert Spencer's theories of the origin and function of music, first adumbrated by Spencer over forty years earlier in his essay 'The Origin and Function of Music' (*Fraser's Magazine*, LVI, Oct 1857: 396-408). Spencer's central thesis was that music evolved from speech - a thesis that had in fact already been opposed by Darwin and Edmund Gurney.[10] Newman added further weight to Gurney's criticism, arguing that the principal flaw in Spencer's speech theory was the supposition that because speech and song share certain common properties, the latter evolved from the former. Spencer responded to Newman's criticism in his last work, *Facts and Comments* (1902), accusing him of masking theoretical speculations with irrelevant aesthetic results. Newman countered with an essay, 'Mr. Herbert Spencer and the Origin of Music' which first appeared in *The Monthly Musical Review* at the end of 1902.[11] This was to be the last word, for Spencer died the following year. In a memorial tribute to the philosopher published shortly after his death, Newman brought to notice those aspects of Spencer's dialectic strategy that he particularly admired and which, being prominent features of his own writing, clearly had some influence: 'To read one of his superb demonstrations, with its orderly marshalling of facts, its dextrous gradation of them according to their importance, its almost imperceptible evocation of the desired conclusion, step by step, the whole argument finally bearing down upon you with the irresistible momentum of a magnificent phalanx, was to get not only a lesson in logic but a real aesthetic thrill' (*The Weekly Critical Review*, II, 1 Jan 1904: 579). Both men were skilled dialecticians who enjoyed polemical discourse and revelled in controversy.

It was Newman's ability to tackle these controversial issues in aesthetics, combined with the brilliance of his literary style and critical judgement, that led to his early rise to prominence as a leader of critical opinion in Britain. His concern with fundamental aesthetic problems led him to a life-long study of Wagner, whose life and work provided an inexhaustible mine of research, never ceasing to offer new material and fresh aesthetic insight. His first book on the composer, *A Study of Wagner,* was neither a biographical

work nor a straightforward guide to the operas, but an attempt to arrive at a critical estimate of Wagner's musical achievement combined with an assessment of his theoretical writings. His stated intentions were 'to study Wagner as a psychological and aesthetic phenomenon; to try to answer the questions "In virtue of what constitution of brain was he so great a musician?" and "How did his peculiarities of mental structure affect his views of the other arts and of life in general?"' (: viii). The book's structure was original and effective; chapters on the operas were interspersed with those of a more general nature, such as a lengthy critique of Wagner's theory of music-drama. During the course of the second chapter on *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman* Newman made his position regarding the composer's philosophical intentions unequivocal, writing of 'one of the most curious of Wagner's hallucinations - the idea that the musical stage can be the dispenser of profound philosophy, and that his own reading of the cosmos was a matter of universal interest' (: 19). Here, for the first time, is the expression of Newman's inability to enter into the conceptual ethos of Wagner's music-dramas; not only is the theme of *The Flying Dutchman* rejected outright but the central notion of redemption is ridiculed. Newman may by this time have abandoned open Rationalist propaganda, but here is ample proof that he had not abandoned the tenets of his philosophical position:

> According to Wagner's stage-directions, "In the glow of the rising sun, above the wreck of the ship are seen the glorified forms of Senta and the Dutchman, held in each other's embrace, rising heavenwards out of the sea." *They*, of course, are "redeemed"; but what of the poor devils who have gone to the bottom of the ocean? Is there no "redemption by woman's love" for any one under the rank of captain, or are the men, by being drowned and done for once and for all, freed from the uncertainty that attends the heavenward journey of "the glorified forms of Senta and the Dutchman"? (: 20)

While such inability to accept the philosophic basis of Wagner's operas remained throughout Newman's later writings, particularly hampering his discussions of *Parsifal*, the argument here that Wagner was of an intensely impressionable artistic temperament but of limited intellectual powers was later rejected. No doubt he overstated his case in order to counter the frequently ridiculous assertions made by Wagner worshippers such as David Irvine and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whose uncritical idolatry was, in 1899, still widely disseminated. Nevertheless, to write that Wagner was 'congenitally unfit for sane thinking' (: 36) or that he had 'no more capacity for philosophic speculation than the average curate' (: 220) must be regarded as so wide of the mark as to suggest that

Newman was blinded by prejudice while taking aim for his shot. His contempt for Wagner's philosophy, reflecting his liberal secularist position, became a stumbling block to his acceptance by the ultra-Wagnerian cult who inevitably refused him admission to their ranks.

One of the reasons for Wagner's failure to realize his philosophic intentions in his early operas was found to be due to an inability to provide his characters with a sufficient degree of humanity. The characters in *Lohengrin* were considered 'so unconvincingly drawn that we either take no artistic interest in them as human beings, or else the didactic purpose shows so clearly through the quasi-dramatic form that we resent its intrusion upon our artistic mood - as when Ortrud shrieks about the gods of paganism' (: 41). The mention of *quasi*-dramatic form here is significant, for it touches on a further criticism of Wagner's early operas which concerns the age-old problem of setting to music the purely narrative parts of the libretto. Newman considered, for example, that much of the scene between Telramund and Ortrud was not music but in fact pure rhetoric; the reason being that their characters were suited to poetic but not to musical treatment. The problem of how to deal with unimaginative prose was found to have been largely overcome in later works, especially *Tristan*, in which the role of external circumstance was reduced to a minimum in order to provide a more suitable drama for musical treatment. The problems resulting from the musical restriction imposed by the libretto, however, were not properly solved until Wagner gave the fullest dramatic significance to the orchestra:

> Wagner may write page upon page of recitative in *Lohengrin*, accompanied simply by a *tremolo* in the strings, without either giving us musical pleasure or portraying a dramatic character. But he has only to suggest ugliness in his orchestra, without attempting to make the ugliness beautiful in the singer's phrases, and he has achieved his purpose. (: 51)

Wagner's competence to deal in his prose works with questions pertaining to any art form other than music was challenged in a chapter on 'Art and Life' in which a case was made for regarding the composer purely as a musician. Wagner's much quoted belief that the error of earlier operatic forms had been that a means of expression (music) had been made the end, while the end of expression (the drama) had been made the means, was vigorously refuted. Such a contention was found to be mistaken through its fallacious use of the essential word 'drama', instead of which Wagner should have used 'musical

drama'. Such uncritical use of language accounted for the confusion among aestheticians:

> The point I am urging is that the drama is *not* the end of expression in a combination of music and poetry, for the reason that (1) everything which goes to make a drama is so modified by the introduction of music that the term, with its former connotations, is no longer applicable, and (2) the use of music has introduced quite a new factor, a new and very important element of aesthetic pleasure of a quite different kind, which cannot be looked upon as subordinate to the "poetical idea". (: 110)

Newman felt that opera must deal with fundamentally emotional subjects, that it could not properly be either sententious, reflective, or didactic. The music had to be of primary importance, determining the words and simplifying the drama; that in his attempt to vindicate the claims of poetry over those of music in *Opera and Drama*, Wagner was merely deluded. As a result, the composer underestimated the importance of giving words of no particular aesthetic interest music that, through its integral beauty, would successfully carry the listener over the narrative. Considering as fallacious Hadow's statement that Wagner's *aria parlante* was 'a marvellously devised system of musical equivalents for the actual tones and cadences of the speaking voice' (1892: 314), Newman argued that 'As soon as the sounds acquire tonality and are accompanied by harmony they cease to be *spoken*, and cease to appeal to the faculty by which we appreciate the intellectual meanings of words; they become music, and appeal to the musical faculty in the first place' (: 197). This wholly musical approach resulted ultimately in a critical impasse beyond which it was not possible to progress, a situation which must, to some extent, account for the fact that his work on Wagner became less critical and more historically orientated as time went on. It is an oddly paradoxical situation. As Lucy Beckett has written, the paradox 'arises from the fact that the musical approach to Wagner, unless purely technical, as in the huge works of Alfred Lorenz, is not compatible, in the thought of serious critics, with admiration, but with disapproval and suspicion, condemnation and fear' (1979: 376). Indeed, Beckett goes so far as to suggest that Newman's admiration for Wagner's music, at the expense of a thorough critical appraisal of his multifaceted creativity, accounts entirely for his later abandonment of a critical response in favour of a purely historical and biographical study:

> His admiration for the music sustained the vast judicial labour of his *Life of Wagner* (1933-47) and the painstaking tracing of prose sources, sketches and amendments in *Wagner Nights* (1949), but neither admiration nor labour resulted in any widening of his critical approach and it is even possible to suspect that the

admiration may have produced the labour as a kind of substitute for the adequate critical account that Newman could not give. (: 376)

Simply unable to accept Wagner's theory of music-drama as being anything more than a vain delusion, Newman criticized severely every aspect of his creativity that was not specifically musical, including his ability as a dramatist. In *A Study of Wagner* he cited various sections of the *Ring* as examples of a complete failure to convince, including the scene in which Siegfried lifts his hand to stop Hagen from taking the Ring:

> The dramatist's dilemma is of course apparent; it is necessary for the purpose of "redemption" that the Ring shall not go to Hagen and Alberich but to Brynhild, and through her be restored to the Rhine. Yet now that Siegfried is lying dead, and Gunnar [sic] has just fallen by Hagen's sword, there is really nothing whatever to prevent Hagen wrenching the Ring from Siegfried's finger; and the only device open to Wagner is the dreadfully indigent one of making the corpse raise its hand in warning... It may have satisfied him, and it may now satisfy Wagnerians, to have the problems of life presented to them in the form of fairy tales; but we are not all constituted like that. In any case, if the drama is to be a fairy tale, let it be a fairy tale pure and simple - not a combination of pantomime heroics and the children's story-book with long dissertations on the will, and the basis of social obligation, and the conflict between Authority and the free Individual of the Future. (: 234)

Wagner's preoccupation with an essentially musical means of providing dramatic verisimilitude had led him to rely too heavily on certain implicit meanings related to his use of leitmotif. Not only was Wagner found to expect the technique to function in a manner beyond its capabilities, but also to deploy it in instances where its use was purely arbitrary. In support of this contention several cases are cited in which the audience are bewildered during the course of the *Ring* through the misapplication of either the form of the motive or its individual function. Newman concluded that 'while the musician has frequently blundered in the use of the themes that refer to persons or events, he is quite unerring in his use of themes that refer to what we may call the invisible forces of the drama' (: 247). The motive of Alberich's curse, for example, was always placed at the most appropriate moment while others, such as the Fafner motives, occurred quite unnecessarily. The Vorspiel to Act III of *Die Meistersinger* was taken as an example of music which carried meaning only in retrospect, an issue that Newman suggested was of a wider aesthetic significance:

> The question, let us remember, is not one of merely declaring Wagner right or wrong; it really goes much deeper than that, and is concerned with a problem of aesthetic psychology. As we saw in the *Ring*, and again in *Tristan*, one cause of

> Wagner's failure was the fact that while we have to take the music in the order in which it comes to us, and construct the total drama from all its fragments, moving, as it were, from the periphery to the centre, he conceived the drama centrally in the first place, and worked, with this central conception in his brain, to the periphery. Thus when writing the Vorspiel he would have the whole course of events in the 3rd Act in his mind - would see all the circumstances that attended Sachs throughout the Act, and the moods they generated in him... It is surely evident that, from the dramatic standpoint, the Vorspiel to the 3rd Act is a pure superfluity. (: 317)

The influence of Schopenhauer's metaphysical philosophy on *Tristan* was dismissed by Newman as of no importance whatsoever and the subject-matter of *Parsifal* was similarly rejected. As an ethical or conceptual drama he considered *Parsifal* meaningless, describing it as 'discontinuous with our modern conception of life' (: 362). Religious art, he argued, survived not through its religious connotations but solely through its integral beauty; it was the humanism alone that appealed to him. Such a rejection of Wagner's ideological framework in which no effort is made even to attempt to enter into the conceptual world of Wagner's operas was a very serious limitation of Newman's criticism. Inevitably the music alone, carrying the whole aesthetic weight, became the sole focus of critical scrutiny.

In *A Study of Wagner*, Newman laid the foundation for all his subsequent criticism of the composer which in essentials remained unaltered. William Blisset has written that the book 'already shows the combination of virtues that were to remain distinctively his - a thorough knowledge of music, a thorough scepticism of metaphysics, a thorough grasp of biographical fact' (1959: 320). It was followed in 1904 by a short and largely non-critical monograph written for *The Music of the Masters* series and in 1914 by the much more extensive volume, *Wagner as Man and Artist*. Of this, Blisset has written:

> The chief thing that Newman had learned in those fifteen years was to refrain from writing like Runciman and from taking part in the "pleasant little game of 'Parsifal'-baiting". He is no more an idolater of Wagner than before; but having completed the rather disagreeable task of examining Wagner's thought, he is now free to give his best effort to more grateful work on Wagner's life and art. He has also, as it were incidentally, equipped himself for an independent attack on the problem that chiefly exercised the Master - that of the relation of music to literature, the rationale of music-drama and programme music. (Ibid.: 318)

Following the publication of *Mein Leben* in 1911, Newman felt able to form an impartial psychological estimate of Wagner. The autobiography had stirred one of the composer's most fervent apostles, David Irvine, to make a highly-charged attack on the

translators in a book entitled *Wagner's Bad Luck: A First Exposure of 800 Errors in the Authorised Translation of Wagner's Biography* (1911). In July 1911 an article by Newman concerning the autobiography appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* (XC, Jul 1911: 75-85) in which he attempted to set the record straight with regard to Wagner's moral behaviour and the way he handled his financial affairs. This incensed the Protestant Irvine who countered with a second book in defence of his idol entitled *The Badness of Wagner's Bad Luck: A First Exposure of Anti-Wagnerian Journalism* (1912). Not only did he abuse Newman's recent article but he also launched a full offensive against *A Study of Wagner*. As the most influential of 'the three notorious anti-Wagnerian English critics' (: 50) Newman was accused of leading a conspiracy to discredit Wagner as a profound moral force. (The other two anti-Wagnerians Irvine cited were Runciman and E. A. Baughan.) It was a slanderous attack which Newman presumably considered beneath contempt, for most unusually he refused to be baited.

In *Wagner as Man and Artist* Newman made a clear distinction between the composer's outer and inner life and considered the wide divergence between the two as accounting for many of the catastrophes he encountered. Wagner's erotic history was documented in detail because this was felt to provide the key to his whole nature. His extraordinarily inconsistent conduct and intense egoism were interpreted with vast erudition and a formidable command of all sources available at that time. Much more important, however, was his discussion of the principles of the Wagnerian aesthetic. The relationship between text and music lay at the heart of this discussion. Whereas for composers such as Strauss or Wolf the words were found to have acted as a generator of the musical style, for Wagner the words functioned as 'the projection of an already conceived musical emotion into the sphere of speech' (: 166). The theory that Wagner should be critically received purely as an instrumental composer undermines his overall achievement. It was based on a faulty view of music history which paid too much deference to Wagner's own view of his historical position in relation to Beethoven. As Wagner's music became increasingly symphonic, the role of the actors became, for Newman, correspondingly irrelevant - merely providing an increased definition to the emotions being expressed in the orchestra. The whole significance of the later stages of the *Ring, Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* was in their role as 'stupendous symphonies for orchestra and voices' (: 225). Implicit in this was the assumption that Wagner should be

regarded as a composer who extended the boundaries of the Beethovenian symphonic form; a composer whose works must be assessed with reference to an evolutionary continuum.

As an example of one of the numerous contradictions between Wagner's theory and practice, Newman cited his approach to the overture. (Curiously, none of Wagner's overtures actually corresponded with those he most admired - those of *Don Giovanni* and Gluck's *Iphigenia.*) Newman held that the overture in Wagnerian music-drama had no aesthetic justification and served to illustrate what he called the dead hand in art; 'the survival in a new art of some method of procedure that had its origin under quite other conditions' (: 178). He regarded the overture to *Tannhäuser* as a particular solecism for it required a text to convey its poetic meaning in much the same way as *Ein Heldenleben* required a literary explanation, again bringing Newman to the central issue of his Wagner criticism.

Before discussing Newman's conclusions in *Wagner as Man and Artist* it is necessary to examine his earlier essay on programme music that was published in his collection of essays *Musical Studies* (1905). This was an extended version of an article entitled 'The Old Music and the New' that had originally been published in *The Contemporary Review* some five years earlier (LXXVIII, Sep 1900: 415-429). In this earlier article he made his position as a programmist absolutely clear, for he not only regarded programme music as the natural method of modern musical thought but also denigrated the continuation of absolute music. His criticism of Brahms serves as an example of his position: 'The trouble is that Brahms was never intended by nature to be a "classical" symphonist; and it is pretty safe to say that had he come under other influences in his youth, had he been born in Russia instead of Germany, he would have been a freer and a greater musician' (: 425). The revised version of this article that appears in *Musical Studies* is a key text for an understanding of Newman's critical thought.

The debate about 'absolute' *versus* 'programme' music, fuelled by the provocative nature of Strauss's symphonic poems, fiercely divided British critics at the turn of the century. Newman attempted to clear the air by arguing that a distinction between the two types of music could not properly be maintained. Far from being a passing disease of his own generation, he considered the desire to write programme music as fundamental to

humanity. The theory suggesting that narrative or representational music was exceeding its legitimate boundaries was fallacious, for it had necessarily to dispose of opera and the song. Also, the argument presented by Fuller-Maitland in *Grove 3* that programme music must be judged according to whether it satisfies as 'pure' music was rejected as a situation similar to judging a song without knowledge of the words. Newman accepted no distinction between singing to a musical phrase the words that prompted it and printing these words alongside the phrase or at the beginning of the score. This was crucial to his argument, for it led to the position where no essential difference of approach could be maintained between Wagnerian music-drama, or at least its ideal, and the symphonic poem. This was a preliminary to his statement in *Wagner as Man and Artist* that had Wagner seen his theory through to its logical conclusion, he would have regarded the symphonic poem as the ideal form of art. Instead, Wagner had stopped short of reaching this conclusion because, although in *Tristan* the recitation of facts had all but given way to the poetic evocation of pure emotion, the elimination of non-musical material was not, and could not be, absolute. This was seen as the greatest flaw in Wagner's aesthetic theory - that the elimination of explanatory matter could not properly be realized in the medium of opera. Only in the symphonic poem could music be written which, while fertilized by a poetic purpose, could avoid the intrusion of verbal and non-emotional substance and thus become the concentrated essence of opera. As Lucy Beckett has pointed out, it is curious that while holding the view that Wagner should have written symphonic poems and not operas, Newman should also have held the opinion that Wagner's expressive exactness was an advance upon Beethoven:

> This manifold confusion is created by Newman's conflicting critical needs. On the one hand, Wagner must be absorbed into the musical tradition in order to be rendered harmless for that tradition's future. On the other hand, Wagner must be recognised as a unique genius who had transformed the means of musical expression. Newman's English faith in musical progress, more tenable in 1914 than now, is the optimistic compromise that insecurely conceals the conflict. (1979: 379)

In 1930 P. D. Hurn and W. L. Root published a book entitled *The Truth About Wagner* that was based on their discovery of the Burrell collection of Wagner documents. It was so inaccurate and misleading that Newman felt impelled to write another in riposte, published as *Fact and Fiction About Wagner* (1931). Clearing away much of the error and legend that had come to surround the whole subject, it prepared the way for his four-

volume biography, *The Life of Richard Wagner*, published between 1933 and 1947. This was followed by *Wagner Nights* (1949) in which each opera was analysed in the light of its literary sources. The fact that here, for the first time, Newman showed a readiness to accept the stories as an adequate framework for the music-dramas has been seen by Blissett as a significant change in attitude: 'Without formally retracting it, Newman seems quietly to have abandoned what might paradoxically be called the 'purism' of the essay on programme music - the impatience with whatever in opera is expository as distinct from dramatic, the reluctance to see the symbol made actual' (Ibid.: 321). Clearly Newman was no longer the arch-champion of the once-radical Straussian symphonic poem.

A Study of Wagner had enhanced Newman's reputation to a considerable extent and by 1900 his contributions were being sought from many sides. In 1903 he was able to give up banking and devote himself to a career in music. He moved to Birmingham where Granville Bantock had invited him to join his Midland Institute of Music. There he taught theory, solo singing and also took an opera class. In July 1905 he resigned this position because he had been called to Manchester as music critic of C. P. Scott's *Manchester Guardian*, in succession to Arthur Johnstone who had held the post since 1895.

Newman's short-lived stint as *Manchester Guardian* critic has been fully documented by John Russell in the essay he contributed to the symposium *Fanfare for Ernest Newman* (1955: 135-56). Since 1897 the resident Hallé Orchestra had been conducted by Hans Richter whose popularity and reputation were immense. Newman refused to be blinded by this reputation, and while he found much to admire in Richter's conducting, and wholly approved of his championship of Elgar and Strauss, he was nevertheless often highly critical. Eventually his remarks cut across the interests of the Hallé Committee and, when he left Manchester after little more than a year, it was rumoured that the complaints that had poured in following his adverse criticisms of Richter were partly responsible for his departure. A notable feature of his columns for *The Manchester Guardian* was his championing of Sibelius and Bruckner - both composers whose works were not to become widely accepted in Britain for a considerable time. Newman was later to contribute to the booklets published by The Sibelius Society to accompany their recordings, alongside the contributions of Cecil Gray.

Newman began a series of regular columns in G. W. Hubbard's *Birmingham Post* in September 1906 which lasted until August 1919.[12] He was one of Hubbard's most famous appointments, made soon after becoming editor, and arrived with the burning zeal of a crusader and the acid pen of a master controversialist.[13] His articles for the paper provide a valuable account of British musical life during the war years. Newman's personal impact on the city has been preserved by Francis Brett Young in his novels of Birmingham, such as *Portrait of Clare* (1927). Here he is portrayed as Ernest Wilburn, the brother-in-law of the protagonist, whom Young describes as a very popular and debonair bachelor with 'sharply humorous eyes' and a mysteriously complex personality.

It is no coincidence that in 1906 and 1908 Newman should have published monographs on Elgar and Strauss respectively, for during his time in Manchester he regularly contributed programme notes for the Hallé concerts and these two composers were very much Richter's personal enthusiasms. While Elgar's music greatly impressed him in general, his contempt for oratorio and his dislike of religious and patriotic works of any kind strongly coloured his view. However much he may have believed that *Parsifal* should be judged only on its musical merits, he was unable to restrain his anti-religious feeling when it came to the evaluation of Elgar's oratorios; he found that the statement of theological platitudes inevitably resulted in corresponding musical platitudes. While he acknowledged *The Dream of Gerontius* as a masterpiece, he remained unconvinced by the work's pictorialism. Frequently when discussing Elgar's music he drew on analogies from painting. Of the 'Demon' chorus he wrote:

> It exhibits all the devices of theatricalism turned to excellent uses, yet it never rises above the theatrical - that is, it lacks the final and essential touch of conviction. The spiritual world, one can say of the rest of the oratorio, is just as Elgar paints it; the demon world, one is impelled to say, is not really like his painting of it. These demons are only pantomime demons; their rage is pantomime rage, their scorn pantomime scorn; they have not been seen from the inside as Gerontius, the Soul, and the Angel have been. A hell of this kind could have no terrors; one could not take it seriously enough for that. (: 72)

Newman admired the human quality of *Gerontius* and considered it philosophical rather than didactic. *The Apostles*, on the other hand, exhibited a 'frankly religious and didactic purpose' (: 82), and again it was only the human elements that appealed to him. In his typically jocular manner, which often could be cruelly penetrating, he dismissed the Apostles themselves as 'rather dull dogs', writing that 'one is always glad to see them go'

(: 84). Of more significance was his criticism of Elgar's leitmotif technique, which he regarded as too systematic; the themes appeared as labels, they were not properly developed and some, like the Ship motive, were wholly arbitrary. The orchestral introduction to the second Part was in this respect the most unsatisfactory section:

> A theme is planked down nakedly; without any development, any dovetailing, it leads into another theme, and this in the same way into another. It is all built up like the pictures made by children by putting together painted blocks of wood; there is a crude pictorial continuity, but nothing of the nature of an atmosphere. Elgar tells his story, but fails to make music in the process. (: 102-3)

In an appendix to the 1906 volume on Elgar, Newman attacked the composer's opinion that 'absolute' music represented the highest form of art. He had by this time become the most conspicuous advocate of programme music through his literary championing of Strauss which, as has been shown, strongly coloured his conception of Wagner's historical position. The issues concerning Wagner's theory of music-drama were inseparably bound up in Newman's critical thinking with those of the then new developments in Strauss's orchestral technique. In the 1905 essay 'Richard Strauss and the music of the future' that was published in *Musical Studies* as a vindication of the essay on programme music, he wrote of Strauss as the overthrower of Wagnerian conventions, the symbol of a new aesthetic. Strauss had emancipated music from what had become the tyranny of speech and was continuing the line of development stemming from Liszt which had been eclipsed during the late nineteenth century by Wagnerian music-drama. The sheer range of subjects Strauss could essay and the reality with which he presented them were both highly significant. Indeed, Newman went so far as to describe him as 'the first complete realist in music' (1905: 273). With *Don Quixote*, he considered Strauss to have inaugurated a new genre - illustrative prose music that had finally ruptured the Romantic school of thought. While he was not blind to certain defects in the symphonic poems, such as the programmatic basis of *Ein Heldenleben* which was put down to the confusion between two plans - 'that of a very definite hero whom Strauss knows very well, and that of a generalised and indefinite hero whom he finds himself compelled to describe in the biggest superlatives' (Ibid.: 288) - he was nevertheless highly enthusiastic and accepted the defects as of minor significance. However, in the case of *Symphonia Domestica* which had been first performed in London only a few weeks before *Musical Studies* had gone to press, he was unable to accept the

defects with such ease. This work was seen as the result of a serious degeneration in Strauss's artistic sense; 'the work of an enormously clever man who was once a genius' (: 304). This criticism later came to have widespread validation, for critics as different as Cecil Gray and Eric Blom agreed that the inter-war years witnessed a serious decline in Strauss's creativity. A short study of Strauss published in 1908 continued Newman's disillusioned tone. The composer was criticized here for overburdening his music with unassimilable literary concepts, such as the theme of 'disgust' in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* which 'no more suggests disgust than it does the toothache' (: 71). Newman continued, 'when at a later stage he brings in the theme in diminution and asks us to see in this the partly convalescent Zarathustra making sport of his previous depression of spirits, we can only say that we are unable to oblige him' (: 72). Strauss had overstepped the mark in attempting the realism of his later orchestral music, marred by the ugliness that such realism necessitated. His songs were criticized for their lack of formal cohesion and served to demonstrate a questionable taste in poetry.

Newman found more to admire in Strauss's operas. Both the early *Guntram* and *Feuersnot* were considered to be handicapped by their poor libretti, yet their music was nevertheless successful. From *Salome* he received the same impression that he had from the later orchestral works; that Strauss was unable to write at length without ruining his work with some perverse display of bravado. However, Newman had clearly not reached any finality of critical appraisal by 1908, demonstrating just how modern the work sounded at that time:

> It is easy enough to talk enthusiastically of *Salome*, or to disparage it; but to look at it critically is a very different matter, so full is it of new and bewildering things. Some parts of it, such as the scene of Salome with the head, are recognized at once to be entrancingly beautiful; it is remarkable, indeed, what depth of real feeling Strauss gives, by his music, to Wilde's cold, mechanical, enamelled lines, and the wax flowers of his imagery. And even where the music is not beautiful, but merely a tissue of cunning *tours de force* of characterization and stage suggestion, it sweeps us off our feet. But whether this latter kind of thing will keep its interest for us is another question... already we can see that there is much in the opera that is sheer ugliness, and the style has a good deal of that cold perversity that is so repellent in all Strauss's later work. (1908: 71)

When *Elektra* was first produced at Covent Garden in 1910 it caused a sensation to which the Press responded by devoting large amounts of space to discussion of its qualities. Writing a few days later in *The Nation*, Newman poured scorn on the critical

temerity that had ensued. Unafraid to express his views in the most trenchant manner, he proceeded to argue that the opera was yet a further stage in the composer's degeneration from his position of fifteen years earlier, particularly noticeable in its thematic invention; it failed to excite, it was over-stated, and much of it was incoherent.[14] This condemnation resulted in a highly charged correspondence between Newman and George Bernard Shaw published over a period of some weeks in the pages of *The Nation*. Newman summarized the degeneration, first begun in *Symphonia Domestica*, as follows:

> (1) Instead of getting to the very heart of a situation in his music, as he used to do, he is inclined to illustrate the mere externals of it; hence the facile and foolish pictorialism of such things as the 'slippery blood' motive in *Elektra*, of the orchestral delineations of Klytemnestra's jewels, the sacrificial procession, and so on.. (2) He is degenerating into a bad and careless builder. Mr. Shaw may object to the phrase, but I repeat that it is ridiculously easy to put a score together as Strauss now does for pages at a time - flinging out a leading motive of three or four bars' length, and then padding unblushingly for twenty or thirty bars until another salient motive can be introduced. (3) He is often downright ugly.. (4) His thematic invention is sometimes positively wretched now.. - let anyone, for example, play or sing pages 45 and 50-51 half a dozen times, and say if a tune like this is fit for anything but musical comedy of the music-halls. (1962: 73)

The Newman-Shaw controversy concerning Strauss was sparked off again in 1914 by the production of *Der Josephslegende*, a work which demonstrated to Newman that Strauss was 'now quite dead as far as music is concerned' (1962: 139). Shaw flatly contradicted this and the inevitable controversy flared up again. Indeed, one is left with the impression that these two literary dualists were less concerned about Strauss than the exchange of verbal blows.

By 1914 Strauss was no longer in the avant garde of contemporary music. This was seen by Newman as only partly due to the rise of a younger generation; more importantly it was put down to Strauss's creative exhaustion. Such fatigue could be seen, for example, in the fugato prelude to the third act of *Die Rosenkavalier*: 'a miracle of energy, volubility and technique, but in the end *nichtssagend*, as the Germans would have it - "nothing saying," - parasitic' (*BP*, 15 Jun 1914: 6). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s Newman tended to express ambivalent responses to Strauss's new operas and it was not until considerably later, after the composer's death in 1949, that he came to reassess the middle period works in the light of later achievements. It was characteristic that he should openly admit his failure to realize how Strauss had been feeling his way towards

a new operatic genre, turning his back on heroic tension and complex romantic comedy in order to clarify and lighten his dramatic purpose and corresponding musical style.[15]

Between the monographs on Elgar and Strauss, Newman wrote another on *Hugo Wolf* (1907). For nearly half a century it was the only monograph on the composer in the English language, and as such it exercised a considerable influence on the perception of Wolf's position and achievement. Newman placed Wolf as a song-writer above Schubert and argued that he was a more profound thinker and a more cultured man. Wolf's settings of many poems that had already been set by Brahms and Schumann were also favourably compared. His assessment of Wolf as music critic of the Vienna *Salonblatt* provides an insight into his own views on the functions of criticism at that time:

> While admitting that musical criticism is of no value unless it sees all round a given case, and states not only its disagreement, when agreement is not possible, but the reason for its disagreement, one cannot subscribe to the further theory, held by many worthy people, that the writing should never show any signs of internal warmth, and that every word should be struck out that is likely to wound... There is a time to sit down patiently outside a citadel, reduce it by a long and scientific siege, and then live on good terms with your quondam enemies; there is also a time to take the position by assault, to sweep a dangerous and hopelessly irreconcilable enemy away in one charge. Criticism of this kind - and this, apparently, is what the advocates of what they miscall "restraint" do not perceive - can be just as well reasoned, just as comprehensive in its survey, as any criticism that is written at half the mental temperature. (: 30-1)

In March 1918, while still writing for *The Birmingham Post*, Newman began a regular column for J. L. Garvin's Sunday paper, *The Observer*. During his twelve years in Birmingham he had become increasingly dissatisfied and, as he had been making frequent visits to London to hear important new works for some time, it was almost inevitable that he would eventually move to the capital.[16] He wrote for *The Observer* for nearly two years, until February 1920. The previous month he had accepted a comprehensive five-year engagement with *The Sunday Times*. His contract stipulated that *The Sunday Times* maintained exclusive use of his writings with the exception that he was able to continue writing for *The Manchester Guardian* or, failing that, for another provincial paper. He was given complete freedom to choose the subject matter for his main article - an arrangement that was conducive to Newman's desire to combine weekly journalism with scholarship. He remained with the paper until his retirement, at the age of ninety, in November 1958.

It was as contributor to *The Sunday Times* that Newman reached maturity as a critic. With James Agate, the drama critic, and Desmond MacCarthy, the chief literary reviewer, he became part of a formidable trio of arts journalists that remained unchanged for a generation - until the deaths of Agate and MacCarthy after the Second World War. On a Sunday paper he was not obliged to cover musical events in the manner necessary to daily journalism. Instead he could deal at length with those aspects of the musical scene that he considered warranted comment. His weekly articles for *The Sunday Times* soon became a valued feature of British musical life. The post also provided him with sufficient leisure time to pursue scholarly interests and to undertake the vast amount of labour required for his biography of Wagner, which eventually became the high point of his literary achievement.[17] Indeed, this vastly erudite work has been likened to *The Ring* itself, for not only is it in four volumes but it grows throughout in its range until the numerous threads are woven together to form a complex tapestry.

Apart from a five-month period between 1924 and 1925 as guest critic of *The New York Evening Post*, he regularly wrote a weekly review of musical events and a longer critical article for *The Sunday Times*, amounting to some 2000 articles in all. From September 1919 until July 1924 he wrote 'Music of the Day' and 'The Week in Music' columns for *The Manchester Guardian* and from July 1924 until October 1928 he also contributed a weekly column to *The Glasgow Herald.* As he concurrently wrote miscellaneous articles for a variety of other papers, he undoubtedly became the most prolific music critic of his day.

Following his move to the capital in 1919, Newman's criticism focused to a much greater extent on contemporary music and especially recent trends in French and Russian music that were becoming fashionable topics for critical discussion. Frequently during the early 1920s he clashed with the partisans of the Diaghilev Ballet and those who supported the anti-Romantic reaction that was taking place in British musical life. Newman and Edwin Evans became regular combatants in *The New Witness*, while the younger members of the *Sackbut* coterie regarded him as a reactionary to be taunted at every opportunity.

Newman's first article for *The Observer* was on Debussy, a composer he had barely written about before. He regarded Debussy as a highly original composer whose experimentalism had led to little of lasting value; an incomplete artist who was unable to

utilize his best achievements for the enrichment and expansion of his later style. Being a slave to his own mannerisms had resulted in a lack of power and assurance increasingly apparent in his late works.[18] Debussy was unable to unite his basic impulses:

> There were three main impulses in him that he never succeeded in coordinating perfectly - the humanist, the descriptive and what I would call the infantile. Of the first, *Pelléas and Mélisande* is the greatest manifestation; to the second belong the marvellous renderings of movement and light and aerial distances that we get in such works as *Fêtes* and *L'Isle Joyeuse*, or such subtleties of what we may call impressionistic realism as we have in *La Cathédrale Engloutie*; in the third category fall the many delightful little works that exhibit Debussy not so much as humorist, but as a childlike lover of fun for fun's sake. But he not only did not correlate all these faculties so as to make them serviceable in one great work; he did not quite reach the full realisation of himself in any of them. (*O*, 31 Mar 1918: 5)

This attitude was very different to that adopted by what Newman called 'the little Anglo-French coterie' led by Edwin Evans, who regarded Debussy as the father of modern French music. In a series of three articles entitled 'French and English Music' written for *The Birmingham Post* in September 1918, Newman had recourse to further discussion of his most recurrent theme of the war and immediate post-war years - that of nationalism. The relationship between music and national expression was a subject that had occupied him from his earliest days as a critic and several articles were devoted to its discussion during the course of his time with *The Birmingham Post*.[19] Almost whenever mention of specifically English, French or Russian music was made during the war years, he launched into his attack on the concept of a definable national character. The school of thought that urged English composers to express the English soul through the use of folk-song was reprehended, for the expression of a national spirit was regarded as an impossibility. For Newman, tradition, sympathy and environment counted for much more than race. So-called nationalism was merely synonymous with dialect and had little bearing on artistic results. Indeed, its use was often detrimental. When Mussorgsky employed a self-consciously nationalistic idiom in *Boris Godunov* to depict Marina's Polish ancestry by using obvious mazurka rhythms, for example, he fell flat on his face. The use of folk-song may have assisted the emergence of Russian music, but it could not provide a means for English composers to overcome the domination of Germanic influences any more than the slavish imitation of the latest French styles:

> A very determined effort has been made during the last few years by a little coterie in London that is specially intimate with the personalities of the newer

> French music to persuade our composers and our public that it is in this music, rather than in German, that they are likely to find salvation... We must no more look consciously to French music for salvation than to German. A great deal of the later French revolt against German influence has its roots in things that are vital for French culture, but have no bearing on ours. It is I, I venture to think, who am a better "nationalist" than my Anglo-French friends - or let me say a better Briton. I do not believe in the possibility of a "national" music; but I am a strong believer in the possibility of our music becoming more truly British... it is folly of our young Englishmen to go dosing themselves with the French medicine. Conscious of his inability to create big human figures, Debussy sometimes revenged himself for his own littleness by trying to make humanity little. In his later years, when he wanted to be sprightly he always chose figures less than life-size, or figures with a touch of the grotesque in them - the golliwog, or the child, or the mannikins of the box of toys. We have no great quarrel with Debussy for doing this.. But we have some right to quarrel with an English composer when he does the same thing, for then he is obviously only imitative. Mr. Goossens, for instance, in his *Kaleidoscope* is only meandering about in Debussy's workshop... And while a certain school of critics regard this Anglo-French or Anglo-Russian music at one remove as the music out of which an English renaissance is to come, music like Elgar's is considered by them to be German. In reality Elgar's music is extremely English. (*BP*, 2 Sep 1918: 4)

Newman considered that it was because the Russian Nationalists talked of making their music specifically "Russian" and also because part of their work reproduced or imitated the music of the people, that the extent to which folk-song had been regarded as the great regenerating force in Russian music had been exaggerated. This was apparent in the misunderstanding of Mussorgsky who was found to have aimed at an idiom completely unrelated to folk-song, as witnessed by his songs. A parallel was drawn between Mussorgsky and Synge; both had assimilated a peasant language until it had become their own medium, both had contempt for falsity in art and both could portray local people in relation to their wider surroundings. Their use of folk material was not so much like the wearing of a costume as the presentation of their very own skin:

> It was this local veracity and local beauty that Moussorgsky achieved in such superb peasant songs as the "Hopak" and "The Mushrooms" and in a hundred cries of the common people in "Boris" and "Khovantchina" and elsewhere. But it was also because this local idiom was so powerful for its own peculiar types and its own *milieu* that it was powerless outside them. That was Moussorgsky's tragedy as an artist, as it was Synge's, and as it will be of every musician who allows himself to be led astray by the *ignis fatuus* of folk-song. (*The New Witness*, X, 28 Jun 1917: 207)

This issue of nationalism was also the subject of Newman's article 'Concerning "A Shropshire Lad" and other matters' which appeared in the September 1918 issue of

The Musical Times as a response to Edwin Evans's article 'English Song and "On Wenlock Edge"' (*MT*, LIX, Jun 1918: 247). Evans's banner-bearing type of writing exasperated Newman, for he found in it no critical standards and a frequent misuse of important terms. Nationality was not for Newman synonymous with race; Housman's poems were English but could not be termed national. In their attempt to isolate a certain genre of expression, the folk-song, and absorb it into their style in the hope of becoming truly English, the musical 'nationalists' were barking up the wrong tree. As he wrote in 1920, 'Any attempt to create a "national" British idiom on the basis of British folksong could only lead to merely imitative, and therefore insincere, work. Nothing, finally, matters in art but the personality of the artist' (*ST*, 2 May 1920: 6). Vaughan Williams's settings failed to find the right emotional expression and rhythmic pulse of Housman's poetry, they lacked lyricism in their too conscious deliberation and were altogether false.

It is within the pages of *The New Witness* during the First World War that Newman and Evans first began their conflict, for the two combatants were able to publish their criticism there alongside one another. This was also possible in their contributions to *The Musician* just after the war. The three central subjects of dispute were nationalism, the influence of Germany on British music and the importance of the new music. On 23 September 1915 Evans first described Newman as standing 'approximately for Mr. Balfour in music: the best informed and most thoughtful exponent of the conservative view' (*NW*, VI, 23 Sep 1915: 502). Four years later, in his review of *A Musical Motley* (*O*, 12 Oct 1919: 4), Evans again referred to Newman taking his place beside Mr. Balfour. In three articles on 'Dogmatism and Doubt in Criticism' written in response to Evans's review, (*O*, 26 Oct 1919: 9; 2 Nov 1919: 11; 9 Nov 1919: 11) Newman attempted to put the record straight. Here he argued that it was in fact Evans who should be regarded as 'the High Tory of English music criticism', for he exercised no degree of philosophic doubt in his criticism; 'Like the man in one of Oscar Wilde's plays, however, he thinks like a Tory and talks like a Radical' (*O*, 26 Oct 1919: 9). When Evans began his important 'Modern British Composers' series in the January 1919 issue of *Musical Times*, Newman wrote: 'I have always wondered how an intelligent man like Mr. Evans could range himself under the banner of the intellectual innocents who believe in folk-songism and all the other articles of the "national" creed in music. His evil associations are at last beginning to corrupt him' (*O*, 12 Jan 1919: 7).[20]

A more significant dispute between Newman on the one side and Evans and Leigh Henry on the other concerned the music of *Les Six* and Stravinsky's burgeoning neoclassicism, both revolving around the activities of the Diaghilev ballet in the years following the First World War. Newman considered that 'The central fallacy of the school to which Mr. Evans belongs is the belief that the day has gone for emotion in music' (O, 6 Jul 1919: 9) - that the composers and critics of this school were intellectuals and cerebrals who, while fulminating against Germanic academicism, were evolving a new academicism of their own. According to Newman (*MT*, LXI, Nov 1920: 729), the dispute was brought to a head at the end of 1920 by three events - a concert of Stravinsky's latest works that had occurred earlier that summer, the Suite from Eric Fogg's ballet *The Golden Butterfly* (scenario by Leigh Henry) that had recently been received with laughter at Queen's Hall, and finally Delius's trenchant article 'At the Cross-roads' that had appeared in the September issue of *The Sackbut.* The reception of Fogg's work had proved to Newman that Stravinsky's idiom had become 'a mere bundle of tricks', that Stravinsky in his weaker moments found it easier to exploit an old manner than to invent new matter - hence the ease with which a seventeen year old, Eric Fogg, could parody it. As he saw it, Evans and Henry, in their preoccupation with method, had become oblivious to aesthetic result; they were dubbed 'the new academics, the High Priests of the Obvious'. By 1921 Newman considered that Stravinsky had ceased to be in any sense creative and had become instead a rather bad imitation of himself. Signs of deterioration had first occured in *Petroushka*:

> The work is, in the main, a masterpiece; but I invite the hearer, at the next performance of it, to listen with special care to the music that comes between the exit of the bear and the final scene between Petroushka and the Moor, and then to say if this music is not relatively poor. It no longer comes bubbling straight from the spring; its sparkle is a manufactured product; the effects are made by trick and formula, and not particularly well made. (*ST*, 3 Jul 1921: 6)

In a 1925 review of Stravinsky's Piano Concerto he gave his opinion that the composer was a restricted genius whose capacity for invention was limited and whose gift lay as an orchestral decorator - as opposed to an orchestral designer or painter. He could not be considered a revolutionary because he had failed to alter the face of music in any appreciable way:

> His innovations have been traits of style too completely personal for it to be possible for anyone else to use them in different circumstances and not become

> ludicrous. His psychological range is very limited. His powers of building are restricted even for a composer of the Russian nationalist school: it seems to be impossible for him to think connectedly for more than a couple of minutes at a time. On the stage, the action can hold his loosely organised music together; but in the concert room its structural helplessness becomes painfully manifest. He had, in fact, a small but highly individual musical gift; and now the little cup seems to be almost empty. (*ST*, 25 Jan 1925: 7)

While Stravinsky was credited with a modicum of creative ability, the apparent failure of the Second Viennese School to make any favourable impression whatsoever on the public was taken as proof of their creative sterility. In 1923 Newman wrote of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*: 'Nothing more needlessly ugly and at the same time so pointless has ever been heard in London' (*ST*, 25 Nov 1923: 7). He found the *Sprechgesang* absurd and described the final piece, in 1942, as 'more than ever today like a bit of Mendelssohn gone wrong in its harmony' (*ST*, 14 Jun 1942: 2). The public non-acceptance of Schoenberg could be explained in one of two ways; either the composer was so beyond the comprehension of the public that the general musical intelligence would have to move ahead of its position before being capable of appreciating him, or he was unable to give enduring aesthetic form to his theoretical speculations. As he considered the former explanation never to have occurred before in the entire history of music, he thought it improbable that it had happened then. He warned against dismissing Schoenberg as a charlatan, for he had the highest admiration for the early works, especially the *Gurrelieder* (*MT*, LV, Jan 1914: 11-13). Yet he found himself unable to appreciate any of his music after the Five Orchestral Pieces. All aspects of modernism were considered to be in decline by 1928: '"Modernism" is becoming more discredited daily, for the simple reason that it has not produced a single work that the average intelligent "plain musical man" wants to hear more than once, still less to live with all the year round' (*ST*, 6 May 1928: 7). The only work of the Second Viennese School he regarded as a masterpiece was Berg's *Wozzeck* (*ST*, 27 Mar 1949: 2; 3 Apr: 2; 10 Apr 1949: 2).

No doubt it was this lack of sympathy for the main currents of contemporary musical thinking and this disillusionment with the apparent chaos of criticism in its response to new music that led Newman to attempt a study of how the critical process operates in his *A Musical Critic's Holiday* (1925). In an age in which the past and future of music seemed irreconcilable, it was natural, especially for a Rationalist, that an attempt

should be made to discern standards that maintained a certain continuity. In seeking a technical basis for criticism that would roughly correspond to the technical fundamentals of composition, he studied the nineteenth-century German critic J. C. Lobe's *Musikalische Briefe, Wahrheit über Tonkunst und Tonkünstler, von einem Wohlbekannten* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1852) in order to perceive just how Lobe's critical faculty functioned and the extent to which his theoretical principles of judgement were valid. Although time far from confirmed Lobe's prognoses, as his estimation of Gade's symphonies demonstrates, certain lessons could nevertheless be derived from his failure. For example, judgement should not be deflected by the partisanship of contemporaries, as in the case of Lobe's appraisal of Schumann. However, in demonstrating the failure of Lobe's attempt at an objectivity of critical perception, Newman unavoidably and somewhat ironically returned the inevitable verdict on his own effort.

A central idea of the book is that the theory of the inevitable failure of any generation to recognize its contemporary composers of genius is a fallacy created by the Wagnerians. Not only did the public receive Wagner in a way that the critics failed to, thus proving that the legend of the struggle of genius against the conservatism and incomprehension of the public was false, but also the music of every great master from Monteverdi onwards was equally recognized and evaluated by the populace during the composer's lifetime. The argument that history has recorded no case of a great composer being so far ahead of his time that his contemporaries could not understand him led Newman to conclude that none of the new works of his time that failed to justify themselves at once, *aesthetically*, to the average musical sense of the period would be of any real significance for the future, no matter how fertile they may be in suggestions of new technical resources. This argument has already been seen to have had an application with regard to Newman's criticism of Schoenberg. Originality was of little relevance in Newman's critical theory; his study of 1600 as a type-period had revealed the futility of speaking of contemporary pioneers, for no one can predict the future course of music - an essential difference between Newman's position and that of Hadow. For Newman, the need to distinguish between technical and aesthetic aspects of a work was imperative. The critic must judge new music not by its ability to break new ground, nor by what it professes or aspires to be, but by what it actually is. From a comparison between his own period and that of 1600 he extracted the laws that such a procedure could illustrate, a

précis of which was presented in an introductory section of the book outlining its

> No great composer uses all the theoretically possible resources of his time. "Progress" largely the work of men of the second or third rank. "Progress" a term without real meaning, for none of us can foresee the evolution of music for even a dozen years ahead. Innovators generally despise their "conservative" predecessors or contemporaries; but it is the work of these latter that survives, while the work of the innovators is mostly, for succeeding ages, only of antiquarian interest. Little or nothing durable comes from the movement of revolt until it is fertilized by some of the more stable forces of the past. Thus the Florentine "reform" remained largely theoretical, doctrinaire, and dilettantish in the hands of its first practitioners; it needed, to vitalize it, an admixture of the despised technique of the "conservatives." The future is veiled from us; all we can be sure of is that it will correspond only imperfectly with our forecast of it, - for two reasons.
>
> In the first place, the vital changes in music come not so much from a general and conscious movement in a direction that is clearly seen, as from the irruption of some original, incalculable, and highly dynamic mind. In the second place, the doctrinaire idea is always modified by pressure from a thousand other forces. Thus the Florentine speculation ended, not as its originators thought it would, in a re-birth of the Greek drama with music, but in a very different thing - the Italian opera.
>
> Genuine criticism must always function in the past rather than the present. It is only from the past that our aesthetic standards can come, and these are valid for any new form of art. (: *ix*)

Although these ideas were discussed at length by most of the leading critics of the day, in Newman's opinion they had all failed adequately to grasp his theories and had frequently misrepresented him. In reply ostensibly to Edwin Evans's article devoted to their discussion that appeared in *The Musical Times* in August 1925 (LXVI: 692-5), he set about correcting the misunderstandings that had arisen in a lengthy series of three articles entitled 'A Postscript to "A Musical Critic's Holiday"' (*MT*, LXVII, Oct 1925: 881-4; Nov 1925: 977-81; Dec 1925: 1076-9). Here he renounced any personal involvement with the views expressed in his book, suggesting that the critic was as fictional as the holiday; that it was not a confession of faith but merely an expression of doubt; and that his purpose was not to dogmatize but to inquire. The first article dealt with Evans's misrepresentation of his views, especially with regard to Stravinsky; the second extended the argument concerning whether a great composer is so far ahead of his time that only a later generation can understand him; the third dealt more generally with the issue of objectivity.

In a series of four articles written for *The Sunday Times* in the late 1920s Newman

expounded a 'physiology' of criticism - the impetus again being to give it a scientific basis in order that more should be revealed about the music under consideration and less about the personal taste of the critic. By physiology he meant the establishment, through analysis, of a physiology of style for each composer - the recognition of compositional fingerprints or the few basic formulae peculiar to each composer. If these elements of style could be isolated they could not only provide interesting data from the scientific-analytic aspect but also provide a practical aesthetic application:

> Suppose we had found that, in the bulk of his [Schubert's] work, a certain technical procedure was always unconsciously employed when Schubert wished to express a certain mood. If, then, we found the same formula in a work that, through the lack of more precise directions on his part, different conductors look at from different points of view, should we not be justified in saying 'Here is the formula that we know to have been used again and again by Schubert for a particular emotional purpose: is it not a fair inference, then, that when he uses it here his purpose was the same as in other cases, and therefore the work is to be taken at a certain tempo and in a certain mood, and no other?'
>
> The same problem is raised (and could be solved in the same way) by the repeated hammering notes in the finale of the symphony. To one conductor they mean one thing, to another, another, and to a third, nothing at all. But a scientific analysis of Schubert's style would show quite definitely what they mean. (1956: 16)

A model for this type of critical procedure was Newman's *The Unconscious Beethoven* (1927). Like his various books on Wagner and his later study of Liszt, he attempted - in the first half concerned with Beethoven the man - to clear away the debris of misinterpretation that surrounded the life of the composer. In doing so he tried to arrive at an accurate psychological estimate of his character. In the second part he set out to prove that an ascending figure of three adjacent notes, consisting of any combination of semitones or tones, was a compositional fingerprint invariably used for the same purpose of emotional expression at very much the same point. The use of this figure was found to be largely restricted to slow movements and to run throughout Beethoven's entire output, having some meaning related to heroism: 'Not, be it understood, that he has a hero in mind each time he employs this figure, but that when he wants to depict a hero rising in his majesty, it is to this figure, generally associated in his mind with some indefinite image of expansion, intensification, or soaring, that he spontaneously reverts' (: 86). Every one of his slow movements was found to contain this motive and they were described as a series of attempts by Beethoven to free himself from a single subconscious

emotional complex, each being a further attempt to fix in sound a particular vision that became obsessional. Newman also found that Beethoven did not generally evolve the structure of movements from consciously invented themes, but arrived at themes by a process of condensation from a dimly previsioned mass, working from the periphery to the centre. This theory accounted for the relatively inferior strength of his slow movements in which he tended to work more from the centre: 'We have the feeling that he more consciously *made* his slow movements, while his fast ones were rather made for him by the unconscious within him; hence the variety and the power of the latter, and the uniformity of mood and the comparative lack of technical resource in the former' (: 134). Unfortunately this theory of musical physiology was not developed further; perhaps it was impossible to extend. Either unable or unwilling to see through the consequences of his speculation to their logical conclusion, Newman failed to achieve a theory of criticism based on this concept of fingerprints. In a parallel situation to that of his contemporary Tovey, whose lack of coherent method resulted in an inability to systematize an analytical theory comparable to that of Heinrich Schenker, he did not codify any of the fundamental laws on which he believed a scientific criticism of music was founded. Thus while lamenting its inability to find basic principles to guide its practice when a problem like the new music was sprung upon it, he himself could not find the necessary critical apparatus to resolve the resulting difficulties.

While his theories of musical physiology failed to provide any lasting impact on British music criticism, his efforts to bring a psychological perspective to the biography of composers, relating conclusions concerning mental states to a view of the dynamics of creativity, were more substantial. This kind of psychological exploration had been undertaken in *The Unconscious Beethoven* and later with greater thoroughness in his biographical work on Wagner and Liszt. With his forensic elucidation of biographical details, it was considerably easier for Newman to prove his hypotheses concerning the workings of a composer's mind and their relationship to his composition than those concerned directly with the music itself. Here, the marshalling of documentary evidence was crucial if a convincing case was to be expounded. Newman was aware, of course, that not all composers' lives can be directly related to their work, but certainly in some circumstances he regarded the study of a composer's psychology to be an intellectual pursuit able to shed more light on creative output than actual 'criticism'. In this respect

he was opposed to the view that those aspects revealed by such a study of the composer's psychology, what Calvocoressi termed 'indirect data', were irrelevant to criticism. He justified this position in the postlude to *The Man Liszt* (1934):

> Mr. Calvocoressi, in his thoughtful book on *Musical Criticism*, has thought it advisable to warn the budding critic against the use of what he calls "indirect data"... A large number of these "indirect data" may indeed be dismissed as irrelevant to the work...
>
> But another class of "indirect data" to which Mr. Calvocoressi refers, the data implicit in Sainte-Beuve's avowal - which Mr. Calvocoressi quotes disapprovingly - that he found it impossible to judge a work without knowing all about the man who wrote it, is another matter altogether. Mr. Calvocoressi's prejudice against this order of data comes from his being preoccupied with the problem of "criticism" as an affair of "judging," ... But there is another and deeper sense in which "the author's biography and letters, his disposition, his ideals, the events of his life, and so on" are not merely interesting in themselves but valuable to us in the study of his work. I say "study" because the process I have in mind has nothing whatever to do with the lower activity that is at present called "criticism"...
>
> There are composers, in fact, whose life is mirrored in their art, and their art elucidated by their life; and Liszt was one of them. Our perception of this fact, however, has nothing to do with "criticism"; we are content, for the time being, to put on one side the question of whether the resultant work is "good" or "bad": we simply note the mirroring, the parallelism, as an interesting phenomenon...
>
> This correlation of the moods, the sequences of moods, and the outcome of the conflict of them in a given piece of music with what we know of the nature and the life of its composer would in most cases be illegitimate. But in the case of Liszt it is not only legitimate but actually forced upon us by the most obvious features of the man's life and those of his music... "Criticism" of him, in the ordinary sense of that word, will never take us much further with regard to Liszt than we are at present. (: 297-301)

Newman's biography of Liszt was an offshoot from his more extensive work on the Wagner biography. As a 'full-length psychological study' (: xi) it was designed to deconstruct the so-called 'Liszt legend' that had been initiated by the composer's first biographer Lina Ramann, by the Princess Wittgenstein and, to some extent, by Liszt himself. He set about discrediting the legend with the assistance of recently published documentary evidence - the *Memoirs* (1927) of Countess d'Agoult and the two volumes of *Correspondance de Liszt et de la Comtesse d'Agoult, 1833-34* (1933, 1934). The simplistic central thesis was that Liszt exhibited a dualism within his character which he never succeeded in reconciling, hence the book's sub-title: 'A Study of the Tragi-Comedy of a Soul Divided Against Itself'. Such dualism made it impossible for him to choose decisively between religion and the world and hindered him from fully realizing himself

either as a man or an artist. This split, at the heart of Newman's 'half Zigeuner, half Franciscan' theory, was found to have become increasingly apparent as time went on. Newman builds up a psychological profile of a weak-willed man with 'an ineradicable strain of insincerity in him' (: 145), 'an inveterate tuft-hunter' (: 181), an aggressive *arriviste* whose apparent acts of altruism are due in part to vanity (: 274) and whose lack of moral fibre led him to wear a kind of psychological mask to cover his flaws (: 249). In counteracting the false portrait of Liszt built up by earlier biographers whose Romantic idealism and falsification had led them to accord the composer something of the status of a saint, Newman goes to the other extreme in his analysis. This only serves to belittle Liszt's achievements. In his attempt to see the man as he really was, Newman became too concerned to set the record straight rather than provide anything approaching objectivity in his biographical method. As one reviewer put it, he pursued the ends of the historian with the methods of the pamphleteer. Undoubtedly it was his Rationalist perspective that prejudiced him against an acceptance of Liszt's religious conviction which in turn blinded him to other qualities, such as the composer's undisputed generosity. In the light of recent Liszt scholarship it has become increasingly clear that Newman severely biased his account through the process of selecting his documentary evidence to suit his preconceived hypothesis.[21] The making of a case by the careful selection of information, in the manner of an accomplished litigator, was a feature of Newman's criticism that could be as misleading as it was persuasive. *The Man Liszt* tarnished Newman's critical integrity.

From his earliest years as a critic Newman had explored the personality and music of Berlioz. As early as 1899, in an article on Berlioz's prose that appeared in Runciman's journal *The Chord* (I, Sep 1899: 48-54), he drew attention to the fact that a study of the composer's writing could reveal much about his character, following the precept of Hennequin in his essay on Flaubert in *Quelques Écrivains Français* (1890). As Peter Heyworth has pointed out in the introduction to his selection of Newman's writings on Berlioz, a generation before advocates such as W. J. Turner and T. S. Wotton had arrived on the scene, Newman had already championed a composer he considered neglected and misunderstood. His essay in *Musical Studies* entitled 'Berlioz, Romantic and Classic' was undoubtedly of considerable importance to the British understanding of this composer, for it provided considerably greater insight than the previously most important critical analysis

- Hadow's essay on Berlioz in his first volume of *Studies in Modern Music*. Newman's changing response towards Berlioz's late works, especially *Les Troyens*, that occurred as he became more familiar with them, serves to illustrate the fact that he was prepared to be flexible in his assessments without ever losing a critical perspective - a feature of his thought that has already been discerned in relation to Strauss. As Heyworth has written:

> Newman was never a fan. As in the case of Wagner and Strauss, he never lost sight of the failings of the composers he was particularly drawn to... one of the aspects of Newman's writings on Berlioz I have come particularly to admire in the course of preparing them for publication is his critical equilibrium, his refusal to hush up Berlioz's shortcomings, his readiness to examine criticism and to admit that it is not always based on error or ignorance. (1972: 14-5)

This critical equilibrium was indeed one of the most conspicuous features of Newman's writing throughout his career and it is certainly true that he was never a mere propagandist. He achieved a balance between imparting historical information and an exceptional percipience of psychological and musical understanding. As a Rationalist he stood for private judgment as against mere tradition or authority and challenged accepted doctrines with the characteristic qualities of Rationalist thought: logical precision, a reliance on scientific investigation, the subjecting of concepts to intense critical scrutiny and, above all, persuasive argument. His objectivist approach to critical theory demanded that aesthetic judgements be argued from a basis of fact and not from personal taste or feeling. His pursuit of primary source material from which to draw accurately his own conclusions - frequently found to be at odds with those of his predecessors - was motivated by a keen scepticism characteristic of the Rationalist outlook. Although his sympathies were moderately wide, it was nineteenth-century music that attracted him most and to which he gave his greatest attention. He dealt only superficially with music written before 1750 and was clearly not greatly interested by it. Of twentieth-century composers it was only those late Romantics of his own generation - Delius, Mahler, Strauss, Elgar, Sibelius - that held consistent appeal for him. Championing their music at a time when they were regarded as being in the vanguard of contemporary developments, he found that following the First World War his fundamentally Romantic taste became increasingly out of step with the new generation of Stravinsky and Schoenberg. By the mid 1930s his position had become marginalized through his impatience with the new directions being taken in contemporary music and through his preoccupation with the then unfashionable Wagner. His refusal to encourage the new merely because of its novelty brought him into

conflict with those of a more progressive persuasion. Combined with his lack of enthusiasm for a large sector of British music, he became regarded as an isolated and reactionary figure. Continuing to look for the expansive impulse in music, he found little evidence of genuine creativity in what he saw as modern experimentalism. The protest against subjectivism and the search for absolute standards with which to measure quality and value in music had failed to take root. Newman's philosophical doubt and his inherent scepticism had served a useful purpose in stirring up debate about critical theory in the late 1920s, but ultimately he could not follow through his theories to provide a workable rationale. This led to an impasse which must largely be held to account for the fact that his early critical confidence gave way to a certain degree of temerity hidden behind the veil of scholarship. As Cardus pointed out, the Newman of Birmingham gave way to the sage of Tadworth. Combining the irreverent wit and literary quality of his predecessors Shaw and Runciman with the intellectual rigour of Gurney and Hadow and the scholarly discipline of musicologists such as E. J. Dent and J. A. Westrup, Newman's clear and vigorous criticism marked a new standard against which the achievements of the younger generation were measured.

Chapter IV - Notes

1. This series of articles was reprinted in *Testament of Music*, ed. van Thal, H., (1962): 1-41.

2. Several dictionaries, including *Grove*, cite Liverpool as his birthplace. As Vera Newman provides the address at which he was born, it is most probable that Lancaster is correct.

3. In a letter to Ernest Walker, dated 27 March 1908, he wrote: 'I used to write a great deal some years ago, but I soon recognised the hopelessness of getting time enough for proper concentration on it. And the more I tried to understand other people's music the fewer musical ideas of my own there were that seemed - even to myself! - worth putting on paper.' (Walker Collection, Balliol College, Oxford)

4. For Newman's criticism of Robertson see 'An Open Letter', *The University Magazine and Free Review*, IX, Jul 1897: 397-409.

5. Several articles were published under this pseudonym, including 'An Ethical Excursion', *The University Magazine and Free Review*, VIII, Jun 1897: 238-252; 'On Atheism', *The University Magazine and Free Review*, VIII, Jul 1897: 347-52; and 'Is Progress an Illusion?', *The Agnostic Annual*, 1898: 29-31. Newman also occasionally used his original name or just his original initials.

6. Lord Farmer, 'Kidd's "Social Evolution"', *The Contemporary Review*, LXV, Jun 1894: 769-80; Spencer, H., 'Mr. Balfour's Dialectics', *The Fortnightly Review*, LVII, Jun 1895: 861-73.

7. See also Newman, E., 'On Music and Musical Criticism', *The Musician*, I, 20 Oct 1897: 450-53.

8. Spencer, H., 'The Inadequacy of "Natural Selection"', *The Contemporary Review*, LXIII, Feb 1893: 153-66, Mar 1893: 439-56; Romanes, G. J., 'Mr. Herbert Spencer on "Natural Selection"', *The Contemporary Review*, LXIII, Apr 1893: 499-517; Weismann, A., 'The All-Sufficiency of Natural Selection. A Reply to Herbert Spencer', *The Contemporary Review*, LXIV, Sep 1893: 309-338, Oct 1893: 596-610; Spencer, H., 'A Rejoinder to Professor Weismann', *The Contemporary Review*, CLIV, Dec 1893: 893-912; 'Weismann Once More', *The Contemporary* Review, LXVI, Oct 1894: 592-608.

9. Newman, E., 'Some Thoughts on Weismann', *The National Reformer*, LXII, 6 Aug 1893: 84-5; 13 Aug 1893: 102-3; 20 Aug 1893: 116-7.

10. For a detailed account of the debate see Kivy, P., 'Herbert Spencer and a Musical Dispute', *MR*, XXIII, Nov 1962: 317-329.

11. Newman, E., 'Mr. Herbert Spencer and the Origin of Music', *MMR*, XXXII, 1 Nov 1902: 205-6; 1 Dec 1902: 224-6. This was later adapted to form an essay in *Musical Studies* (1905): 189-218.

12. The Birmingham Central Library holds a complete series of Newman's columns from *The Birmingham Post* starting from 1913. His earlier articles, and much other material including his notebooks, is contained in the Newman Collection at the Lila Acheson Wallace Library housed at the Juilliard School in New York. This should be available on microfilm once the funding for such a project has been secured. For an inventory of this collection see Ewazen, E., 'The Ernest Newman Collection', (unpublished paper, The Juilliard School, n. d.).

13. For a contemporary account of Newman's early career in Birmingham see 'Mr. Ernest Newman', *The Musical Herald*, XXIII, 1 May 1912: 131-4.

14. The whole Newman-Shaw controversy concerning Strauss that had originally appeared in *The Nation* during 1910, and later in 1914, was reprinted in *Testament of Music* (1962): 115-162.

15. One result of this new perspective was a complete re-evaluation of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Intermezzo* and *Arabella* during the 1950s. The extent to which they were re-evaluated can be seen from Newman's article 'A Conflict of Critics', *ST*, 5 Feb 1956: 8.

16. See Beeson, W., 'Ernest Newman's Departure from Birmingham', *MT*, LX, May 1919: 215. Apparently, when he gave notice to leave the paper, Newman wrote to its editor, G. W. Hubbard: 'I feel that this town will never do anything in music, and I am very tired of struggling to rouse it. I feel, too, that I must settle somewhere where I shall have more opportunities of hearing new things and keeping my knowledge up to date' (Newman, V., 1962: 12).

17. According to James Harding, in his biography *Agate*, (1986: 67), no-one ever saw Newman at *The Sunday Times* office, except in 1944 when he turned up to be presented with a gold watch for long service.

18. See also 'A Note on Debussy', *MT*, LI, May 1910: 293-6; 'The Later Debussy', *The New Witness*, VIII, 27 July 1916: 403-4; 'The Development of Debussy', *MT*, LIX , May 1918: 199-203; Aug 1918: 343-6.

19. The earliest article by Newman to deal with nationalism is 'Music and Race', *The Musician*, I, 16 Jun 1897: 116-17. For articles on nationalism in *The Birmingham Post* see in particular 'More Fallacies about Nationalism', 30 Oct 1916: 4; and 'The Meaning of Nationalism', 6 Nov 1916: 4.

20. Despite their critical differences they apparently maintained a cordial friendship - see Trevor, H., 'The Newman-Evans Fight: What is Mr. Cochran Doing?', *The Musician*, II, Jan. 1921: 100.

21. Adrian Williams's *Portrait of Liszt, By Himself and His Contemporaries* (1990), for example, paints an altogether different picture of the composer. Williams also notes a curious mistranslation that occurs in *The Man Liszt* in which the Prussian historian Theodor von Bernhardi is recorded as writing that Liszt made 'a disagreeable impression', when in fact the German is *einen angenehmen Eindruck* (Newman, 1934: 178). Williams concedes that this blunder could have been perpetrated inadvertently, but suggests that it may also have been a Freudian slip!

Ralph Hill (1931) has pointed out a similar example of Newman's bias and inconsistency in *Fact and Fiction about Wagner* in which the testimony of Hanslick's detractors is used in evidence against the critic while, in a later chapter, Newman places his whole case on the unreliability of human testimony.

CHAPTER V

THE MODERNIST CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

i) EDWIN EVANS

Edwin Evans was the most prominent literary advocate of contemporary music in England during the first half of the twentieth century. Although he began his career sometime later, he can be seen to have performed a parallel role in the history of music in England to that of the conductor Henry Wood. Both, in their different fields, championed a very wide range of modern music and were accused by the more conservative members of their professions of having little sense of discrimination. The catholicity of their taste can now be seen as serving an invaluable purpose in Europeanizing British musical life. During his early career Evans was referred to as 'Edwin Evans Junior', for his father, having the same name, had been a professional organist (he was the first Fellow of the [Royal] College of Organists) as well as a much respected writer on music. Edwin Evans senior published several books, including *A Historical, Descriptive and Analytical Account of the Entire Works of Johannes Brahms* (4 vols., 1912-36), *Wagner's Teachings by Analogy* (1915), and *Beethoven's Nine Symphonies* (2 vols., 1923-4). These works were typical examples of the academic approach to writing about music that was characteristic of its age. It was precisely this kind of dry and essentially analytical writing, with its deferential treatment meted out to German models, that the younger Evans reacted against so vigorously. Reaction against the paternal preoccupation with the German classics accounts, to some extent, for why the younger Edwin Evans turned so decisively towards an interest in non-Germanic music.[1] He consistently placed emphasis on the fact that his advocacy of modern music was in direct opposition to those he regarded as 'Teutonophil diehards', considering himself to be a spokesman of musical internationalism who opposed the upholders of a former world empire. Whereas the slogan of the 'Teutonophils' was 'Art has no frontiers', he argued that music actually drew its life from frontiers, that it was diversity of culture that had in fact produced the most characteristic elements in all the arts. Without such diversity, music would be threatened with the academic uniformity that had characterized the later decades of what he frequently referred to as 'the German predominance'.

A general education at Lille (1883-5) and at Echternach, Luxemburg (1885-9), provided Evans with a European outlook and a command of both French and German that was to prove an invaluable asset for his understanding of foreign music and criticism. It was also later to provide him with the means of mediating between the various factions of the ISCM, of which he was a founding member and later, in 1938, president of the British section in succession to Edward J. Dent. Apart from some elementary tuition from his father, he received no formal musical training. From 1889 he spent four years in cable telegraphy before entering the financial world, first as a member of the Stock Exchange and later, in 1908, as a financial journalist. It was not until May 1914, when he was appointed critic of *The Pall Mall Gazette*,[2]that he committed himself entirely to music criticism. He remained critic of that paper until its demise in November 1923. During the First World War he wrote occasionally for *The Daily Mail* and in 1933 he became its regular music critic in succession to Richard Capell. A large proportion of his prolific writings were published in weekly reviews of politics and the arts, especially *The Outlook* (1911-21) and *Time and Tide* (1927-44). He also created and edited two journals of his own - *The Dominant* (1927-9) and *The Music Lover* (1931-3) - as well as editing *The Musical News and Herald* (1921-2) for a short period. Several articles contributed to the latter were collected to form *The Margin of Music* (1924). His two other books, a biography of Tchaikovsky (1906\R1935) and *Stravinsky: The Firebird and Petrushka* (1933) are both largely non-critical, being founded on an historical and analytical basis.

Evans's first articles appeared in *The Musical Standard* of 1902[3]and dealt with modern Russian instrumental music. They were written to counter the imbalance that had arisen from earlier writers, most especially Rosa Newmarch, focusing too exclusively on the vocal and dramatic music at the expense of a thorough examination of the entire corpus of Russian music. Evans's stated intention was 'to furnish in short sketches a brief survey of what the Russians have done, not so much with an idea of producing a critical or even historical essay, but rather a handy guide to such as might feel sufficiently interested to wish to study the works of this school' (*MS*, LXIII, 29 Nov 1902: 337). The educative purpose and emphasis on utility was highly characteristic of the author. Writings on Russian music formed the core of his early criticism; he was the first to champion Skryabin in England and, like his later interests in French and British music, it was Russian music that stood for the contemporary idea and not a *réchauffé* of tradition

that appealed to him primarily. He corresponded with Borodin during the last years of the composer's life and also received some correspondence from Skryabin in July 1909.[4]

It was through his enthusiasm for the music of the Russian nationalists that Evans came to champion modern French music early in the twentieth century - a time when very little was understood in England about Debussy, let alone younger French composers. He frequently presented illustrated lectures on modern French music and was well equipped to lecture at the RAM on the eve of the first London performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Covent Garden in May 1909, especially having received an informative letter from the composer giving some useful guidelines.[5] In a preface to his translation of G. Jean-Aubry's *French Music of Today* (1919) he gave an account of how he was able to procure scores and enrich his knowledge of this repertoire during the 1890s through the assistance of other enthusiasts, including Vincent d'Indy:

> My enthusiasm for modern French music is now of twenty years' standing, and, in view of the analogies which so many critics have detected between Musorgsky and Debussy, it is worth recalling that I first became acquainted with the French movement through the Russian composers. The circumstances may perhaps be of some interest. On page 9 of the present volume M. Aubry records an "irresistible and definite sensation of the decadence of German music," which he received on hearing Strauss's "The Legend of Joseph." With me that impression is of much longer date, and it was preceded by a period of scepticism concerning the finality of the ideals even of the German classics who preceded the decadence. I was vaguely conscious of something lacking in them which had been present in the music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and at the same time I was alertly conscious of a hiatus between those ideals and the German spirit, with which I had come into contact in the most impressionable years of my boyhood. I realised the nobility of the sentiment, but suspected the accompanying eloquence, and was not disposed to accept it without question, as I experienced a difficulty in reconciling it with what I felt concerning both music and Germany. Needless to say, I was regarded almost as a blasphemer. It was at this time that I first heard of Borodin. Very little of his music was then procurable in London, except by order, and I was not in a position to purchase complete works without knowing more about them, but I became acquainted with a French enthusiast who was more fortunate. This was M. E. Duval-Yzelen, a gifted musician, and the brother of M. Raymond-Duval, the author of the best French edition of Schumann's songs. This gentleman possessed practically the whole of Borodin's works in the form of arrangements for piano duet. We played the volume through from cover to cover. I believe it was at a single sitting, for we had Gargantuan appetites in those days. (On one occasion we played through in the same afternoon the whole of "Hansel and Gretel" and Glazunoff's three-act ballet "Raymonda.") This feast of Borodin was the starting-point of my activities on behalf of modern Russian and French music in turn, for I found in certain portions of this composer's work not only an emancipation from Germany such as one does

not meet with, for instance, in either Dvořák or Tchaikovsky, but also that other element, difficult to define, which the romantic movement had gradually submerged in the nineteenth century. In short, Borodin, and Musorgsky when I began to study him, held for me at least the promise that what I had thought to be lacking since the eighteenth century was not lost beyond recall. It was a little later, but still in the late nineties, that the same musical friend, to satisfy my curiosity whether similar movements could be traced elsewhere, played me, as having an affinity with Borodin, the slow movement of Debussy's string quartet, and also prepared me for the appearance of "Pelléas et Mélisande," of which he had private knowledge. Thanks to this valuable hint, I secured a copy - probably one of the first to reach this country - of that masterpiece the moment the original edition was published by M. Fromont. Meanwhile I had not only obtained practically everything that Debussy had in print at that date, but also extended my studies of French music in general. At first it was a slow process, for the more closely I approached the subject the bigger it became, and, M. Duval-Yzelen having returned to France, there was no information obtainable near at hand; for in those days English musicians still considered Saint-Saëns the last word in French music. However, soon after the appearance of "Pelléas" I had the assistance, for which I could never be too grateful, of M. Vincent d'Indy, the head of the Schola Cantorum, who not only increased my knowledge but also gave me some illuminating hints that enabled me to bring my impressions, which then threatened to become chaotic owing to the profusion of material, into some sort of order. Other help reached me from M. Ed. Moulle, whose wonderful volume of French folk-songs is another charming acquaintance I owe to my fortunate meeting with M. Duval-Yzelen. From that moment my task was easy, and it was not long before I endeavoured by means of lectures and articles to draw the attention of English musicians to the musical treasures lying neglected at their very doors. (: x-xiii)

Those early experiences set the pattern for the rest of Evans's career, for his criticism was almost completely confined to discussion of late nineteenth and twentieth-century English, French and Russian music. At the conclusion of his first series of articles on Russian music he wrote that he hoped to 'place before the readers of *The Musical Standard* some further details concerning this rising English School, which it is my earnest wish and hope to see take its right place at no very distant date, crowned with as much success as that achieved by the Russians' (*MS*, LIV, 17 Jan 1903: 37). To this end the editor of the journal invited composers to submit their works for the author's attention in order to make the articles as representative as possible. A series of seventeen articles entitled 'Modern British Composers' was duly begun in May 1903 in which the author heralded the advent of a young generation of composers who, he felt, demonstrated a marked degree of creative potential that held promise for the future.[6] Unfortunately, during the following decade their potential had largely remained unrealized, a situation



Edwin Evans

particularly apparent in the work of Joseph Holbrooke which had increasingly disappointed the critic. The reasons he suggested for this were threefold; the composers had failed to break free from 'quasi-suburban parochialism', they had failed to develop because of the destructive influence provided by the admiration they received from their immediate surroundings in the absence of a cosmopolitan corrective and they had not acquainted themselves with the broad stream of European intellectual life and culture (*NA*, XIV, 22 Jan 1914: 372-3). During the time the original series was being published he also began to review foreign books for *The Musical Standard*, as well as new music and events such as the 1904 Elgar Festival. His early non-technical manner of attempting to express in general terms how music operates on an aesthetic level can be seen from his remarks on Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. The linking of music and art is highly characteristic:

> To me the first part of "Gerontius" is, to borrow the phraseology of Whistler, an artistic arrangement in grey and violet: the grey of meditation carried to mental disintegration, and the violet of propitiation or rather of penitence, which, in fact, it symbolizes in the ritual. In the second part this sombre colour scheme is in a masterly manner gradually toned upwards until it reaches that pure serenity, which, despite interruptions by angry shadows, is the goal of the composer no less than of the central figure of the poem. (*MS*, LXVI, 19 Mar 1904: 179)

Evans maintained that while Elgar's attainments were unquestionably great, they did not exceed those of other British composers to an extent sufficient to explain why he alone was able to receive a hearing. His antipathy towards certain features of Elgar's style is made plain in the following comment, which at the time, 1911, was no doubt considered by many as being quite heretical:

> Although he has a fine command of the means of expression, he is at times angular and even clumsy in his musical diction, and he is guilty of distressing longueurs. Even at its best his thought is redundant.. Pietism and sentiment are both popular, but when they are combined in a species of sentimental religiosity they are practically irresistible. (*Ok*, XXVII, 10 Jun 1911: 755)

By 1905 Evans had become so closely associated with the work of contemporary British composers that when Frederick Corder and John B. McEwen launched the Society of British Composers he was invited to become a co-founder.[7] Through his involvement with this society he established friendships with many of the younger generation of composers and gained an intimate knowledge of their work. British music enjoyed increasing popularity in the years immediately prior to 1914 and concerts given by

Thomas Beecham, Landon Ronald and Balfour Gardiner, combined with the success of Elgar's First Symphony and a revived interest in British opera, did much to increase public awareness of the quality of indigenous creativity. The First World War forwarded this new impetus and when The Ministry of Information wished to promote contemporary British music after the Armistice it was to Evans that they turned. Their invitation resulted in a second series of articles entitled 'Modern British Composers' which appeared in *The Musical Times* during 1919 and 1920.[8] This series represented a landmark in the critical dissemination of information about British music, for it dealt at length with several composers who were to make a significant contribution to British music and yet whose work had not previously been surveyed as a whole, including Bax, Holst and Vaughan Williams. In an introductory article to the series Evans asserted his belief in the correspondence between social and artistic history. He argued that the composers who were attempting to give expression to a national type of music were forwarding the cause of British music to a much greater extent than those who wrote in a style heavily indebted to German models. The use of foreign models was a mistake, for such models could not express the characteristic features of the English personality:

> It is not surprising that success should come first in forms of music which, even though mainly instrumental, are based upon lyrical needs, especially as the wealth of English literature points to very strong lyrical leanings. But the national expression does not stop here. There are other elements in the English character so strongly national that they perforce remained silent so long as the prevailing idiom was imported. To mention only one, the characteristic vitality of English humour could not find voice in what was virtually a foreign language...
>
> The impatience of mere logic which has so frequently asserted itself in English life was bound to show itself in music so soon as the latter began to emancipate itself from imported traditions. An Englishman addressing his own countrymen will always meet with a more ready response to a plain and direct statement than to a logical dissertation, and expediency will always recommend itself in preference to academic argument. In the degree that music resumes its function of reflecting the national life, this characteristic will become more apparent, but even now, clever symphonic developments of the standard type are to be sought mainly in the works of composers who are least identified with the reawakening of the national spirit. There are, of course, exceptions, but these prove the rule. Directness of purpose, a sentiment that occasionally savours of the ingenuous, combined with a reticence that frequently causes it to be misunderstood abroad, an open-air vigour, and a latent sense of fun, not often disclosed but seldom far distant, these are the features that one may expect to find in representative modern British music. (*MT*, LX, Jan 1919: 11)

The articles were thoroughly appreciative and illuminated the qualities of each

composer's style with some brilliance. Evans was at pains to stress their individuality and independence and often made correspondences between their personality and musical style. Each of the ten composers' entire output was surveyed and a vast amount of useful information was provided, including complete lists of compositions to date. A thorough account of the progressive trends in contemporary British music was thereby established over a period of several months, laying a secure foundation on which future writers could build in the years to follow. Some composers, such as Bax, had received practically no literary recognition other than from Evans, and it was as a direct result of his writing that several of their works were published.[9] In 1944 a similar series was begun, but the critic managed to write on just two composers, Walton and Rubbra, before his death in March 1945.

In 1907 Evans, T. J. Guéritte, and a few others formed a small group called the 'Society for French Concerts in England'. During the ten years of its existence this group was responsible for introducing a great deal of French music, especially chamber music, to this country, particularly through bringing over continental musicians such as Ricardo Viñes, Blanche Selva and Jane Bathori.[10] The intimate knowledge of French music that Evans gained through his involvement with the society was naturally communicated to his lecture audiences and, at a slightly later date, to the readers of his articles. In 1910 he brought together his thoughts on the subject in a paper presented to the Musical Association, entitled 'French Music of Today' (*PMA*, XXXVI, Feb 1910: 47-74).[11] He followed Calvocoressi's division of French composers into two main camps; the intellectuals - the *École cérébrale*, and the aesthetics - the *École sensorielle*. More importantly, however, he set out the view that there existed certain fundamental psychological differences between the races that accounted for their musical characteristics and for the difficulties experienced by listeners of other races; a view vigorously expounded a few years later by Leigh Henry in the series of articles he wrote for *The Egoist* during the First World War and one which was in direct opposition to Newman's thinking on the subject.[12] The concept of a definable racial psychology was closely connected to the issue of nationalism that became the subject of Evans's fiercest and longest standing controversy with Newman. Their exchanges on the issue became increasingly heated during the First World War, when the political situation in Europe inevitably brought the subject to the fore. During the early days of the war some patriots

formed themselves into a group intent on the prohibition of German music, but few critics endorsed their views, which were, they argued, impossible in any case to implement. While Evans agreed that to ban all German music would be absurd, he nevertheless expressed the view that Strauss should be taken out of the repertoire because the composer voiced the ideals of contemporary Germany in music (*Ok*, XXXIV, 28 Nov 1914: 692). Nationalism was regarded as a necessary evil, for as Germany had gained a monopoly of cultural influence it was essential that other nations should assert themselves in order to regain their independence.[13] In his view nationalism in music was merely a means to an end - a way of attaining freedom from the imposition of academic uniformity. Once it had served its purpose and liberated music from the overthrow of 'abnormal' influence, essentially Germanic, it should lapse into unconsciousness. Until such time, it could usefully become a self-conscious expression, with the use of folk material being entirely appropriate in the cause of liberation. To elucidate this opinion Evans was particularly fond of the following analogy between the English composer of German music and the Japanese gentleman in a bowler hat, first made in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of 1915, for he frequently referred to it in his later writings:

> My objection to an obvious Englishman producing music that is as obviously German is that it arouses the same kind of feeling as the sight of a Japanese gentleman in a bowler hat. It is no sort of argument to tell me that a bowler hat is the ideal headgear, or that the bowler hat has no frontiers. I do not dislike bowler hats *per se*, but I cannot get away from the conviction that a Japanese cannot express himself in a bowler hat, or an English composer in terms of German music. (*PMG*, 18 Mar 1915: 5)

Evans, the advocate of all things non-Germanic, and Newman, the champion of Strauss and Wagner, inevitably became the arch-enemies of British music criticism, the representatives of two opposing factions. As they no doubt felt their rivalry to be advantageous on all sides, they did little to disguise the fact and played on their differences of opinion. During the war years Evans had a popular mandate to ally himself with the cause of French music and accuse the Germans of perverting their eighteenth-century heritage. His pro-Latin stance was expressed particularly clearly in his article 'The Foundations of Twentieth Century Music' (*MT*, LVIII, Aug 1917: 347-51) in which he wrote:

> One need only contrast the turgidness of Reger with the clarity of Ravel to realise in what form the Latin mind is asserting itself. The period of German predominance destroyed the clarity of the 18th century. France is restoring it. (: 349)

To employ eulogistic prose in equating French music with 'the anti-sentimental trend', and to accord it such qualities as grace, vivacity, colour and wit, was to ignore the applicability of such terms to much German music of the period. Newman argued that Evans was mistaken in his racially based view, stating that it was the circumstances, not racial germs, that determined the different ideals of French and German music:

> The danger of selecting a few mental traits and elevating them to the dignity of national characteristics is that composers may feel it their duty to try to live up to them, to the damage of their own originality which may really have quite a different orientation. I think the French music of the present generation is a proof of this. While we all admire the beauty and the individuality of much of that music, we all feel it to be a little thin-chested: there is nothing great about it, in the sense in which we speak of the greatness of Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Milton or Balzac. (*BP*, 20 Aug 1917: 4)

This sense of partisan criticism, which resulted from the extreme conservatism of the majority of critics and which no doubt to some extent mirrored a division in the public response to contemporary music, became a predominant feature of British music criticism during the inter-war years. Not only did Evans and Newman continue to disagree violently on the issues surrounding nationalism, the relative value and importance of Germanic music and the significance of the new Franco-Russian repertoire, but also on the issue of criticism itself. Following the publication of Newman's *A Musical Critic's Holiday* (1925) Evans denounced the concept of objectivity in critical thought and set out, as he had done many times before, how he considered his own position to be truly progressive:

> just as composers with all their diversity conform to two basic types, so do critics. One type clings tenaciously to what is, and therefore dedicates himself to the past, or, at most, to such composers of more recent date in whom the inventive element is not paramount. The other is curious as to what may be, and on the alert for all that offers a hope, however faint, of growth and development. One regards new manifestations as a nuisance, the other will travel many miles to hear them, even though his professional duties may not involve the obligation. Mr. Newman, who wrote a self-revealing article to explain why he would not go to Salzburg [for the ISCM Festival] and who devotes so much of his valuable time to the supererogatory task of giving enthusiastic support to the Pyramids, appears to dislike the current division into conservatives and progressives. Above all, he detests the word 'reactionary.' But instead of offering us alternative slogans, such as 'safety first' and 'go ahead,' he gives us nothing better than 'objective criticism,' which, as his book shows, is merely another way of saying 'orthodoxy is *my* 'doxy.' Like his kindred spirit, Lobe, he has admirable theories to substantiate it, but, as with Lobe, they compare ill with his practice...
>
> The kernel of the entire fallacy which he is at such pains to expound lies

> in the touchstone of curiosity. He, the most brilliant leader the conservative party has ever had in this country, conforms to the conservative type in the absence of curiosity. If a thing is not full of meaning for him, he has not the curiosity either to inquire of himself whether there may not be unresponsive patches in his temperamental predisposition, or to apply himself diligently to the conundrum why this thing which conveys no meaning to him should apparently convey significance to others as intelligent as himself. He takes the easier course of denying either their intelligence or their sincerity, and calling his own judgment 'objective.' (*MT*, LXVI, Aug 1925: 694-5)

Although Evans had been a 'progressive' from the start of his career, it was not until Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes came to England during the summer of 1911 that he became closely associated with Franco-Russian modernism. His first article for *The Outlook*, a weekly review of politics, art, literature and finance that published his early responses to modernism, was penned in June of that year.[14] On 11 July 1913, the night of the first London performance of *Le Sacre*, he presented an explanatory lecture on the work at Drury Lane Theatre, thereby publicly aligning himself with the most controversial trends in contemporary music.[15] When the Russian Ballet returned to London after the war he acted as its Press Advisor and chief propagandist. He had a knowledge of the ballet that was unrivalled among music critics of his day and later wrote on the subject for magazines such as *The Dancing Times*. In 1930 he was instrumental in the establishment of the Camargo Ballet Society, of which he became Musical Director.[16] Following the first post-war performance of *Le Sacre* he reprinted in *The Musical News and Herald*, of which he was then editor, an anthology of telling judgements expressed after the earlier performance of the work as a vindication of Stravinsky (*MNH*, LXI, 11 Jul 1921: 749-51). The original performance received mild public opposition but, according to Evans at least, it was none the less emphatic (*Ok*, XLVII, 8 Jan 1921: 38). The critics, however, had reacted against it with an extreme violence of expression. Some had even dismissed it as not being music at all, most prominent among them being Percy Scholes of *The Observer*. Evans had heard the work in Paris shortly after its premiere, along with Debussy's *Jeux* which he described as 'a conclusive rejoinder to those who affect to believe that his powers are on the wane' (*Ok*, XXXI, 21 Jun 1913: 835) - implying Ernest Newman - and was therefore one of the few British critics who were able to write knowledgeably of it before its London premiere. Following this performance he found himself to be 'the leader of a minority of one in praising it in print' (*Ok*, XXXII,

26 Jul 1913: 128). He admired its 'astounding robustness' and lack of sentimentality, and drew attention to the fact that it was, essentially, absolute music:

> The strenuous energy of this music is almost entirely subjective, the "programme" being little more than a pretext... Indeed *Le Sacre du Printemps* is, in all but name, a modern symphony.
>
> The strength of the music is largely due to the entire absence of the romantic element, which has proved a source of much weakness in the music of the past century. By that I do not mean the absence of emotion. On the contrary, the prelude to the second scene contains some of the most poignant music I have ever heard. Its tristesse is almost overwhelming, but it is, so to speak, a physical and not a sentimental sadness. It is emotion without fine phrases, without rhetoric. As I believe that rhetorical sentiment has wrought incalculable harm to music, I am grateful for its absence. (*Ok*, XXXII, 26 Jul 1913: 129)

As an associate of Diaghilev, Evans became acquainted with the coterie that centred on the impresario and an enthusiastic advocate of their work. Whereas by 1920 several critics, including Ernest Newman, considered Stravinsky already to have written himself out, Evans considered that his new directions demonstrated an increasing creativity. Such was the critical antagonism between Newman and Evans over the music of Stravinsky that it practically dominated the British musical press during the autumn of 1920. Evans had championed the aesthetic qualities of classicism from the start of his career. Now he wrote of Stravinsky's methods in a way which directly echoed the composer's own writings. Perhaps it was the other way around, for as early as February 1921 (*Musical America*, 12 Feb 1921: 9) Evans had discerned a link between Stravinsky and Bach and was given credit for establishing this connection by the American critic, Laurence Gilman, who wrote in 1922: 'Only the other day his chief apostle, the able if not wholly persuasive Edwin Evans, hailed him as in fact 'the Bach of today' (*The North American Review*, CCXV, Jan 1922: 117). Stravinsky himself only invoked Bach's name with any frequency after critical responses to his Octet and Concerto for Piano had established the connection as a cliché. Performances of Stravinsky's music in London during 1919 and 1920 provided critics with opportunities to build upon the notion that Stravinsky was the standard-bearer of a new musical objectivity. The analogy Evans chose to describe the difference between Stravinsky's manner of juxtaposing fragments of thematic material, in a work such as *Petroushka*, and what he regarded as the out-moded Germanic technique of weaving such material into a texture, was that between the pudding and the macedoine.[17] The modern composer should not ask the listener to

understand but to feel, he should not impose intellectual problems or have any pretensions of profundity:

> Certain critics, with Mr. Ernest Newman at their head, consider that great composers should be preoccupied with such fundamental themes as love and death. For a century music has suffered from this disadvantage. In the graphic arts it is common that a painter is preoccupied with colour and design. His picture may produce other psychological reactions, but he is not judged by them... Now, if a painter is primarily concerned with colour and design, why is it considered heterodox for a musician to be primarily concerned, as Stravinsky is, with sound and rhythm? To say that music is not an art of representation is no reply when representation is at best regarded as merely incidental to good painting. The position is illogical. In his avoidance of everything that is irrelevant to sound and rhythm Stravinsky is not running riot... In dealing with a dramatic subject such as "The Tale of a Soldier" he can adopt the illustrative methods that we hope to see developed in some super-cinema of the future, but he cannot admit the psychological expression belonging to music-drama. In short, he has handicapped himself at every turn in order to devote himself to the ideal of abstract music, which, according to his point of view, has been submerged since the eighteenth century by a flood of extraneous considerations. In fact, this break in the continuity of abstract music is one of his major difficulties, for it is this, and not any wilful perversion of method, that makes his idiom antipathetic to many. (*Ok*, XLVI, 7 Aug 1920: 138)

Evans's views on neoclassicism were summed up in the first article he wrote for *Time and Tide* (VIII, 8 Jul 1927: 650), an independent journal that combined an entertaining style with serious discussion of ideas about politics, literature and the arts, and which enjoyed considerable prestige during the 1930s when Evans was a regular contributor. In this first article he argued that nobody was better equipped than Stravinsky to reinterpret eighteenth-century classicism from a twentieth-century perspective. The true basis of Stravinsky's neoclassic style was not in the texture of the music but in 'the dialectic mode of constructive thought, which turns from romanticism and "rich" harmonies, regarding both as self indulgence, the former sentimental and the latter sensual' (: 650). The constructive element of Stravinsky's style was frequently emphasized in order to defend it against the charge of a lack of thematic coherence; thematic material was employed purely as constructive building blocks, the significance of which was imparted solely by the builder himself. It was precisely this aesthetic standpoint that Evans had taken in his championship of Debussy. In an *Academy* article of 1909 entitled 'The Direction of Music' he had written:

> Groups of aesthetically selected sonorities are taking the place of the older polyphony, to the neglect not only of contrapuntal laws, but even of the

> preparation and resolution of dissonances. Chords are used as independent organisms, and not as inevitably consequent one on the other. Mathematical symmetry is yielding before the more subtle balance of irregularities which prevails in other arts. (*A*, LXXVII, 17 Jul 1909: 324)

Neoclassicism maintained a Romantic element, although it was considered an 'objective' Romanticism. The element of craftsmanship was all-important for such objectivity and composers such as Hindemith and Milhaud, who were found to be simply making music and not striving subjectively after self-expression, were praised for their objective view of the role of composition (*TT*, XV, 24 Mar 1934: 385). The reduced forces employed by Stravinsky and others also held considerable appeal, for Evans was a particular enthusiast for chamber music and did much to break down the popular conception of that type of music as a kind of esoteric mystery to be enjoyed only by initiates. This was all part of his fight against what he regarded as the ridiculous Teutonic tendency, prevalent in Britain, to judge music by weight. The adjectives he employed to describe the music he admired were part of a common vocabulary found in the writings of all the early champions of Stravinsky: abstract, absolute, architectural, pure, concise, direct and objective. These were contrasted with adjectives deemed more appropriate for music of the pre-war era: metaphysical, illustrative, sentimental, symbolic, prolix, vague and subjective.

It is surprising, considering how closely Evans's view can be seen to correlate with that expressed by Jean Cocteau in his *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* (1918) (which appeared in an English translation by Rollo Myers in 1921), that he did not regard the work of Satie to be of any lasting worth (*TT*, XVIII, 27 Feb 1937: 283). Here is a fundamental difference between Evans and Leigh Henry. The former had been an advocate of the 'new classicism' of Debussy and Ravel long before the mid 1920s, when the term 'neoclassicism' eventually lost its former pejorative connotation and became a label associated almost solely with Stravinsky, and had championed their return to the tradition of Rameau and Couperin. Satie's '*nouveau simplicité*' did not lead back to these sources; nostalgia for the eighteenth century was anathema to the composer. Henry, on the other hand, represented a younger generation and aligned himself with the aesthetic of Apollinaire's '*L'Esprit nouveau*'[18] which presaged Cocteau's *Le Coq et l'Arlequin.* Indeed, it was Cocteau who was responsible for shifting critical approval away from Debussy and Ravel towards members of *Les Six.* The difference is made clear when we

read Henry writing of the 'anaemic neoclassicism' of Ravel's *Tombeau de Couperin* (*The Chesterian*, II, Jan 1921: 371).

As part of an aesthetic view which set France against Germany, classicism against Romanticism and Paris against Vienna, Evans set the virtues of Stravinskian neoclassicism against the atonalism and serialism of Schoenberg. In order to do so it was important for him to be able to discern a unity within the diversity of styles revealed by Stravinsky's middle-period works. It was easy to argue that Schoenberg had broken away from the natural course of his development. Like so many British critics, he considered works such as *Pierrot Lunaire* to represent the final decadence of the German Romantic tradition. It was less easy to discover the stylistic thread that joined Stravinsky's seemingly disparate works into a logical sequence. This accounts for the emphasis given to the abstract nature of Stravinsky's art which played down his involvement with any text. Schoenberg's atonal music had been little performed before the First World War and following the Armistice considerably more attention was focused on Stravinsky, whose ballets became immediately popular.[19] Following the first London performance of Schoenberg's Op. 11 piano pieces in 1912, Evans wrote that he could find in them no coherence of thought, although he considered it 'quite feasible that his [Schoenberg's] wanderings may some day lead him to an unsuspected musical truth' (*Ok*, XXIX, 24 Feb 1912: 239). Although he was not wholly dismissive of serialism, he found little to praise in Schoenberg's music. In 1925 he reported on the famous ISCM Venice festival at which new works by both Stravinsky and Schoenberg were performed and clearly biased his report in favour of the former. His non-committal response to Webern is typical of his open-minded and generous attitude that very often lacked real critical insight (*TT*, XIX, 26 Mar 1938: 436).

The long list of journals to which Evans contributed aptly demonstrates that he was by far the most journalistic of his generation of music critics. The ability to adapt his style to any given medium, to be equally persuasive in writing for a popular newspaper like *The Daily Mail* as for an academic or literary journal, was a skill that he perfected to a greater extent than any other critic of his day. While he limited the content of his criticism to discussion of music written roughly between 1840 and 1940, within that period he ranged comprehensively, although with a clear bias against German music. It seems likely that his close alignment with Franco-Russian modernism played some part in preventing his appointment to a London newspaper until very late in his career. This

was unfortunate, for a position on such a newspaper would perhaps have provided the means by which he could have developed a more thorough critical account of contemporary music. He could successfully provide journalistic copy, but the sheer facility with which he exercised his professional skills seems to have hindered the development of his critical thought. Nevertheless, he never lost an enthusiasm and curiosity for new developments and for this reason managed, during the 1930s, to appeal to a younger generation that had become disenchanted with many of the established critics of his age.[20] In this respect his criticism can be seen to have had significance, for if we take Evans's own view of what constitutes the critic's duty to his contemporaries we find that no other British critic managed so successfully to fulfil those critical functions during the first half of the twentieth century:

> His [the critic's] duty to his contemporaries is, in the first place, to be curious; in the second place, not to aim at forestalling the judgment of posterity, but to review them in the light of their own day, which is the only light upon which he can rely; thirdly, to temper that judgment with consideration for the fact that their lives are not yet ended, and that there is at least as much chance for the fruition of the good that is in their work as there is for the bad to overcome the good; fourthly, to judge any work of heterodox purport by its own standard, and not condemn it for the absence of things which its composer has avoided of set purpose; fifthly, sixthly, seventhly, and so on to the end of the chapter, to be helpful, which is only another word for constructive, and the opposite to destructive. It is quite easy to stifle effort, and no doubt there is much effort that should be stifled at birth, for its value is merely negative. But if the positive factor can be discerned, then it must be permitted to germinate, and one of the most honourable functions of criticism is to prevent the tender plant from being trampled into the earth. (*MNH*, LXI, 11 Jul 1921: 745)

The impact of Evans's advocacy was ultimately weakened by the fact that he was too generous in his praise and too parsimonious in his damnation. This gave the impression of a certain timidity, a willingness to sit on the fence of critical judgement and merely issue a blanket approval to contemporary works that seemed to be progressive. But if the end of criticism is conceived not as the handing-out of judgements, but the promotion of musical understanding - to which judgement is a by-product - then the way is open to that potentially most valuable function: the bringing to light and questioning of the common, often unconscious assumptions which define musical taste. Through his constructive and positive criticism of all progressive trends, Evans fulfilled a vital role in the wider dissemination and understanding of contemporary music.

ii) LEIGH HENRY

If, as Newman once suggested, the music critic is even more painfully the product of his epoch than the composer, nowhere is it more true than in the case of Leigh Henry, perhaps doubly so as he was at once critic, poet and composer. As creative artists of secondary importance are frequently more representative of their age than major figures, being able to offer through their art a unique insight into the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, so critics such as Henry who are particularly sympathetic to new movements in musical thought can articulate contemporary aesthetic concerns with clarity while suffering the inevitable consequence of future oblivion. Although active as a critic for a period of nearly twenty years, from 1914 to 1933, he was most prolific during the early 1920s when for a brief time he edited the remarkable but ill-fated journal *Fanfare: A Musical Causerie*. His critical thought was identified with the concerns of the immediate post-war era, focusing on those composers centred on the Diaghilev Ballet (for which he was later in 1926 to succeed Edwin Evans as press advisor on musical matters and director of the musical information bureau). He never held a position on a London newspaper and only published four marginal books; three were concerned with musical appreciation (1920, 1921, 1935) and the fourth, on John Bull (1937), being more in the nature of a novel than a critical biography. It was through regular articles and reviews written for *The Musical Standard* and various other periodical journals, as well as a weekly column in the Cardiff *Western Mail*, that he championed the cause of contemporary music with a critical acumen propounding an aesthetic truly representative of its age.

Although born in Liverpool, Henry was by blood and sympathy an enthusiastic Celt, taking an active role in the yearly Eisteddfod Festivals, later supporting the budding Welsh national school of composers led by Gwynn Williams, and lecturing on various aspects of the Welsh musical heritage. He especially urged Welsh composers to abandon foreign influences and turn instead to the investigation of the Cymric folk-tradition in music - a path he attempted to take in his own compositions. From around 1912 he probably travelled in Europe; certainly he was present at the first performance of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* in Prague during the autumn of that year. The following year was decisive, for he was then appointed Director of Music at Edward Gordon Craig's short-lived but highly influential 'School for the Art of the Theatre' in Florence. Craig

had gathered around him at the Arena Goldoni young teachers from all over Europe who were, simultaneously, students of his own innovative methods working under his supervision, each teacher contributing something of his own art while being taught by the others. Craig's individual aesthetic outlook, expounded in his periodical *The Mask*,[21] and his fight against the conventions of realistic theatre, as well as numerous other aspects of his personality such as the fascination with marionettes which he shared with Stravinsky, all exerted a profound influence on Henry that was later to manifest itself in his critical writings. Florence, at that time, provided him with a cosmopolitan perspective of modernist trends in each of the arts that was unavailable to his compatriots at home. This access to international culture enabled him to absorb assiduously the multifarious new developments in contemporary music of which he was to write so profusely in later years. The Florence of 1913 was a conspicuous centre of radical innovation, especially as the home of Italian Futurism. Significantly, the Futurists made anti-Teutonic nationalism part of the avant-garde artistic agenda in Italy. Marinetti's shout "Down with Wagner, long live Stravinsky" was often repeated after 1914 and became a slogan of the radical movement with which Henry became intimately involved. As W. S. Meadmore later testified:

> At the time that I met Henry in Florence, the city was very much alive with new artistic impulses and ideas. Leigh Henry gave a remarkable series of concerts at the Liceo Reale (of which he was made an Hon. Associate) of contemporary music, which attracted cultured and enthusiastic audiences. The Italian Futurists had made Florence their headquarters, and nightly we met Marinetti, Panini, Severini and others of the movement. I have since often wondered if the grosser exaggerations of the Futurists did not owe much to the ironical remarks of Leigh Henry, received with too much seriousness by the attentive Futurists! (*MS*, CXI, 20 Nov 1926: 163)

At the Arena Goldoni, between 1912 and 1914, Henry received a broad artistic education encompassing areas such as stage design and choreography, providing him with an invaluable resource on which to draw in his criticism and particularly in his appraisals of the Ballets Russes. His first critical writing dates from this time and takes the form of various substantial letters to the Press and to editors of periodicals. The earliest, addressed to the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* (7 Mar 1914: 7), corrects a then widely-held British misconception regarding Futurism, namely that the leader of the movement was not Schoenberg, Skryabin, nor any of the other composers indiscriminately labelled as Futurist, but Balilla Pratella. Clearly under the influence of Marinetti (Henry was later

to become a pro-Mussolini Fascist), his progressive attitude is made apparent from the outset as he wrote appreciatively of Pratella's compositions as well as his radical theoretical manifestos. Later, however, he came to regard Pratella's theoretical preoccupations as an obstacle hindering the complete freedom of his musical expression.[22]

In 1914 Henry was appointed Musical Director at the Theaterkunstschule in Berlin, but on arrival in Germany he was detained by the authorities and later interned at Ruhleben. Here he maintained his artistic activities through giving concerts and lecture recitals, as well as organizing a tercentenary Shakespeare Festival in 1916.[23] Concert-going was not altogether forsaken as he was escorted from the camp to hear certain performances, including the premiere of Strauss's Alpine Symphony. He was also able to continue his critical writing which was sent to England. In April 1914 an important series of essays entitled 'Liberations: Studies of Individuality in Contemporary Music' was begun in *The Egoist*. This literary journal, subtitled 'An Individualist Review', was an entirely appropriate medium for Henry's first critical essays on contemporary music, for although it had adopted its name only four months earlier (it had previously been *The New Freewoman*), it had already succeeded in putting itself in the avant-garde of literary revolt - a revolt spearheaded by the group described broadly as Imagist. It included Richard Aldington and the American expatriates John Gould Fletcher and Ezra Pound, who were avidly publishing discussion of 'advanced' art and ideas to which Henry's articles contributed in like manner. Henry's views on music closely followed the aesthetic of Imagism. As an aesthetic of hardness, Imagism came about as a reaction against the 'softness' that had enthraled the alternately melancholy and hedonistic spirit of the 1890s. Its hallmarks were concision, the avoidance of sentimentality and 'soft' symmetrical metres, the paring away of all ornamental frills and the tendency towards irregularity of poetic form.

In a prelude to the series, Henry expressed his belief that music must be evolutionary in order to justify its existence, that it should in some way document its age. He shared with his Imagist colleagues a strong antipathy to all things Victorian, an opposition to representational art, and a belief that the new twentieth-century consciousness demanded new and original art forms - that the old academic approaches were outmoded. His critical response to new music can be seen as a parallel to the

Imagist revolt against descriptive poetry and their attempts to formulate a direct presentational art which would abandon such formulist aspects as regularity of metre and the use of capital letters when starting a new line. With the purpose of attacking the false academic criteria of technical and theoretical achievement and replacing them with a method that would 'examine motives, analyse the force and mental standpoint of the composer and indicate his significance in relation to life and the intellectual individualism surrounding him' (*E*, I, 1 Apr 1914: 121), Henry sought to propose a new critical framework in order to deal with the ever widening conceptions of new music. With the advent of Schoenberg, he asserted, the imperative necessity for such a new critical faculty was finally demonstrated, and it was to this composer that his first essay was appropriately assigned. Its title, 'Arnold Schoenberg and the Protection of Introspective Psychology', reveals the all-pervasive contemporary influence of Freud and although he was not the first to relate the creative achievements of Schoenberg to those of psycho-analysis, he was probably the first in British music criticism to draw attention to this important relationship. Schoenberg's music is interpreted in terms of a psychological exploration dealing with introspective mental states recreated in abstract sound, the composer being a musical counterpart of such literary figures as Strindberg and Jacobsen. For example, Henry described the first of the *Five Orchestral Pieces* Op. 16 as 'the awakening of mentality from subconsciousness to the realisation of possibilities emanating from an approaching psychological crisis' (: 123). When dealing with Bartók in a later article (*E*, I, 1 May 1914: 167-9) he again draws on the connections between music and psychology in an attempt at an 'analysis of racial psychology'. Such an analysis was found necessary to arrive at an estimation of 'the purely material elements underlying the development of national thought and the moods emanating therefrom' (: 167) - an idea reinforced in his discussion of new developments in Spanish music (*E*, I, 1 Aug 1914: 291-4). The desire to knit together diverse cultures into a single racial fabric that is evidenced in these articles was a common ploy in anti-German rhetoric.

These twelve studies, spread over the duration of the war, represent a remarkable achievement not only in their wide-ranging diversity of subject matter but more especially in their sheer contemporaneity.[24] They included the first article in English to deal comprehensively with the work of Erik Satie, written at a time when his name was virtually unheard of outside a small group of Parisian admirers. Also notable is the

manner in which Henry considers music in its broad artistic context. Characteristically, he draws analogies between the repudiation of barlines and time signatures in the work of Erik Satie and the poetic precepts of Guillaume Apollinaire, between Skryabin's harmonic vocabulary and Kandinsky's use of colour, and between Schoenberg's polyphony and the techniques employed by the Parisian group of Simultanist painters and their literary counterpart in the poetic aesthetic of simultaneity originated by H. M. Barzun. A series of twenty articles on contemporary composers, similar to that published in *The Egoist* during the First World War, was published between 1920 and 1924 in *Musical Opinion*.[25]

Following the Armistice, Henry was released from Havelberg Punishment Camp and he returned home with fierce anti-German feelings.[26] If he was hardly an advocate of German Romanticism before the war, he now considered there to be a distinct correspondence between the massed armies of the German empire and the massed batteries of sound found in the compositions of Wagner and Strauss. He insisted on making Germanic academicism the scapegoat for all manner of evils, especially the neglect of non-German repertoire. Typically, following a concert of Byrd's music some years later, he expressed the view that the Germans had cooked the musical history books:

> Criminal neglect alone obscured this splendid native music for two centuries, and Germanised academicism was responsible. German propaganda for world-supremacy was as thorough as German preparation for political world-dominion through war. As Bismarck faked his Emperor's messages to justify the Franco-Prussian start towards conquest, so German professors and historians cooked musical history, ignoring all contesting non-German claims. The epoch of genius was presented as German, comprised in Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, canonised as perpetual immaculate models. (*WM*, 29 Sep 1923: 6)

Henry's complete lack of regard for Wagnerian music-drama can be seen in the following provocative remarks which resulted in a heated exchange in the correspondence columns of *The Musical Standard*:

> There is no real excuse for *Parsifal* as a stage-work; its theatricalism belongs to the melodramatic infancy of modern drama. The action is unspeakably tedious, the dialogue pretentiously dull to boredom; of all the music eight-tenths is superfluous. It is best in the concert-hall, well pruned, and even bowdlerised. (*MS*, XCVIII, 13 Mar 1920: 93)

The rejuvenation in London concert life after the war largely centred on the younger generation of British composers and the influx of contemporary music from France and Russia. It was this repertoire that inspired Henry to prodigious quantities of

critical writing which, like Evans's, was essentially constructive, enthusiastic and positive in its appreciation of the new. While such enterprises as the 1919 Beecham Opera Season and the Russian Ballet at the Alhambra Theatre were reviewed at considerable length in *The Musical Standard*, it was above all the work of Stravinsky that received closest attention in the post-war period. *The Firebird* and *Petrushka* made an enormous impact on London audiences in 1919 and, although in his 1914 *Egoist* article Henry had expressed reservations concerning the former's over-seriousness and the limitations of its depictive theme, as well as the latter's reliance on external forms, he was nevertheless highly enthusiastic:

> Both in creative attitude and in technical methods Stravinsky stands alone, and above, all other contemporary composers. His music is in closer relationship to the expressive essence of sound than any other hitherto known. For Stravinsky deals with music in substance, not according to mode. His compositions are the outcome of an absolute objectivity of mind, which is acutely sensible of the *aural* qualities of sound: it is music written to be heard, and to react on the aural sense, not to be measured on paper with the foot-rule of a Teutonic "système." Stravinsky is practical, not theoretical; he has methods, but no system.
>
> The music he writes for his choreographic poems never distracts; he has no subservience to abstract architectonics. The crowd-music in *Petrushka* has no artificiality of melodic refrains, cadences, of musical 'chopped-off' periods; it is an interactive fusion of kaleidoscopic images corresponding precisely to the shifting impressions from which the exuberance of crowded scenes is built up. To this Stravinsky's orchestration contributes greatly. He negates the old instrumental group divisions, and writes for each instrument particularised, with regard to the qualities discerned by direct experiment. Hence he obtains a diversity and multiplicity of tonal colour, and a subtlety of orchestral nuance never before attained. Added to this fusion of streams of instrumental colour, he has a rhythmic sense which renders his rhythmic expression a unifying factor which, far more efficiently than the conventional structural balance, creates for it a striking individuality of form. He employs his rhythmic movement of sound as a delineative factor, by which he co-ordinates all the constituent thematic subtleties and harmonic tints of which his music is made up.
>
> Yet, despite all this complexity of medium, there is nothing ever redundant or prolix in Stravinsky's expression. Always he is distinguished by the clarity and concision of his writing, from which it derives its dramatic force and appeal. The music of the elusive Bird-Woman has nothing of the childishly obvious and static character of Wagnerian 'Leit-motif'. Plastic musical phrases, of a tonal colour only to be described as luminous, are used interactively, producing an imagist effect of arabesque design in music. (*MS*, XCVI, 24 May 1919: 170-1)

Henry considered Stravinsky's works from *Le Sacre* onwards to represent an entirely new aesthetic approach to the resources of sound, defined in his criticism by the keyword, 'objectivity'. As an empiric experimenter investigating the aural qualities of

sound, Stravinsky was able to produce objective compositions that maintained no reference to the artificial technical conventions and stereotyped formal procedures that restricted his lesser contemporaries.[27] Henry admired his negation of poetic implication, his new structures based on 'sound-colour quantities' and his decorative juxtaposition of instrumental timbre. Discussing the *Three Pieces for Clarinet* in a 1920 article on Stravinsky's chamber music he drew attention to Stravinsky's capacity for what he termed 'sound-synthesis':

> Without accompaniment, they constitute a kind of musical arabesque tracery, where the form is defined by rhythmic figures, and by a balance of the tone qualities of the various timbre-contrasts provided by the different registers of the instrument. The tonal line of each arabesque is so devised as to synthesise at once the characteristics of Stravinsky's melodic and harmonic expression, the successive notes, taken in succession, providing a harmonic fabric treated horizontally, in place of the older perpendicular method of writing. (*MS*, XCIX, 31 Jul 1920: 39)

The performance of *L'Histoire du Soldat* given by Ernest Ansermet at the Wigmore Hall on 20 July 1920, which had occasioned the article mentioned above, was considered by Henry to be the finest musical event at which he had been present since the concert rendering of *Le Sacre* under Monteux in Paris some six years earlier. He wrote of the work's structure as being based on 'tonal-colour values' with each instrument being treated objectively with regard to its individual timbre and employed with a view to the greatest number of dynamic possibilities.[28] The three main advocates of Stravinsky's music in Britain, Evans, Henry and Ernest Ansermet, each drew attention to the 'absolute' nature of Stravinsky's works. This caused some controversy in the pages of *Musical Opinion* when Percy Scholes, writing as 'Autolycus', attempted to deride such a suggestion in his regular column 'Unconsidered Trifles'.[29] A further aesthetic feature of Stravinsky's musical style that Henry considered to be of significance was its humour. In a *Musical Times* article devoted solely to this subject he referred to *Petrushka* as the first manifestation of the objective musical development of Stravinsky's sense of humour, although he admitted that he did not consider much of it to be of an independently musical nature (*MT*, LX, Dec 1919: 671-3). With *Le Rossignol* he found that Stravinsky had achieved a humour inherently aural and praised him for ridding music of its subordination to literary purpose that had taken hold from the inception of Romanticism. Music of an intrinsically humorous character held much appeal for Henry, who championed the satirical works of Lord Berners and Erik Satie. In his review of Satie's



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Parade he wrote at length about its mocking whimsicality which, contrary to the opinion of most other commentators, he did not perceive as truly parodistic. His criticism was more penetrating:

> The humour consists of pure "actualism"; the jest is in the presentation of certain phrases of music absolutely as they commonly confront us, without exaggeration or modification, and then, without further allusion, placing them in sharp juxtaposition with something else, equally independent - in fact so much so, as to scarcely constitute it a comment.' (*MS*, XCVII, 6 Dec 1919: 181)

The humour of Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat* was also analysed with considerable skill in a *Musical Opinion* article that illustrates Henry's wide-ranging critical perception equalled in breadth by few of his colleagues (*MO*, XLIII, Nov 1919: 122-23). Here, every aspect of the production, from Picasso's costume designs to Massine's choreography, is discussed in detail - even the drop curtain receives criticism.

The basis of Henry's critical thought is most concisely summarized in an article of 1919 entitled 'The Objective Direction in Contemporary Music' (*ER*, XXIX, Dec 1919: 507-16). This is divided into five sections: Music and Modern Influences; The Academic System; The New Spirit and Methods in Music; and The Consequent Necessities in Musical Criticism. An attempt is made to demonstrate how the critical and academic functions are opposed for, while the former is held to measure the value of art by precedent and absolutist criteria, the latter is seen to view its phenomena directly, regarding each element in relation to all others. The academic system is held responsible for perverting art through the imposition of arbitrary ideals and theories to such an extent that the accepted notions of musical form, based on German models, had become foreign to the purely aural and expressive nature of music as sound. Issuing directives to composers to liberate themselves from the harmful influences of precedent in order to live and create freely with spontaneity, and to critics to rid themselves of all prejudices and abstract concepts enabling constructive criticism that perceives music's 'real' or 'actual' value, this manifesto summarizes the central tenets of Henry's critical thought. In maintaining a position at the forefront of the avant garde he articulated the progressive aesthetic which prevailed at that time. The devastation of the war had led him to conclude, with Stravinsky and others, that the era of grandiose Romantic musical conceptions had become obsolete and that a new spirit of economy was imperative in an impoverished world:

> Empiric methods and independent thought based on tonal actualities, on experiment, investigation and personal selection - these, with imagination to discern unutilised possibilities, are the sole means to full, sincere, and truly creative expression. Everywhere today we are striving to penetrate to essentials, to re-coordinate the wreck occasioned by a sterile tradition of civilisation, and to conserve energy, and to do this successfully we must deal freely, directly, and unprejudicedly with all quantities in life, and in that art which is its expression. NE QUID NIMIS... everything superfluous must go. (*ER*, XXIX, Dec 1919: 514)

While attacking the academicism of the old pre-war order, Henry was also quick to discern elements of what he regarded as the 'new academicism' emanating from 'the abstract systematisation of certain practices along the lines of mechanical formulae' (*WM*, 15 Dec 1923: 9). Among those to whom he applied this term were Holst and Vaughan Williams, of whose string quartet he wrote scathingly, 'What is not Ravel in it is marked by a painfully antiquarian delving into folk-modes which preserves all the sepulchre remains, but ignores the spirit which once animated them' (: 9). As an example of a trend towards neo-academicism that he found was affecting certain Italian composers of the younger generation, he cited Pizzetti:

> I first remember him in Florence when he was enthusiastically searching into the early Italian polyphonists and madrigalists, and we used to meet at the home of Bastionelli... Then, between researches, Pizzetti was writing delightful *a capella* choral works, full of vigour, and exquisitely impressionistic songs such as 'I Pastori'.. Then these things seemed inspirations; Pizzetti became leader among the young Italians. Now we realise them as reflections of the polyphonic music of his researches, and of the Debussy who so stimulated the Italian Nationalist revival, through Latin racial affinity, from France. The remaining works, particularly the violoncello and violin sonatas, revealed Pizzetti's decline into academicism, albeit modern in kind. (: 9)

The year 1921 represented a high water mark in Henry's career, and among his daily companions in the round of social and musical functions were Stravinsky, Falla, Prokofiev, Egon Wellesz and Ernest Ansermet. In October the first issue of his journal *Fanfare* was published by Goodwin and Tabb.[30] Although this review of decidedly 'advanced' tendencies lasted for just seven issues, it was the most colourful and in many respects the most representative periodical dealing with music and the arts of its time. As its editor, Henry opened with a characteristic flourish entitled 'En Fanfaron' - full of high-spirited confidence and *joie de vivre*:

> Fanfare - does not the word suggest something stirring, brilliant, joyous, exciting - something which preludes adventure? Is it not fraught with the glamour of bold endeavour, of fearless questioning and resolute achievement by the world's far-

spreading ways of land and sea?

Yet it is no mere sentimental symbol of romance. The thrill of it seems remote only because our senses have been deadened by the dull era from which we are emerging...

Our FANFARE sounds for the advanced guard; but patrols have gone before us, spreading out the load, opening up new routes, preparing our roadways. We have girded on new accoutrements, and carry new banners; but we are aware of our heritage. (*F*, I, Oct 1921: 2)

Setting out to achieve a diversity and breadth of perspective on the arts that represented the international avant garde, *Fanfare* dealt with literature, drama, painting, sculpture and theatre as matters of knowledge forming a necessary complement to musical culture. The first issue alone encompassed articles on recent developments in Paris, Flamenco music, poetry by Richard Aldington and John Gould Fletcher, drawings by Freegrove Winzer and Sancha, as well as four specially composed fanfares by Satie, Falla, Bantock and Goossens.[31] In fact this breadth of purpose was doubtless an important contributory factor in the journal's lack of long-lasting appeal, along with the fact that it was probably just too advanced for its day; had it been postponed for a year or two it might have sustained its readership.

As the instigator of the 'Fanfare Movement,' whose admirable purpose was to enfranchise the British musician among other European artists, Henry urged British composers away from insularity towards an international outlook, a tendency that had in fact already been taking place for some years among the younger generation. The movement's slogan was every bit as feeble as those adopted by the popular advertisements of the day, though here, of course, the effect was limpidly satirical: 'We like its sound and we know it's sound'. The list of contributors and well-wishers was impressive and included T. S. Eliot, Picasso, Satie, and a host of other influential writers, artists and musicians. Many of the articles retain significant historical interest, such as those on Satie and *Les Six* by Jean Cocteau (who also contributed drawings), the Paris notes by Poulenc and essays by Egon Wellesz. Henry himself wrote poetry, reviews and articles on contemporary music, including an interesting paean to the chamber orchestra in 'Music and the Modern Intimate Trend' (*F*, I, Dec 1921: 81-3). Here he argued that this medium was the most fitting vehicle for contemporary expression as it permitted to the best advantage the play of its individual instrumental characteristics: 'It does not coerce our feelings by mass-force; it leaves them free to re-act' (: 82). He also reflected that the

ultimate form evolved should combine song, dance and chamber orchestra, with the action mimed and the voices singing apart with the orchestra - a conception influenced by the ideas of Gordon Craig and perhaps also by those expressed by Stravinsky in *Les Noces*:

> With the barriers of the proscenium removed, with its puerile illusions cast aside, and with direct *rapport* between the media of voice, instruments, and movement and the audience which sees players, singers, and actors alike, is there not here the most human form of the presentational theatre towards which so many in the theatre are already making tentative movements? Is there not here something to replace the abomination of the 'musical evening' - something to revive again, without the archaeologic sentiment of folk-like societies, the old, virile joy of the vocal round-dance, the carol, and the social music which once made our country Merrie England? (: 83)

In September 1923 Henry began a regular column for the Cardiff daily *Western Mail* entitled 'Music of the Moment: A Weekly Survey'. He was given the space, often as much as 2000 words, to develop his critical ideas at leisure with apparently very little editorial intervention.[32] He voiced opinions strongly, ranging over a wide area of contemporary music, and dealt especially with Welsh concerns. His stated objective was 'to realise by comparison of the various elements represented by all kinds of music, the essential *realities* which these, severally and collectively, constitute' (*WM*, 15 Sep 1923: 9). The idea that criticism should examine the extent to which a composition fulfils its own intention and purpose, revealing its 'essential realities' and their significance in relation to other music was later developed in a *Sackbut* article concerning 'Musical Reality and the Critical Function' (*S*, X, May 1930: 264-8). By 'realities' he referred not to anything which could pass under the term 'realism', but to the intrinsic qualities inherent in music itself, the spiritual essence of which his criticism attempted to deduce. He argued that such deduction could no more easily be achieved from observation of external form than the nature of a human being from superficial traits of physical appearance.

Henry's *Western Mail* columns usually included a review of the week's concerts and often a general survey of the historical background to the repertoire being discussed, written from his trenchantly anti-German and highly idiosyncratic point of view. The vigour with which he expressed his criticism can be seen in the following general observations sparked off by a performance of Hindemith's Piano Concerto:

> Hindemith broke the monotony of Teutonic rhythm, that exasperating pedestrianism which clogged most of the movement in Beethoven's symphonies,

> gave Schumann often an untidy lurch, reduced Wagner to dyspepsia and evoked from Strauss the cacophony of rheumatic capers - the ponderous gait of German romanticism. He dared to look over both German borders into France and Russia without condescension, to voice their tongue without a guttural accent and even to flout the elephant-leg of German mental tailoring to caper now and then in musical pants strangely peg-topped and imbued with trans-Atlantic ozone. (*WM*, 10 Sep 1927: 9)

As the 1920s progressed, Henry became increasingly involved with composing, conducting and broadcasting. In 1927 he was appointed Artistic and Musical Director of the Italian marionette players (Teatro delle Piccole Maschere), who produced his 'cinematographic' ballet *L'Homme Saoul*. From 1923 he had written appreciative articles on the marionette drama, which for him was a combination of music and drama considerably superior to opera, certainly grand opera.[33] Rarely does he even mention opera in his criticism, since he found its opulence repellent and its conventions absurd (*MO*, XLIX, Aug 1926: 1095-6). He demanded a more intimate type of entertainment, one that would be genial rather than grandiloquent, one that would make its appeal to every member of society rather than the select few. As a result he supported the tentative moves being made in the direction of chamber opera by English composers such as Armstrong Gibbs, Holst and Holbrooke.

In 1928 Henry resigned his position on *The Western Mail*, and in the following year he travelled to America, where he lectured and broadcast on contemporary music. He had been a member of the advisory board of the New York League of Composers since its inception in 1924, and had contributed articles to its journal *Modern Music*. Contacts with America had also been established through his London editorship of *Musical America* between 1927 and 1929, as well as his regular column 'American Notes and News' written for *The Musical Standard* between 1923 and 1933. In the latter he took up the cause of American music with characteristic vigour and the column became an important platform for discussion of new American music rarely heard in this country. He regarded this platform as an attempt to 'act as a minor liaison between American and British musicians and music lovers and serve to provide matter of interest to those who would see a common ground established for Anglo-American musical topics, along the lines broadly characterised by feeling akin to that which created the English-speaking Union' (*MS*, CX, 20 Mar 1926: 101). In 1930 he was appointed Musical Director of the American Ballet Guild in New York.

With the works of those composers Henry had championed so forcefully back in 1914 now - at the end of the second decade of the twentieth century - winning increasing acceptance in the public domain, he no doubt felt the advocacy of his pen to be increasingly redundant. With the demise of both *The Sackbut* and *The Musical Standard* in 1933 his career as a music critic came to an end. He had documented his response to contemporary developments in music during one of the most rapidly shifting periods in music history, and although he cannot be said to have made a major contribution to critical thought, it was nevertheless a contribution of historical significance. His aversion to all things German, intensified by his experiences at Ruhleben during the First World War, was extreme. The need to exaggerate and overstate his case was particularly pronounced in his rejection of Romanticism and his break with anything that remotely resembled tradition. In the evaluation of art for its ability to shock, in his rejection of Beethoven and his championship of Satie and *Les Six*, Henry adumbrated an aesthetic that was in all essentials that of Jean Cocteau as expressed in his *Le Coq et l'Arlequin*. As a propagandist for creative innovation and what he might have described as 'empiric experiments in sound' he argued his case with intelligence and a considerable literary exuberance. His descriptions of Stravinsky fit comfortably into the composer's own post-war view of himself as a champion against the characteristic utterances of nineteenth-century Romanticism. Through the intense individuality of his criticism and his close alignment with the aesthetic predominating in the immediate post-war era, Henry shared with Edwin Evans a position in the forefront of progressive critical thought. His support of the aesthetic of simultaneity, which he had first encountered in pre-war Italy through his association with Futurists such as Gino Severini,[34]resulted in a more radical perspective than Evans's and one which contrasted post-war achievements with those of the pre-war era, setting itself, in particular, against Debussian Impressionism. Both shared an appreciative manner of criticism which can be broadly classified into four general aesthetic areas, each expressed by Henry with greater clarity and vigour than by Evans. This difference in expression mirrors that of the pre-war and post-war modern movement in England at large; the latter was more cynical, less assertive about points of morality and value and more determined to reject outright everything that could in any way be identified with the pre-war era.

The first of these four aesthetic areas can be classified as 'objective empiricism'.

Evans and Henry championed objectivity in the belief that the expression of intensely personal utterances led either to a distortion or to offensive and vulgar sentimentality. The composer must not be restricted by academic devices and should not seek to convey literary, graphic, or philosophic significances, or emotional implications suggested by means of mental associations. A high degree of craftsmanship was essential if a work was to succeed. Secondly, they demanded simplicity and economy of means, an important result of which was their enthusiasm for contemporary chamber music. This was expressed as a reaction against size and density and the obscurity that resulted from large-scale dimensions. They demanded a straightforward expression in which any sense of vagueness or ambiguity was excluded. Thirdly they supported the notion that spontaneity and freshness could often be best characterized by evoking the childlike condition. Many of Henry's poems evoke this condition and his involvement with marionette theatre also expressed his fascination with childhood. Interest in the comic themes of the Commedia dell'Arte was a dominant feature of all the arts during the first decades of the twentieth century and works which took such themes as their basis invariably received the approval of these two critics, who often made a correlation between youth and expressive simplicity. In 'The Country of "Children's Tales"' (*MO*, XCVII, Aug 1919: 689), for example, an enthusiastic review of a dance-cycle presented by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, Henry wrote:

> Every child is more than a mere entity for those of us who feel at all sensitively: it is a symbol of our own first unmarred potentialities and aspirations... there are some who not only roam at will in the Country of Children's Tales, but who have also knowledge of the magic which can transport us there for brief moments. This may be done with many different spells. One wave of "The Wand of Youth", one peal on the *Knaben-Wunderhorn*, one trill of Stravinsky's and Andersen's "Nightingale", or a step to the other side of Carroll's "looking Glass", one tap of the crutch of Ravel's "Mother Goose", and we are there. (: 689)

The fourth classification, that of cultural elitism, was perhaps the most dominant feature of their critique. The previous elements of objectivity, simplicity and youth were all found to be inherent in non-Germanic peoples. Nationalistic music, whether it be Spanish, Hungarian or Czech, was consistently praised and favourably contrasted with the achievements of German Romanticism. The critics' diatribe against what they perceived as Germanic academicism and their excessive musical xenophobia was part of a larger cultural perspective. It may have provided pungency to their writing, but ultimately it prevented them from achieving a balanced critique of contemporary music.

Chapter V - Notes

1. In an article entitled 'Then and Now' (*MT*, LXXXV, Sep 1944: 269-71) Evans wrote of this reaction: 'I had been brought up to regard the German classics as the 'absolute' in music. So complete was my father's allegiance to them that he would not even refer to the 'working-out' section of a sonata allegro. It had to be called *Durchführung*. It was the natural impulse of youth to react against the teaching of age that led me, without in any way lessening my respect for the masters, to question whether they had really told the whole story - whether music was really, as Wilde's Baroness Bernstein imagined it, a dialect of the German language - and made me intensely curious to know what else there was to tell' (: 269).

2. The entry for Evans in *The New Grove* mistakenly puts the starting date of his articles for *The Pall Mall Gazette* as 1912. A letter from J. L. G. Garvin (1868-1974), editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1912-15) and also of *The Observer* (1908-42), to Evans, confirming his appointment as critic of that paper at a salary of six guineas a week, is held in the Evans Collection at the Central Music Library, Westminster, London.

3. Evans, E., 'Modern Russian Instrumental Music', *MS*, LXIII, 29 Nov 1902: 337-8; 6 Dec 1902: 349-50; 13 Dec 1902: 366-7; 20 Dec 1902: 382-3; 27 Dec 1902: 398-9; LXIV, 3 Jan 1903: 6-7; 10 Jan 1903: 22-3; 17 Jan 1903: 36-7.

4. Evans mentions the Borodin correspondence in an article entitled 'My First "Modern"', *ML*, IV, Jul 1923: 228. Apparently the composer presented him with the autograph manuscript of one of Glazunov's symphonies which was sent to him after the printers had finished with it. He mentions letters from Skryabin in a letter to the editor of *Musical Opinion*, Dec 1920: 226. Several letters he received from composers, including Stravinsky, Falla, Ravel and Walton, are held in the Piermont Morgan Library, New York, but it has not been possible to ascertain the whereabout of the Borodin and Skryabin correspondence.

5. A synopsis of one of his lectures entitled 'Some Aspects of Modern French Music' was printed in *MS*, LXXVIII, 25 Jan 1908: 52-3.

The letter from Debussy to Evans is contained in the Frederick R. Koch Foundation Collection, on deposit in The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. It is reproduced in an appendix to Nichols, R. and Smith, R. L., *Claude Debussy: Pelleas et Melisande* [Cambridge Opera Handbooks], (1989): 184-6.

6. Evans, E., 'Modern British Composers ', *MS*, LXIV, 23 May 1903: 321-2 to LVI, 9 Apr 1904: 229-30.

Evans fixed the date of his interest in contemporary British music by the performance at a Promenade Concert of Holbrooke's Variations on 'Three Blind Mice' in 1900, which led to his acquaintance with the composer (*MT*, LXXXV, Sep 1944: 270).

It is a reflection of the condition of British music at that time that among the twenty-seven composers whose works were dealt with by Evans in his first series of 'Modern British Composers' only one has entered the standard repertoire - Vaughan Williams; only four more have works performed occasionally - Holbrooke, Hurlstone, Scott and Wallace, while the remainder have sunk without trace.

7. The Society of British Composers was responsible for the Charles Avison Edition which published several new British works, including Benjamin Dale's Piano Sonata and Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge*. This publishing initiative greatly advanced the cause of British music at that time, for publishers were then very reluctant to invest in contemporary music and, as a result, new works that remained in manuscript could not be widely disseminated.

8. For a list of these articles, as well as Evans's other contributions to *The Musical Times*, see 'Edwin Evans', *MT*, LXXXVI, Apr 1945: 107.

9. The extent to which British musicians felt indebted to Evans's advocacy of contemporary music is attested by the fact that in 1923 a large company assembled at Pagani's Restaurant to pay tribute to him and to present him with his portrait, painted by Wyndham Lewis, that had been subscribed for by the guests. This is now in the collection of The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and is reproduced following page 177. The list of those who attended (see *MT*, LXIV, Feb 1923: 127) is like a roll-call of the most distinguished musicians of the early twentieth century, including figures such as Bliss, Bax, Falla, Ravel and Stravinsky. The portrait was presented by Eugene Goossens. Augustus John was there, but Wyndham Lewis was notably absent. Apparently the course of the subscription did not run altogether smoothly. Possibly due to the fact that insufficient funds had been raised, Lewis retained the portrait after the presentation and worked on it for a further period as more money was subscribed. Eventually Evans claimed it from him even though technically it appears unfinished. Nevertheless, it displays a certain majestic solidity that was doubtless a character of the subject as much as a feature of the artist's manner of portraiture.

10. The Society for French Concerts in England was responsible for the first British performances of works such as the string quartets of Debussy and Ravel. These opened the way to the appreciation of others - Fauré, d'Indy, Chausson, Roussel and Schmitt among them. According to Gueritte (*MT*, LXXXVI, Apr 1945: 108), the society's chamber music programmes were heard in some 130 concerts throughout Britain, and contained the names of 75 composers, of whom 15, including Debussy, d'Indy, Ravel and Roussel, were present. Of the 407 works performed, 240 were British premieres.

11. This was based on an article entitled 'Musical Party Strife in France' that had appeared in *The Academy* (LXXVII, 7 Aug 1909: 392-5). Although they were anonymous, it would appear that Evans wrote several articles for this magazine during the second half of 1909. As he mentions in *The Musical Times* (LXVI, Aug 1925: 693) that he had contributed an article to the magazine on 14 August that year, we can safely attribute this article to him, especially as both style and content are highly characteristic.

12. The extent to which Evans's early articles influenced Henry is particularly apparent in the way in which Henry used a similar manner of relating movements in modern music to those of modern art. Discussion of sound 'quantities' and 'masses' is characteristic of this and such phrases as the following, written by Evans, could equally well have been written by Henry: 'If form there must be [in Debussy's music], it must depend rather on what painters term "quantities" than on key relationship or the evolution of musical protoplasm' (*PMA*, XXXVI, Feb 1910: 58). When Evans took over the editorship of *The Musical News and Herald* in 1921, Henry wrote an appreciation of his achievements in *The Musical Standard* (C, 15 Jan 1921: 23). Here he declared his admiration and gratitude, writing that 'In every way his information concerning music other than the stale organ-loft stuff and watered Rhine-wine, which were all then provided for the young musician's nourishment by every other critic, proved a substantiation of one's convictions, and an encouragement of one's aspirations'.

13. A transcript of much of Evans's lecture entitled 'The Role of Nationalism in Music', which had been given at Steinway Hall in July 1915, can be found in *The Queen*, CXXXVIII, 24 July 1915: 176-7.

14. No articles by Evans were published in either *The Outlook* or *The Pall Mall Gazette* from 1916 to 1919. Presumably he was too taken up with his contribution to the war effort at this time. There is mention in *The Queen* (CXXXVIII, 3 Jul 1915: 37) of a series of concerts organized for Belgian refugees at Earls Court which he had begun in November 1914.

15. Apparently Evans was heckled, for a letter he received from one W. M. Faulkner, deposited in the Evans Collection, Central Music Library, Westminster, states: 'I am taking the liberty of writing to you to express my gratitude for your explanation given last night at Drury Lane Theatre of M. Stravinsky's work "Le Sacre du Printemps" and to disassociate myself from those members of the audience who were inartistic and impolite enough to make your task so very difficult by talking and otherwise interrupting you'.

16. Correspondence relating to Evans's activities as Musical Director of the Camargo Ballet Society is deposited in the British Library: *Lbl* Add. MS. 59814.

17. The culinary analogy was a characteristic of Evan's criticism that reflected his passion for food. Often by using such analogies he would considerably enhance the potency of his argument, as in the following example which encapsulates a fundamental belief and contains a memorable laconic: 'It is perhaps necessary to add that few men are born gourmets. The palate has usually to be educated. There appears to be a current belief that the best way of educating the musical palate is to take its owner into the musical kitchen. I cannot bring myself to believe that the true gourmet graduates in this fashion. Taste is formed by tasting, not by observing the chef' (1924: 25).

18. Apollinaire's 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes' was given as a lecture on 26 November 1917 and was later published in *Mercure de France* in December 1918.

19. The first and probably the only public performance of Schoenberg's piano music before the war was given by Richard Bühlig at Steinway Hall on 22 January 1912 when he performed the Piano Pieces, Op. 11. On 3 September of that year Henry Wood gave the first performance of the Five Orchestral Pieces Op. 16 at a promenade concert. The composer himself conducted a further performance of that work on 17 January 1914 at a Queen's Hall Symphony Concert. Although this concert received warm approval, after the war Schoenberg's music failed to gain any degree of popular acceptance for a considerable time.

20. This is particularly noticeable in a remark made by Constant Lambert in a letter to Evans, dated 4 September [1933],: 'I have always thought it disgraceful that a critic of your standing should not be on a well-known London paper at a time when most posts are held by deadheads who would be better employed either (a) selling motor cars (b) seducing choir-boys' (Evans Collection, Central Music Library, Westminster, London).

21. See Craig, E. G., *A Living Theatre* (Florence, 1913).

22. See Henry's article on Balilla Pratella in *The Musical Standard*, XCVII, 11 Oct 1919: 107-09.

23. For a description of these activities see 'Art at Ruhleben', *MS*, XCI, 14 Oct 1916: 275-76; 21 Oct 1916: 293-94.

24. Henry, L., 'Liberations: Studies of Individuality in Contemporary Music', *The Egoist*, I-IV, (1914-18):

1. Prelude\Arnold Schönberg and the Protection of Introspective Psychology (1 Apr 1914: 121-23)
2. Balilla Pratella and Futurist Music (15 Apr 1914: 147-49)
3. Béla Bartók and the Analysis of Racial Psychology (1 May 1914: 167-69)
4. Igor Stravinsky and the Dionysian Spirit (1 Jun 1914: 212-14)
5. Erik Satie and the Ironic Spirit (1 Jul 1914: 252-54)
6. The Dramatic Conceptions of Alexander Skryabin (15 Jul 1914: 269-72)
7. The Significance of Modern Spanish Music: The Works of Enrique Granados, Manuel de Falla, and Joaquin Turina (1 Aug 1914: 291-94)

8. Frederick Delius and the Retention of Intuitive Sensibility (15 Oct 1914: 381-84)
9. The Fantaisiste Spirit in Modern French Music: The Works of Maurice Ravel (1 Mar 1916: 43-46)
10. Nikolai Medtner and the Modern Heroic Spirit in Music (1 May 1916: 70-71; 1 Jun 1916: 88-90)
11. Th. Akimenko and the Oriental Spirit in Music: The Development of Akimenko's Idiom (1 Aug 1917: 137-39; 1 Oct 1916: 152-154)
12. Déodat de Séverac: A Modern Pastoral Poet in Music (1 Feb 1918: 26-28; 1 March 1918: 40-41)

25. Henry, L., 'Contemporaries,' *MO*, XLIII- XLVII, (1920-24):

1. Lord Berners (Jan 1920: 291-92)
2. Igor Stravinsky (Feb 1920: 371-72)
3. Erik Satie (Mar 1920: 459-60)
4. Francis Poulenc (Apr 1920: 543-44)
5. Arnold Bax (May 1920: 629-31)
6. Granville Bantock (Jun 1920: 711-12)
7. Alfred Casella (Aug 1920: 867-68)
8. Francesco Malipiero (Sep 1920: 954-55)
9. Béla Bartók (Oct 1920: 53-54)
10. Eugene Goossens (Jan 1921: 327-29)
11. Arnold Schönberg (Mar 1921: 511-12; Feb 1921: 420-21)
12. Maurice Ravel (May 1921: 689-91; Jun 1921: 774)
13. Manuel de Falla (Jul 1921: 847-48; Aug 1921: 929-30)
14. Nikolai Medtner (Dec 1921: 226-27; Jan 1922: 318-20)
15. Havergal Brian (May 1922: 698-99; Jul 1922: 867-68)
16. Arthur Bliss (Oct 1922: 47-49)
17. Ernest Bryson (Apr 1923: 659; May 1923: 751-53)
18. Cyril Bradley Rootham (Jul 1923: 949-50)
19. Albert Roussel (Sep 1923: 1148-49; Oct 1923: 51 -52)
20. Serge Prokofiev (May 1924: 806-07; Jul 1924: 999-1001)

26. Apparently (*MS*, XCVII, 20 Dec 1919: 190-91), early in 1918, Henry carried out a long-prepared escape plan and successfully left Ruhleben in a laundry-cart. On arrival in Berlin he was sheltered by friends and eventually left with false papers disguised as a corporal of the German Third Army Corps. He crossed Germany to Aix-la-Chapelle, travelling in a military train. However, he was retaken at the border, being stunned by an electric shock received while attempting to cut a live wire at the frontier.

27. See Henry, L., 'Igor Stravinsky and the Objective Direction of Contemporary Music', *The Chesterian*, I, Jan 1920: 97-102; 'Stravinsky: The New Lyric Expression', *DT*, 17 July 1920: 4; and 'Stravinsky and the Pragmatic Criterion in Contemporary Music', *ER*, XXXIII, 1921: 67-73.

28. Henry's abundant enthusiasm for Stravinsky resulted in a proposed biography of the composer, written with his authorization, which was at one time to be published by the firm of J. W. Chester. Although mentioned in A. E. Hull's *Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians* (1924), Chester's have no record of it. In 1924 Henry was to accompany Stravinsky to America and the fact that this trip failed to materialize may have some bearing on the matter. Percy Scholes mentioned in *The Observer* (18 Jul 1920: 10) that the book was to be published by John Lane.

29. For this Stravinsky controversy see *MO*, XLIII, Sep 1920: 939-40; Oct 1920: 30-3, 43; Nov 1920: 135; Dec 1920: 214.

30. *Fanfare: A Musical Causerie*, I, 1-7, Oct 1921-Jan 1922. See Ager, L., 'Fanfare', *MT*, CVIII, Nov 1967: 1001-02.

31. Each successive issue, except the last, included four such compositions. In his autobiography *Overture and Beginners* (1951), Eugene Goossens claims the credit for suggesting the idea of securing original fanfares from contemporary

composers for inclusion in each number of the magazine. He certainly claimed priority of performance, as they were included in his important series of four Queen's Hall concerts devoted to contemporary music, given in the autumn of 1921.

32. The lack of editorial intervention can be seen in Henry's review of Ibert's musical version of Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol* (*WM*, 22 Aug 1925: 9). This prompted an extraordinary paragraph vividly describing the horrors of solitary confinement which Henry had experienced in Germany - quite unprecedented within the columns of newspaper music criticism.

33. See Henry, L., 'Music and the Marionette,' *MS*, CIV, 21 Apr 1923: 133-34, and 'Burattini and the Ballet,' *MS*, CXII, 1 Jan 1927: 11-12.

34. It is indicative of the similarity of perception shared by Henry and the Futurists that in 1921 Gino Severini published a treatise, *Du Cubisme au Classicisme*, in which he employed the term *'nouveau classicisme'* to describe a new trend in the visual arts. This was based on geometric principles of proportion as opposed to what he considered the personal whim of Impressionism.

CHAPTER VI

M. D. CALVOCORESSI AND THE PRINCIPLES OF MUSIC CRITICISM

Calvocoressi's autobiography, *Musician's Gallery: Music and Ballet in Paris and London* (1933) provides a fascinating and detailed account of his early years in Paris during the 1890s. Linguistic skills were a major asset for him as a music critic, enabling him to correspond with a wide range of foreign composers and musicians and to specialize in the translation of song texts, opera librettos and books from languages as diverse as Russian and Hungarian. In 1898 he attended Xavier Leroux's harmony class at the Paris Conservatoire where he formed a lifelong friendship with Ravel, at that time a student in Fauré's composition class.[1] They shared many musical affinities including a passion for Russian music and a profound knowledge and love of Liszt's works. Ravel, being considered by many during the early years of this century to be a dangerous revolutionary, experienced considerable hostility towards his music at that time. It is therefore of some significance that almost alone amongst critics at the turn of the century, Calvocoressi wrote enthusiastically of his music while nevertheless retaining a degree of critical objectivity. It was mainly through Ravel that he became acquainted with several of the leaders of French and Spanish contemporary musical thought, including Florent Schmitt, Manuel de Falla, Déodat de Séverac, Albert Roussel and Erik Satie. As a member of the informal circle of friends centred on Ravel and the pianist Ricardo Viñes that met regularly to read and discuss music, he was in the vanguard of the most recent developments in contemporary musical life.[2] His understanding of Ravel's personal aesthetic and his favourable judgement of its quality is shown in a 1913 *Musical Times* article in which he drew particular attention to the question of artificiality, one that has always been at the centre of aesthetic considerations of Ravel's music:

> One might say, indeed, that artificiality is natural to M. Ravel. He is sensitive enough, and thoroughly sincere; but the topics that appeal to his imagination are few, and perhaps rather peculiar as a rule. With a lesser insight, he might have fought shy of his own instincts; but being remarkably purposeful, shrewd, and cool-headed, he has deliberately yielded to his nature, as every true artist should. When one comes to know him well, one can but ackowledge that he has displayed no slight discrimination in his choice of subjects. And a significant fact is that the majority of those subjects - whether in song or instrumental pieces - have tempted no other musician...
>
> The very deliberateness, the remorseless limitation of the emotional range

> of music that are fundamental characteristics of M. Ravel's art might in a less gifted composer be defects. In him they are part and parcel of the artistic individuality... Even whilst acknowledging the apparent absence of a whole category of affections, one might well be satisfied with what M. Ravel obviously gives: utmost delicacy and refinement, perfect balance and concinnity, a wealth of novel, attractive material, skilfully used and displayed in admirable light. But the absence of emotion is only apparent; and although the emotion itself is subdued, and its expression always toned down and recondite, many instances may be adduced in which genuine feeling asserts itself under the industrious show of impassivity, whilst in others the composer drops the mask altogether. (*MT*, LIV, Dec 1913: 785-6)

In 1902 the novelist Binet-Valmer introduced Calvocoressi to Octave Maus, founder of the extraordinary movement known as *Les Vingt* and proprietor and editor of the Belgian weekly *L'Art Moderne*. Maus offered him the position of Paris music correspondent to his journal. A few months later he became music critic of Binet-Valmer's own newly-founded Paris monthly *La Renaissance Latine*, which was to last just three years. In 1903 he also began writing for Arthur Bles's *Weekly Critical Review* which was devoted to literature and the fine arts, with music receiving the lion's share. His early concert notices and articles appeared alongside those of Arthur Symons, Rémy de Gourmont, J. F. Runciman and Ernest Newman, and it was for this journal, which published half its contents in English and the other half in French, that his first articles in English appeared. Unfortunately, probably on account of its Anglo-French nature, this vehicle for music criticism of exceptional quality was unable to sustain its appeal to a wide readership and consequently, after a period of only two years, it disappeared. Each of these positions, as well as that of critic for the daily *Gil Blas*, which he held between 1909 and 1910, and a similar position on the fortnightly *Comedia Illustré* which lasted from 1909 until 1913, required him to deal mainly with new or little-known works; a situation which fortunately corresponded with his own preferences. He later wrote with characteristic modesty of these early experiences as a critic:

> In short, whenever I considered that the very things which I felt were already said and well said, and that there was no opposition or indifference to overcome, I had no desire to play a part which would have been, to my mind, that of a fly on a wheel. But to write on Liszt and d'Indy and Ravel and the Russians, amongst others, was a different matter. I knew that there was a lot to be said, and felt that I had things of my own to say.
>
> Had I been able to deal only with subjects in which I felt at home, all might have gone well. But while learning to swim, I was not allowed to choose my own pool. I had been thrown into the deep, swiftly moving, open waters of

contemporary music and was compelled to keep afloat as best I could.

Naturally, some of my efforts were very poor. For instance, it was in May, 1902 - exactly four months after my first Paris letter to the *Art Moderne* had appeared in print - that Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* was first produced. There indeed was a chance for a tyro critic to display acumen and balance, and to fight for the new music against the prevailing hostility and routine! But, alas, I missed it!... A few months later, after having heard *Pelléas* several times, I tried to make amends, as best I could, in another article: but, by that time, *Pelléas* had overcome all opposition; and I remained with the feeling that I had badly failed in the first important test to which my critical abilities had been put. (1933: 43-4)

In 1905, at the invitation of Romain Rolland, Calvocoressi began lecturing at the École des Hautes Études Sociales. He dealt especially with contemporary music and the theory and practice of criticism.[3] That year he also began to contribute to the *Monthly Musical Record*, then edited by John Shedlock. However, he felt these early attempts at criticism in English to be unsatisfactory and soon decided to submit no further material until more at ease expressing himself in the English language. In this he was assisted by his friend Arnold Bennett who introduced him to much contemporary English literature. It was from Bennett's *Literary Taste* (1924) that he was to derive the title for his own book on *Musical Taste and How to Form It* (1925).

Calvocoressi realized that apart from France, England was the only country at that time which could accommodate his critical leanings towards contemporary developments in music, especially those of France and Russia. He made contact with Edwin Evans, who provided invaluable information on British music, and also, amongst others, with Dr. W. G. McNaught, later to become editor of the *Musical Times* for which he was to write over sixty articles. Indeed, British music was a particular area of specialization for him and having made these contacts he was able to publish *La Musique Anglaise* (Paris, 1911). As a founder member of the short-lived British Concert Society in Paris he championed the cause of British music in France and was probably the first to write a French article on Elgar, which appeared in a 1905 edition of *La Revue Musicale de Lyons*. In 1911 he visited the London Musical Congress as the delegate from Greece, and was the chairman for the section on aesthetics and theory. It was here that he met F. J. Barrett,[4] then the musical editor of *The Morning Post*, who invited him to become the Paris music correspondent for that paper. He duly accepted and wrote a regular column until the start of the war. Also, at the invitation of Percy Scholes, he contributed articles to *The Music Student* and was invited to make several journeys to England during the following three

years to lecture on Russian and French music and the music of Liszt, the subject of his first book which had been published in Paris in 1905. Along with his other books published in French, this had received little or no critical attention in England. Indeed, it was not until 1911 that any of his criticism made a significant impact in Britain. This came after his first article for *The Musical Times* (LII, May 1911: 300-2) received widespread discussion in the British musical press at large. Entitled 'Can Musical Criticism be taught?', it outlined some of the ideas originating from his method of teaching criticism at the École des Hautes Études Sociales. Earlier, in January 1911, Ernest Newman responded to a report of a paper Calvocoressi had presented, read by Newman in *Le Courier Musical*, with his own article entitled 'A School for Musical Critics' (*MT*, LII, Jan 1911: 16-17). Newman employed Calvocoressi's thoughts as a starting point for his own disquisition:

> The critic alone has not only to build his house but make his bricks and find his own straw... The very fact that critics differ so radically over this composer or that, or this performance or that, is a testimony to the haphazard way in which criticism is conducted. These differences of opinion do not, as is commonly alleged, invalidate criticism; they merely invalidate the critics who are wrong... M. Calvocoressi, rather weakly as it seems to me, distinguishes between what a critic may be positive about and what he may not; he is to be 'impersonal and decided' when he is sure that he is announcing 'facts', and to 'employ the first person and make explicit reservations' when he only 'puts forward his own opinion.' Is the distinction a workable one? At what stage did the 'opinion' of some contemporary of Beethoven that the ninth Symphony was a great work pass from the domain of 'opinion' into that of 'fact'? Every critical judgement that we now call a 'fact' was an 'opinion' at one time. (: 16-17)

It was in response to such questions of critical theory that Calvocoressi later wrote *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism* (1923/*R*1930), discussed below. Admiration for the work of Liszt originated in the 1890s when he attended performances of the Faust and Dante symphonies, arranged for two pianos with the addition of a small choir for the choral finales, given in Paris by Risler and Cortot. By the time he came to write of these works, over ten years later, he had fully assimilated their implications. In a substantial series of articles published in *The Musical Times* throughout 1925, he particularly determined to avoid the issue of their relation to any programme. The importance that had become attached to the notion of their programmatic basis and the general position of low esteem in which they were held is clearly seen in Parry's article on 'Symphony' in Grove's *Dictionary*:

> In Liszt's 'Faust' Symphony... Figures are used after the manner of Wagner's 'Leit-motiven' to portray graphically such things as bewildered inquiry, anxious agitation, love, and mockery, besides the special figure or melody given for each individual as a whole... with all its striking characteristics and successful points, the music does not approach Berlioz in vitality or breadth of musical idea. (2nd ed., IV, 1904-10: 794).

In an article entitled 'Fair Play for Liszt' Calvocoressi argued:

> One of the true reasons why Liszt's music is being given a bad name is that most of his admirers agree with his detractors in dealing with it as 'programme music'. Thereby they adopt the worst possible means of vindication, and provide detractors with the best possible means of attack. It would be more sensible to point out that Liszt's music - like everybody else's - should be judged as music. (*MT*, LXVI, Jan 1925: 19)

By 1934 the critical estimation of Liszt in Britain had improved considerably and in a *Listener* article of that year, 'On Liszt and Programme Music', Calvocoressi was able to write that 'The effort of a small but persistent minority (ranging among composers, from Sir Alexander Mackenzie to Mr. Constant Lambert; among critics from Mr. Ernest Newman to Mr. Cecil Gray; and including among non-specialists, keen champions such as Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell) have actually led to Liszt's music being given, at long last, a fair chance with listeners' (*L*, XIV, 12 Sep 1934: 437). However, the issue of programme music remained and was one to which Calvocoressi returned on numerous occasions. His conviction that music inspired by a programme, by the very fact that it becomes music, severs the bonds that link it to the programme is most clearly stated in two *Musical Times* articles of 1913. The first, on 'The Problem of Programme-Music', asserts that 'What the student must remember is merely that the answer to the prejudicial question: "Is music and a programme better or worse than music and no programme?" remains - except if one deduces it, after the fashion of Hanslick, and of Dr. Hugo Riemann, from some more or less arbitrary definition of music or aesthetic principle - wholly optional' (*MT*, LIV, Jun 1913: 372). In support of this position he enumerates the ways in which programmes may potentially offer elements of suggestion. These can be either in the form of imitative sounds with the corresponding rhythms; descriptive suggestions of other than audible rhythms as, for example, pantomimic sounds; sounds that have emotional associations; and those suggestions provided by an abstract analogy, as in some of the techniques used by Kuhnau. The second article on 'The Appraisement of Programme music' develops these ideas:

> The theory upheld by the Hanslick-Riemann school of aestheticians, that the very spirit of descriptive or programme-music is antagonistic to the essence of musical art, is indefensible except if the proof comes forth that descriptive or programme-music is foredoomed to remain subject to other and less propitious conditions than those governing music pure and simple.
>
> Now it stands to reason that the part played by material suggestion in the much abused imitative or descriptive music - and likewise by each single dramatic suggestion of 'emotionally associated' music, by each abstract analogy in 'conventionally associated' music - is far less than theorists aver: it affords, in Mr. Newman's words, but 'the raw material out of which programme-music is made.' It acts as a stimulus to the composer's creative imagination, and not, as one would have the student believe, as a check... as imitative, descriptive and other poetic or dramatic elements suggest motives that may be more pregnant and more novel than merely formal, abstract motives, so does a programme suggest new plastic forms.
>
> Now the perennity of any law of construction is as great a superstition as any of the other dogmatic principles against which our student has been more than once cautioned. Among the many abstract, general definitions of artistic beauty that have been offered, none seems more to the point than Diderot's. The sense of Beauty, the French philosopher said, originates in the notion of relationship - a work of art being an independent whole, that has a purport of its own, and whose several parts stand in obvious and satisfactory connection; and artistic pleasure consisting of a perfect apprehension of those connections and of their purport...
>
> Diderot's definition helps to explain why many art judges believe pure music to stand on a higher level than poetic music... It also affords an argument in favour of the opinion that programme-music should be judged exactly as pure music, and by the same standards... Once the music is written, the programme has served its turn; if the hearer feels in need of it, the fault lies with him, or with the composer, but certainly not with the principle of poetic music. (*MT*, LIV, Jul 1913: 439-41)

To return to Calvocoressi's career, in 1906, when Diaghilev first arrived in Paris to organize an exhibition of Russian paintings, he was introduced to the impresario as someone who might be of service in his plans for the diffusion of Russian music. The following year he was requested to provide a few French translations of excerpts that were to be performed during the season of Russian Concerts which Diaghilev organized at the Paris Opera. In addition, he was to prepare programme notes based on information supplied by the Russian critic Alexander Ossowski. Having been invited to attend rehearsals, it was not long before he became acquainted with those Russian composers taking part in the concerts. These included Rimsky-Korsakov, with whom he had already corresponded on the subject of his French translations of Mussorgsky's songs, Glazunov and Skryabin. At the end of the season Diaghilev invited him to become second-in-

command for the opera festival planned for the following year. Having agreed, he was able to persuade Diaghilev to produce *Boris Godunov*, although Diaghilev refused to stage it in its original version. However, believing that the production of the Rimsky-Korsakov arrangement would pave the way for an early production of the genuine opera, he felt that it was generally advantageous for the furtherance of Mussorgsky's music. In later years he was to champion the unrevised score tirelessly, writing numerous articles on the various issues involved with its realization. It is likely that had it not been for the 1908 performance of *Boris Godunov* at the Paris Grand Opera in Rimsky-Korsakov's version, the awakening of the general public's interest in the opera would have taken place far later; but as Calvocoressi wrote in his autobiography, 'To wonder what might have happened if in 1908 the genuine *Boris*, and not the revised, had been revealed in Paris would be idle speculation' (1933: 179).

These experiences with *Boris Godounov* were of considerable importance in the formation of Calvocoressi's relativist ideas about criticism. He had first encountered the opera in 1903 when he acquired the 1874 vocal score - all that was available of the original opera at the time. Having studied the work closely, comparing it with Rimsky-Korsakov's revision of 1896, and later with his revision of 1908, he accepted the 1874 *Boris*, except for the Polish Act, as perfection of its kind. But as he recalled in 1934, this was not the end of the matter:

> I knew vaguely, as all specialists did, that it did not quite represent Mousorgsky's spontaneous conception; but information was so indefinite that I left it at that. I regarded the Act in Poland, despite the lovely music it contains, as an incongruous adjunct (I still feel this), but I could quite see how it could be left out and *Boris* still form a satisfying whole. I found the first scene perfectly proportioned... I specify these points because therein lay the cause of the biggest of the surprises that were to come.
>
> During the war I lost sight of *Boris*. I did not resume work on it until 1921, when I found my views absolutely unaltered but began to see in the music many beauties and points of interest which I had overlooked.
>
> Then in 1925 the news came that in Russia Professor Lamm was preparing a complete edition of the genuine *Boris*, including sketches and suppressed portions. I remained on tenderhooks [sic] until 1927, when the first proofs of the new vocal score reached me. There at last was, jointly with the version I already knew, the 1868 version in all its starkness; and there were all the episodes cut out before 1874 for a variety of reasons, not one of them good... I shall never find the opening scene and the scene in the cell satisfactory except in their full form. There can be no question of weighing the initial version against the final *in toto*; they constitute widely dissimilar wholes, each to be judged on its own merits.

> The main point is that nothing in the world outside Moussorgsky's *Boris Godounov* could provide the standard (that is, suggest the 'ideal model') by which to judge *Boris Godounov* as revealed in the 1874 edition... We often say that 'objectivity' is the ideal of criticism, never realizing that nothing of what can be determined objectively comes anywhere near to the root of the matter, unless intuition has shown the way... If a critic, knowing only Rimsky-Korsakov's arrangement, could have shown where the music was tame, conventional, or out of keeping in comparison with what could actually have been done; or, knowing only the 1874 edition of the genuine *Boris*, divined something of the secrets preserved in the original manuscripts, then he might really be proud of both his intuition and his capacity for objective judgement. (*MMR*, LXIV, Jul 1934: 124)

With his first book on Mussorgsky, published in Paris in 1908 and translated into English in 1919, Calvocoressi established his reputation as a leading authority on Russian music. It marked a significant advance on earlier critical work concerned with the composer, even in Russia itself, and was accepted as the standard biography for many years. In fact, combined with his services to Russian music as Diaghilev's close collaborator for the Russian season in Paris in 1908, it led the Russian authorities to award him a Knighthood of the Imperial Order of St. Anne.[5] However, with new and important material continuing to surface, it was not long before the book became inadequate, especially as at the time of its publication Mussorgsky's original texts were largely unknown. (Its English translation, made by Arthur Eaglefield Hull, was also very unsatisfactory.) As the author himself later admitted, even by 1911, when a second edition was called for, the book was hopelessly out of date. The following year Serge Makovski, the editor of the St. Petersberg periodical *Appollon*, commissioned a new biography for his publication but on account of the war this never materialized. Having renewed his interest in Russian music when returning to music criticism in Britain in 1921, the conductor Koussevitsky encouraged him, in 1924, to continue with his proposed plan, for Koussevitsky agreed to publish it in Paris where he had his own publishing company. In 1925 Calvocoressi learned of Pavel Lamm's research and his preparation of an edition of Mussorgsky's complete works which, as it turned out, was later aborted. Combined with the news that several important books about the composer would appear in 1931, the fiftieth anniversary of Mussorgsky's death, the completion of Calvocoressi's book was considerably delayed. Eventually the manuscript was sent to Paris where it remained throughout the war and until Francis Poulenc rescued it following the collapse of Koussevitsky's firm sometime in the 1950s. It was eventually published in 1956 under

the title *Modest Mussorgsky: His Life and Works*. In the meantime a further book on Mussorgsky by Calvocoressi had been published in 1946. This was a smaller volume than his *magnum opus* which had been completed in 1946 by Gerald Abraham for Dent's *Master Musicians* series.

In 1912 Calvocoressi paid his only visit to Russia. The journey to St. Petersburg was broken by a couple of days spent in Berlin to meet Schoenberg, a visit arranged through Schoenberg's pupil, Egon Wellesz, whom Calvocoressi had met in Paris. Schoenberg was apparently very accommodating and spoke at length of his music. He also gave Calvocoressi a copy of his recently published *Harmonielehre*. This visit resulted in the first of many articles devoted to the work of Schoenberg. On returning to Paris, he also began to lecture on the Second Viennese School, even though not wholly convinced by their new developments. In his regular column 'Music in Paris', begun in November 1910 for *The Monthly Musical Review*, he expressed his characteristically open-minded response:

> I have followed the articles published on M. Schönberg's works in Great Britain and elsewhere; and I am bound to acknowledge that these works puzzle me greatly and please me little. However, the study of the composer's really admirable *Handbuch der Harmonielehre* has convinced me not only of his earnestness, but also of his insight in musical art. It would be imprudent to judge from his opinions on art as to his merits as a creative artist; but the contents of the book suffice to warn readers that it is even more imprudent to treat M. Schönberg's musical output with levity, and that before doing so we should probe the matter well to the bottom. Between the Charybdis of presumption and the Scylla of Pyrrhonism the road is not always easy. Sometimes, however, landmarks are available and those afforded in the present instance by M. Schönberg's book on his art should not be disregarded. (*MMR*, XLIII, Jan 1913: 11)

Calvocoressi always stressed the importance of considering Schoenberg's achievement in its historical context, as a continuation of an inherited tradition. Such articles as that published in *The Musical Times* of 1914 entitled 'The Classicism of Arnold Schönberg', following Newman's 'A Propos Schoenberg's Five Orchestral Pieces' which had appeared two months earlier, did much to counteract the then prevalent conception of the composer as a radical musical anarchist. Such a conception had gained popular currency following Henry Wood's performance of the Five Orchestral Pieces Op.16 in 1914 which had caused some controversy.

In Russia, Calvocoressi met, among the older composers, Glazunov, Cui, Grechaninov and Liapunov; of the younger generation he met Steinberg, Senilov and

Prokofiev. Perhaps most importantly however, he made contact with the critics Findeisen, Karatyghin and Ossowski, for in later years they were able to provide him with invaluable material relating to Russian music that would otherwise have been unobtainable.

With the outbreak of war in 1914 he moved to London, being unable as a Greek subject to serve in the French army. Through the assistance of his friend T. A. H. Hammond, he secured a position in the British Intelligence Service where he was able to utilize his knowledge of languages and his keen interest in cryptography. He remained in the employment of the British Government until 1919, during which time he married and became a naturalized British citizen, and it was not until 1921 that he returned to music criticism. Following this break of seven years he began to write miscellaneous articles for a variety of publications as well as a regular column for *The Glasgow Herald* entitled 'The Week's Music in London', a regular column in *The Musical Times* which summarized 'Music in the Foreign Press' and a series of articles in *The Monthly Musical Record* dealing with general aesthetic questions and those concerning the theory and practice of music criticism. The latter served as the basis for his *Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism* (1923\R1931). Being both theoretical and pragmatic, this book was divided into two parts - one for each of these respective categories.

Calvocoressi defined the critical process as a manifestation of a threefold operation. The first consideration was the predisposition and bias of the critic himself, moulded by such personal facets as his temperament, experience, personality and education. Adapting a proposal made by J. M. Robertson in his influential *New Essays Towards a Critical Method* (1897), he suggested that the critic should draw up a credo or confession of bias. Having thus enumerated his predispositions he could then study their influence on his own criticism and, as a consequence, be in a better position to perceive bias in that of others. Defining three aspects brought to bear on the critical process - emotion, imagination and intellect - he proceeded to demonstrate their operation in conjunction with his second consideration, that of the composition's 'direct data'. This provides, in theory at least, the only ground common to everyone. On a superficial level one can find, in the music itself, obvious tangible features to account for an opinion, but a convincing demonstration of why, for example, a Beethoven symphony is a masterpiece will depend on more abstract concepts such as organic unity and logic of progression. Calvocoressi questioned Hadow's notion of masterpieces being founded on 'psychological

laws' and asked, on a more pragmatic level, whether it is always possible to ascertain the difference between conforming to laws, obeying rules and following recipes. In attempting to find a workable solution, which he ultimately failed to do, a fourfold plan outlining the development of musical laws was evolved. This can be summarized as follows:

1 Creative artists resort to certain practices which become more definite in proportion to their suitability - a selective and organizing process takes place.
2 Theorists distinguish laws and from them define rules.
3 The notion that practice must conform to theory becomes prevalent whilst artists discover new means, possibly invalidating the old rules.
4 The old rules become recipes for composing and indeed judging.

As far as analytical practice was concerned, Calvocoressi emphasized the importance of distinguishing between objective intellect and subjective imagination. For him, analysis meant only foreground description. Such a narrow interpretation led him to the assertion that 'to find definitions for the features of a work is a process which cannot serve as a foundation for criticism; it will never show whether the things labelled constitute evidence of artistic interest and logic or not' (: 68). This reinforced his belief that the intellect alone is powerless to establish the criteria on which value judgements can be made. There is some confusion here, for he seems to be saying that whilst one cannot have purely objective criteria, the critic must proceed to make a distinction, in some way disengaging facts from opinions.

What then of the third consideration, the 'indirect data' such as composers' correspondence and autobiographies; can a composer's own statements about his work provide a positive clue to its meaning? Here Calvocoressi is far from dogmatic, offering a summary of the issues rather than an ultimate verdict. On the one hand he quotes Saint-Beuve who declared judging a work impossible without knowing a great deal about its creator, and on the other Hennequin who posited that the only object of consideration should be the work itself. The various issues arising from an appraisal of programme music are also dealt with here. In conclusion, he asserted that the significance of both direct and indirect data can only be realized in as much as they bring confirmation to an intuitive value judgement. This is an important distinction between his critical theory and Newman's which has been overlooked. Alan Walker, in particular, failed to grasp its importance in his discussion of their ideas in *An Anatomy of Music Criticism* (1966).

Calvocoressi's *Principles and Methods* marked an important advance over earlier

discussions of critical theory and succinctly outlined the problems. Yet it offered little in the way of positive solutions, leaving the reader to tussle with the propositions for himself. Clearly the first and third considerations are of little significance as they may equally justify wrong evaluations as well as right ones. A fundamental confusion arises from the paradoxical conclusion that, while criticism consists almost entirely of subjective opinions, the critic must proceed with the intention of finding objective facts. From these facts opinions diverge, thereby accounting for conflicting views and providing a key for the reading of criticism as well as for the writing of it. In 1931 a new and considerably enlarged edition was published which contained a third part entitled 'The Critic at Work'. This dealt mainly with the objectivity *versus* subjectivity debate in criticism which was at the heart of the dialectic given prominence by the ideas expressed in Newman's *A Musical Critic's Holiday*, published two years after Calvocoressi's *Principles and Methods*. Contrary to the noncommittal policy of the original two parts of the book, this additional section makes a definite case in favour of a relativist approach as against Newman's absolutist theory of criticism. Taking from J. M. Baldwin's *Thoughts and Things, or Genetic Logic* (3 vols., 1906-11) the classification of judgements as either 'synnomic', being held as 'necessarily valid, universally binding', or 'syndoxic', being 'held not only *in* common, but *as* common: i.e. as appropriate termini of common psychic processes', he argued:

> Whether aesthetic judgement can ever stand as an appropriate terminus for common psychic processes depends upon the scope given to the word 'common'. On Newman's own showing, the utmost we may expect in the matter of judgements on music is 'a vast majority' of 'plain, sensible, instructed music-lovers whose taste is fairly catholic'. The word 'objective', to most minds, seems to connote something 'universally binding' (i.e. 'synnomic'). But even the final test of the less ambitious 'syndoxic' truth: 'you must be found not only alone in your judgement, but mistaken' cannot apply to critical judgements: it is solely by the fact that a critic remains alone (or almost) in his judgements that he can ultimately be proved mistaken. In short, the conception of objectivity must be qualified in so many ways that it had better be left out altogether. (1931: 155)

The criticism of French and Russian music which provided the core of Calvocoressi's writing demonstrates the extent to which he succeeded in achieving those aims of criticism elucidated in his *Principles and Methods*. For him, no aesthetic judgement could be valid unless it was based on exhaustive unprejudiced study. While Ernest Newman became increasingly less critical the more he undertook musicological

research, Calvocoressi never renounced aesthetic judgement of his primary musicological concerns. Neither did he devote himself solely to a limited repertoire at the expense of neglecting those aspects of contemporary music which were found to be of value. In his book *Bartók in Britain* (1989) Malcolm Gillies traces the British critical response to Bartók and finds Calvocoressi's early championship of his music of considerable significance, along with that of Heseltine and Gray. Calvocoressi had met the composer in Paris shortly before the outbreak of war and the two men began a correspondence that was to last for some fifteen years.[6] Although Calvocoressi's first article on the composer to appear in the British musical press was published in 1913, the years immediately following his return to criticism saw the most sustained critical attention which was in part due to the stimulus of Bartók's 1922 British tour. Gillies wrote that following a performance given by the composer and Jelly Arányi of the First Violin Sonata,

> Calvocoressi was able to write a truly informed review far surpassing the hurried observations of his fellow critics. He fearlessly tackled the difficult issues of form and tonality avoided by others, finding standard underlying forms to each movement and a consistent approach to tonality. Bartók used neither traditional keys nor polytonality, he asserted, but rather, polarized each section of his music around a particular note or interval. Calvocoressi's Glaswegian readers (who had not had any opportunity of hearing the work) were probably bemused by the listing of tonal areas which followed. Despite the technical details of his review Calvocoressi made no attempt to hide his admiration for Bartók's work. (Ibid.: 42)

Both his numerous articles for *The Listener* from 1932 until 1943 and his regular column in *Musical Opinion* entitled 'From My Notebook' written between March 1934 and January 1941 reflect his continued interest in contemporary music. However, it appears that as the 1930s progressed he became disenchanted with the business of criticism and certainly the quality of his critical thought deteriorated. Many of his later articles merely repeat earlier thoughts and propositions in a rather tired fashion. Perhaps he was bitter that in England he had failed to maintain the momentum of his earlier career in France, of which he wrote with enormous charm and vivid recollection in his autobiography. Whatever the reasons, his contribution to British music criticism in terms of historical significance must be considered to have taken place during the 1920s and early 1930s. Offering a theory of criticism which not only ran counter to that of Ernest Newman but provoked extended discussion of the whole subject was valuable. His articles on Russian music made a significant contribution to the critical dissemination of that repertoire in Britain, extending the pioneering work of writers such as Rosa

Newmarch and Montagu-Nathan and laying foundations for the younger generation of critics interested in that repertoire, such as his friend Gerald Abraham. He practised an essentially affirmative criticism and being fully aware of his blind spots, in particular Tchaikovsky, Brahms and Strauss, never abused that which he felt temperamentally unable to appreciate. As Gerald Abraham wrote in his obituary tribute, Calvocoressi 'practised criticism as one would expect it to be practised by one trained in the ways of science and philosophy', writing enthusiastically of music he found to be of value 'to such purpose that he opened a way for musicians in general to enjoy these unknown treasures too' (*MT*, LXXXV, Mar 1944: 85).

Chapter VI - Notes

1. Correspondence between Ravel and Calvocoressi covered a period of over thirty years. Much of it is reproduced in an article entitled 'Ravel's Letters to Calvocoressi with Notes and Comments', *MQ*, XXVII, Jan 1941: 1-19. Ravel dedicated his *Alborada del Gracioso (Miroirs* No.4, 1905) to Calvocoressi.

2. Calvocoressi is shown in Georges d'Espagnat's famous painting of Ricardo Viñes playing at the Godebskis' (n.d.). The other members of the group are Ravel, Cipa Godebski, Florent Schmitt, Déodat de Séverac and Albert Roussel.

3. For an account of Calvocoressi's early career see *MT*, LIV, Sep 1913: 573-5. This includes a synopsis of four lectures on French music that he delivered at Oxford in 1913.

4. It has not been possible to trace any further information about F. J. Barrett. He might have been a relation of William Alexander Barrett (1843-1891), music critic of *The Morning Post* (1869-91) and author of *Balfe: his life and work* (1882).

5. Calvocoressi was one of the few people who enjoyed the distinction of being honoured by both the pre-Soviet and Soviet regimes, for in 1929 he was made a member of the Soviet Academy of Art Sciences.

6. See 'Bartóks Briefe an Calvocoressi (1914-1930)', ed. Gombocz, A. and Somfai, L., *Studia Musicologica*, XXIV, 1982: 199-231.

CHAPTER VII

THE *SACKBUT* COTERIE

i) PHILIP HESELTINE AND CECIL GRAY

In his autobiography *A Mingled Chime* (1943) Sir Thomas Beecham recalled how in 1915 he had offered accommodation to Delius and his wife, who had been forced into exile from France by the advancing German army. Among the visitors to the Delius' home was Philip Heseltine, whom Beecham described as 'a young man just down from Cambridge [in fact it had been Oxford] who surprised us all by his sympathy for and understanding of modern music' (: 135). Beecham continued, 'His ambition was to edit a journal which should be progressive and aggressive in tone, and as the idea had the enthusiastic backing of Delius, whose chief delight in life next to composing was to stir up any kind of public controversy provided it was acrimonious enough, we drew up a scheme for launching it under the title of *The Sackbut*, or *The Anti-Ass*' (: 135). According to Cecil Gray, whose memoir of Heseltine was published in 1934, a contract was drawn up, offices taken and notepaper printed bearing the journal's strikingly original title. Heseltine received a quarterly allowance from Beecham, the journal's proprietor, and various critics were approached for contributions. However, the project was shelved by Beecham from month to month and the journal never materialized. A second attempt at launching it took place just after the war in the spring of 1919 when a controversial prospectus was issued.[1] Whether Beecham had any involvement at this stage is uncertain, but again the attempt was aborted, this time through lack of funds. It was fortuitous that in 1920 Winthrop Rogers should suggest to Heseltine that he edit a journal his publishing firm had recently acquired - *The Organist and Choirmaster*. Having successfully convinced Rogers that this journal had no future, Heseltine persuaded him to absorb *The Organist* into a new venture. In this way Heseltine gained a firm financial basis for his paper, a pre-existing subscription list and an able and efficient business manageress who had worked with Rogers for some time and was able to give sound advice on the commercial running of a paper. Apart from the proviso that an 'organist's news' section was to be retained at the end of the journal, Heseltine was given complete editorial freedom. Within six months this section had dwindled to two pages and in the sixth issue

of October 1920 there appeared an article entitled 'Why is Church Music so Bad?' by R. R. Terry.[2] In return, Winthrop Rogers' name was to be kept out of its pages altogether, for such a venture was potentially damaging to the reputation of his publishing firm.

In the editorial forward of the first issue, which appeared in May 1920, Heseltine laid down his objectives for the journal:

> *The Sackbut* will have no rigid "policy", no axes to grind, no cliques, coteries or societies to support and, above all, will put no ban on the free expression of opinion, however much its contributors may conflict with one another. Its aim will be to disseminate and intensify the love and understanding of good music, regarding music not as an isolated phenomenon, existing in its own separate sphere under its own laws, but as an integral and essential factor of modern life; to foster a mutual interest and sympathy between musicians and other artists; to discover hidden talent and help to bring it to the light of recognition, and, equally, to denounce with no uncertain voice whatever appears to tend towards the confusion and deterioration of musical taste in this country. (*S*, I, May 1920: 8)

The journal's first article, 'The Task of Criticism' by Cecil Gray (see below: 229-30), was dedicated to this latter end and set the tone for future issues by attacking certain features of the musical Establishment and debunking the Victorian values that had permeated the writings of Establishment figures such as Corder and Stanford. This was in line with the fashion of literary journals such as Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* and later the Sitwells' *Wheels,* but such consistently aggressive and combative writing within a specialist music periodical represented a new phenomenon. Further attacks on the contemporary state of criticism were issued by Heseltine in his second editorial and it was here that a notorious controversy between Ernest Newman and K. S. Sorabji first began. Heseltine had been a close friend of Sorabji's since 1913, and when Newman had refused to look at Sorabji's manuscripts, for a variety of justifiable reasons, Heseltine was incensed. He felt that it was Newman's duty as a critic to search for potential masterpieces among contemporary compositions. In fact, Newman had been doing precisely that for many years. Sorabji took up his position in the pages of *Musical Opinion*, where a battle of fierce invective was fought, so fierce, in fact, that it precipitated Winthrop Rogers's decision to withdraw from his involvement with *The Sackbut* and assign the ownership to its editor. Cecil Gray subsequently became joint proprietor. Before long, financial problems began to plague the journal and eventually its continuance was impossible.[3] The last issue to be edited by Heseltine and Gray was in June 1921, and thereafter it was sold to the publisher Kenneth Curwen, who appointed

Ursula Greville as editor.[4]

Heseltine had had his first article on a musical subject published soon after leaving Eton in 1912. This was a short essay on Schoenberg that appeared in *The Musical Standard* (LXXXIII, Sep 1912: 176-8). From then on he became a prolific music journalist, contributing numerous articles to a wide variety of journals, many of which were ephemeral, until the end of his life.[5] His articles fall into three broad categories: critical studies of contemporary music and a limited number of articles on nineteenth-century composers he admired, such as Berlioz and Liszt; musicological studies of sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century music, including issues surrounding editorial practice; and miscellaneous articles on general subjects, including criticism. His two major works are his 1923 biography of Delius and *The English Ayre* (1926). As well as *The Sackbut*, he also edited the short-lived *Milo* (1929), the journal of Beecham's Imperial League of Opera. Apart from a series of nine columns in *The Weekly Westminster Gazette* (1923) and a few articles that appeared in *The Daily Mail* between March and June 1925, he did not write a regular newspaper column.

Heseltine's incisive response to contemporary music was the most historically significant aspect of his criticism and one which was broadly shared between other members of the *Sackbut* coterie. His 1919 article entitled 'The Modern Spirit in Music' (*PMA*, XLV, May 1919: 113-34) outlined his position without the kind of violence of expression found in his *Sackbut* articles. Here he spoke against the doctrine of 'sound for sound's sake', which he was later to apply specifically to Stravinsky's aesthetic (*S*, I, Aug 1920: 153-6), and the pedantic, indiscriminate condemnation of innovation. He argued that 'the so-called new movement is essentially nothing more than the backwash of Romanticism' (: 122), a view that Gray was later to expound, and that 'People are so interested in discovering what music can be perverted into becoming, that they seem to have completely lost sight of what music fundamentally is' (: 127). At the end of the article he mentioned two composers to whose work he considered posterity would attach more importance than contemporary criticism suggested - Delius and van Dieren, both composers who had a profound influence on Heseltine the composer as well as on other members of the *Sackbut* coterie. The former was described as 'the setting sun of musical romanticism' (: 129) while the latter was considered to be 'the first composer to bring a sound knowledge of the architectural and contrapuntal methods of the older masters to

bear upon the extended harmonic resources of the present day, and almost the only one of the moderns who can handle a complex polyphonic structure with assurance and ease' (: 130). Delius and van Dieren can be seen to represent the two boundaries of Heseltine's aesthetic; the one intuitive, directly emotional and preeminently concerned with harmonic colour, the other more intellectual, esoteric and concerned with melodic and contrapuntal devices. Their music, along with that of Bartók,[6]was consistently regarded by the *Sackbut* coterie as representing the summit of contemporary musical achievement during the early 1920s, often being favourably contrasted with that of the 'anti-emotional' composers, Stravinsky and *Les Six*. Heseltine's condemnation of Stravinsky was severe:

> After *Petrouchka* Stravinsky seems to have abandoned as a bad job any attempt at organic development in his music, which begins to proceed almost entirely in repetitions or *ostinato* figures reiterated with such maddening insistence that one might almost suppose his sole object to have been to reduce his audience to a condition of St. Vitus' dance. The music of *The Rite of Spring* has been described as the music of epilepsy; it is, perhaps, more suggestive of a mantra-mumbling Tibetan monk in the last stages of auto-intoxication. But neither of the two comparisons is appropriate in more than a superficial sense. The really significant thing about this score is its factitious vitality, which is obtained by the absolute negation of the fluid, interpenetrating rhythms of life and the exaltation of automatism by setting in their stead the hard, mechanical, jerky pulsations of puppets...
>
> The object of such music is not to stir natural impulses but to provoke involuntary reactions. Here we have in an extreme form the commonest and most unmistakable symptom of decadence - the inability to take life whole, the fear and resultant atrophy of vital instincts - life must be "simplified", spontaneity must become automatic, everything must be reduced to its lowest terms - and so to absurdity. Enter Dada - (or rather dodder -)- ism. (*S*, I, Aug 1920: 154)

For the *Sackbut* coterie, great music was the outward signification of an inward spiritual reality that was relevant for all ages, whereas music displaying the mannerisms of its age could only be ephemeral. As will be seen later in this chapter, the individualism and cultural isolation of the composers they championed were features they were at pains to expose; an effort particularly noticeable in the emphasis they placed on the absence of discernable creative influences within the music of such composers. The *Sackbut* coterie represented the last critical bastion against the surge of modernism, the last cry for the return of Romantic values.

Cecil Gray's autobiography *Musical Chairs or Between Two Stools* (1948) provides a partial portrait of the critic which has been supplemented by his daughter, Pauline Gray,

in her book *Cecil Gray: His Life and Notebooks* (1989). He had received a university education in Edinburgh before enroling as a student at Bantock's Midland Institute in Birmingham where, under the influence of its founder, he developed a keen interest in contemporary music. He moved to London in September 1915 to study composition and it was there, at the Café Royal, that he first became acquainted with Heseltine. Through Heseltine he was introduced to many of the leading artists, writers and composers who worked in the capital, including Jacob Epstein, Augustus John, D. H. Lawrence and Bernard van Dieren. It was a 1917 concert of van Dieren's music, sponsored by Gray and Heseltine, that first brought the two enthusiasts, who were at that time pupils of the composer, to public notice.

Gray's first published article, entitled 'Concerning César Franck' (*MT*, LVI, Jun 1915: 341), questioned a statement made by Colles that 'the whole plan of sonata form... is conditioned by the travelling type of melody, and not the circling one' and argued that the best symphonic melodies were in fact of the circling variety. Already from this very first article a predominant feature of his criticism can be detected - the desire to provocatively contradict widely held opinions, especially those held by the Oxford critics. While a tendency for contrariness is indisputably a characterisitic of his critical manner, it is also a feature that has been exaggerated by those out of sympathy with his thought. Frank Howes's entry for him in *The New Grove* is particularly misleading in this respect. Howes's clear antipathy towards Gray's trenchant style is hardly surprising, for as a member of the Oxford group his critical stance was precisely that which Gray was determined to oppose. Certainly Gray's forthright attitude, frequently overstated prose and undeniably idiosyncratic judgements did little to encourage popularity.

It was as contributor to *The Sackbut* that Gray established himself as an articulate spokesman of the coterie centred on that serial publication. In line with the journal's tacit policy, he set out to debunk the Victorian and conservative values that permeated so much of the criticism of the day. While he quickly established a reputation for expressing unconventional views with enormous verve and literary panache, he was far from being an advocate of all things new. In fact, ultimately, he was just as reactionary as his supposed opponents.

Between November 1923 and January 1924 Gray was critic for *The New Age* (the journal for which Sorabji was later to write for many years).[7] In October 1925 he began

a series of articles for *The Nation and Athenaeum* which lasted until April 1930. Another venture of this time was a regular feature for *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, a literary monthly edited by Edgell Rickworth which in its short lifetime made a significant contribution to the growth of the modern movement in literary criticism, presaging F. R. Leavis's *Scrutiny*. In 1928 he was appointed to the staff of *The Daily Telegraph*, where he worked under Herbert Hughes, and a year later he combined the position with that of London critic to *The Manchester Guardian* previously held by Eric Blom. However, the life of a Fleet Street journalist was uncongenial to him and in 1930 he resigned from both posts.[8] He had always been torn between composing and writing - hence the title of his autobiography. Nevertheless he was able to write in the 'Views and Reviews' section of his private papers that 'writing music is a torment and a misery to me; historical and critical research a constant joy - a labour of love' (*Lbl.* Add. MS. 57788: 5). Not surprisingly, he continued to issue reviews and occasional articles throughout the 1930s and 1940s, often contributing to *The Listener* and *The Radio Times*. The most important of these were collected in *Contingencies and Other Essays* (1947). However, the core of his critical writing is contained in three books dealing respectively with the present, past and future of music: *A Survey of Contemporary Music* (1924), *The History of Music* (1928) and *Predicaments: or Music and the Future. An Essay in Constructive Criticism* (1936). In addition to these there are two important biographies - *Sibelius* (1931\R1938) and *Peter Warlock* (1934) - and two more analytical books dealing with specific genres - *The Forty-Eight Preludes of J. S. Bach* (1938) which is dedicated to the memory of Bernard van Dieren, and *Sibelius: The Symphonies* (1935) which was published as part of 'The Musical Pilgrim' series. In collaboration with Heseltine he was also author of *Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa: Musician and Murderer* (1926), a revised version of which was included in *Contingencies*.

Gray's early articles for *The Sackbut* laid the foundations for much of his later work. In them he wrote about modern developments in music, especially championing the work of Bartók, as well as being concerned with older music and aesthetics. From the outset he presented a strongly individual critical ideology, and it was entirely appropriate that in the very first issue of the journal he should examine critical theory in an article entitled 'The Task of Criticism' (*S*, I, May 1920: 9-13). Here he reasoned that the contemporary failure of music criticism and the consequent chaotic state of musical

sensibility in England were due to the persistent reiteration of various misconceptions regarding the very nature of art itself. Foremost among them was the evolutionary concept of music history found in works such as Stanford and Forsyth's *History of Music* (1916) and William Wallace's *The Threshold of Music* (1908). These works were found to have mistakenly viewed music in the light of a collective activity in which each successive stage of evolution represented a corresponding advance. Attention was also drawn to their frequent confusion between language and thought, Gray vociferously debunking their idea of musical genealogy whereby 'once they can prove a composer to be legitimately descended from some great master of the past by means of the musical equivalent of a strawberry-mark on the left shoulder, there is no more to be said' (: 10). His proposals for a new type of history which would abandon such evolutionary concepts were much needed and when, in 1928, he was commissioned to write such a work for the *History of Civilization* series, edited by C. K. Ogden, he returned to these issues to deal with them more fully. He tackled the problem by writing a history that sought to relate music to general culture, that attempted not just to record facts but to interpret them and reveal their intrinsic significance. This results in a highly personal account in which many traditions and assumptions of earlier writers are questioned, including the exaggerated importance of Greek influence in early music, the historical significance of the Florentine Camerata and Mussorgsky's reliance on the stimulus of literature.

Gray also opposed the established critical dogma that art was inevitably conditioned by milieu - the artist giving voice to the general trend of thought of his epoch. This was to become the first of many fierce disagreements between Gray and Newman, who took up his position in the pages of *The Sunday Times*. Gray concurred with Heseltine that the artists whose work most reflects the spirit of the age are necessarily those who are much the most ephemeral - an argument that was primarily employed to denounce Stravinsky. The primary function of criticism was taken to be a re-creation of the work of art. Such a recreation had to be approached from the standpoint of the artist, as opposed to that of the critic himself, in the manner of the impressionist critics. The critic's aim was to identify completely with the artist in the act of creation. In doing so, he needed to efface all personal prejudices and preconceived notions, becoming purely receptive and totally impersonal. Wholly subjective writings such as Pater's famous essay on Leonardo's *Gioconda* were valueless to Gray as pure criticism, regardless of their

literary or other merits. He believed that criticism, as Hanslick suggested, should properly focus on the beautiful object and not on the perceiving subject. However, while he suggested that great masterpieces contained what he described as a substratum of objective aesthetic reality, he also felt that to discern such substrata in contemporary music would be an impossibility. Thus various differing estimates may be equally valid as in this repertoire the so-called 'sensitized plate' school of criticism, associated with Cardus, could in fact provide the sole criterion. In a letter to *The Musical Times*, headed 'Subjective Criticism', Gray took issue with Newman's statement that, when there is a divergence of critical opinion, diametrically opposed sides cannot both be correct:

> in criticism there is no absolute standard of values. We can only see the work of art from one angle, from one point of view. If I say that one man is a better draughtsman or a better philosopher than another, it does not mean that we see or believe alike, but only that he gives me the impression of having a finer sense of line, or of having reasoned more clearly and logically than the other. And if I say that one man is a better critic than another, I do not necessarily mean that I agree with him. For example, I consider Wagner to be a great composer, but at the same time I consider Nietzsche's 'Der Fall Wagner' to be one of the best pieces of musical criticism in existence... No doubt there is an ultimate in which all points of view are reconciled and all contradictions resolved, but it is unattainable in practice, in the same way that I cannot see all around the table at once. And this is what the objective critic is always trying to do, with the result that he sees nothing at all. (LXVII, Feb 1926: 161)

Having identified with the artist in the act of creation, the critic is then in a position to exercise judgement on the work's intrinsic merit and subsequently may compare it with others, classify it, discern influences and so on. These processes are important, but Gray stresses that they must be distinguished from aesthetic considerations and must constitute the final stage of the critical process, not its starting point. As he wrote in 1936, 'the critic must seek to detach himself completely from the work of art, and to regard it impersonally and dispassionately, from the outside, *sub specie aeternitatis*' (*L*, XVI, 22 Jan 1936: 187).

If there is one fundamental premise that underlies all Gray's thought, it is that music represents the Romantic art *par excellence*: a phrase that occurs with some regularity throughout his writings. He regarded the art history of every civilization, viewed collectively, to be the progression from classical to Romantic values: 'All romantic art is a swan-song, the final expression of a civilisation, the rich autumn tints of decay, the writing on the wall, the flaming comet heralding the approach of anarchy and

dissolution, known to Plato and called by him the "rebellious principle"' (1924: 18). Developing this thesis in an early *Sackbut* article entitled 'In Defence of Romanticism' (I, Aug 1920: 162-71), he first propounded a theory of the cyclic sequence of the arts throughout modern history, a theory that acknowledges the basic Hegelian view of art as a collective expression of its society.[9] The theory suggests that at any given period there is one specific art which best expresses the values of that period and imposes its unique qualities in varying degrees on the other arts. The sequence begins at around 1200 with architecture as the predominant art, the argument being that, for example, Dante's *Divina Commedia* is structured along the lines of a vast Gothic cathedral, while the music of the Netherlanders also displays architectonic properties. Sculpture follows in the succeeding period, then painting, the various literary arts and eventually it is music that is found to realize most fully the aims and ideas of the nineteenth century. Clearly this conception shares much with Flinders Petrie's *Revolutions of Civilization* (1911), with Hegel's ideas of sequence expressed in his *Philosophy of Fine Art* (1886) and above all with Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* (1926-9). In order that the facts of history can be made to fit this preconceived pattern Gray has to manipulate certain important notions. He claims, for example, that although much nineteenth-century music is closely allied to literary conceptions, an examination of the actual compositions reveals that in fact they are more often than not re-translations into sound of ideas that are fundamentally musical:

> It was Weber and Wagner who actually achieved what Tieck, Novalis, etc., so conspicuously failed to achieve; it was through Berlioz and Liszt, not through Hugo and Delacroix, that the French romantic ideals found their most consummate expression; it is Frederic Delius who at a century's distance has realised in music the essentially musical impulse of Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley. (*S*, I, Aug 1920: 167)

It follows that the epithet of 'programme' music must necessarily be rejected as being in any way applicable to the Romantic masterpieces of the nineteenth century. In relation to Liszt's *Tasso*, for example, Gray argued that it was Hugo who was guilty of a musical programme, not Liszt of a literary one. The estimation of Liszt's symphonic poems as little more than decorative scene painting was prevalent in British music criticism during the first decades of the twentieth century, especially among Oxford critics. Hadow had even gone so far as to write that 'Most of his composition is glitter and tinsel, fragments of weak trivial melody decked out in elaborate and incongruous ornaments, covered with paste jewels and tawdry embroideries... shallow displays of

brilliance, which still retain some power to astonish, but very little to delight' (1924: 186-7). Realizing that he was debunking a view held by many of the 'absolutist' critics such as Hadow, Tovey and Walker, Gray tended towards overstated exaggeration which considerably weakened his argument. However, he justified his position as follows:

> The work [*Tasso*] is not in any way a tonal biography of the poet; the title bears only a symbolic relation to the music. The actual programme is contained in the sub-title *Lamento e Trionfo* - the most elementary of all musical conceptions, not a literary one at all. Indeed most of Liszt's works are simply variants or extensions of this simple formula... In all these cases the titles are purely symbolical, and it is just as legitimate to call a work *Faust* as to call it *Symphony in C minor*, to name a movement *Gretchen* instead of merely *Andante in A*; their purpose after all being only to give the listener a more precise and definite idea of what he is to expect than is afforded by the more technical expressions. They symbolise states of mind and evoke certain associations - human and psychological rather than literary or pictorial - which enable him to grasp the work more readily - they are, in fact, spiritual key signatures. (*S*, I, Aug 1920: 168)

Employing a definition of programme music as 'that which aims directly at the realisation through music of a purpose external to the music, in which music is the only means to the attainment of a literary or pictorial end, or music which strives to represent actual happenings' (Ibid.: 169), Gray considered the true perpetrators of such depictive music to be Strauss and Debussy. Strauss's famous statement of his desire to depict a teaspoon in music was indicative of his misguided allegiance to realism. Debussy's respect for literature was found to have been ruinous to *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a work in which the composer had mistakenly subordinated the musical interest to the dramatic exigencies to such an extent that very little real drama remained.

If music is regarded as the artistic citadel of purely Romantic values then it follows that masterpieces will fulfil certain basic criteria. They will be primarily concerned with developing abstract sensations and emotions rather than building concrete, intellectual structures; they will display a predominance of colouristic rather than linear interest; and they will inevitably appeal to the spirit rather than to the sense, to the heart rather than to the mind. As Gray wrote: 'The foundation of all aesthetic enjoyment lies in the direct, unfettered, unreflecting response to a sensual, emotional, imaginative experience' (1947: 21). He believed that whenever classical eighteenth-century values predominate, music is despised or misunderstood because the creation of clearly definable forms is inherently better suited to the plastic arts, existing in space, than to music existing in time. He even extended this aesthetic premise to support ideas about the

relationship between homosexuality and art. In *Contingencies* he stated the following syllogism:

> (a) music is the romantic art *par exellence*; (b) the romantic element in art, wherever we find it, immutably revolves around some manifestation or other of the worship of the feminine principle; (c) the musician, as such, is inevitably and ineluctably a lover of womanhood. It therefore necessarily follows that no homosexual, except perhaps a Lesbian, can possibly be a great composer. (1947: 30-1)

Tchaikovsky's symphonies are thereby denigrated as ballets in disguise, for ballet was deemed the ultimate homosexual art-form. It appealed too much to primitive human emotions expressive of real life, not to those purely aesthetic emotions which were considered the sole preserve of great art. The influence Diaghilev exerted on the culture of this country was wholly reprehensible. The Ballets Russes was 'an aesthetic monstrosity, neither life nor art, but a kind of substitute for both' (1924: 132).

The aesthetic dichotomy between classical and Romantic values that lies at the heart of Gray's critical thinking is symbolically represented by two formal tendencies - those of sonata and fugue. As the critic wrote in one of his numerous notebooks, 'Sonata and fugue are the musical equivalents of free-will and predestination respectively' (Gray, P., 1989: 160). The former proceeds from diversity to unity, the latter *vice versa*. The Berliozian *idée fixe*, the Wagnerian leitmotif and the Lisztian representative theme are each regarded as attempts to create unified structures along the principle of fugal development. Contrapuntal or polyphonic writing embodied in fugue was for Gray the fundamental symbol of all Romantic art in which conflict is reconciled into unity. Bernard van Dieren's music was championed with enthusiasm largely because it adhered to traditional polyphonic principles, as exemplified in his *Diaphony* Op. 8. The fact that Gray devoted nineteen pages of his *Survey* to van Dieren while others received barely a mention, including Mahler and Vaughan Williams, caused a controversy at the time of its publication. Embracing traditional methods, van Dieren's music was found to stand apart from much contemporary music, yet it was far from being merely a continuation of the nineteenth-century Romantic heritage. Rather it was seen as a fulfilment of Busoni's prediction of the *Junge Klassizität*; a paradox that was apparent in his positive evaluation of other individualistic composers, especially Berlioz and Sibelius. Berlioz's standing aside from the central currents of nineteenth-century music and Sibelius's complete isolation from such currents were both accorded a great deal of significance. Again, in

the case of the latter, there is the link with Busoni, for it was Busoni who campaigned for Sibelius's music in Germany. The enthusiasm for composers who stood aside from the mainstream, and the placing of their achievements above those with wider appeal and more seminal influence, are features of Gray's criticism shared by other members of the *Sackbut* coterie, most especially by Sorabji. Their perception of their own marginal position within society as composers without any degree of public appreciation surely played some part in this. Gray made high claims for Sibelius, regarding him as the rightful heir to Beethoven and the sole example of an early twentieth-century master who was neither influenced by nor reacted against the Romantic excesses of Wagner. The Romantic symphony had been moving increasingly away from the classical ideal and through championing Sibelius's attempts to return to what he regarded as 'the same fundamental, immutable, and ever-fruitful principles that have inspired the great art of the past and are equally destined to inspire that of the future' (1934: 203-4), Gray showed his true reactionary colours. It is interesting to note that, when extolling the virtues of Bartók's two string quartets in 1923, he also had occasion to compare modern works with those of Beethoven, for rarely did he make such comparisons:

> The influence, or rather the inspiration, which they reveal is that of Beethoven, particularly the later Beethoven of the posthumous quartets. And it certainly provides food for thought that practically the only composer of to-day who is still progressing - not merely in the narrow sense of idiomatic novelty, but also in the true sense of spiritual depth and expressive power - should be so akin to the great master who, more than any other, is despised and neglected by the so-called advanced musicians of to-day. (*NA*, XXXIII, 27 Dec 1923: 102)

Neoclassical aspiration in twentieth-century music was for Gray the worst possible offence, always to be condemned outright. One of the worst offenders was Richard Strauss. His early symphonic poems, adhering to the formal principles of the Romantic ideal by extending essentially Lisztian prototypes, could be subsumed into the tradition. As soon as organic development was sacrificed to classical ideals, as in *Der Rosenkavalier*, it resulted in false art: 'The divinely innocent and virginal Mozartian muse cannot be wooed and won like an *Elektra* or a *Salome*; all we find in *Der Rosenkavalier* is a worn-out, dissipated *demi-mondaine*, with powdered face, rouged lips, false hair, and a hideous leer' (1924: 49). Concurring with Newman's diagnosis of Strauss's artistic decay in his post-*Elektra* works, Gray felt that he had turned his back on the Romantic tradition in an attempt to become a modernist against his own nature. Reviewing the first

British performance of the *Alpine Symphony* in November 1923 he wrote:

> The most noticeable characteristic of the Alpine Symphony... is precisely the lack of this nervous energy and leaping pulse of earlier days. It is joyless, slack, sodden, listless in every bar. In this work Strauss is the merest shadow of his former self. The climbing theme is only a pathetic, limping caricature of the hero theme in Heldenleben; the sunrise at the beginning of the work is a feeble thing compared to the similar passage in Also sprach Zarthustra [sic]. (*NA*, XXXIII, 22 Nov 1923: 42)

This was indicative of the way in which Gray considered the Romantic movement to be disintegrating in general. Stravinsky's neoclassicism lent further weight to his theory that the progression from the cosmopolitanism of eighteenth-century music to the nationalism of the nineteenth and individualism of the twentieth was a gradual process of disintegration that would ultimately culminate in anarchy. Such dissolution could be found in the 'infantile' works of *Les Six* whose members combined 'an undoubted talent for self-advertisement with a complete lack of artistic ability' (*NA*, XXXIII, 13 Dec 1923: 81). The music of the first two decades of the twentieth century was regarded as the last expression of expiring Romanticism, the development of which had curiously been paralleled by the three movements of Liszt's *Faust Symphony*. These were found to contain in embryo the three phases of nineteenth-century art:

> The first, *allegro furioso*, with its characteristic alternations of despair and exultation, admirably symbolises the art of Byron, Delacroix, and Berlioz; the second, impassioned yet serene, represents that of Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Delius; the sinister and demoniac *scherzo* in which the themes of the preceding movements are derisively parodied and inverted affords a striking parallel to the art of Rimbaud, Laforgue, James Joyce, Stravinsky, and lastly Schönberg, especially in his *Pierrot Lunaire*... (*NA*, XXXIII, 6 Dec 1923: 68)

Pierrot Lunaire was found to be a terminal point beyond which it was impossible to progress, a point which was also reached by *Elektra* and *Le Sacre*, the latter being described as 'the end of a long *cul-de-sac*, the last stage of degeneration and artistic depravity' (1924: 136). This was precisely the verdict passed so eloquently by Lambert a decade later in his *Music Ho!* As Gray quipped in *Predicaments*, 'the final death-dance of Elektra is paralleled by the final death-dance of the Elect' (: 197). Stravinsky's return to classical models and procedures might, in theory, have served as a healthy corrective. However, it was considered self-consciously artificial and sterile, resulting from the imposition of an external constraint which was not a feature of true classicism. He wrote: 'The two most essential qualities for a great classical art are precisely those in which

Stravinsky is most completely lacking - the power of melodic invention and of formal construction on a large-scale, and they are the two things in music which cannot be successfully counterfeited' (1936: 209). Stravinsky added weight to Gray's theory that the artists who most completely express the spirit of the age were inevitably those of the second rank. Although *Le Sacre* had given voice to an artistic expression that defined a particular moment in cultural history, it was nevertheless condemned in musical terms; a work in which rhythm degenerated into metre (1924: 142). In *Les Noces* he continued along the same path as in *Le Sacre* - 'the same monotonous little wisps of folk-song which are never developed or combined, but merely repeated; the same metronomic, machine-like rhythms, the same mechanical harmonization' (1936: 201). Yet these two works represented the real Stravinsky whereas his later works were the insincere results of his attempt to remain fashionable in a decadent world. Gray was unable to see beyond what he regarded as the last vestiges of a decaying Romanticism and could therefore offer no perceptive critique of the music of his own generation. The essay *Contingencies* was written in the optimistic belief that through the suffering engendered by the Second World War the disintegration of the old order would be complete, clearing the way for a new awakening. His perspective on the extent to which this old order had become diseased linked artistic results with sociological history. The excesses of Strauss's tone poems, Mahler's symphonies and Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* reflected Edwardian opulence while the neoclassicism of Stravinsky was likened to the perversity of Gurdjieff's institution at Fontainebleau, where the rich and famous, including Alfred Orage, the former editor of *The New Age*, would pay the Master vast sums to undertake domestic chores. Both were indicative of the same trend, only Stravinsky's art was 'the luxury of the cocktail bar and chromium-plated steel furniture; rather uncomfortable but *chic* and elegant, discomfort *de luxe* in place of comfort *de luxe* - but always *de luxe*' (1947: 37).

Each successive stage in music history from eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism to twentieth-century multiplicity of styles was, in Gray's opinion, mirrored by the political and sociological developments of their respective periods. Regarded as an essentially conservative reaction devoid of inherent creativity, neoclassicism was likened to Fascism. Members of the Second Viennese School, through their restriction of resources and revolutionary innovations, were seen as musical Communists. While such musical Communism appeared theoretically to offer a viable alternative, in practice it was found

to be irreconcilable with all pre-existing aesthetics and failed to appeal to the average sensibility. Unable or unwilling to see Schoenberg as the figurehead of a new creative movement, Gray insisted that he was in fact the last commanding figure in the history of Romanticism. In the early 1920s Gray was one of the few critics who dealt with Schoenberg in any depth. His article 'Arnold Schönberg - A Critical Study' written for *Music and Letters* (III, Jan 1923: 73-89) was a serious attempt to discover the continuity between his early works and those of his post-1908 period, yet he returned a negative verdict. In a letter to Heseltine written at the time he wrote:

> I have recently been delivered of a large article on Schönberg which Fox-Strangways is publishing in this number of Music and Letters due any day. I am better pleased with it than with anything I have yet written. But a terrific effort. It is a difficult problem both to do justice to him and to abuse him in equal measure. (*Lbl.* Add. MS 57962, 29 Nov - 6 Dec 1921: 22)

The string sextet *Verklärte Nacht* left him 'entirely cold and unmoved' (Ibid.: 76) while even admiration for Schoenberg's achievement in *Gurrelieder* could not dispel 'the uneasy but certain conviction of its inherent sterility, its immense and utter purposelessness' (: 78). The works immediately succeeding the second String Quartet were found to represent the composer at the height of his powers and *Pierrot Lunaire* was hailed as the most perfect expression of his personality:

> Out of the unpromising material afforded by these highly artificial, precious, and decadent little poems, Schönberg has created a whole world of strange fascination and enchantment, of nameless horrors and terrible imaginings, of perverse and poisonous beauty and bitter-sweet fragrance, of a searing and withering mockery and malicious, elfish humour, which the poet most assuredly never even contemplated. All the *diablerie* of the Romantics pales besides its demoniac intensity, and the much-vaulted irony and cynicism of Stravinsky appear childish and insipid in comparison to the sardonic and inhuman laughter of Schönberg's sinister and menacing evocation. In all art and literature one can only think of Hoffmann who has anything to compare to it. (: 83-4)

Regarded as representing the final expression of decaying Romanticism in which the very nature of Romanticism itself was satirized with derisive mockery, Schoenberg's abandonment of tonality in *Pierrot Lunaire* and the consequent freedom of procedure that it exposed in *Erwartung* and *Die Glückliche Hand* resulted in his becoming 'a slave to his own mannerisms, the prisoner of his own originality' (: 85). The liberation of tonality had led to an aesthetic morass; only through returning to traditional methods could balance and direction be regained. The significance of Schoenberg's 'conversion' from

Op. 11 onwards was minimalized and interpreted as an attempt to conceal the same essential stylistic qualities that were found in his earlier works: 'the German romanticism of the first works does not disappear from his later ones, but is merely inverted and reacted against, in a kind of romanticism *à rebours*' (1936: 187). Precisely because of this misguided view, Gray was led to the prediction that the Second Viennese School would not succeed in establishing an enduring school. Although he later rescinded it, the comment stuck to him like mud and served to undermine his critical authority.

In April 1930 Gray concluded his series of articles for *The Nation and Athenaeum* with a piece entitled 'The End of a Period', referring both to his time with the paper and, more importantly, to the end of Franco-Russian hegemony that had prevailed for the last twenty years, symbolized by the death of Diaghilev in the summer of 1929 (*NAth*, XLVII, 5 Apr 1930: 14-15). This article defines Gray's position with regard to recent music history with precision. He concluded:

> A century and more of well-nigh exclusive German domination had resulted in an oppressive tyranny harmful even to German music itself, which, through a process of inbreeding as it were, had fairly run to seed in the obese and plethoric art of Mahler and Bruckner, of Reger and Strauss. Anything, one had begun to feel, was better than to go on like that, and in putting an end to the sway of this degenerate Teutonic dynasty the French and Russian schools performed a service for which they deserve our undying gratitude.
>
> The price we pay for liberty, however, is always a high one, sometimes even more than we can afford, and the sequel has been a phase of utter anarchy and disintegration, productive of little that will endure, from which music is only now beginning painfully to emerge. (: 15)

We may concur with Arnold Whittall that Gray was 'too concerned with his own creative ambitions to be a reliable, much less charitable, critic' (1966: 125). Indeed, such a judgement could be passed on the literary achievements of every member of the *Sackbut* coterie. As composers their writing displayed the violent prejudices that are associated with the more famous composer-critics. Gray's exaggerated prose style did little to encourage acceptance among his colleagues and consequently, after his death, it was seen necessary by his friends to balance the books. Hubert Foss was particularly assertive in his recognition of Gray's achievement, writing in his obituary notice:

> The idea that Gray set himself to *épater les bourgeois* is ridiculous: a pettifogging view of an expansive mind. For Gray, like all his friends in the Heseltine group, was supremely interested in one thing only - in art and its perfection; within the confines of the chosen ground he and they were supremely interested in genius. They had no desire to applaud talent because it was possessed by a friend;

> nepotism, back-scratching, jockeying for coveted positions, were not only alien to them but despicable in their eyes. They sought musical truth; many of us have long thought they found it where others, acclaimed publicly with brighter medals, were blind to music's meaning and trend. (*MT*, XCII, Nov 1951: 497)

Yet for all his idiosyncratic views and misguided predictions, Gray was above all a brilliant writer. His combative style demanded a response from the reader, his violent and provocative prose demanded to be challenged. This is where Gray's strength as a critic lay, for as Shaw's criticism continues to maintain interest so one may also read Gray for the pleasure of his prose alone. Along with Calvocoressi, he did much for the understanding of Bartók and Kodály in this country and led the way towards the recognition of Sibelius. With W. J. Turner and Ernest Newman he championed the cause of Berlioz at a time when his music was considerably undervalued in critical terms, if not in practical ones. As an enthusiastic Lisztian and a champion of Italian opera - both traits that were to be taken over in British music criticism by Constant Lambert - he attempted to set the record straight, to find a middle path between the idolaters and the detractors. His historical significance lies most prominently in the influence he exerted as a critic over the young Lambert and in his non-acceptance of what he considered to constitute the post-Romantic repertoire.

ii) K. S. SORABJI

Philip Heseltine's article 'Some Reflections on Modern Musical Criticism' in *The Musical Times* (LIV, Oct 1913: 652-54) elicited what was to become the first of numerous letters from Kaikhosru Sorabji to its author.[10] It initiated a lifelong friendship between the two men which, coincidentally, began at about the same time as that between Gray and Heseltine. Sorabji introduced himself as an 'ultra-modernist musician' and proceeded to outline something of his aesthetic point of view:

> Much of Beethoven's music is absolutely repellent to me. To Bach and Mozart, Schumann, Chopin and Schubert I am faithful and thoroughly appreciate and enjoy their beautiful works, but it is among the ultra-modern that I am in my musical element... I wish you had laid more stress in your article on the insensate bigotry and narrow-mindedness of the academics towards modern music... Your remarks about the fixed rigid standard of beauty too are splendid; they go right to the heart of things. People seem to have such difficulty in emptying their minds of

> prejudices and preconceived notions. My first taste of modern music was gained some six years ago when I heard *Pelléas et Mélisande*. I at once succumbed an easy prey to this most exquisite ravishing work. Not so very long afterwards I had my first taste of the great Richard - 'ELEKTRA'! This carried me away as it were a whirlwind. From that day to this I have devoted my attention - with the full consent of my professor - entirely to modern music. (op. cit., 3 Oct 1913)

Born to a Parsi father and a Spanish-Sicilian mother, Sorabji had been educated privately in England and had received musical tuition until his mid-teens, after which he became largely self-taught in matters of composition - which he began just prior to the First World War. His correspondence with Heseltine, begun at that time, reveals an extraordinary conversance with the whole spectrum of contemporary developments in music and art throughout Europe that was remarkable for a young musician in pre-war England. In a letter to Heseltine dated 3 February 1914 he wrote of his plans to devote himself entirely to musical study with a view to becoming a critic, a desire which initially resulted in various letters being sent to the editor of *The Musical Standard* that were published in 1914, including a series in which he entered into controversy with Leigh Henry over the relative value of Chopin's music.[11] His first article, entitled 'Musical Lumber', appeared in that journal in February 1915. It began with what, in hindsight, can be seen as an entirely appropriate sentence summarizing the role of his early criticism: 'The present time seems to be a most suitable one for having a grand spring-clean of musical life and conceptions, and discarding antiquated notions, effete dogmas, fetishes and exploded superstitions' (*MS*, LXXXVIII, 27 Feb 1915: 151).

From the very first, Sorabji attempted to clear away the debris of what he regarded as the deficient thinking of the academics. In this respect he took a line similar to that of John F. Runciman; neither had had an academic training at a university or conservatoire and both fiercely lampooned the Establishment, at the expense of their own popularity, with a highly pugnacious literary style. Such invective could, in Sorabji's case, be construed as resulting in part from a childhood in which racial abuse was a part of daily life. As a Spanish-Sicilian Parsi living at the time of the British Raj he was no doubt made to feel an outsider, as his first letters to Alfred Orage's periodical, *The New Age*, testify.[12] His unique position on the periphery of British musical life was clearly reflected in his approach to criticism.

When Heseltine finally got *The Sackbut* published in 1920 after two false starts, Sorabji was among its first contributors; Heseltine had in fact commissioned articles from

him at his first attempt in 1915. The two articles he penned for the journal concerned the two subjects that were to become his most frequent concerns - singers and the decline of vocal art and pianists and the piano repertoire.[13] Already his allegiance to the kind of intellectually flamboyant Romanticism found in the works of Liszt, Busoni, Reger and Medtner was made plain, as was his distaste for *Les Six*. These two subject areas formed the backbone of his first regular articles for *The New Age* between 1924 and 1934.

In *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (1969) John Gross states that during the Edwardian period there were only two English journals that could be called creative forces: *The English Review* and *The New Age*. When A. R. Orage took over *The New Age* in 1907 he transformed it from an insignificant Liberal journal into one of the most brilliant weeklies featuring reviews on politics, literature and the arts in Britain. He attracted distinguished writers including Shaw, Wells and Arnold Bennett. Its music criticism had been highly individualistic from 1917, the time when Ezra Pound had taken up writing music criticism under the pseudonym 'William Atheling'.[14] In September 1922 Orage resigned the editorship of *The New Age* and the paper was taken over by the supporters of the financial system called Social Credit associated with Major Clifford Hugh Douglas. According to Cecil Gray (1948: 267), who then succeeded Pound as its music critic, the great reputation that the journal had thus far enjoyed dwindled gradually towards nothing and its circulation correspondingly. Certainly 'Douglasism' enjoyed little political force, for being a purely financial system it offered no social philosophy. When Sorabji joined the staff of *The New Age* in 1924, it was struggling to survive under the editorship of Arthur Brenton. Having a private income, Sorabji remained unperturbed by the journal's financial insecurity which resulted in infrequent payment of its contributors. In fact, for him it was in certain respects an advantage, for it provided a laxity of editorial control that few other critics enjoyed, while it also meant that he was not committed to a regular column and could write at his leisure. Indeed, according to Alistair Hinton, his criticism was written purely as a diversion and relaxation in between bouts of compositional activity.[15] Over the period of ten years and four months that he wrote for *The New Age*, his least productive year, 1933, yielded just seven articles while his most productive years, 1928 and 1929, resulted in 25 and 26 articles respectively.

Sorabji described himself as 'a staunch Monetary Reformer and Social Creditor' (*NEW*, X, 18 Feb 1937: 380) and so, when in 1932 Orage began *The New English Weekly*,

a Guild Socialist journal that set itself against Fabianism, it was inevitable that he should be invited to contribute. For two years he wrote music criticism in both *The New Age* and *The New English Weekly* before he resigned from the former in July 1934. He contributed his final review to the latter in June 1945 and thereafter wrote only the occasional "letter-to-the-Editor" until its demise in 1949. Like its predecessor, this journal weathered serious financial difficulties for a large part of its existence and only attracted writers of strong political ideologies.

The majority of Sorabji's early articles take the form of concert reviews and discussions of current events. Later on they consist more of reviews of radio broadcasts and records. As the 1930s progressed he became increasingly disillusioned by the standards of performance and unimaginative concert programmes; he attended fewer concerts and spent more time reviewing records.[16] As well as music criticism he also wrote on a variety of other subjects from abortion to British rule in India. Always full of pungent invective, his articles were designed to arouse the feelings of even the most passive, insensible reader. His views on performers were expressed in an unreserved and frequently extreme manner and while some performers, such as the Busoni pupil Egon Petri, were eulogized extravagantly, others received very short shrift indeed; mediocrity was vehemently disdained. Some of his more significant articles from *The New Age* and *The New English Weekly* were reprinted in two books of collected essays, *Around Music* (1932), which included a foreword by Orage, and *Mi Contra Fa* (1947).

Sorabji's criticism was based on a clearly defined if rather restricted aesthetic point of view. Like Heseltine, he did not believe in any fixed standards of beauty but rather that such standards were in a continual state of flux, changing from place to place, from age to age, and within these from individual to individual. His own conception of beauty can best be revealed through an acquaintance with his own music which is broadly in the tradition stemming from Bach through Liszt and Busoni, but embracing an oriental luxuriance and formal freedom found in the works of composers such as Debussy, Skryabin, Delius, Szymanowski and the early Schoenberg. These two strands can be clearly discerned in his most extended published piano work - *Opus Clavicembalisticum* (1929-30).

For Sorabji, great music must express an exalted emotion, must glow with a warmth of humanity, and must be transcendental and essentially aristocratic in its appeal.

W. J. Turner's anti-democratic critical stance in his *Variations on the Theme of Music* (1924), reflected in various pronouncements such as that against opera in the vernacular, won Sorabji's support (*NA*, XXXVII, 8 Nov 1925: 271) and it is significant that his only article on a non-musical subject to be published in book form was concerned with the validity of the aristocratic principle.[17] His whole attitude was that of the connoisseur, of a member of what he would have regarded as the select cognoscenti, or as one of the élite class of discerning individuals. He considered the composer's attitude should properly be one of reverence for musical art in which no concessions are made to popular taste. Such an attitude can be seen clearly in his response to Elgar, whose large-scale Romantic works won considerable praise - especially the Violin Concerto (*NA*, XXXIX, 23 Sep 1926: 242). Yet Elgar's marches and his musical appeals to a wide audience were seen to exercise a pernicious influence within his more serious compositions such as *The Kingdom*: 'Occasionally the music rises to heights of etherealised, rarefied purity and beauty, to descend promptly into the worst Elgarian maudlin of the amorous sections of the "Cockaigne" overture or the detestable bombast of his jingoism, such as "Land of Hope and Glory"' (*NA*, XXXVII, 14 May 1925: 18). This was very much in line with Cecil Gray's criticism of Elgar in his *Survey of Contemporary Music* (1927: 78-94). The fact that a serious artist like Elgar allowed his popular 'mass-appeal' style to intrude upon at least this one serious work was found to be wholly detrimental.

Sorabji championed no school of compositional thought, for he was particularly set against the idea of groups of composers sharing a similar aesthetic, especially those of a nationalist orientation. He disdained the use of folksong as a means of providing greater accessibility for contemporary music. For him, the greater the composer, the less he would admit of any nationalist pigeon-holing: 'As a general rule, I must confess myself to be one to whom "nationalism" in music is utterly meaningless when not actively repellent - the sort of thing with which de Falla and Bartók are associated turns me into a raving maniac' (*NA*, XLVII, 11 Sep 1930: 236). His estimation of Bartók was one of the few wide divergences of opinion between himself and other members of the *Sackbut* coterie. Following a Bartók recital in January 1930 he wrote:

> In respect and admiration of the incorruptible and lofty ideals of Bartók, so directly, even drastically, expressed in this music of blunt utterance, I yield to no one. I only permit myself to wonder if such a bluntness tending often to an uncouthness, is really compatible with musical expression at its highest. The

> intensely compressed, concentrated thought of a Sibelius, with its laconicism of expression, is aphoristic, significance-crammed enough in all conscience, like a Yoga-Sutra of Panjali, for instance; but the expression, laconic though it be, is full of hidden subtlety. It is always (for want of a better expression) essentially *musical.* This is what I feel lacking in Bartók: it is, it seems to me, a really primitive musical nature expressing itself. There is also an insensitiveness to the quality of sounds in themselves, a crudity of inner bearing that shows itself in the sharp, blunt ugliness of many of Bartók's chord-spacings and groupings... (*NA*, XLVI, 23 Jan 1930: 137)

It was no doubt Bartók's treatment of the piano that repelled Sorabji, for he considered the Fourth Quartet an important work which exhibited ' a strangely convincing power... as of one of Mantegna's Marys in the Brera Gallery "Dead Christ"' (*NEW*, XIX, 12 Jun 1941: 80).

Ironically, in his apparent rejection of all fashions and cliques, Sorabji became a partisan of what could broadly be termed the 'esoteric outsiders' group of composers. Those he regarded as supreme Masters - Busoni, Mahler, Reger, Medtner, van Dieren, Sibelius and to some extent Delius - shared certain common characteristics. Many had a mixed nationality (as did Sorabji himself), they were all highly individualistic, independent, and stood aloof from the mainstream of contemporary compositional trends, seeking neither to lead nor to belong to any particular school of thought. This is, of course, to group very different composers together according to how they have been perceived and reflects little about their actual historical position. Busoni's far-sightedness and percipience, for example, were such as to exert as powerful an influence, albeit a subtle one, over an extraordinarily broad spectrum of twentieth-century musical thought as any of his contemporaries. Not surprisingly, however, bearing in mind Sorabji's support of these then neglected composers, Newman's theory of the contemporary recognition of genius expounded in his *A Musical Critic's Holiday (1925)* was completely rejected as reflecting an index to an artist's status either during his life or after (*NA*, L, 18 Feb 1932: 187).

The other side of this critical coin was a loathing of 'the fashionable monkey-tricks' of Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Moscow. The following 1926 review of the first performance in London of Stravinsky's Piano Sonata, which suggests how Busoni might have succeeded where Stravinsky failed, is characteristic of his response to the composer whom he later described as a 'fashionable *couturier* in music' (*NEW*, VII, 1 Aug 1935: 315). Music which came under the 'pestilent' influence of Stravinsky, such as that of

Falla, Bliss and Honegger, was dismissed in a similar forthright and uncompromising manner:

> A work so tedious, so dull, so utterly without essential logic, coherence, or significance, and finally, so pretentiously ridiculous, it is not often, even in these days of atrociously bad music-making, one's fate to hear. One listened vainly for the indication of any conscious or unconscious certainty of aim or direction, and the only thing one can compare the thing to is a feeble attempt to imitate Clementi, while making use of the "current cant" (as *The New Age* used to say) of contemporary music. But a pastiche of Clementi might conceivably be well and cleverly done; one can imagine Busoni, for instance, producing a fascinating, witty, and dazzling piece of work of the sort. Under no circumstances can one imagine Stravinsky doing it; he has neither the intellectual power nor the breadth of musical culture. The miraculously happy harmonic twists that Busoni knows so well how to give to passages of comparatively ordinary harmony are the result both of immense knowledge and skill, and impeccable, never-erring instinct. Stravinsky's, on the other hand, approximate to the fumblings of a child pianist somewhere in the vicinity of the right notes; just lack of competence. Of taste or style he has none. His harmonic sense is cramped and limited to a degree almost incredible, and the rhythmic variety and vitality of which we hear so much spoken and actually hear so little, is as conspicuously lacking as it always is. (*NA*, XXXVIII, 18 Feb 1926: 190)

The issue of 'essential logic' was at the heart of Sorabji's critical thought, for musical expression needed to dictate its own manner of presentation. The analogies employed to describe successful forms are revealing; sometimes works were like stone, such as the Berlioz *Requiem* likened to a huge granite rock-hewn temple (*NA*, XL, 10 Feb 1927: 177), while others were constructed like vast tapestries such as Debussy's *Iberia* (*NEW*, VIII, 20 Feb 1936: 375), or grew like vegetation such as Florent Schmitt's *Symphonie Concertante* (*NA*, LII, 27 Apr 1933: 310). The aesthetic of expressive simplicity and economy of means was entirely alien to him, as witnessed in his own often highly complex music and in the essay on simplicity in *The Scottish Musical Magazine* (XII, Dec 1930: 28-9), amended and reprinted in *Around Music*:

> But if there is one thing more than another that Oriental art impresses on one, it is that to the Oriental artist, the ideal of simplicity as an end and aim in itself, as a thing to be striven for for its own sake, is not only utterly meaningless and alien, but scarcely enters his head... A tired, exhausted mind is not equal to the intellectual effort demanded by the apprehension of rich and elaborate detail; it becomes wearied and bored and cries out for simplicity... The end is when a phase of Dada is reached - not childishness, but sheer infantilism - of which the present vogue of Stravinsky and his epigoni in almost every country in Europe, and the craze for folksong, Negro-spiritual and so on, are symptomatic. (1932: 116)



K. S. Sorabji

Large-scale Romantic structures with a contrapuntal basis, such as Delius's *Mass of Life* or Busoni's *Fantasia Contrapuntistica*, were consistently placed at the summit of musical achievement. They represented the ritual aspects of music that had a strong appeal for the critic. In an essay on 'Attitudes of Mind Towards Music' in *Around Music* he posited that there were three such attitudes - the tradesman, the professional and the religious. The artist of genius belonged, naturally, to the third type: 'This attitude is peculiarly an Oriental, and particularly an Indian one - the 'act of Art', as I may perhaps call it, taking on the aspect and significance of a rite, a religious celebration, and not only taking on the aspect thereof but actually becoming a religious act, so inextricably interwoven are the conceptions of Art and religion to the Indian mind' (1932: 110). The organization of musical material into a cohesive and organic whole, the fusion of thought and expression on an epic scale that took on this quality of celebration was the central criterion for greatness. This criterion of value is expounded in the essay 'Organic and Inorganic Form':

> This is the crux of the distinction between organic and inorganic form; in the one case the music is forced or poured into a ready-made mould, as in the case of the Stanfords and the Parrys, and often of the Brahms too, a form that does not really arise out of any inner necessity of the music; in the other it moulds its own form, as in the case of Delius or Sibelius, or any great master of what (I think it was) Clive Bell once called "significant form."
>
> The great masters of organic technique, Berlioz, Delius, Sibelius, van Dieren, pursuing intensely orderly cohesive trains of musical thinking instinct with vital and living ideas, mould and shape their forms in accordance with the growth, development, and proliferation of these ideas. This, of course, is the real, the only, creative technique, and those who possess it, though they may never in their lives have set their hand to a formalistic sonata-form movement, rondo or what not, are the Masters - the only Masters - of "significant form" in music. (1947: 51-2)

Schoenberg's twelve-note music was found to be reprehensible on the grounds that it could never achieve this cohesion, that it was an inorganic technique which represented a contraction of outlook, a constriction of vocabulary and a drying up of creative ideas from his earlier late Romantic works; mechanical manipulation of formulae was the worst offence against music (*NEW*, V, 27 Sep 1934: 472-4). Schoenberg was also condemned for his approach to the voice; the songs of *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*, for example, represented 'a denial, a negation of the human voice, springing from the perverse anti-vocal obsession of the latter-day Schoenberg' (*NA*, XLVI, 21 Nov 1929: 32). A similar

critical view was taken of the ornamentation and elaboration of musical thought; it could either be organic, as in the music of van Dieren and Szymanowski, or merely a superficial addition as in the music of Bax. In Bax 'the elaborate detail is often irrelevantly overlaid upon an essentially simple structure', while in Szymanowski, 'as in that of the Oriental artist and craftsman, the intricacy and elaboration are essential and inherent in the matter itself' (*NEW*, XII, 21 Oct 1937: 36-7). Bax's mind was found to have no natural tropical richness: 'the attempts of this essential chilly Hyperborean to force the small plants of his northern imagining by a sort of hot-house intensive culture into a semblance of the burgeoning vivid luxuriance of an exotic vegetation simply produces a weak and debilitated overgrowth with exhausted vitality' (*NA*, XLII, 10 Nov 1927: 22).

One feature found to be of particular significance in the esoteric Romantic repertoire, to which Sorabji so closely aligned himself, was what he described as a 'metapsychic motivation' (1947: 193 *et seq.*), found particularly powerful in works by Strauss, Liszt, Busoni and Alkan. Again, it is a feature of his own works such as *St. Bertrand de Comminges* and *Quaere Reliqua Hujus Materiae Inter Secretiora*, based on stories of the supernatural by Montague Rhodes and M. R. James. He admires the 'magical necromantic quality' (1932: 68) in Busoni's music and finds in Alkan an appealing strangeness, an under-the-surface quality that shares an affinity with Berlioz (1947: 213).

Although Sorabji's aesthetic was formulated early in life and changed little over the years during which he was active as a writer, he was by no means inflexible in his critical assessments. In *Mi Contra Fa* he openly retracted his earlier remarks made about Fauré in *Around Music*, writing that his 'insufficient knowledge of the great French Master's work at that time may explain, but it cannot excuse, what was there said' (1947: 162). More significant was his change of opinion regarding Skryabin and Delius. Both Sorabji's early compositions and his letters to Heseltine testify to the enormous impact the works of Skryabin made on him around 1913, especially *Prometheus*. By 1934, when he came to review Stokowski's recordings of *Le Poème de l'Extase* and *Prometheus*, his passion for these works had completely dissolved: 'There is not a trace of coherent consecutive thinking in either *Le Poème l'Extase* or *Prometheus* from first bar to last. A little idea is initiated, run for a little, or else grotesquely inflated, left, and another started after a piece of transparent and pitiful padding of the string-twiddling type, sure

indication, that, of the composer lacking in power of sustained and coherent thought' (*NA*, LV, 19 Jul 1934: 141-2). He nevertheless remained loyal to aspects of Skryabin, the composer of exquisite piano miniatures, into late life.

His attitude to Delius was more ambiguous. From his association with Heseltine he had gained a profound knowledge and enthusiasm for the works of the composer that dated from around 1913. In 1925 he described *Paris* as 'alight and burning with a white hot imagination, exultant, and.. shot through with that nostalgia, that "tristezza," which is such a characteristic of Delius, and which attains to such poignant and piercing intensity in the greatest musical Nature-elegiac ever written, Delius's own *Song of the High Hills*' (*NA*, XXXVI, 19 Mar 1925: 272-3). The 1929 Delius festival also brought enthusiastic reviews. In his discussion of the *Mass of Life* Sorabji revealed his conception of Delius's position in relation to the broader trends of contemporary music, a highly negative conception that later found expression in Lambert's seminal *Music Ho!*

> here is teeming, abundant, and over-flowing "life," exultant and vivid enough to galvanise into response even the machine-monotony-stunned disciples of the *Zeit-geist*, as represented, naturally, by Stravinsky, Hindemith and Co. The work has the surge and sweep, the breadth and length of phrase that are instantly recognisable as the sign-manual of the greatest music, and that have completely disappeared from all "modern" music that is recognised as such by the cliques. Schönberg had it even as late as the five Orchestral Pieces. Sibelius still appears to possess something of it - otherwise it is not, and it will get less and less as music universally declines into the senile, sophisticated quibbling jugglings that are becoming increasingly the mark of contemporary work as a whole, apart from one or two conspicuous and exceptional figures, who stand right outside the main current, a fact shown by the savage hostility and venom of those whose strength is such that will-they nill-they *with* the main current is the only possible way for them. (*NA*, XLVI, 14 Nov 1929: 20-1)

By the mid 1930s his opinion of Delius had undergone a radical reassessment. In reviewing a performance of Delius's opera *Koanga* in 1935, he wrote of the ineffective vocal writing and word-setting. He also drew attention to the fact that 'the obviousness of any sort of stage-musical form was rather repugnant to the musical nature of Delius, whose art, moreover, did not in its very nature lend itself to music-psychological delineation of the kind that is essential in the lyric theatre' (*NEW*, VIII, 24 Oct 1935: 33-4). With the second volume of records issued by the Delius Society in 1937 he expressed an uneasiness, finding 'a sort of superficiality in this Nature-Worship business, this eternal regret and repining for what does not in the least call for any regret or repining at all; an

incurable and all-pervasive whine seemed to pervade what has in former times seemed pure beauty' (*NEW*, X, 25 Mar 1937: 474). By 1939 he had become scathing in his condemnation:

> Constant Lambert conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra gives a very good and careful performance of the Delius "On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring," and his discreet and sensitive handling does not obtrude or cause to obtrude the whining lushness of the music, its lack of spiritual and moral back-bone so to speak, the reason by the way, apart from its rhythmic poverty and monotony, why the work of Delius palls after a time, far more than the work of that other composer who is supposed to have concentrated so much of his attention upon "lachrymae rerum" - Tchaikovsky. I am inclined to think that the rhythmic poverty is more than half the explanation, and the narrowness of scope of its moods. In both respects Delius is a child compared with Tchaikovsky, almost his one and only formula for an allegro being a ta-taa, ta-taa, ta-taa or its converse a taa-ta, taa-ta, taa-ta. There is hardly one single work wherein he gets away from either or both of these narrow formulae, wearisome and primitive. (*NEW*, XIV, 2 Feb 1939: 255)

Yet for all this vehement trouncing, Sorabji could still praise certain works of Delius with extravagance during the 1940s.[18] His response had become ambiguous; he could appraise the quality of Delius's expression while being fully aware of his technical shortcomings.

It would seem that to some extent Sibelius had taken the place of Delius in Sorabji's critical affections from the early 1930s. The essential difference between the two composers was found to be in their creative response to nature. Delius's preoccupation with nature allowed no real insight into its true inwardness - the object of the composer's obsession - and led to a lack of formal constraint resulting in a sense of enervation. Sibelius, on the other hand, realized that the external features of nature were in themselves a magical manifestation and did not communicate the kind of melancholic sadness in its beauty which is such a characteristic of Delius's music. Rather than enervating, Sibelius charged his audience with nervous energy (*NEW*, XII, 16 Dec 1937: 526-7). Gray's 1932 monograph on the composer received a highly laudatory review, although not entirely without reservation:

> What, I confess surprised me, was to find Mr. Gray conceding, as though he considered it a legitimate basis of criticism, that there is a "certain lack of warmth, of humanity" in the music of Sibelius: I do not feel the criticism to be pertinent. This music of brooding, of magic and incantation.. is by just so much the more impressive in virtue of this very fact of its aloofness or indifference to the ordinary emotional well-springs of music... It seems to me a wholly gratuitous assumption - and it is worth noticing that the great and ancient art-cultures of the East have never assumed it - that the possession of an alleged "humanity" confers on one

work of art any sort of hierarchical superiority. (*NA*, L, 18 Feb 1932: 187)

For a critic who was keen to display the extent of his racial and cultural dislocation from the British musical tradition, Sorabji, in his response to contemporary British music, made some interesting critical distinctions. Foremost among those he rejected was Holst. In his 1934 obituary article on the composer he wrote that Holst was 'lamentably lacking both in intellectual sweep, spaciousness of style, and any real magisterial authority' (*NEW*, V, 14 Jun 1934: 208). Holst's adoption of folk music was found to be as detrimental to his style as the pernicious influence of Stravinsky, especially with regard to his rhythmic invention. He was impugned for rejecting Romantic warmth and harmonic lusciousness in his post-1920 works in favour of an austerity and economy of expression. The extent of this unfavourable criticism of Holst's music can be discerned in a review of the first performance of the *Choral Symphony*:

> Where Mr. Newman, for instance, sees a keen musical intelligence threading its way with certainty and unerring skill through the maze of the modern harmonic vocabulary, I can only see a manipulator of arrant cliches loosely tacked together with no organic essential or inherent cohesion, a set of ideas devoid of intrinsic distinction or individuality in expression. The same clumsiness and gaucherie, the same lack of certainty, of inevitability, the unfailing hall-mark of the hailed masterpieces of Mr. Holst is here as everywhere else in his work. The choral writing is splayfooted and unvocal; indeed Holst's lack of vocal sense is as conspicuous as his lack of orchestral sense. He seems to have no feeling at all for the medium for which he is writing. His harmonic and melodic ideas waver between the diatonic commonplaces on the one hand, and polytonal on the other. His potterings about and fiddlings with chords in fourth structures have no more merit or interest than Rebikov's affairs of ten or twelve years ago... (*NA*, XXXVIII, 19 Nov 1925: 31-2)

While Holst was seen as a manipulator of current clichés, Vaughan Williams was admired as a man of deep seriousness with profound reverence towards his art. The *Pastoral Symphony,* with its intensely Romantic expression and freely evolving thematicism, was heralded as the most important and individual symphony since Elgar (*NA*, XXXVII, 7 May 1925: 7). The influence of Sibelius on the Fourth Symphony was found to be reflected in its laconicism, abruptness in cessation of statement, and in its lack of symmetric endings (*NEW*, XII, 17 Mar 1938: 454), while the Fifth Symphony, dedicated to Sibelius, returned to 'the harmonic breadth, richness and subtlety of the lovely "Lark ascending"' (*NEW*, XXIV, 13 Apr 1944: 219). Such seriousness of purpose was also detected in the works of John Ireland. In reviewing Ireland's Cello Sonata in

1924 he wrote of its granite-like aural texture and its directness of expression (*NA*, XXXV, 12 Jun 1924: 79-81), qualities he also found in other works by the composer such as the symphonic rhapsody *Mai-Dun* (*NA*, XXXVII, 7 May 1925: 7).

As a member of the *Sackbut* coterie, Sorabji naturally admired much of the music composed by other members of the group, as well as by those on its fringes such as Walton and Lambert. Cecil Gray's opera *The Women of Troy*, for example, was hailed as the most outstanding work of its kind since Delius's *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, produced some thirty-four years earlier (*NEW*, XXV, 4 May 1944: 26-7). Natural also was the fact that he wrote nothing but praise for the work of Bernard van Dieren, frequently drawing attention to the quality of his contrapuntal writing and melodic flexibility. His review of van Dieren's book *Down among the Dead Men* (1935) was entirely sympathetic (*NEW*, VIII, 30 Jan 1936: 314) and following the BBC van Dieren Memorial concert in April 1937, conducted by Constant Lambert, he wrote a highly laudatory article summarizing those qualities most admired in the composer's work which closely followed Gray's earlier appraisal in his *Survey of Contemporary Music* (*NEW*, XI, 22 Apr 1937: 35-6).

Sorabji shared with Gray a love of the *bel canto* tradition of vocal writing which had greatly influenced van Dieren's contrapuntal style. A passion for Italian opera, which in Gray and Heseltine's case had largely been instigated by van Dieren, went right back to his earliest musical experience and background; his mother had been an opera singer. A high regard for Italian opera is also a feature of Lambert's criticism that had surely rubbed off from his association with members of the *Sackbut* coterie. Sorabji regarded *Turandot* as Puccini's best opera, writing in 1931 that it was 'as far beyond the rest of his work in technical subtlety, fineness of style, and musical thought as Verdi's *Falstaff* was beyond the rest of his' (*NA*, XLIX, 18 Jun 1931: 79). The only reservation he expressed concerned the sudden drop in resource, style and invention in the last act, where Franco Alfano took up the work that was left incomplete on Puccini's death. A 1937 broadcast of *Otello* from Covent Garden led to a recantation of 'exceedingly ill-considered and mistaken observations of my own made publicly some years ago now, after the last performances at Covent Garden of this great masterpiece...' (*NEW*, XI, 6 May 1937: 74). He especially admired the richness and colour of Verdi's melodic writing in *Otello*, its theatricality and also its independence from the influence of Wagner.

Perhaps the single most historically significant aspect of Sorabji's criticism in relation to British musical life was his championship of Mahler from the mid 1920s - a time when Mahler's symphonies were virtually unheard in this country and consequently very little understood. Needless to say, he also championed other composers who were little known at the time, such as Szymanowski and Medtner, but their music has not as yet received the later recognition in England that has been accorded to Mahler. Although Beecham had presented four of the symphonies to London audiences before 1914, the war interrupted any momentum to their wider dissemination. After the war Mahler's position was marginalized by the new anti-Romantic reaction, headed in critical circles by Evans and Henry.[19] Sorabji repeatedly called for more Mahler performances and paid tribute to the courage of concert promoters whenever a performance was mounted, although never sparing the performers themselves. Following the first English performance of the monumental Eighth Symphony he wrote with burning enthusiasm: 'No work since the B minor Mass has more wonderfully, nor with greater loftiness, nobility, and such all-consuming passionate sincerity, expressed the Catholic spirit.. the *one-wholeness* of the work, its supreme structural conviction, its undeviating progress to the ineffable grandeur and nobility of the mighty final choruses, the work is one of the authentic marvels and glories of all music of all time' (*NA*, XLVII, 1 May 1930: 7). The supposed thematic weakness that had received widespread critical consideration was dismissed outright, as later was the idea that Mahler was merely a Wagnerian *epigonus* (*NEW*, II, 29 Dec 1932: 255-7). Mahler represented all those qualities that Sorabji admired in great art which are so clearly reflected in his own compositions; epic conception, flexibility of structure, ultra-chromaticism, 'grand line', variety of rich colour and a transcendental expression.

Although Sorabji's position as a member of the *Sackbut* coterie is founded on those fundamental areas of critical opinion shared with Gray, van Dieren, Heseltine and, later, Constant Lambert - the rejection of Stravinsky, the championing of Sibelius and the rightist Romantic attitude to aesthetic evaluation - as the 1930s progressed he increasingly found his own idiosyncratic voice. This is most noticeable in his reservations concerning the music of Skryabin and Delius and in his preoccupation with the repertoire of those 'esoteric outsiders' - whose music became ever more important to him as his sympathy for the more obviously progressive trends in contemporary music diminished. As Orage pointed out in his preface to *Around Music*, Sorabji's music criticism exhibits an

essentially Oriental mind expressing itself in a European technique. His literary style displays this orientalism in its length of sentence construction, highly coloured descriptive manner and the sheer ebullience of his often panegyric paeans. Arnold Whittall has asserted that Sorabji's main failing as a critic was to write about music with which he had no sympathy, and to judge it solely by the standards of his idols (1966: 216). It was not so much the music itself that he was out of sympathy with as the approach and the ideological principles which helped to give rise to it and which ultimately became the real butt of his criticism. No doubt such 'failure' was the necessary concomitant of Sorabji's success as a critic, the extent of which must be equated with our present knowledge and appreciation of those composers, such as Busoni, Medtner, Alkan, Mahler and Szymanowski, whose music he championed almost singlehandedly and with great force at a time when they were admired by so few. His was an extreme critical attitude, one that expressed an uncompromising individuality and an aesthetic of clear definition. It became an important element in the *Sackbut* coterie's offensive against what they regarded as academicism and the blind acceptance of the new.

iii) CONSTANT LAMBERT

Constant Lambert's book *Music Ho!* of 1934 is undoubtedly the single most important and influential British critique of contemporary music to have been written between the wars. A penetrating, cogent, and highly stimulating analysis of how the music of the early twentieth century can be related to its social and cultural background, it presents a non-technical summation of Lambert's critical thinking up to that point. It is the culmination of that particular attitude towards the modernist movement which first became apparent in British music criticism with the publication of *The Sackbut* in 1920 and later permeated it throughout the inter-war period to such widespread effect. While Lambert's ideas were sometimes at odds with those of Gray and other members of the *Sackbut* coterie, in their essence they nevertheless represented an extension of the reactionary and Romantic commentary on twentieth-century music that formed an integral part of the *Sackbut* coterie's aesthetic. Although ten years younger than Gray, the youngest of the group, Lambert was a member of the same social circle which included

van Dieren and Heseltine as well as the Sitwells and Walton, and enjoyed their wholehearted approval and support. He was the dedicatee of Walton's *Façade* (1922) and spent his formative years among the Bright Young Things of the 1920s, experiencing that sense of liberation and post-war hope that was later to turn into the hopelessness of the 1930s, reflected to some extent in the pessimism of *Music Ho!* His alignment with the *Sackbut* coterie was absolute - a fortnight before he took up his position as critic of *The Sunday Referee* in November 1931, Gray heralded his arrival on the paper with undisguised partisanship in an article entitled 'The Ideal Critic of Music' (*SuR*, 8 Nov 1931: 9), stating that, while the vast majority of British music critics were either trained musicians who could not write or journalists who failed to understand their subject, Lambert possessed the advantages of both and none of their shortcomings. When he joined *The Sunday Referee* the paper had been in existence for three years, having supplemented the weekly *Referee* from September 1928. It had established a reputation for high quality criticism and contributing to it regularly were Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell and Richard Aldington - three of the best writers in British journalism at that time. Lambert wrote a weekly article for the paper under the column heading 'Matters Musical' until March 1938, shortly before it was merged with *The Sunday Chronicle.*

Lambert was 25 when he began his first regular employment as a critic, taking over Gray's position on *The Nation and Athenaeum* in April 1930. By that time he had already established himself as a composer of the first rank, for his reputation had been firmly secured in 1926 when Diaghilev commissioned a ballet from him.[20] From then onwards his career was closely associated with the ballet world in which he worked for most of his life, either as conductor or composer. In 1930 he became conductor for the newly founded Camargo Society whose Musical Director was Edwin Evans. The formation of this private organization is of considerable historical significance in the history of British ballet, for it paved the way not only for the Sadler's Wells Ballet but for the Royal Ballet itself. Naturally Lambert's position as the pre-eminent conductor on the British ballet scene from the late 1920s had an effect on the subject matter of his criticism and he made no secret of the fact that for him ballet was a more monumental form of expression than opera and one with a greater future (*SuR*, 6 Dec 1931: 15).

Lambert's musical background before he began writing in the late 1920s played an important part in the formation of much of his critical thought. According to his

biographer Andrew Motion, the essential character that informed his critical attitude in later years had in fact become apparent very early on: 'By the eve of the 1920s - the decade for which he was to provide much of the musical colouring - Constant had already developed a coherent artistic personality: rebellious, bitter-sweet, scornful of pretensions, and enthusiastic' (1986: 127-8). In 1922 he left Christ's Hospital, where he had been since 1915, and entered the Royal College of Music with a Composition Scholarship. His first composition teacher was Vaughan Williams, for whom he had a good deal of respect but little admiration; the folksong tradition in English music was at that time being derided in *The Sackbut* and Lambert was very much in agreement with its views, as witnessed later in the chapter on 'Nationalism and Democracy' in *Music Ho!* For him, the nostalgia of the 'Shropshire Lad' had headed the worst aspects of the English Musical Rennaissance which he found wholly artificial and sterile. Before long he changed professors and went instead to R. O. Morris.

It was while at the RCM that Lambert saw C. B. Cochran's revue *Dover Street to Dixie*, which included Will Vodery's 'Plantation Orchestra' and a troupe of coloured artists known as 'The Blackbirds' who later won much fashionable acclaim. This made a very deep and lasting impression, as his companion Angus Morrison has described:

> Without doubt this performance was one of the key experiences in his life, beginning not only his long preoccupation with jazz [in fact it had begun to develop at school] and the possibility of fusing and blending many of its rhythmic inventions and subtleties into the texture of more serious music, but also moving him in a far deeper way emotionally than any other music he had hitherto heard... I am convinced that the first time he saw 'The Plantations' was a moment of true inspiration - a moment he sought to recapture over and over again in his own music... (1951: 109)

Lambert had enormous enthusiasm for jazz and treated it seriously as an art form worthy of critical appraisal rather than a type of music to be scorned by the serious musician. He was particularly interested in the amalgamation of classical procedures and jazz idioms; throughout *Music Ho!* he lauded composers who had responded creatively to the stimulus of jazz, especially Satie and Lord Berners, as well as certain 'pure' jazz composers. For him, the composer who had most successfully found an appropriate balance between the 'number' and the 'étude', as he differentiated it, was Duke Ellington. While Gershwin wrote either plain 'numbers' or 'ramshackle fantasias for grand orchestra in the style of "the American in Paris"' (*SuR*, 3 Jul 1932: 12), Ellington displayed such

creativity that Lambert regarded him in 1933 as 'probably the first composer of real character to come out of America' (*SuR*, 25 Jun 1933: 9).[21] It was not just the rhythmic interest of jazz that appealed to him: the harmonic richness that he had admired in the hymns of John Bacchus Dykes, combined with the orchestral subtlety of the Impressionists and more popular elements, produced a musical language that successfully bridged the gap between 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow'. Ellington's colourful music set the standard by which he judged not only jazz composers but also those composers, both American or European, who indulged in what has become known as 'symphonic jazz'. Lambert looked to composers such as Milhaud and Weill for the advancement of this internationally comprehensible medium. The type of amalgamation between jazz and classical music that he admired, his ideal 'rapprochement between highbrow and lowbrow', can best be discerned in his own *Rio Grande* and his other jazz-inspired works of the late 1920s such as the *Elegiac Blues,* written as a tribute to the jazz singer Florence Mills. Richard Shead, in his biography of Lambert, has commented that 'one does not have to know *The Rio Grande* very well to realise that it contains as much nostalgia as it does exuberance and a brash jazziness is very far from being the dominant mood' (1973: 72).[22] This nostalgia, an innate romanticism, is apparent throughout Lambert's music and certainly colours his criticism. For all his *enfant terrible* posturing in *Music Ho!*, as will be seen later, he was essentially propounding a time-honoured aesthetic which sought to re-establish the connection between art and life.

Friendships formed at the RCM played an important part in Lambert's determination to re-examine accepted views, but his questioning, inquisitive nature was nurtured to a greater degree through his relationships with Heseltine and Gray. While Motion's view that Heseltine 'helped Constant to clarify his musical tastes by challenging his addiction to Stravinsky' is unfounded, it would seem likely that 'Constant's responsiveness to Heseltine derived largely from a recognition that Heseltine embodied the same paradoxical qualities that existed (largely hidden, as yet) in his own personality' (1986: 141). They shared a love of limericks, cats, Delius - and a tendency towards both manic depression and alcoholism. It was from Heseltine that he inherited a fondness for neglected composers of earlier periods. In 1932 he read a paper to the Royal Musical Association on Thomas Roseingrave (1690-1766), a composer who shared with Carlo Gesualdo (Heseltine and Gray's particular passion) a bizarre life and a penchant for

extraordinary modernisms (*PMA*, CVIII, Mar 1932: 67-83). He also championed the neglected works of William Boyce in which he found an admirable freedom of outlook and technique. Of Boyce's symphonies he wrote in 1929: 'I know no works that more happily represent the English tradition in music than these symphonies. They have all the vigour of Handel, but without his heaviness, all the lightness of Scarlatti, but with a greater force and emotional power' (*L*, IX, 16 Jan 1929: 10). The fact that so many of the opinions and critical standpoints Heseltine and Gray persuaded Lambert to adopt in the late 1920s later appeared in *Music Ho!* implies both a certain malleability of thinking on Lambert's part and an extraordinary force to both Heseltine's and Gray's personalities. The similarities in their critical thought will be discussed later, but the extent to which Lambert had absorbed the debates in British music criticism of the 1920s can be gleaned from a 1933 article in which, discussing the problems besetting the modern composer, Lambert refers to a controversy that had taken place back in 1920:

> Far too much criticism of modern music is taken up with purely technical considerations, such as the advisability of writing in no key at all or in five keys at once... The real problem which faces the present-day composer is not so much technical as spiritual. How far his music should reflect what programme-annotators refer to as "his inward ideals", how far it should reflect what leader-writers refer to as "the spirit of the age".
>
> From the critic's point of view the two attitudes were summed up in an interesting controversy now some thirteen years old between Mr. Ernest Newman and Mr. Cecil Gray. Mr. Newman, with his usual sensitiveness to historical background, stigmatised as a "hasty and sweeping thesis" Mr. Gray's contention "that the element in a work of art which reflects its age dies with its age - that a great artist's faults are of his time, his virtues of eternity; that the composer who best represents his age is a second-rate one" &c. As the charwoman said when the man next door was arrested for adultery, "Ah, well, there's a great deal to be said on both sides." The truth, as usual, lies somewhere between the two... (*SuR*, 2 Jul 1933: 9)

However, more than either the influence of his contemporaries at the RCM or that of Heseltine and Gray, it was the overwhelming impression made by the Ballets Russes which really induced him to repudiate so many current notions of value in music. Having been won over by the French and Russian music that Diaghilev had introduced in the early 1920s, Lambert, like Edwin Evans and Calvocoressi before him, sought to tip the balance of critical opinion against the Austro-German repertoire. As Motion has written, the effect of the Ballets Russes 'was not simply to make him resist received opinion about who deserved to be considered a minor and who a major composer, but to challenge the

dominant contemporary view as to which was the preferable classic tradition' (1986: 134). While the conservative critics such as Newman and Blom upheld the virtues of the Teutonic repertoire, Lambert was clearly biased in favour of Franco-Russian and Italian music. It is perhaps simplistic to paint a picture of two opposing camps in this way, yet the divide between the two factions of critical opinion was very real and frequently surfaced when some unusually strong condemnation led to controversy and dispute.

The *Sackbut* coterie had had frequent disputes with Newman during the 1920s and Lambert inherited their dislike for the reactionary stance of this figurehead of right wing critical opinion. They first clashed swords at the end of 1932 over Hamilton Harty's interpretation of Sibelius's Second Symphony which Newman had adversely criticized. Lambert responded by writing that 'Mr. Newman, of course, is entirely right when he says that it is no use playing early Sibelius as though it were the Tchaikovsky which it superficially resembles, but when he suggests that Sibelius can only be properly conducted by a Finn, and Elgar only by an Englishman, I feel that he is instituting a passport system of musical criticism which, were it to be generally adopted, would become as pointless and galling an institution as the passport system in real life' (*SuR*, 27 Nov 1932: 9). While Gray's criticism had first lent literary support to the ever-increasing interest being shown in Sibelius's music in England between the wars, on a practical level it was the unremitting efforts of Harty that had precipitated this interest, especially through his popularization of the Fifth Symphony. Lambert no doubt felt impelled to support his cause against Newman's attack. Later, following the first performances of Italian opera given by the La Scala Company after the Second World War, the magazine *Opera* printed a number of opinions of their merit as a corrective to the criticisms of Newman and Blom. Lambert wrote that he was not surprised by their 'carping and niggling' attitude, 'For the reason that I have, in the past, had to earn my living by that melancholy trade and realise all too well that the average English critic is a don *manqué*, hopelessly parochial when not exaggeratedly teutonophile, over whose desk must surely hang the motto (presumably in Gothic lettering) "Above all no enthusiasm"' (*Opera*, II, Dec 1950: 20).

Lambert's first controversy came very shortly after his appointment as critic of *The Nation and Athenaeum*. His opposite number on *The New Statesman*, W. J. Turner, had given a lengthy defence of the artistic and commercial policy of the Courtauld-Sargent concerts, declaring their popularity to be 'the writing on the wall'. Lambert, no doubt

particularly riled by Turner's view that the age of jazz was dead, responded that it was rather 'the writing in the cheque-book' (*NAth*, XLVII, 8 Nov 1930: 192-3). The differences of personality and their respective critical standpoints were totally opposed to one another. Having so clearly aligned himself with those writers who had participated in Edith Sitwell's serialized anthology, *Wheels* (1916-21) which had assaulted the social Establishment and the faded sentimentality of literary 'Georgianism', Lambert's antagonism towards the Neo-Georgian Turner was inevitable:

> English musical taste is always inclined to mistake the pretentious and pompous for the solid and profound, and one looks to the critics to protest against this attitude. Mr. Turner enjoys a considerable reputation as a poet, and I trust that I am not descending into personalities when I say that a taste for the pseudo-profound in music is very often the mark of the writer turned music-critic. We find the same superior attitude to music that does not *sound* profound in Mr. Aldous Huxley. Even Mr. Clive Bell, to whom one looks for a certain easy urbanity, took much the same severe line about the Age of Jazz and The Twentieth Century, in his memorable article "Plus de Jazz"... I should have thought though that one of the signs of maturity was the ability to distinguish between the profound and the pseudo-profound, and a general tendency not to mistake the weather-cock on the village hall for a universal seismograph. (: 193)

W. J. Turner had been writing for *The New Statesman* for fifteen years when *The Nation and Athenaeum* was merged with it at the beginning of 1931 and so it was Lambert who inevitably lost out. Nevertheless he continued to contribute record reviews and other occasional articles to the paper. He also contributed to a variety of other journals and newspapers including *Figaro, The Listener, The Saturday Review, The Daily Chronicle* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Much of the criticism contained in the scattered articles for these publications provided the basis for *Music Ho!*, for Lambert never appeared to revise his critical evaluations. When the book was reprinted in 1948 he prefaced the edition with a short justification for leaving the text in its original form without the addition of further material in order to bring it up to date. His reasons for doing so were twofold. Firstly he felt that it remained a period piece, that written in the 1930s it was essentially a history of the troubled 1920s which avoided reference to works which he could not view in retrospect. Secondly, he felt that it continued to present the reader with the problems that faced the contemporary composer which had remained unaffected by the Second World War and the emergence of various new schools of musical thought. Neither affected the central issues of the book, which in their application to the whole history of music remain as relevant today as they did in 1934.

However, Lambert did wish to make two qualifications:

> (a) My criticisms of Diaghileff were aimed at his later artistic policy and were in no way an attack on his genius as a producer, least of all were they meant to foreshadow the present school of ballet critics who, alas, are unacquainted with his living work. (b) My apparent lack of enthusiasm for the works of Bartók was due, as I tried to point out in the Preface to the First Edition, to the fact that I was dealing with movements and not with individual figures. Bartók, after the rich achievement of his early years, appeared even to his greatest admirers to be going through a singularly barren stage during the 'twenties'. Few could have anticipated that in his last period he was to fulfil his early genius with an added maturity and establish himself once more as one of the dominating figures of our time. (Preface, third ed., 1948: 10)

As early as 1929, in an article for *The Listener* entitled 'Doubts about the Moderns', Lambert unambiguously expressed the aesthetic that was at the heart of all his later criticism, accounting not only for the sub-title of *Music Ho!* - A Study of Music in Decline - but also for its very title, taken from some lines in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (Act II, Scene V) which read:

> ALL: The music, ho!
> *Enter Mardian the Eunuch*
> CLEOPATRA: Let it alone; let's to billiards.

While Cleopatra's boredom at the suggestion of musical entertainment is obviously satirical, it is the fact that an emasculated performer is unable to excite her that is surely the key to this cryptic passage.

The 1929 *Listener* article was written as a critical response to a BBC concert of contemporary chamber music. Tellingly, he wrote of Martinů's second String Quartet:

> This musical and exhilarating quartet was typical of the best modern work in that it never really departed from the fundamental traditions of classical music, although it never allowed itself to be hampered by its conventions. It steered a clear path between self-conscious modernity on the one hand and classical pastiche on the other. The slow movement in particular was extremely personal, and was not without a strange romantic charm, reminiscent of a great city in the small hours. (*L*, IX, 10 Apr 1929: 462)

While Hindemith still carried with him 'all the necessary verbosity of the older Teutonic music', Stravinsky's *Serenade* was found to be 'lacking in the vitality and freshness of the works of his national period'. The accusation of self-conscious classicism made against this Stravinsky work was also made against Nabokoff's Piano Sonata which led Lambert to one of his characteristic pronouncements on the problems of modern music: 'The chief fault of contemporary music is that it cannot achieve any lyrical quality

without stealing the thunder of the classical composers. But obviously the best modern music should have a lyricism which is of our days, and this, I feel, is to be found not in the composers who are in their thirties or forties but in the very youngest generation of composers such as Walton in England, and Benoist-Mechin in France' (Ibid.).

Lambert's response to the whole issue of neoclassicism is central to an understanding of his critique. Significantly, it was to his chapter on 'Post-War Pasticheurs' in *Music Ho!* that his later qualification concerning Diaghilev, quoted above, had referred. This was because he approached the whole issue of neoclassicism through his perception of the way in which Diaghilev manipulated the course of twentieth-century music. Inevitably, his own relationship with Diaghilev coloured this perception and it is necessary to understand the difficult relationship that existed between the two men before being able to view Lambert's criticism in its true perspective. The artist Edmund Dulac introduced Lambert to Diaghilev in 1926. Having heard the *suite dansée Adam and Eve,* the impresario commissioned a ballet from him, although his reasons had little to do with a liking for his music. As Shead has noted:

> There was a particular reason for Diaghilev to commission a ballet from an English composer. He was short of money (a normal condition for him) and in 1925 he had still not recovered from the financial disaster of his *Sleeping Beauty* of 1921... Diaghilev was trying to persuade Lord Rothermere to underwrite his London seasons, and it seemed tactful to include some English works in the Company's repertory. (1973: 51)

There was also the fact that with young artists Diaghilev could more easily manipulate the direction of their work and persuade them to accept the absurdities of what later became known as his 'cocktail' ballets, or, as Lambert later termed them, 'scrapbook' ballets, of which his own was a typical example. His *Adam and Eve* was transformed into *Romeo and Juliet* at the Russian's insistence. Ironically the music had precisely that neoclassical styling, influenced by Stravinsky's *Pulcinella,* that Lambert later found so repugnant in its confusion between the expressive and formal content of the eighteenth-century style. The sets and costumes were originally to be by Christopher Wood who had been recommended for the task by Picasso, but after deciding that the ballet would not entail a direct presentation of the plot but rather the depiction of a company rehearsing *Romeo and Juliet,* Diaghilev went one stage further and transferred Wood's commission to Max Ernst and Joan Miro. These two artists did not at that time enjoy the reputation that is now accorded them and the whole situation became so

unsatisfactory for Lambert that he attempted to withdraw his music entirely. Unfortunately his contract was legally binding and so the ballet that was eventually produced displayed a complete disparity between music and décor. The disappointment Lambert suffered inevitably affected his disposition towards Diaghilev and the whole aesthetic that he represented. As Shead has written:

> The *Romeo* affair laid the foundation for Lambert's animosity towards Diaghilev and much that he stood for - an animosity that found powerful expression eight years later in the pages of the book *Music Ho!* But it was only certain aspects of Diaghilev's complex character - notably his reckless pursuit of chic at this later stage of his career - that aroused Lambert's dislike. For Lambert, as for many of his contemporaries, the Diaghilev Ballet at its best was something to be admired and emulated. (1973: 63)

Lambert argued in *Music Ho!* that whereas before the war Diaghilev travelled geographically throughout Europe showing the marvels of Russian orientalism, once he had become a European citizen himself following the First World War, he was forced to travel in time, moving from century to century in his artistic enterprises. He wrote: 'Wyndham Lewis has pointed out that when speed and familiarity have reduced travelling in space to the level of the humdrum, those in search of the exotic will have to travel in time, and this is what has already happened' (1934: 68). It was not necessary that those who worked for him had even to metaphorically travel with him, although clearly Stravinsky was Diaghilev's fellow 'time-traveller' initially, for by choosing collaborators with sufficient disparity of outlook he could achieve the desired result.

The pre-war period of disruption was considered by Lambert to have resulted directly from the revolutionary aspects of Debussy's late works. His view that works such as *Jeux* and the orchestral set of *Images* liberated music in the early years of the century, setting the stage for the revolutions that followed, was a highly original, if not unique, critical perception in its day. While it totally opposed the then commonly held negative opinion of these works, found for example in the criticism of Newman and Gray, in more recent years it has been widely endorsed by many commentators, most notably Edward Lockspeiser, Pierre Boulez and Herbert Eimert. The subsequent expansion of resources immediately prior to the First World War resulted in what Lambert considered to be 'the absolute limit of complication' and had unfortunately only led to a 'psychological cul-de-sac' from which neither Stravinsky's supposed classicism nor Schoenberg's 'official revolution' offered a satisfactory exit:

> The neo-classicism of today, as we have seen in examining different aspects of it in Stravinsky and Hindemith, is a bare framework, a stereotyped scaffolding designed to give to the inconsequent and devitalized ideas of the post-war composers a superficial air of logic and construction. It is a conscious revival of formulas that were the unconscious inessentials of the age that originally produced them - as who should confuse archaic spelling or the use of the long 's' with the content of the writers in whom these devices are to be found.
>
> The moment we realise that the revolutionary spirit and the classical spirit, which would appear to form such odd bedfellows in the work of the average post-war composer, are in fact not revolution and classicism at all but reaction and formalism, then we see that there is no real conflict between the two, that they are both expressions of the same underlying weakness - lack of faith, or, if that phrase be considered too sentimental, soft and yellow for this tough, red-blooded, poker-faced, he-man age, shall we say, no sense of direction. (: 279-80)

It was characteristic of Lambert's criticism that he should draw parallels between modern movements in art and literature and those in music. The gulf between the Cubist aesthetic and that of Surrealism was mirrored by that existing between the impressionism of Stravinsky's pre-war ballets and the neoclassicism of his post-war concertos. The rapid changes of style, the 'time-travelling', found in works such as Poulenc's *Les Biches* and Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*, were likened to the Surrealist's juxtaposition of incongruous visual images. Stravinsky's 'pastiches' were compared in some detail with the work of Chirico:

> Both Stravinsky and Chirico stand a little outside the more unscrupulous and arriviste work of their disciples,... A background of classicism is by no means incompatible with the surrealist mind working in music. Like the realistic style of the surrealist painters it provides the essential norm without which the abnormalities would pass by unnoticed... A discordant harmonization of a familiar tune like 'God Save the King', for example, would be much more of a shock to us than any given fourteen bars in an atonal work. Chirico can convey by his classically painted broken columns an effect which would fail were the columns to be painted in the manner of Rouault. The groups of geometrical planes which take the place of breasts in his gigantic philosophers are only remarkable through their contrast with the uninspired realism of the rest of the painting. Similarly, Stravinsky can achieve a surrealist incongruity by his wilful distortion of familiar classical formulas. A perfect cadence is broken across like a Chirico column, a suave and formal fugue leads, like the toga of Chirico's mobled sages, to a harsh and discordant collection of abstract patterns. (: 84-5)

It was significant to Lambert that Ernst and Miro were only employed by Diaghilev for one ballet, his own *Romeo and Juliet*; for Diaghilev to have continued to employ the same artists would have shown a continuity of thought and action that was alien to his aesthetic, summed up by Lambert in the epithet '*Toute reaction est vraie*'.

Because Stravinsky's exploitation of particular superficial aspects of technique had led him down a variety of blind alleys, he was also forced to change direction with some regularity in able to maintain his reputation as a revolutionary pioneer: 'Like a spectacular sinner the only course left open to him was a spectacular conversion. If sensation could not be caused by a departure from the audience's norm it could at least be caused by a departure from his own norm - that of sensation... Stravinsky, in his last works, has achieved the final triumph of fashion, he has created a fashion for boredom' (: 90). The most important and all-embracing element of music was considered by Lambert to be melody and it was with regard to this element of Stravinsky's neoclassicism that he made his most sustained attack. In the section of *Music Ho!* entitled 'Synthetic Melody' he argued that melody cannot be reproduced like counterpoint; by imitating the conventions of eighteenth-century melodic outline Stravinsky was confusing the periwig with the face beneath it. The attack went further, for even the creation of a satisfactory synthetic melody, such as that found in the slow movement of Ravel's Piano Concerto, required a power of sustained linear construction that Stravinsky did not possess. Both the shortwindedness of his melodic construction and his inability to get away from the tonic note in his melodies could be seen in the slow movement of his Piano Concerto:

> It opens with a two-bar phrase in the eighteenth-century manner - commonplace enough, but still, capable of yielding results of a certain distinction in the hands of a composer such as Vivaldi. Stravinsky, however, is unable to continue this phrase or even find a contrasting two bars. He repeats it with a slight rhythmic variation - the only type of treatment that comes easily to him - twists its tail for a moment and then lets it fall gradually back on itself, the process of extinction being artificially held up by the mechanical application of sequential figures, which derive not from the eighteenth-century lyricism, but from eighteenth-century passage work. (: 103)

A clear distinction was made between this method of rearranging pre-existing formulas and the technique of pastiche found in the parodies of Walton and Berners, the genre pieces of Ravel or the satirical works of Satie. These were legitimate expressions of compositional traits within the composers' established idioms. Lambert's perceptive criticism of Satie in *Music Ho!* was one of the most surprising aspects of the book in its day and is among the finest writing on this still misunderstood composer. Regarding Satie as an interesting minor composer on the margin of music, he nevertheless surveyed Satie's output at some length and with considerable insight. Of Satie's harmony he wrote with his characteristic 'criticism of comparison':

> The strangeness of his harmonic colouring is due not to the chords themselves, but to the unexpected relationships he discovers between chords which in themselves are familiar enough. There is, however, no instance in his works of the spicing up of a simple harmonic basis by the addition of what are popularly - and rightly - known as 'wrong notes', such as we find in Auric. Nor is there any suggestion of the illogical distortion of recognized classical methods such as we find in Stravinsky. His progressions have a strange logic of their own, but they have none of the usual sense of concord and discord, no trace of the *point d'appui* that we usually associate with the word progression. They may be said to lack harmonic perspective in much the way that a cubist painting lacks spatial perspective. (: 127)

Lambert found the most impressive moments in Stravinsky's neoclassical works those which displayed Russian influences, for he considered the composer as '*au fond* nationalist and illustrative'. He considered *Les Noces* to be Stravinsky's greatest work and dealt with it in some depth in the section on 'The Cult of the Exotic' in *Music Ho!* In view of the extent to which Stravinsky influenced Lambert's own compositions, his critical response to neoclassicism is curiously contradictory. Angus Morrison was surely right in arguing that the section called "Post-War Pasticheurs" has too much of the exaggerated indignation of the reformed sinner castigating his own erstwhile lapses and it is vital to view Lambert's remarks in the light of his own experiences with Diaghilev. We may also agree with Morrison that, in repudiating the important early influence of Stravinsky on his own compositions, Lambert did not draw on his own mature judgement but merely succumbed with equal blindness of personal vision to the influence and opinion of his admired friend Cecil Gray.

As with his criticism of neoclassicism, Lambert's discussion of 'Nationalism and the Exotic' draws on questions of melody and how it determines structure. The inherent dichotomy between national expression and symphonic form that was discerned in works as dissimilar as Vaughan Williams's *Pastoral Symphony* and Glinka's symphonic works lay in their attempt at a fusion of two diametrically opposed thought systems. The conflict is seen as both technical, emotional and sociological, that is to say a conflict between aristocratic internationalism and proletarian nationalism. Cecil Gray's important division between the sonata and fugue is here subsumed into a wider analogy:

> Spiritually speaking, this struggle is symbolized by the contrast between the sonata and the fugue on the one hand, types of aristocratic, international and intellectual expression, and the folk song and folk dance on the other, types of popular, national and instinctive expression. More technically speaking, it is due to the fact that folk songs - round which national expression in music centres - being already finished works of art with a line of their own, obstinately refuse to become links

> or component parts in the longer and more sweeping line demanded by the larger instrumental forms. One cannot use a small watchchain as a link in an anchor cable. (: 161)

There were two key reasons why Lambert considered the deliberate use of nationalism in music to be doomed to failure. Firstly, the application of modern harmony to modal folksong *à la* Bartók was artificial. Secondly, and more importantly, there was no genuine spiritual necessity and no social background to provide a basis for it. The only solution was considered to be an absorption of national feeling in an intellectually self-supporting form such as that found in the symphonies of Sibelius, for he alone 'combined the national intensity of Mussorgsky's operas with the formal intensity of Beethoven's quartets' (: 184). Like Gray, Lambert considered the symphony to be the most complete formal expression of the musical spirit and he concurred with Gray's judgement that Sibelius was the first great composer since Beethoven whose mind thought naturally in terms of symphonic structure. Significantly, he found Sibelius to be 'the one important figure of our times who has not been influenced by the Impressionist revolution' (: 319). Whereas the pre-war revolutionaries quickly became victims of their own mannerisms, finding no exit from the 'psychological cul-de-sac' that they inevitably reached, the succeeding generation, in particular *Les Six* and Prokofiev, found no real artistic direction and could not creatively mature further than their adolescence. Sibelius stood apart from these movements and concerned himself with content rather than vocabulary. The fact that the most vital minds of Lambert's own generation were found to have turned their backs on both the kind of techniques employed by the Impressionists and the montage or pastiche of the neoclassicists confirmed his view that, of all contemporary music, Sibelius's pointed forward most surely to the future. Composers of the future, he predicted, would draw more inspiration from the solitary figures of contemporary music than from the various fashionable trends. Such composers as Busoni, van Dieren and Sibelius were, of course, the exact same heroes as in Gray's *Survey of Contemporary Music* written a decade earlier. They were men seen to be building on established traditions who, seeking no materialistic goals, were expressing their emotional worlds without intellectual compromise, attempting an individuality of expression that sought a public comprehensibility in its communication.

While folksong no longer had any socio-political significance in modern society, neither the pictorial realism of Honegger's *Pacific 231* nor Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik*

could offer an alternative. Lambert's objection to Honegger's 'Mechanical Romanticism' was 'not that it makes things too easy for the listener but that it makes them too difficult. Instead of receiving an immediate and incisive physical impression he receives a vaguely visual one, which has to be related back to early associations and personal experience before it produces the emotional reaction which the music should have evoked directly' (: 243). Hindemith's mechanical Romanticism, being based on a misapprehension of the medium in which the composer expresses himself, went far deeper - the idea that the usefulness of music can be distinguished from its aesthetic quality. Hindemith's approach was indicative of the mechanization of modern society that had resulted in what Lambert memorably termed 'the appalling popularity of music'. The inter-war period was an age of rapid technological advance. The British Broadcasting Company had become a corporation under Royal Charter in 1927, and its services rapidly increased so that by the mid 1930s music of all kinds was being brought into homes all over the country. Dubbed the journalist of modern music, Hindemith represented the perfect symbol of the falsely democratic tendencies in modern art: 'Standing in Central European music between the reserved and intellectual Alban Berg on the one hand, and the facile and popular Kurt Weill on the other, he reflects the tempo and colour of modern life in the brisk unpolished manner of the newspaper reporter' (: 247). Hindemith was the ultimate 'middlebrow' composer, symbol of the artist who, no longer relating to the spiritual background of the Romantic individualist, is unable to adapt himself to the physical background of modern life made communal through the existence of mechanization. The middlebrow composer could only follow the path of the middlebrow poet:

> In the early nineteenth century one could be a great poet and yet a popular figure. It was possible by poetry alone, and good poetry at that, to achieve the popular success now vouchsafed only to the prose of Arlen and Priestley. But now poetry of any merit has become the specialized enjoyment of the few and there is no great poet of our times who is genuinely in touch with the public as a whole... Much the same process of splitting up is taking place in music. Elgar was the last serious composer to be in touch with the great public. Sophisticated composers are either becoming more sophisticated, like Alban Berg, or they are deliberately turning their sophistication to popular account, like Kurt Weill... The middlebrow composer will disappear in the same way as the middlebrow poet, and the mechanically conceived *Gebrauchsmusik* of Hindemith and his followers will suffer the same swift oblivion as yesterday's newspaper. (: 272-4)

This perception was indicative of general trends that were taking place in the arts as a whole. Lambert's own position within this movement of fragmentation is

unequivocal. During the 1920s, schisms were opened up in public reaction to contemporary music between the cognoscenti who understood and appreciated the 'new' and the public who were content to have the well-worn formulas repeated. Lambert's writing demanded an intellectual knowledge and, like Leigh Henry's, it deliberately administered shocks. It was written for a highbrow readership comparable to that of Huxley or Virginia Woolf rather than, for example, Bennett and Wells who appealed to a far wider cross-section of society. While it assumed a high level of general culture, this position was not necessarily what Lambert had intended: after all, he went to some lengths to avoid technical points of interest.

The weakest aspect of Lambert's critique was his discussion of Schoenberg. His understanding of German Romanticism was the area in which he most fundamentally differed from Gray, for his knowledge of the repertoire of German music from Weber to Mahler was shallow. His entire aesthetic was founded on a reaction against this repertoire which, as it held little appeal for him, he was unable to criticize with perceptive understanding. This accounts for the fact that, while the music of those composers who rejected an alien Teutonic tradition was dealt with in detail, that of composers such as Strauss, Mahler and Schoenberg, who worked from within their own inherited tradition, was dealt with summarily. Schoenberg's creative development was seen to parallel that of James Joyce: 'Joyce and Schönberg are both writers whose early work is feebly academic and sentimental, who have then revolutionized the technique of their arts, produced one outstanding masterpiece (*Ulysses* and *Pierrot Lunaire* respectively) and have finally become prey to their own mannerisms, abandoning creative expression in favour of a dissection of technique' (*SuR*, 12 Feb 1933: 9). The parallels between the two artists were expanded in *Music Ho!*: 'Just as Joyce in order to bring *Anna Livia Plurabelle* to a climax has to drop his philological wisecracks and relapse into the frank negro-spiritual sentimentality of "Beside the revering waters of, hither and thithering waters of", so Schoenberg, in order to achieve a work of importance, has to return... to the romanticism of *Pierrot Lunaire*' (: 300). Schoenberg, once the great isolated figure in European music, had become its 'official revolutionary', escaping from one set of academic rules only to be shackled by another. Again, Lambert's main criterion, melody, is employed as evidence against the composer - his idiom is 'so essentially unvocal, so remote from primitive song - which is the ultimate foundation of our musical sense' (: 290). However,

with the *Orchestral Variations* Schoenberg was seen to be making a return to an expression of his innate Romanticism, a return, if not to the formal freedom of his earlier work, at least to its freedom of outlook.

Berg's compositions were considered by Lambert to be more genuine and successful successors to Schoenberg's pre-war works than Schoenberg's later works themselves. As an individualist Romantic in the nineteenth-century mould, Berg was placed far higher than Webern, whose achievements were seemingly largely unfamiliar to Lambert. The fact that much of *Wozzeck* retained its basis in tonality and that the famous section of two bars from *Tristan* in the *Lyric Suite* could be effected without a dislocation of style was significant in pointing towards a general relapse from strict dodecaphony. In Lambert's view such a relapse could only be beneficial in re-establishing an intelligible line of contact between composer and audience.

Many of Lambert's aesthetic predilections discussed so far are apparent in his response to contemporary English music. The wide gulf between his position and that of a conservative critic such as Eric Blom can be seen in his remark that 'The English were the last race to take to writing in sonata form. I wish they would be the first to stop doing so' (*SuR*, 20 Dec 1936: 19). He felt that the English were by nature unsuited to large-scale formal designs and therefore regarded works which rejected 'academic' structures, such as Vaughan Williams's *Flos Campi,* as generally more successful than those reliant on such forms. Holst's *Hammersmith*, for example, was found arid and unimaginative: 'The Prelude was singularly uninspired and the Scherzo suggested the dry cackling of intellectual conversation in Chiswick Mall more than the good-humoured pleasantries of Hammersmith Broadway crowds that the composer sets out to depict' (*SuR*, 29 Nov 1931: 15). The works of his friends Walton and Berners were consistently praised and of those composers who came into prominence in the 1930s he regarded Rawsthorne as being particularly notable in his rejection of the traditional English influences of folksong, Anglo-Irish nostalgia and Chester-Belloc heartiness. Although acknowledging Britten as the most outstanding composer of his generation, he found his music problematic: 'One cannot but admire his extremely mature and economical methods, yet the rather drab and penitential content of his music leaves me quite unmoved' (*SuR*, 2 Feb 1936: 16).

Music Ho! must be viewed in the light of its historical position, for it reflects very

strongly a general mode of thought that was characteristic of the mid 1930s. The economic uncertainties and social problems of the 1930s were bound to have a widespread effect and disillusionment was rife. Lambert's pessimism is precisely that of Huxley's *Brave New World* written in 1933. The two men shared a bias towards Latin art and as Arthur Hutchings noted in his 1966 introduction to *Music Ho!*, both were compassionate towards the individual within society but felt a certain aristocratic contempt towards herd-brutality and philistinism similar to that expressed by Sorabji and Gray. Although Lambert's review of Gray's *Predicaments* took its title from Wells's masterpiece of 1933 - 'The Sound of Things to Come' (*SuR*, 7 Jun 1936: 16) - Hutchings is surely wrong to suggest a parallel between Lambert's book and Wells's, for the latter has an optimistic message: that mechanical inventions could be used well or badly and by treating them with responsibility man could utilize their abundant benefits to his own advantage. Lambert's aggression and abrasiveness, as well as some of his aesthetic and social judgements, were much more influenced by, if not derived from, Wyndham Lewis. Gray had introduced Lambert to Lewis sometime during the late 1920s and Lambert had become a regular member of that 'Lewisian symposium' described by Gray in his *Musical Chairs*:

> Many were the occasions on which we used to come together, sometimes in the local public-house, more often in his rooms in Ossington Street in the evening - Mr. Lewis's ten-o'clocks, but unlike those of Whistler, *p.m.* not *a.m.*, and lasting into the early and even late hours of the morning; during which the oracle, like the Bailiff in his *Childermass*, would hold forth without intermission on any and every subject under the sun, moon and stars, to an entranced and highly select audience which, in addition to myself, generally included Constant Lambert, Thomas Earp, William Gaunt, and R. H. Wilenski, with an occasional odd intruder in addition. (: 270-1)

To Lewis the optimism of Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come* was wholly antipathetic; for him the interest of new technology was that it was non-human and essentially divorced from life.

Lambert brought to British music criticism a truly European vision coupled with a broad humanistic approach. His attack on the various strands of modernist innovation was in its essence due to what he perceived as their severing of the connection between music and human emotion - their obsession with means had blinded them to the aesthetic failure of their artistic results. Hutchings speaks of 'the enigmatic conflict of Lambert's ideals', by which he presumably refers to Lambert's support on the one hand of good,

genial and well-crafted music such as the ballets of Lord Berners, popular but essentially trivial, and of more esoteric composers such as van Dieren and Busoni on the other. Perhaps this is really not so contradictory, for while he could find much to admire in both the extremes of Central European aesthetics as represented by those two contrasting pupils of Busoni, Weill and Berg, he was unable to accept the validity of the two opposing aesthetics most commonly regarded as representing the main currents in twentieth-century music: Stravinskian neoclassicism and Schoenbergian serialism. That is not to say, of course, that he dismissed their work without making exception for individual compositions. Yet there undoubtedly existed a duality in Lambert's personality that accounted for the contradictory aspects of his critical thought, even disregarding his attitude towards Stravinsky, and perhaps also for the combination of aggression and melancholy that is one of the most striking features of his compositional style. This dichotomy was perceived by Gray when he wrote in *Musical Chairs*: 'Duality is as characteristic of his private personality as of his public artistic activities, for he exhibited in himself a disconcerting blend of the most opposite extremes imaginable - a *fin de siècle* Frenchman with morbid *faisandés* tastes and a bluff and hearty roast-beef-and-Yorkshire Englishman; Baudelaire and Henry Fielding combined, Purcell and Erik Satie, Ronald Firbank and Winston Churchill' (: 290). It was this ambivalence that resulted in such an admixture of wit and wisdom, profundity and coarseness, laudation and denigration, that made *Music Ho!* the most readable, entertaining, and stimulating critique of modernism written between the wars.

Lambert can be seen to have transmuted the basic tenets of belief shared by the *Sackbut* coterie, but while he took much from Gray there were several areas of conflict. Shead gives a useful summary of their relative positions:

> They are united in rating Sibelius, Busoni and van Dieren very highly, in admiring the early works of Bartók but not his so-called "middle period", and in respecting certain works of Elgar. Neither cares for Strauss. Gray reveres Delius, while Lambert, though thinking very highly of some of his music, believes that eventually Delius sacrificed too much to harmonic interest... Gray patronises Puccini: Lambert takes him very seriously. The two greatest differences between the two men lie in Lambert's view that jazz is capable of producing good music and perhaps also of providing a useful *lingua franca* for present-day composers (he instances Milhaud and Weill) and in the fact that for Lambert ballet is an important art form, while for Gray it is merely a sophisticated pantomime, unworthy of serious consideration.
>
> Lambert follows Gray in denigrating Stravinsky - though not all the way;

> Lambert writes with great understanding about *Les Noces*... while Lambert broke away from Gray in his high estimation of Alban Berg he followed his friend's line on Schoenberg. (1973: 105)

Each member of the *Sackbut* coterie practised at least two arts and sought to diagnose the causes of their contemporary decline. Intellectually they moved with ease throughout the diversity of modernist art and thought which was reflected in all their creative endeavours. They shared an aesthetic that was every bit as reactionary as those conservative critics whose work they derided. They demanded that music should be an expression of deeply felt emotion, recollected in tranquillity and ultimately rendered in a symphonic or large-scale construction. Melodic invention and organic coherence were the cornerstones of their criteria for value judgement and they shared the view that music was the Romantic art *par excellence*, for behind their *enfant terrible* posturing they were unable to disguise their basic assumption that music must reflect the whole of life.

Chapter VII - Notes

1. The prospectus itself is not extant although much of its content was reprinted in *MO*, XCII, May 1919: 470-1.

2. Richard Runciman Terry was a cousin of John F. Runciman and Heseltine's chief advisor on musicological matters. Like Heseltine, Terry felt he was an 'outsider' and aided and abetted the younger man in his attacks on the editorial methods of Edmund Fellowes. For an account of Terry's life and work see Andrews, H., *Westminster Retrospect* (1948).

3. The third chapter of Cecil Gray's *Peter Warlock: A Memoir of Philip Heseltine* (1934) contains a detailed description of the reasons for the demise of *The Sackbut*. The extent of the magazine's losses was considerable. Between November 1920 and March 1921 receipts totalled £130 and expenses £352. See *Lbl* Add. MS 57794: 21 Oct 1921.

4. Apparently the sale was arranged so that Heseltine received nothing. The format of the magazine altered with the September 1921 issue in which appeared an abusive and vitriolic letter from Robert Lorenz denigrating the new editor's achievement and deploring the way in which Curwen had treated its former proprietor. Such letters were also received from Gray and Bernard van Dieren but were considered unprintable.

5. For a comprehensive bibliography of Heseltine's writings see Tomlinson, F., (1977).

6. For a thorough account of the relationship between Bartók and members of the Sackbut coterie see Gillies, M., (1989): 115-30.

7. He was not Sorabji's deputy as Foss, H. J., (1951: 496) claims. A paragraph in *Musical Chairs* devoted to reminiscence of *The New Age* states: 'In the early 'twenties Orage, the editor and creator of *The New Age*, resigned, and the paper fell into the hands of a collection of cranks devoted to the furtherance of the seemingly now defunct financial system called Social Credit, associated with the name of one Colonel Douglas. The great reputation that the journal had once enjoyed - and justly - dwindled gradually towards nothing, and the circulation correspondingly.' (: 267)

8. In *Musical Chairs* he wrote of this decision with regard to the latter appointment: 'The fact is that, for some time past I had come increasingly to loggerheads with my opposite number in Manchester, Neville Cardus: it had become as impossible for us to work together as for two *prime donne*. There was not room for both of us on the same paper... No, decidedly, journalism is not, never has been, or will be, my vocation. At the same time, I confess to what I hope will be regarded as pardonable pride in the fact that I served on *The Manchester Guardian*, the greatest newspaper in the world, and gave satisfaction to the extent that I was earnestly entreated to reconsider my decision and withdraw my resignation.' (: 267)

9. See the third chapter of Gray's *Predicaments* (1936) which is devoted to a discussion of the sequence of the arts.

10. A substantial collection of these letters, dating from 1913 to 1922, is deposited in the British Library: *Lbl*. Add. MS. 57963.

11. For the controversy between Sorabji and Leigh Henry see *MS*, LXXXVI, 25 Apr 1914: 401; 16 May 1914: 473; 23 May 1914: 493; 30 May 1914: 521; 6 Jun 1914: 544-5.

12. See Sorabji's letter 'Foreigners in England', *NA*, XVI, 15 Apr 1915: 653. This stated: 'If we go in the train, the 'bus, the street, we are greeted with rude, insolent stares. Insulting and offensive remarks are passed about us in loud tones... although time has more or less hardened me to the daily insults and indignities put upon me, there are times when I feel... that this sort of thing is making life wellnigh "impossible for the sensitive and cultured among us".'

13. Sorabji, K. S., 'Of Singers', *S*, I, May 1920: 19-22; 'Modern Piano Technique', *S*, I, Jul 1920: 116-123.

14. See *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. Schafer, R. M., (1978). Pound described Atheling in his *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony* (1968) as follows:

> "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 of 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 research 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. (1968: 67)

15. In a private communication to the author. Alistair Hinton was the executor of Sorabji's will and is the curator of the Sorabji Music Archive in Bath.

16. See Chapter 18 of Sorabji's *Mi Contra Fa* (1947), entitled 'Il Gran Rifuto'.

17. Sorabji, K. S., 'The Validity of the Aristocratic Principle', in *Art and Thought*, ed. Iyer, K. B., (1947): 214-18.

18. See for example NEW, XIX, 29 May 1941: 62-3 and NEW, XXIV, 7 Dec 1944: 71.

19. The fate of Mahler in Britain during the inter-war period has been summed up by Deryck Cooke in his book *Gustav Mahler: An Introduction to his Music* (1980):

> When the enthusiasm of a conductor (usually Wood) brought a Mahler symphony to performance, the press mainly voiced the spirit of the age, dismissing the work with contempt. Understandably, few concert promoters cared to engage huge forces to perform works too unpopular to guarantee an adequate box-office return - yet how could they become popular unless they were frequently performed? Mahler's name disappeared into musical dictionaries, usually heading an ill-informed, derogatory article. (1980: 4)

20. Lambert was in fact the first of only two British composers to be commissioned by Diaghilev, the other being Lord Berners.

21. The week following the article on Ellington that contained this statement brought a flurry of protests, three of which were published in *The Sunday Referee* as a corrective to Lambert's view.

22. Motion sees *The Rio Grande* as an accurate reflection of the era in which it was written: 'determinedly fun-loving, and modestly iconoclastic, yet instinct with a sadness which suggests that its freedoms are an exception to the general rules of life. Squeezed between the wars, and begun in the aftermath of the general strike, it cannot help but contain an element of escapism in its jollity, and of guilt in its melancholy' (1986: 157).

CHAPTER VIII

THE RIGHT AND LEFT IN CRITICAL THOUGHT

i) ERIC BLOM

It is perhaps surprising that having started his literary career writing analytical programme notes in the rather flowery, descriptive manner of Rosa Newmarch, Blom did not become an analytical writer of the kind that Tovey best exemplified. He had enormous admiration for Tovey and found his individual analytical style of the greatest interest, evident in the extensive reviews of Tovey's *Essays in Analysis* that were published in *The Birmingham Post* (*BP*, 18 Feb 1935: 6; 30 Nov 1936: 6; 7 Dec 1936: 6). Both men shared a common concern with music of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as the basis of their critical work, but while Blom praised Tovey's writings lavishly, he found that they contained considerably less aesthetic awareness and sensitivity than profound analytical insight. His obituary tribute to Tovey reveals something of the difference between their approaches; that between an instinctive response based on the subjective temperament of the enlightened critic, or as Blom put it 'feelings modified by experience' (*BP*, 31 May 1933: 8), and one based on an appraisal of art in which 'emotion is ratified by design, and design vitalized by emotion...' (See Machlin, 1985):

> His appreciation was mainly, indeed almost wholly, analytical. He had no patience with claims to aesthetic "instinct" made by critics less ready than he to quote chapter and verse from any masterpiece from Palestrina to Brahms and from a generous choice of others on either side of the two masters who may be said to have bounded the fields of his immediate interest. This analytical basis of criticism, it must be said, sometimes showed disadvantages when it was a question of artistic appraisal rather than scientific insight. If the design of a work as a whole satisfied him, he was not in the least worried by indifferent quality in the material. I shall never forget the disappointment of a concert of works by Joachim for which he had written programme notes according to which this respectable but quite lifeless music should have been as satisfying as Beethoven. (*BP*, 29 Jul 1940: 2)

In accord with the essentially journalistic nature of his writing, Blom had no more desire to attempt an intellectual or philosophical criticism than to essay the kind of psychological and physiological investigations that characterized the work of Ernest

Newman. He regarded the purely aesthetic appraisal of works of art to be the highest ideal of criticism and, although in no sense a formalist, he regarded his work as essentially a technical exegesis - an informed and informative explanation of musical processes that could provide the means toward that end. In the preface to his book of collected essays entitled *Classics: Major and Minor* (1958) he stated his position with disarming clarity:

> Where I analyse masterpieces, or music which, for some reason or other, I like sufficiently to wish to share my pleasure with others, I am afraid I do it very much in the way now dismissed with derision and obloquy by the musical psychologists as merely telling people what is there for them to hear in performance or to see in a score. Analytical criticism of the visual arts does not seem as yet to have come in for the contemptuous treatment meted out to that of music, possibly because by going to absurd lengths at times in 'merely telling people what is plain for them to see', it may show that its often over-exuberant use of jargon and metaphor does in fact tell them *how* to see things. By analogy, musical criticism of a similar kind can teach the public - let us hope with as little jargon as possible - not merely to hear, but to listen.
>
> With psychological quests, or inquests, I could not hope to interest my readers, for the simple reason that I find them desperately tiresome and uninteresting when they are undertaken, however skilfully, by others. That is one objection; the other, to my mind, is that to find hidden thematic connections between one section or movement and another of a composition is fatally easy if one has made up one's mind beforehand to do it with the idea of proving a work a masterpiece.
>
> I may not have done the best that can be done on my own lines; but I think I may at least claim, not for myself, but for technical criticism in general, that whenever it is exercised with love for and interest in its object, it rarely turns out to be concerned solely with dry matters of technique and incidentally with historical aspects, but sets in motion reactions of taste and feeling to which the reader may respond in kind. (: vii)

When Blom took over A. J. Sheldon's position on *The Birmingham Post* in 1931, the city offered an enterprising cultural and musical programme of some diversity.[1] It had had an illustrious history: the Birmingham Festival, from the nineteenth century up until the early years of the twentieth, had cultivated a discerning public which after the festival's demise continued to support classical music in large numbers. A choral tradition had remained strong and chamber music performances were frequent and of a high standard.[2] Opera was mainly in the hands of touring companies although occasional performances were given by groups such as the students of the Midland Institute. The previous year, Leslie Heward had been appointed conductor of the municipal City of Birmingham Orchestra in succession to Sir Adrian Boult.

From the beginning of 1931 Blom had contributed a monthly article to *The Listener* of about 1400 words giving a review of musical events, both broadcast and non-broadcast, under the title of 'Music of the Month'. With his appointment to Birmingham he was unable to provide any kind of comprehensive survey and the title was changed to 'Some Music of the Month', a column of the same length dealing with more specific topics relating to the BBC's broadcast music programmes. With an ever increasing number of commitments in Birmingham, this was abandoned in 1933 and a series of articles taking a quotation from some other writer as its starting point was begun. Entitled 'Musical Views Enlarged', this gave a considerable degree of flexibility in the choice of subject matter, but unfortunately the BBC's Music Department felt that more topicality was required.[3] Nevertheless, Blom continued to write for the magazine until he became editor of *Grove* in 1946, although with less regularity.

In April 1921 he began what was to become a lengthy series of articles entitled 'Studies at Random', that were published monthly in *Musical Opinion*. They dealt with unfamiliar areas of the repertoire and studied those minor composers whom he felt had been unjustly neglected. Several were included in a volume of collected essays entitled *Stepchildren of Music* (1925). It was highly unusual for a critic of Blom's ability to give such serious attention to the byways of music history, but it was an indication of the independence of his critical thinking that he was not content to accept customary appraisals without an independent investigation of his own. He wrote sympathetically of composers such as Piccinni and Cherubini whom he felt deserved to be lifted out of the false position into which they had been placed by perfunctory historians. Certainly his perceptive examination of minor works of art could frequently illuminate with considerable brilliance those areas of music history that surrounded them. The essay on César Franck (*MO*, XLVI, Dec 1922: 252-3) is characteristic of his easily assimilable prose style and typically wide vision. It is written with few technicalities and a minimum of historical information, the author's stated aim being here, as elsewhere, 'a form of criticism which could not be accused - whatever else its defects - of following the two main currents of present-day musical journalism, with neither of which he is much in sympathy' (1925: 7). The basis for the essay is the belief that without an investigation of Franck's weaknesses it is impossible to arrive at an estimation of his true strength. Accountable almost entirely to a lack of literary culture, the weaknesses can provide

certain criteria for judgement - those works that are purely musical as opposed to those based on a literary subject are invariably found to be greater, for example the *Variations Symphoniques* for piano and orchestra are considered superior to *Les Djinns* for the same combination. Whereas the songs provided the most convincing proof of this lack of literary taste, Franck's religious works could to some extent be exempted, for his faith was seen to have guided him to texts that were essentially congenial to his nature. Nevertheless, with reference to those parts of the *Béatitudes* which deal with evil, he wrote: 'Innocent and unsuspecting, aloof from the world on his organ-bench, busy among his pupils, or working at home in his spare hours, the kindly, gentle master did not succeed in depicting iniquity as anything to be taken more seriously than the devil in a pantomime' (*MO*, XLVI, Dec 1922: 252).

Without external means imposed on it, Blom considered music to have no power to describe or to fix conceptions lying outside its scope. This accounts for the fact that he consistently placed 'absolute' music above all others. In a 1923 *Musical Times* essay entitled 'Has Music Descriptive Power?' he wrote: 'There is an ever-growing tendency today to look upon the two most objective classics, Bach and Mozart, as the greatest. Purcell, Scarlatti, and Couperin, who never worry us with their own affairs, are coming into their own again, while Tchaikovsky and Strauss, whose absolute music is insignificant, are already waning' (*MT*, LXIV, Jan 1923: 31). Clearly, Blom's negative attitude towards Franck seen earlier was indicative of a more general critical reaction to late Romanticism as a whole:

> Romanticism was too rich a fruit not to decay speedily upon its arrival at maturity, and it was excesses of chromaticism that speeded a rot which had at least the merit of not being dry. Composers who fondly imagined that they were pure classicists, but who had secret romantic leanings, were exposed to the supreme irony of succumbing to a particularly virulent form of the chromatic disease. The most lurid example is Max Reger, but Franck caught it badly enough in all conscience. (*BP*, 21 Nov 1932: 8)

Another composer to have fallen foul of this disease was Richard Strauss, who as classicist *manqué* was 'made to feel by the growing materialism of the age and environment in which he lived that for him the predominant expressiveness of music was neither poetical nor formal, but graphic' (*L*, XVII, 27 Jan 1937: 192). However, it was in precisely these middle-period graphic works that Blom considered the really vital Strauss was to be found. By the 1930s *Salome* had long ceased to sound cacophonous

and even what Blom called 'that musical ulcer', *Elektra*, was acceptable to him essentially through maintaining its basis in diatonic harmony. Again, when discussing Strauss's harmonic style he resorts to the analogy of health: 'Discord he regards as pathological, and though he takes a profound, not to say at times morbid, interest in what may be called, from his point of view, the chromatic diseases of the traditional scales, the common chord is for him the perfect state of health' (*BP*, 11 Jun 1934: 6). Again, in 1943, he wrote that the dissonance of *Salome* and *Elektra*, which was prone to break out in later works 'like a disease', was not a natural part of Strauss's true style but 'a kind of complaint from which his music suffered' (*BP*, 19 Apr 1943: 2). Concurring with many critics of the inter-war period, foremost among them perhaps Cecil Gray, in regarding *Der Rosenkavalier*, (with *Ariadne* being a 'kind of pleasant by-product'), as Strauss's last great work, Blom considered the post-1918 works as little more than dross:

> What is most characteristically Straussian is the upsurging passion of some of his best music, a striking example of which the listener will hear at the opening of *Don Juan* and elsewhere in the work. It is the loss of this in Strauss's later music or, worse still, the mere empty imitation and pretence of it, that has made his decline as a truly creative artist so sorry a spectacle. (*L*, XXV, 8 Nov 1945: 537)

Blom wrote practically nothing on Wagner and very little on Mahler or Bruckner. He was unconvinced by most late Romantic attempts at large-scale symphonic structures and did not in fact consider any of Mahler's music as essentially symphonic at all. He wrote of Bruckner that 'the art of building is left half undeveloped... His themes are not bound together by transitions so much as loosely piled one on the other, his modulations are jerky, his means of climax primitive (pedals are generally the last and easiest resort), and he does not so much develop his material as discourse interminably on it' (*L*, XVI, 21 Oct 1936: 787) - a surprisingly strong castigation considering that it was written for *The Listener* as an introduction to a broadcast performance of Bruckner's Sixth Symphony. Mahler's worst fault was found to be his addiction to the use of folksong material. Through its incongruity 'in a composer so complex in character, so divided against himself, and so sophisticated', this was found in 1946 to be 'undoubtedly the main reason why his work has, on the whole, remained unacceptable outside Central Europe' (*BP*, 29 Apr 1946: 2). Such a remark serves to highlight the unconventionality of those Mahler apologists such as Sorabji and Cardus who wrote of his music with enthusiasm before the Second World War.

Blom's critical thought was rooted in his experience of the Viennese classics, especially Mozart - the composer who dominated his life's work and was the subject of his only monograph, written for Dent's *Master Musicians* series and first published in 1935. His 1928 book *The Limitations of Music*, subtitled 'A Study in Aesthetics', is as much a study of Mozart as an inquiry into the aesthetic problem of limitation. Taking the outline of sonata form as its basis, the introduction to this volume immediately states the central thesis: 'The perfection of a piece of music depends not on the quality of the artist's thought alone, but no less on his ability to subordinate his invention to certain limitations, the more or less successful accommodation to which will determine, with almost automatic accuracy, the value of his work considered purely as a feat of artistry' (: 1). In contrast to a work such as Lessing's *Laokoon* (1766), to which Blom makes extended reference in his introduction, the object is to demonstrate that works of art must be subjected to restriction from the moment of their conception, as opposed to the view that the limitation is only of interest in the final product of creativity. Whereas Lessing deals with the aesthetic result, Blom is more concerned with the problems that beset the composer during the process of composition. The book's exposition section deals with the nature of such limitations which are considered as either being imposed from within, restrictions of individuality, predilections, deficiencies and so on, or imposed externally, such as the style of the age or the exactions of public taste. Mozart was considered to be the pre-eminent exponent of the salutary submission to limitation and inevitably became the key figure in the argument. In order to understand Mozart's greatness, his defects had to be taken into consideration, since for Blom adverse criticism was not to be equated with destructive criticism. These were classified for detailed examination as follows:

(a) He was a formalist quite unaware that accepted conventions must at certain points of musical evolution be thrown into the melting-pot by the composer who wishes to inaugurate a new era, and be shaped quite arbitrarily into new ideas.

(b) He had no feeling for nature and took no joy in the open air. His music is that of candle-lit drawing-rooms and theatres.

(c) He did not hesitate at times to set down shallow and mediocre ideas or to let facility deputise for invention when a work had to be hastily written to order. (: 20)

Each is considered in some detail with the intent of proving that they are rendered innocuous by the composer's awareness of their presence that turns them into virtues.

The development section catalogues further limitations, frequently with reference to other composers. In dealing with style for example, defined as 'the spiritual fingerprint unconsciously impressed', he takes the case of Ravel whose self-conscious awareness of style is found to degenerate into mannerism. A distinction is drawn between style and personality: 'personality is the cause and style the effect of the impress of the artist's mental and temperamental characteristics upon his work' (: 85). This distinction was one that had particular importance for Blom's criticism of Ravel, for what Ravel lacked in personality he made up for in style. His technique was assured but eventually his mannerisms got the better of him:

> Ravel's preciousness is not only that suggested by the special meaning of the term his music implies; it is also to be understood in its ordinary sense of high value. His artificiality is also artifice - the exquisite artifice of the perfect craftsman. Even his mannerisms are on the whole to his credit, being marks of a very distinguished personality. It was only towards the end of his career that they began to get the better of him, for it must be admitted that from about 1920 onwards his music began to show signs, not exactly of deterioration, but of a certain exhaustion due to habitual procedures from which he was unable to emancipate himself. Indeed, the more determined he showed himself to produce something new, the more tightly he found himself caught in his own limitations, which were limitations not of intellect or technique, but of taste and feeling. He had a brilliant mind, and his technical wizardry, above all in orchestration, has never been disputed; but like every true Parisian, he was too fastidiously exclusive in his artistic sympathies. What lay outside his range of these was not even worth his contempt: it simply did not exist for him. (*L*, XX, 29 Feb 1940: 443)

A digression on the failure of Wagner's music dramas, which were criticized for the fact that their music was constantly subordinated to literary and dramatic considerations, leads Blom in *Limitations* to state his view that the sooner opera was able to drive music drama from the stage the better. Again Mozart appears to be the standard by which judgement can be made:

> Opera is frankly artificial, but music drama is, what is far worse, artificially made to look natural... Dramatically it is an impropriety for a number of characters to be talking together on the stage, but this is nothing to the musical unreason of never letting singers join their voices together... We no longer want a musical theatre that gives us drama on the stage and symphony in the orchestra. The music must be equally distributed on both sides of the footlights. Above all, we must have pure singing again, not declamation, which the different treatment of Wagner, Strauss, Debussy and Ravel has shown with equally forceful persuasiveness to be all wrong. There must be vocal body and plasticity once more. The listener wants, as it were, to aim at the singer as at the target; he is tired of having the vocal part given a kind of protective colouring that makes it

as indistinguishable as possible against a luxuriant orchestral background. (: 99)

The recapitulation section of the book calls other composers to bear witness. Stravinsky is discussed with regard to his capacity for innovation. Blom regarded the early ballets as intrinsically valuable, along with such works as *L'Histoire du Soldat*, the *Concertino* for string quartet and *Pulcinella*, the only neoclassical work that he thought succeeded. Stravinsky was able to achieve this success because 'not only the spirit of the old composer [Pergolesi], but that of the Italian commedia dell'arte, is admirably caught, because for once Stravinsky reproduced a living tradition, not mere dead conventions' (: 119). Neoclassicism was for him reaction disguised as innovation, offering an example of the futility of innovation for its own sake. He did not believe that it was possible to revive musical phenomena of a past era without deliberately adopting an aesthetic attitude that could only be unnatural: 'The spiritual values of a past epoch can only be explored by study; they cannot be exploited to any artistic purpose' (*L*, XIII, 8 Feb 1933: 209). The fact that Stravinsky should waste his talent with such 'experimental futilities' and 'theorising with the violence of a stump orator, while leaving others to carry out effectively most of the reforms he advocates' (1928: 117) was wholly reprehensible. In 1931, Blom lamented that 'If only he would abandon the practice of advertising his intentions to all the world, we should then at least get what we can out of his music without being constantly made aware of a distressing disparity between his aims and his actual achievements' (*L*, XI, 9 Dec 1931: 1004).

If not a great master, Stravinsky was at least considered to be one of the great constructive and innovative forces in music. In a 1923 article entitled 'Constructive and Destructive Influences in Music' Blom set out his theory that most of the undisputed classics of musical art have a negative influence, while the really valuable services are rendered by 'a certain number of men who, comparatively insignificant as regards their own work, did an incalculable amount of pioneer work and thus became, if not towering figures in musical history, constructive influences that are scarcely ever rated at their full value' (*MQ*, IX, Jul 1923: 384). In the former category he placed Palestrina, Beethoven and Wagner and, in the latter, Liszt and Berlioz. In this light Stravinsky appears as the true continuation of the Russian nationalist school, for other Russians had not managed to overthrow the destructive influences that pervaded their work to such detrimental effect:

The Russian eclectic school, with Rachmaninov who follows in the wake of

> Tchaikovsky, and Medtner who pursues the Beethoven-Brahms direction, to say nothing of the academic Taneiev and others, does not promise any future, because such parasite plants can have no independent existence. Nor does Scriabin, for all his great individuality, wear at all well. His idiom, alarming as it sounds at first, becomes distinctly trite when once the ear is attuned to it. The morbid eroticism underlying it soon grows wearisome, and one begins to see through it the skeleton of a system that is in its way as dry as any other, for any harmonic basis, however strange in itself, grows into a dull and artificial mannerism of intolerable monotony if it is used arbitrarily and exclusively. (: 391)

Other issues dealt with in the recapitulation of *Limitations* were the need for the continued use of sonata form, the irrelevance of folksong in Western music, and the whole issue of nationalism in general. Blom's extreme conservatism is nowhere more apparent than in his opinion that folksong and dance can only exist as an aspect of life, not as a legitimate element in art. Any attempt to integrate such an 'uncultivated' style into Western art music was considered misguided. Bartók's explicit use of folksong had, in his opinion, a debilitating effect on his early music which was later overcome with the gradual ascendancy of individual over national expression. The distinction between works such as Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover* employing a national idiom adhering closely to original folksong, and those such as his *London Symphony* which transmute the national element into something wholly personal, was of the utmost importance in Blom's argument. Carried to its extreme, he considered the national principle would become a parochial one, as in the case of Turina or Séverac: 'The national composer has difficulty enough in all conscience to make himself heard abroad, but the local composer cannot even hope to make his dialect appreciated in the next country. His music is for the most part water from the village pump which it is superfluous trouble to carry into the neighbouring parish' (: 138).

Along with so many other critics of the period, Blom was unconvinced by Schoenberg's middle-period works and made no secret of the fact that they were unintelligible to him. Whereas in 1931 the *Five Orchestral Pieces* Op. 16 continued to sound strange after twenty years, the more recent *Variations* Op. 31 were received with complete incomprehension:

> It would be idle pretence to say that the new *Variations*... are anything at present but a bewilderment. One cannot tell Schoenberg that he is wrong; one can only hope that he is not right, for it is without the least pleasure that one looks to a musical evolution on his lines - or rather lack of lines, since he disintegrates music more and more into single notes, related neither harmonically nor melodically in

> any intelligible way. One anticipates the spread of the new atonality with more alarm than that of the new amorality of which the world shows unmistakable signs, for the latter is bound to shape a new kind of morality again, whereas the former has not gone far enough with Schoenberg and the rest of its exponents to convince us that it will give rise to anything permanent. (*L*, XI, 9 Dec 1931: 1004)

The fundamental barrier that prohibited Blom's appreciation was that the musical processes at work in Schoenberg's twelve-note music could not be perceived aurally. To employ Schoenberg's phrase, this resulted in a criticism of *twelve-note* composition as a system, as opposed to a method, rather than twelve-note *composition*: 'The utter frigidity and dryness and joylessness of most of the twelve-tone music so far turned out with the aid of this system makes even Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* with its synthetic humanity actuated by nothing but glandular functions look like a paradise of poetry by comparison: it is in fact as appalling as the worst of H. G. Wells's *Things to Come*' (*BP*, 26 Jul 1937: 6). Similar statements expressing a highly negative and narrowminded response to contemporary music in general tended to appear in the most unlikely contexts. In an essay ostensibly concerning Brahms's position in the musical world, occasioned by the centenary of his birth in 1933, we find the following:

> The most representative music of the day is engaged in the same kill-joy process. Beside the laboratory cerebrations of Schoenberg, the dry experiments with other people's styles indulged in by Stravinsky, the machine-gun allegros of Hindemith, to say nothing of the mechanization of the more frivolous pleasures brought about by jazz, the music of Brahms seems full of dithyrambic enthusiasm. (*BP*, 8 May 1933: 8)

Prokofiev wrote 'wallpaper music' whose patterns were 'devoid of emotional significance' (*L*, XXII, 23 Jul 1942: 125), while the trouble with Hindemith was 'an utter want of live melodic invention: hence his failure in slow movements which, deprived of the rhythmic and dynamic energy that never fails him in an allegro, almost invariably sag badly' (*L*, XII, 9 Mar 1932: 349). J. A. Westrup was certainly mistaken when he wrote in his *Grove V* article on Blom that the critic was not hostile towards contemporary music! Only composers who clearly followed a mainstream symphonic tradition received his wholehearted support. Such a composer was Arnold Bax who 'dared to use conventional terms for the sake of a rough definition of the case - to remain a romantic in a society of musicians the conservatives among whom still cling rigidly to classicism while the progressives react against 19th century expressiveness by trying to divest music of all personal emotion' (*BP*, 2 Nov 1931: 8); a remark which tells much about Blom's

position on the extreme right of British critical opinion. Of Bax's Third Piano Sonata he wrote in 1944:

> It is not a relapse into convention, it is a firmer grasp of the essentials of sonata-writing, which makes the mature Bax lay greater stress on the tonic key in his (so far) latest piano Sonata... It does what live, as distinct from academic, music has always done: it shapes its own variants of whatever form the composer may have chosen to use, and if that form happens to be a conventional one, it overrides the conventions without breaking with tradition. (*L*, XXIV, 12 Oct 1944: 417)

The continuation of such a clearly defined tradition in the symphonic works of Sibelius, Vaughan Williams and later Walton was generously endorsed. It was highly characteristic, for example, that in announcing the second performance of Walton's First Symphony in Birmingham on 22 November 1935 Blom should steer attention away from any progressive aspects of the work and draw a parallel between Walton and Sibelius:

> Though it contains many harsh, grating dissonances, they should not repel the ear, for they always mean something. They never strike one as the mere experiments of a composer who lacks the courage to use a common chord, and they are always ingredients in a large musical plan with definite tonal centres. Although there are no key signatures anywhere, it is perfectly clear, for example, that the Symphony as a whole has B flat as its pivot... Walton's way is to piece together gradually a great wealth of thematic fragments, and it is in this rather than in any actual idiomatic turns that he resembles Sibelius. (*BP*, 18 Nov 1935: 6)

As one of the most highly respected critics active in the inter-war years, Blom vigorously upheld the conservative notions of right-wing British music criticism. The strength with which he held his views was such that it inevitably coloured even his lexicographical work. While his *Everyman's Dictionary of Music* of 1946 is an exemplary work of its kind, his editorship of *Grove 5* proved more problematic. The difficulty was that in the early 1950s there was just beginning the explosion of new research and more generally accepted scholarly and lexicographical techniques, so that no one single man could handle the entire enterprise. *Grove 5* retained the element of personal, liberal humane outlook which survived from Grove himself through Fuller-Maitland and Colles and which was lost in Stanley Sadie's more recent approach that put the work on a sounder professional basis. Two notorious examples of Blom's bias in *Grove 5* may be cited. The first is his dismissal of Rachmaninov: 'His music is well constructed and effective, but monotonous in texture, which consists in essence mainly of artificial and gushing tunes accompanied by a variety of figures derived from arpeggios. The enormous popular success some few of Rakhmaninov's works had in his lifetime is not likely to last,

and musicians never regarded it with much favour' (1954, VII: 27). Another says of the musicologist and critic Hans Keller that 'it remains to be seen whether.. he will influence criticism more positively than he has hitherto done by largely destructive methods' (1954, IV: 718).

Blom's critical insight into the classics was frequently profound - as witnessed in the volume of selected essays *Classics: Major and Minor* published in 1958. Yet for a critic of such high standing he dealt with a very narrow repertoire. While never attempting to conceal his enmity towards certain composers held in high public esteem, especially Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky, his attitude was frequently reactionary and characterized by an intellectual *hauteur*. He consistently damned the more progressive trends in contemporary music with faint praise, finding little of merit even among the now accepted masterpieces of the period. His command of a highly fluid and easily accessible journalistic style was unquestionably of a high literary order. It found a large readership among the non-specialist musical public as well as those of deeper knowledge and gained him the reputation as a leader of critical opinion with widespread influence throughout the inter-war period. In such a capacity he can be seen to have played an important role in providing high quality and perceptive criticism of the classical masters while discouragingly hindering, to quite detrimental effect, the fuller dissemination of contemporary music, much of which did not enjoy public acceptance until after the Second World War.

ii) W. J. TURNER

The poet and critic W. J. Turner is remembered today primarily as the author of a few poems that have become anthology favourites and of a pioneering study of Berlioz - the first extended biography of that composer in the English language. The fact that his name is frequently met with in the correspondence of his literary contemporaries, such as Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves, provides some explanation of why his important contribution to British music criticism has passed rather unnoticed: musicians tend to regard the musical effusions of literary figures with suspicion. The lack of a technical vocabulary in his criticism also counted against him in the eyes of more academically

minded writers. Both the advance of musicology during the inter-war years and the prevalent post-1918 concern with new developments in contemporary music combined to divert attention away from the kind of explorations of aesthetic experience that affords the dominant impulse in his philosophically based criticism. His three major books - *Beethoven: The Search for Reality* (1927), *Berlioz* (1934) and *Mozart: The Man and his Works* (1938) - have inevitably been superseded as authoritative critical biographies. Yet each is far more than a mere factual account. In the introduction to his book on Beethoven he explicitly stated that he made no attempt to deal comprehensively either with the composer's life or with his music, while that on Mozart included chapters concerning general issues, such as 'The Comic and Tragic in Mozart's Operas' and 'Kierkegaard on Mozart and Music', that remain of enduring interest. The provocative critical thought they encapsulate continues to be of value.

As a *littérateur* concerned with musical value judgements, Turner was one of the few non-specialist critics of his generation who maintained an unsophisticated approach without pandering to Philistinism or compromising critical perception. His anti-intellectual stance relied heavily on the personal expression of intuitive feeling. While this exasperated the more academically minded critics and others, such as Newman, who demanded a degree of objectivity, many found this stance wholly refreshing. Cardus, for example, was pleased to find that Turner was heir to the line of Shaw and Runciman. In a mid 1930s review of his *Berlioz*, Cardus wrote:

> No writer on music nowadays shares Mr. Turner's gusto, his fine downrightness, his humour, his independence; his contumely for all who differ from him; his disdain for all those who will not bow down before the particular geniuses who command the devotion of Mr. Turner. It is something at the present time to find a music-critic in London who is not satisfied to rotate year by year with the exquisite orderliness round the bright star of Mr. Ernest Newman. Mr. Turner is easily the most personal writer in music, the most bold and outrageously free and uninhibited since J. F. Runciman. (*NS*, VIII, 17 Nov 1934: 726)

The events of Turner's early years spent in Australia were to have a profound impact on his critical thought. After a series of personal disasters, including the death of his father and brother within a period of six months around the turn of the century, he was entrusted to the care of an aunt while his mother travelled to England.[4] Experiencing something of a religious crisis and becoming preoccupied with death, these disasters appear to have affected the metaphysical bias of his philosophical outlook. In December

1900 he abandoned his studies at Scotch College, Melbourne, and entered the School of Mines. He remained there for just one year before joining an exporting and importing company. In 1907 he emigrated to England, determined to create a new career as a writer in London. At first this attempt failed and in 1908 he took employment in Germany. This was not to continue for long however, and after a few months he returned to England. He travelled extensively in Europe and South Africa in the years preceding the First World War before serving in the 28th London Battalion. In 1914, during an extensive visit to Holland, Germany, Austria and Italy, he made his first appearance in print with a satirical sketch on Shaw's *Dark Lady of the Sonnets* that was published by Alfred Orage in *The New Age* (XXIV, 8 Jan: 314-15). Two days later his first music review was published in *The Musical Standard* (CXXXVI, 10 Jan 1914: 44-5). Appropriately it was a concert notice from Munich, for German musical life was frequently to be contrasted favourably in Turner's early writing with the English; he held that German artistic excellence resulted from the extent of subsidy afforded to artistic enterprise. His first series of articles on music was also published in *The Musical Standard* and entitled 'Some Reflections of a Critic' (*MS*, LXXXVIII, 16 Jan 1915: 43 - 13 Mar 1915: 191-2). Here, among some rather confused thinking about the nature of genius, Turner first stated in embryonic form the essence of his critical ideology:

> The one thing that we can feel within ourselves to be deathless is the spirit. (People hear about this in churches but, of course, no one believes it there.) Not only is it deathless but it is growing; it is the only thing which grows and keeps on growing and which is eternally fruitful. Therefore when I listen to music I listen for the voice of the spirit and when I hear nothing but a wonderfully clever construction of delightful sounds (it's not often that I hear that) no marvellous display of learning, or originality, or fireworks, or captivating melodies, or philosophical programmes can persuade me that I am dealing with life. (*MS*, LXXXVIII, 13 Mar 1915: 191)

Turner's first book of poetry, *The Hunter and Other Poems*, was published in 1916. In January of that year he had been appointed to the staff of the recently founded socialist journal *The New Statesman* and he held the position of chief music critic there for twenty-four years, until May 1940. Also in 1916 he began a two-year period of service in the Royal Garrison Artillery which was followed by a year in the *Commission Internationale de Ravitaillement.*

In the immediate post-war years he wrote several plays and a considerable number

of poems, as well as maintaining various positions in journalism. In March 1919 he was appointed music critic of *Truth*, a 'society' weekly for which he wrote an anonymous column dealing mainly with concert reviews and performance criticism until July 1939. In 1919 he was also joint editor of *The Owl* with Robert Graves and William Nicholson, and from 1920 to 1923 was literary editor of the London *Daily Herald*, then under George Lansbury, having begun his association with the paper as author of a weekly music column in April 1919. He also wrote as a drama critic, first for *Land and Water* in 1919 and then for J. C. Squire's *The London Mercury* from its inception in November 1919 until April 1923. He thus established himself in the early 1920s as a prominent member of that literary coterie christened by Francis Brett Young as the 'Squirearchy'. At irregular intervals he stood in for Desmond MacCarthy as drama critic of *The New Statesman* and from 1942 to 1946 he was literary editor of *The Spectator*, in succession to Graham Greene, for which he occasionally wrote record reviews.

Widespread recognition first came to Turner when Edward Marsh invited him to contribute to the third anthology of *Georgian Poetry*, published by Harold Monro from his famous Poetry Bookshop. By that time the term 'Georgian' had ceased to imply a healthy insurgence against *fin-de-siècle* Victorianism and Turner's early poems, extending the line of exoticism or 'tropical pastoralism' begun in the series by James Elroy Flecker, served to demonstrate its escapist retrenchment and enervation. As a Neo-Georgian,[5]Turner displayed little individuality and the influence of his models was never far from the surface. However, in 1920 he seceded from the group, much to the chagrin of Marsh who later wrote bitterly that '.. before my last volume he withdrew his skirts from me in what I thought sectarian intolerance, *since when he has never written so well again'*.[6]

At a fundamental level, Turner's thought asserted the primacy of the creative imagination. It is significant that along with music and poetry he took a keen interest in mathematics, for each expresses and in a sense defines the abstract inner life in the philosophical tradition originating from Bishop George Berkeley's *A New Theory of Vision* (1709). His commitment to metaphysical philosophy informed both his poetry and his music criticism. Frequently when he described aspects of the natural world in his poems he proceeded not from their impact on the senses but from their position within the imagination. While certain aspects of his anti-materialist view, such as his individual

conception of time, are purely poetic in quality, other more tangible concepts can be seen to pervade both mediums of poetry and music criticism. This is as one might expect, for in Turner's work each is an attempt to articulate the aesthetic experience. Objectivity such as that sought by scientific positivism was rejected and condemned; reality for Turner could be found only in the inner world of the imagination. Thus many ideas stemming from scientific enquiry are disregarded along with more general conceptions such as the notion of progress:

> The idea of progress
> Is vertical -----
> In geological strata
>
> It is a geometric illusion [7]

Such a highly solipsistic vision led Yeats to praise Turner for rejecting the last vestiges of nineteenth-century materialism and raising the cry, 'the flux is in my own mind'.[8] Yeats wrote:

> It was Turner who raised that cry, to gain upon the instant a control of plastic material, a power of emotional construction Pound has always lacked. At his rare best he compares with Eliot in precision, but Eliot's genius is human, mundane, impeccable. Generations must pass before man recovers control of circumstance; mind has recognised its responsibility that is all; Turner himself seems the symbol of an incomplete discovery... I think of him as the first poet to read a mathematical equation, a musical score, a book of verse, with equal understanding; he seems to ride in an observation balloon, blue heaven above, earth beneath an abstract pattern. (Ibid.: xxviii-xxvix)

In this rejection of materialism, Turner took issue with both the Hegelian and post-Marxian dialectic in arguing that it is love, rather than thought, that ultimately provides the fundamental substance and creative power of the universe (1926: 19). The connection between art and the spiritual force called love was an important one in Turner's thought, for it supplied him with an idiosyncratic definition of music itself. If artistic creation, being the movement from spirit to actuality, is essentially the imaging forth of love, then music in turn could be defined as 'the imagination of love in sound' (Ibid.). Thus Turner wrote of Beethoven's Quartet Op. 131:

> Such movements as the variations *andante* of the C sharp minor quartet give us a sense of naked life, of a profound inexhaustible spring sprouting up limpidly without a crack of a bubble from the deepest fountain of being. It is in this music that Beethoven is metaphysical in the supreme sense, for this beauty is beyond all desiring. Dante - who ranks in our European literature as a metaphysical poet of the highest order - spoke of that love which moves the sun and all the stars. Here

> in Beethoven's quartets we have that love made manifest in the forms of earthly sound. (1927: 287)

For Turner, the artistic medium in itself was a series of abstract symbols employed neither logically nor emotionally but in a purely aesthetic manner. The medium itself had no aesthetic value or meaning. In essence, Pater's most famous remark was right - only in expressing his perception that each art aspired to something more than representation he confused the logic of music with this aesthetic quality. Being as closely related to facts as science (those facts being the phenomenal world of our senses), the products of artist creativity sought the same reality. While the scientist may call it physical reality, the artist may call it beauty. Consequently, in Turner's view, the products of science and art should rightly be judged by precisely the same criteria; namely, whether they were true, or if not, the extent to which they could be seen to correlate with such 'reality'. Turner agreed with Keats that beauty is truth. This was a touchstone for his music criticism; if a work had aesthetic value it was because it was true to a greater reality than the facts related.[9]

Turner's attempt to formulate a canon of aesthetic music criticism diametrically opposed the idea of discerning the kind of objective criteria which Newman sought under the influence of J. M. Robertson and Rationalism. Newman's approach was found by Turner to have much in common with the so-called 'art for art's sake' theorists of the 1890s, whose response to Ruskin's puritanical moralizing left art similarly without any underlying organization. Seeking to reaffirm Ruskin's standard of 'moral goodness' in principle, Turner needed to reject its former connotation which implied a negative and stultifying denial of life. In the belief that art transcends worldly morality, he replaced 'moral goodness' with 'spiritual life'; the life of creative imagination:

> By 'life' I mean our inner life. There is no life outside us except in works of art; that is why art is so immensely the most important of all human products. What is called 'life' by many people is merely material mechanism without any significance. Significance only exists in our own spirit and in works of art in which we touch the spirit of others. (1924: 287)

If music was not an artificial simplification of reality but a creation of the imagination expressing our inner spiritual life, then absence of the creative imagination must be equated with death. Thus the 'life' of hearing was not in the material representation of sound, or what Turner called the 'death-shape', but in creation or the hearing of something new. His conceptions of life and creation, which are contrasted with those of



W. J. Turner

knowledge and death, form the basis of his discussion in *Orpheus, or the Music of the Future* (1926). Here the conception of death as something complementary to the process of creation or life, which pervades both his poetry and criticism, can be seen to share something with Yeats's recurrent idea of the lily blossoming from the dunghill. It comprises three distinct elements:

> this power of becoming *physical* (life taking on flesh, the spirit achieving form) or *material* (electricity becoming molecules of hydrogen, lead, etc.) is the process which I have described as death; and as that necessary and important death, death the complement of life. But, as I have already shown, a third kind of death, other than the material and the physical, is that of *intellectual* structure - known variously as tradition, belief, dogma, logic, technique or, most comprehensively, as knowledge. (1926: 39)

In the fifth chapter of *Orpheus* entitled 'Absolute Value', Turner argued against the possibility of there being any objective approach to criticism in the manner suggested by Newman; that judgement could only be 'instinctive' (: 57) or 'individual' (: 59). With Beethoven, however, he could at least discern a 'temporary Absolute' (: 68) which might serve as some kind of yardstick. Indeed, Beethoven's achievements were frequently used throughout his criticism as a measure of the success of other composers. He regarded the proper function of art as the creation of 'absolute values in the imagination upon which the human species can continually re-create its intellectual, moral, and physical structures' (: 69). Clearly such a perception is informed by a close study of Benedetto Croce's writings. Both men subscribed to a non-idealist metaphysics in which, as has already been shown, the processes of the imagination were the primary focus of attention rather than the material forms of art themselves. Both propounded broadly expressionist rather than formalist ideologies; the predominant concern of their criticism being the spiritual life embodied in works of art rather than objective structures. For Turner, the supreme moral duty of the artist was not to sacrifice life to form. A central theme of his rather precious and muddle-headed Platonic dialogue, *The Aesthetes* (1926), was that art results from the coincidence of an intuition image with a physical and intellectual construction. This is clearly derived from Croce's 'expression-intuition' idea in which art is viewed as a purely internal event; in Croce's own words, 'What is external is no longer a work of art'.[10]

Croce's *Aesthetic* had first appeared in an English translation as early as 1909. It sets out the idea of the artwork as an inviolable world, a complex synthesis or image

within which subordinated details, or images, are fused. Such images convey an intuitive or expressive knowledge distinct from logical or conceptual knowledge. Turner follows Croce in regarding this distinction as fundamental to the difference between creative imagination and scientific knowledge. He also shares with Croce the view that great music does not appeal to or in any way express emotions; a view which provides a means of assessing value, albeit a rather flexible one. As genuine works of art give aesthetic pleasure which is untranslatable into any particular emotional state, overtly 'emotional' composers such as Tchaikovsky or Puccini are placed in a secondary position to the subjects of his three main books - Mozart, Beethoven and Berlioz.[11] Like Croce, Turner rarely discusses formal problems, but instead attempts to define the feelings and preoccupations embodied in the work of art.

Great art then presents the imagination with some eternal truth. As Turner wrote: 'I have the deepest conviction that great music is great because it is the expression of some profound idea in the universe' (1921: 11). The danger inherent in this statement was that through its abstraction such a 'profound idea' could be equated with 'significant form', thereby arousing an aesthetic emotion which results in a similar philosophical *cul-de-sac* as that reached by Clive Bell and Roger Fry. The difference, however, appears to be that Turner's evaluative scale existed outside the work of art. Whereas for Bell and Fry art was purely a matter of internal tension and conflict within a self-contained framework, for Turner it functioned in order to define the relationship between the individual and the universe:

> The value of a work of art is nothing more or less than the value of the soul of the artist, i.e., the value of the active relationship between him and the universe. It is this which makes great works of art profoundly refreshing and regenerating. In experiencing a great work of art it is as if we were bathing in the ocean of the universe and all its virtue and richness were passing into us and becoming a part of us. In other words, when we truly experience a great work of art we are, as it were, flooded with new life. (1938: 341)

Such monistic idealism denies, or at least plays down, the very important differences between the arts and therein lies its greatest weakness.

Turner's epistemological system placed a strong emphasis on music criticism's need to determine the extent of the composer's spiritual integrity. One application of this criterion resulted in a correlation being drawn between late Romanticism and the corruption of true Romantic values. His belief that the late nineteenth-century expansion

of material resources was counterbalanced by a process of increasing spiritual bankruptcy was most clearly exemplified in his response to Wagnerian music-drama. In a provocative article entitled 'The Fraud of Wagner' he denounced *The Ring* as a hollow theatrical artifice and launched into an attack on the composer that defied all reason (1933: 89-97). The thesis that as Wagner's means of expression expanded his aesthetic sensibility degenerated led to a view of *Parsifal* that stemmed from Nietzsche and was most conspicuously shared by Runciman; that it represented the final deliquescence and decay of all that was once, in Weber and the 'true' Romantics, brave and idealistic. As an atheist, he was repelled by its religious overtones and hoped that it had dealt the final death-blow to the conception of sacred music: 'The depths have been plumbed once for all, and all decent people can return with sober satisfaction to the enjoyment of music which is neither secular nor sacred, but merely great' (*Truth*, CIII, 11 Apr 1928: 687).

Turner's response to Wagner's music was highly inconsistent, for he held extremely ambivalent attitudes towards it. Nothing damaged his reputation as a critic so much as his intemperate attacks on the composer which were pounced upon by those who sought to discredit his professional standing. Part of the problem was the issue of operatic representation, for a too literal and realistic account of events resulted in over-charged emotionalism which annihilated all trace of imagination. Concerning Wagner's inability to forego a literal and descriptive method he wrote:

> Every intelligent producer of Wagner's "Ring" has felt that only by having real mermaids, and real water, a real dragon, and so on, could the stage effects Wagner calls for be obtained. Producers have tried, for example, doing away with the flames of fire in the last act of *Die Walkure* on the plausible theory that the flames were in the music; but the effect was miserable. The fact is that the music, for all its astonishing cunning and invention, does not fill the imagination; it merely puts us into a state of excitement in which we want to see real flames. (1933: 95-6)

Equally, Turner considered the continuous orchestration of melodic recitative to be a senseless formula detracting from dramatic effect. In its lack of formal definition he likened it to prose writing. Preferring the conception of opera as a play set to music - (Edward Dent's Cambridge productions of Purcell earned high praise) - he considered Wagner's innovations as a blind alley in the development of opera which had disastrous consequences. One such consequence was the influence it exerted over early performances of Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict*:

To such an extent are we all slaves of our period and of fashion that even a good

> musician like Felix Mottl, when he revived *Beatrice et Benedict* at Karlsruhe in 1887, thought it necessary to set the connecting dialogue to music (written by himself). This was one of the accursed results of Wagner's influence and of the mania which, after him, set in all over Europe for operas which are what the Germans call *durch-komponiert*. Even to-day musicians have not got free from this cramping and wholly idiotic obsession that every opera must be cast in the same form, which means that there are no longer any forms. This pernicious Wagnerian idea... has almost destroyed opera, and it has prevented the performance of such masterpieces as *Beatrice et Benedict*. (1934: 317-18)

This criticism reinforced Turner's view that the greatest art was dependent upon both the degree of creative talent in the artist and the quality of his humanity. He made no distinction between the artist as artist and the artist as human being. Therefore to him the greatest artists were also the greatest men (1936: 107). Whereas Wagner was considered essentially as a *chiffonnier*, Verdi by contrast was regarded as a man of real character, a genius who mastered the development of the modern orchestra with consummate artistry:

> In *Aida* Verdi showed that as a master of blatant splendour he could meet Wagner on his own ground; but a man who could write for the brass as well as Wagner and Berlioz could also write such an aria as 'O Patria Mia!' where the instrumentation has an exquisite economy such as has been unknown since the days of Mozart and Gluck. (1933: 68)

The extent to which an opera displayed Wagnerian influence almost became a critical yardstick in itself; Puccini's *La Bohème*, for example, was considered superior to *Manon Lescaut* and *The Girl of the Golden West* purely because it evaded the Wagnerian influence to a greater degree. Turner despised sentimentality and often found the formal freedom of late Romantic works, as well as their grandiloquence, to be in some sense fraudulent. Mahler's symphonies were held to be 'pretentious, long-winded, bombastic, and banal almost beyond conception' (*Truth*, CII, 9 Nov 1927: 853) and similarly he found little to admire in the symphonies of Elgar. Large-scale Romantic works, such as Delius's *Mass of Life* or Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*, were often described as lacking vitality, shapeless, loose-jointed or invertebrate. He openly admitted that he preferred diatonic to chromatic melody and counterpoint to 'the shifting kaleidoscopic colours of vertical harmony' (*Truth*, CXII, 11 Jan 1933: 59). He required music to have a sense of structural definition that could be clearly audible. Frequently, in order to clarify his disparagement, he would play one composer off against another; a mannerism that always tended to weaken his argument, as in the following remarks on Bax:

> Nearly everything Mr. Bax composes is too long; his works have neither beginning

> nor end; they simply drift at the mercy of the conductor's rudderless sensibility, diffuse, and cloudy, and in the midst - I might say, in the mist - of their diffuseness they stop or, rather, they just cease to be. I would not be surprised to learn that Mr. Bax did not care for Mozart as a composer. Nothing, indeed, could be more strikingly antithetical to Mozart's precision and firmness of outline than Mr. Bax's hazy meandering among sounds. (*Truth*, XCII, 22 Nov 1922: 37)

Turner was of the opinion that the value of programme music, song and opera was entirely musical and needed to be judged as such. He disputed the capacity of music to enhance poetic beauty; the song-writer's artistic goal was the expression of feeling awakened by the poem's stimulus rather than the interpretation of its meaning (1921: 41-2). He even went so far as to suggest that only bad poetry should be set to music and that the text of an ideal opera should be 'beyond comprehension and certainly incapable of reduction to the illustration of a story' (1936: 78). The imposition of a literary basis for a composition was frequently found to thinly disguise a lack of structural cohesion within the music itself. Strauss, for example, was unsuccessful in his attempt to unify his *Alpine Symphony* through the use of an external programmatic backcloth; coherence being achieved only on an intellectual level, not on an aesthetic one (1924: 14-23). Similarly the movements of Bliss's *Morning Heroes* could not coalesce properly because they were related only rationally through the choice of war poetry and not through any purely musical means (1933: 15-18). With disarming honesty he wrote in his book on Berlioz:

> For me music always speaks adequately without any words, and I judge it (rightly or wrongly) without reference to words. Even in the case of a modern opera like *Wozzeck* I have never read Buchner's play, and on the sole occasion on which I heard *Wozzeck* I did not understand one word in a hundred of the German text. But this did not prevent me from enjoying Berg's music or from having very definite opinions about it. In short, I am of the opinion that the whole ancient controversy about programme music was the result of a misconception and is a controversy about an illusion. The text of an opera, the words of a song, the programme of a symphony or tone poem or whatever name in the future may be given to any musical composition is of *no importance or significance whatever.* (1934: 133)

Consistently maintaining an open-minded response to contemporary music, Turner showed a healthy curiosity towards the music of the Second Viennese School, towards members of *Les Six*, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Bartók and towards many other contemporary composers, albeit without displaying any real depth of critical perception concerning their music or any sense of finely judged discrimination. His ability to respond positively to any work in which he detected an original voice served as a

corrective to much of the dismissive writing that was produced by more conservative critics of the daily and weekly Press after premieres of important contemporary compositions. This was particularly apparent in the case of Hindemith, who received very little appreciation from British critics until after the Second World War. Above all, he stressed the importance of Stravinsky. Stravinsky had opened up those 'new worlds of the imagination' that he sought in modern music. It was to be expected that a critic who considered the greatest art to be 'absolutely free from the expression of any emotion that can be referred to in our daily existence as human beings' (*NS*, XVI, 30 Oct 1920: 240) should find in Stravinsky a composer of outstanding originality. The orchestral version of Stravinsky's *Nightingale* was held in particularly high esteem as he found it approached his personal conception of the ideal operatic form in providing both unity of idea and musical style, thereby rendering the stage version superfluous:

> In the theatre one was somewhat distracted from the music by the scenes, whose very fantasticalness was detrimental, and, indeed, superfluous. But, listening to the symphonic poem, I became aware of how imaginative the music was. Everything was there. Stage, scenery, actors are all unnecessary...
>
> The music is never insincere, it is never emotional, it is always strange, vivid, aloof, terrifying. Music so tersely imaginative has never before been written, not even by Stravinsky himself, although the chief virtue of his *Spring Rite (Le Sacre du Printemps)* was its imaginative power...
>
> It is an organic whole; one does not need to know anything about the opera to understand and enjoy it, nothing could be clearer or more compact. It is music, like the best modern poetry, primarily appealing to the imagination, not to the emotions or a superficial logical faculty. (1924: 173-4)

Turner shared with members of the *Sackbut* coterie a distaste for the 'musical appreciation' movement and what he described as the 'drivelization' of the Press.[12] He considered it his duty as a critic to speak out against the misguided attempts of broadcasters and musical educationalists whose work he felt impeded the development of a true aesthetic understanding of art. In the section of his *Beethoven: The Search for Reality* entitled 'Ideals and the Artist' he described the nature of ideals as images of the life within us, as attempts to divide reality which could be communicated only through experience, not by knowledge. Essentially the composer and the auditor have the same experience but in a different order: 'From the philosophical point of view a composer is "feeling crystallizing into music" and auditor is "music dissolving into feeling"' (1927: 296). Again, the influence of Croce's view that art is essentially intuition, that it is the expression of direct and not discursively derived knowledge, can be seen to pervade Turner's thought:

> Without external objects, without images held up before us we should never experience anything, for our whole sentiment, intellectual and emotional life consists in that conception which is the coalescing of the coincidence of an image with a feeling...
>
> Let us imagine ourselves at a given moment in possession of a complete and exhaustive set of ideals. This would mean that all experience had been ours and we could only repeat it. Under such conditions life would only be possible if memory began to fail us and we were able to live afresh in the discovery of new images. Otherwise our condition would be that static and incomprehensible condition of omniscience and omnipresence which has been attributed to an inconceivable God. Thus it is clear that ideals are only valuable in so far as we have the power to depart from them, after having recognised them. The mistake educationists make, the mistake all idealists make is in thinking that an ideal is an ultimate goal instead of a point of departure. For mankind there are no ultimate goals in the shape of images because, as we have seen, an image is part of the whole and to set up a part of being as the goal of being is to make idols and to make idols is merely to idealize, and to idealize is to realize imperfectly. (1927: 299)

The idea that anyone could be taught how to receive 'the imaging forth of man's life' through lessons in 'appreciation' was an anathema to Turner, whose strictures against the diffusion and democratization of musical knowledge took on a variety of guises. He considered programme notes and books on musical appreciation to be objectionable and useless because they could only provide a false substitute for real aesthetic experience. In the belief that great art could never be accessible to the masses he proposed, in a debate with the prominent broadcaster and educationist Walford Davies, that the broadcasting of music was deplorable.[13] The comparative weakness of Davies's response surprisingly highlights the strength of Turner's claim that 'the multitude was better off when it was poor and without [broadcast] music.. whereas now it has the illusion that it is rich and that it possesses music, and this is the one condition which may prevent its ever having the real experience of music and is therefore a deplorable condition' (1933: 47).

Expression of the view that apodeictic knowledge is an irrelevance in artistic matters occurs with regularity throughout Turner's criticism. It is as if he employed it in defence against those who might regard his lack of musical scholarship as a serious flaw in his ability to make sound aesthetic value judgements. Rarely does he penetrate to the root of musical problems to offer the sort of insights provided by the more technical criticism of writers such as Tovey, or even the relatively musically untrained Newman. Yet while his writings may not have been comfortably embraced by a musically

sophisticated readership, in their finely literary expression of genuine experience they were no doubt of value to many. Turner's critical apologia stated that all knowledge is founded on experience; for him it was not the knowledge of the expert, but the experience of the human being that made works of art intelligible. In a review of his book on Mozart, the critic Wilfred Mellers paid tribute to his personal integrity:

> We all know Mr. Turner's immaturities, his unreliability, his trumpery bellicosities, his occasionally really astoundingly inane failures of insight. His may not be a subtle mind. Yet this reasonable and readable book makes one realise how decent and how honest a person he is compared with the majority of those who infest the suburbs of the musical republic. (*Scrutiny*, VII, Mar 1938: 117)

Although Turner brought to British music criticism a wide cultural view displaying a degree of sensibility that is rarely discernible in more strictly academic approaches, his kind of 'judgement by spiritual values' could never have been wholly acceptable in an age which witnessed the budding of musicological positivism. In his predilection for making comparisons between composers of completely different outlooks and for easy categorizations, such as Bach's 'intellectual virtuosity' or Wagner's 'hysterical emotionalism', he laid himself open as the target of satirical insult. His flirtations with philosophy and science were perhaps little more than those of the educated dilettante, yet he was never afraid to form an independent judgement and to stand by his convictions. He formulated no aesthetic doctrine and exercised little influence on criticism in general, but his capacity for independent thinking provided perceptive and valuable aesthetic insights into the mysterious world of musical communication.

Chapter VIII - Notes

1. Music criticism in *The Birmingham Post* has been collected and indexed from 1913 in bound volumes entitled 'The World of Music: a weekly article from the Birmingham Post'. These are housed in the Local Studies Department of Birmingham City Reference Library, shelfmark LF-55.

2. For Blom's account of Birmingham's musical life during the early 1930s see 'Music in Birmingham', *MMR*, LXII, May 1932: 87; LXIII, May 1933: 87; LXIV, May 1934: 86.

3. The Editor wrote to Blom on 14 December 1933: 'You will remember that we have previously discussed the point that the music articles in "The Listener" ought to be related more specifically to items in the broadcast programme; and recently we have had very strong representations from our Music Department about this, which have led me to feel that it may be rather difficult for us to continue your present series. I am reluctant to say this, for they are most excellent in themselves, but the fact that you are in Birmingham makes it difficult for us to have the day-to-day contacts to reorient these articles towards the greater topicality in the broadcast programme sense.' (BBC Written Archives Centre: Blom, Source File.)

4. Turner wrote three autobiographical novels: *Blow for Balloons: Being the First Hemisphere of the History of Henry Airbubble* (1935), *Henry Airbubble in Search of a Circumference to His Breath* (1936) and *The Duchess of Popocatapetl* (1939).

5. See Waugh, A., 'The Neo-Georgians', *FR*, CXV, 1924: 126-37.

6. Marsh, E., *A Number of People* (1939): 326. Following general post-war trends, Turner's poetry became more experimental, subsuming various influences from Imagism to the Sitwells and others of the *Wheels* group. Nevertheless, the preciosity of his Georgian manner was never entirely abandoned.

7. Turner, W. J., *The Seven Days of the Sun* (1924): 11.

8. Yeats, W. B., Introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936): xxviii.

9. See Turner, W. J., 'Symbols in Music and Literature', *Variations of the Theme of Music* (1924): 207-26.

10. Croce, B., *Aesthetic* (2\1922): 51.

11. For Newman's response to Turner's proposition that bad music is overtly emotional see his article 'Music and Emotion', *ST*, 28 Nov 1920: 7.

12. Gray's similar views on this were summarized in *Contingencies* (1947) when he wrote: 'With all respect to the many well-meaning, devoted and enthusiastic members of this faculty of musical appreciation, one cannot help feeling that their activities are based upon a complete fallacy, namely that it is possible for aesthetic sensibility to be imparted or acquired, or even developed, by any such methods of spiritual jerks or intellectual Sandow exercises. The foundation of all aesthetic enjoyment lies in the direct, unfettered, unreflecting response to a sensual, emotional, imaginative experience, and no amount of lectures or evening classes can take its place, nor can they enhance it.' (: 21)

13. This debate was conducted in the pages of *The Radio Times* in 1927. Turner's case against broadcasting and Davies's case in favour of it are both reproduced in Turner, W. J., (1933): 42-53.

CONCLUSION

It cannot be claimed that the achievements of British music criticism during the new era matched those of contemporary literary or art criticism, nor that they existed on a par with those of musicology. If by 1945 British music criticism had passed its stage of infancy, it had certainly advanced no further than adolescence in comparison with the criticism of literature. But while critical thought in music seems destined to lag conceptually far behind that in the other arts, its position within the history of music is nevertheless of fundamental importance, for the documentation of music history divorced from the value judgements achieved by criticism is inconceivable. In this, the contribution of British music criticism has been significant.

Certain general characteristics of the new era can now be discerned. It was one in which individuality of critical perception increasingly asserted itself. During the 1890s British musical culture was fairly sharply segmented into a few different levels to which writers addressed themselves. Davison and Chorley spoke to a specific social group that shared similar values and a relatively coherent culture that musically focused on Germany and Italy. The new era reflected the upheaval that took place throughout British artistic life during the early decades of the twentieth century. While almost every other department of musical life became increasingly commercialized, unionized or professionalised during that time, music criticism remained the domain of semi-amateurs - men untrained according to any recognized standards and largely unorganized.[1] Although criticism could financially support an increasing number of men solely dedicated to its practice, it nevertheless remained the part-time pursuit of composers, academics and teachers. As highly independent individuals operating aside from any hierarchical system, these men were uniquely placed to campaign for their own particular causes and to freely attack artistic sharp practices. The emergence of new periodicals encouraged a lively dialogue between critics and their readers. The numerous journals that sprang up stressed their novelty and reflected the move towards greater plurality throughout British society at large. Some, such as *The Chord*, *The Sackbut* and *Fanfare*, emphasized the community of the arts by carrying articles on painting, poetry and drawings. Music criticism also became increasingly a feature within the literary and political journals that appealed to a

cultured and normally middle-class readership. These journals did much to mould taste, assert standards of judgement and keep intellectual thought and evaluation alive. They reveal how modern critical attitudes emerged and how modern thought about music developed.

The divide between the gentleman scholar and the belletrist critic remained as the position of musicology in Britain gained strength. Would-be critics turned to the universities to satisfy their musical and intellectual appetites. Often men who had undertaken a quantity of journalistic work at an early stage in their careers, such as E. J. Dent and J. A. Westrup, turned away from such tasks as their university careers developed. Both Dent and Westrup studied Classics as undergraduates. Dent gained a Fellowship at King's College Cambridge (1902-08) through his research on Alessandro Scarlatti and was able to establish himself as a scholar before the First World War through his monograph on that composer (1905) and his *Mozart's Operas* (1913). He contributed an enormous quantity of musicological articles to a wide variety of journals[2] and worked as a critic for *The Athenaeum* and, after its amalgamation in 1921, *The Nation and Athenaeum* (1919-24). Whereas Dent confined his scholarly work to periodical journals and wrote very little for the daily Press, Westrup spent some years as a newspaper critic as assistant to Richard Capell on *The Daily Telegraph* (1934-9). During this time he also edited *The Monthly Musical Record* and lectured at the RAM. He later developed his academic interests to become one of the leading musicologists of his generation. With his appointment as Heather Professor at Oxford in 1947, along with the similar appointments made that year of Anthony Lewis at Birmingham, Arthur Hutchings at Durham and Gerald Abraham at Liverpool, British musicology came of age. As the twentieth century progressed it had become increasingly necessary for critics to have more than a dilettante's knowledge of music history and many, such as Newman, Tovey and Calvocoressi, demonstrated a keen scholarly ability. But it was not until after the Second World War that the fruits of the explosion in musicological research concerned with the pre-Classical repertoire could be evaluated in a critical manner.

Although the factors that shaped critical thought came from multifarious sources, they can nevertheless be broadly categorized. Firstly, influences emanating from contemporary musical activity, such as the impression made by Strauss's tone poems on Newman, by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes on Evans, Henry and Lambert, by van Dieren's

music on Heseltine and Gray or by Dolmetsch's pioneering work in the field of performance practice on Runciman, were decisive. Contact with conceptual and philosophical ideas also exerted considerable influence. These include the influence of Darwinian evolutionary concepts on the historical perspectives of several Oxford critics, of the neo-Hegelians on Tovey and Walker, of Rationalism on Newman, of the cyclical historiographers on Gray and of Berkelian idealism on Turner. Influences also came from movements in other arts, such as that of Imagism on Henry, of Georgianism on Turner and of oriental decorative art on Sorabji. Lastly, there were influences brought about by the unique external circumstances of critics' lives, the most extreme example being the influence of German imprisonment on Henry's radical reaction against German music. In this category can be placed such factors as the effect racial isolation had on Sorabji's critical attitude, the influence educational environment had on the Oxford critics, and Calvocoressi's social involvement with several Paris-based composers at the turn of the century. The fact that few of these influences were of importance for more than one or two critics gave rise to a multiplicity of independent viewpoints. Whereas a nineteenth-century critic such as Davison was able to gather around him a clique of minor writers who shared his concerns and opinions, critics of the new era tended towards a much greater degree of idiosyncrasy. A strong sense of partisanship strongly coloured criticism during the new era. Critics openly expressed their antagonism in print in a manner that is rarely witnessed today, most noticeably in the case of Newman and his opponents, but also between members of the *Sackbut* coterie and the Oxford critics as well as between several others. They felt the need to take a positive personal stand, to challenge conceptions they considered wrong or outmoded and to provoke, or at least to embrace, controversy. The expression of extreme views encouraged debate and a healthy desire to find the underlying causes of conflicting value judgements. Widespread polemicism attracted attention to music criticism and produced a sense of dynamism that had been lacking in the pre-Shavian era. Following the Second World War this sense of pervasive polemicism gradually diminished as the musical press became increasingly taken up with non-critical writing, such as interviews with leading figures and the previewing of concert programmes. Polemical articles made thought about music coherent, created a critical, evaluative environment and maintained a self-conscious dialogue with the musical public. An impersonal environment, in which academic and analytical skills are valued above

critical ones, is not such a discriminating one.

The new era can be seen as the literary counterpart to what has since become known as the British Musical Renaissance: a chapter of music history that is significantly one without schools and defined movements. Such a renaissance of composition presupposes logically, if not in any chronological sense, some parallel renaissance of critical reaction. A prominent feature of this new spirit was the move away from Teutonic-based aesthetic standards towards a recognition of an international cultural heritage. This is especially noticeable after August 1914, although a decade before the First World War German culture was becoming increasingly suspect in England as the culture of a bitter rival and potential military enemy. The war intensified this position and added momentum to a movement that had already begun. Cecil Forsyth's *Music and Nationalism* (1911) voiced a growing resentment of German domination in English musical life. His forceful appeal for a state funded national Opera was couched in jingoistic terms and enlisted the politicized language of conflict:

> The history which we have is... the history of a continual struggle between a foreign culture imposed upon us by our own upper classes and a national popular culture... In this struggle it is noteworthy that, though the foreign composer always won, the Englishman was beaten but never killed; he rose to his feet again, and with a certain doggedness of purpose, renewed the contest, fighting in his old way and with his old weapons... Always defeated, he refused, with a curiously sure instinct, to get himself the rapier and light suit of foreign armour with which alone, it might have been supposed, he could fight successfully. Homespun and leather with a good English broadsword were, he knew, the only implements with which he could ultimately win; but what amazes us is his stupidity in not seeing that the condition of his success was that his leather and homespun should be made good and sound and his rusty blade resharpened. (: 124-5)

The idea that music revealing any other than German influence was in some way inferior was very firmly rooted at the turn of the century and often pervaded music criticism in subtle ways. Musical xenophobia appeared in all manner of guises. Nicholas Kilburn's *The Story of Chamber Music* (1904: 125), for example, contains the following reference to Dvořák - 'True, the Slav idiom pervades a number of his works, but this is, as it were, a mere accident of his nationality and in no way detracts from the splendour of his achievement' - as, seemingly, it might have been expected to do. The extent to which the German repertoire had taken hold of critical opinion is also revealed by a notorious statement made by Edward Dannreuther in the sixth volume of the influential *Oxford History of Music* (1905: 321) condemning Mussorgsky's style as 'barbarously ugly' to

Western ears - unequivocally referring to ears attuned to German music. The Oxford critics maintained this pro-German stance during a time when Franco-Russian modernism was in the ascendant, providing one source of the friction that became a dominant feature of British music criticism of the time. Periodicals such as *The Chesterian*, *The Sackbut*, and *Fanfare* attempted to develop a public awareness of contemporary music and to educate its audience, while the old guard attempted to discredit any movement away from traditional modes of expression and what they regarded as the mainstream.

The polemical criticism which sought to come to terms with the various modernist aesthetics clearly mirrors the transitional stage through which European music was passing during the first decades of the twentieth century. The rise of modernism inevitably brought with it a factional musical press across Europe, and Britain was no exception. While Stravinsky found champions in Evans and Henry early in his career, and most other contemporary composers found some degree of sympathetic support in Britain, albeit often of a rather limited nature, the serial music of the Second Viennese School proved to be a stumbling block for British critics in general. Modernism in pre-1945 British music criticism meant Franco-Russian, not Viennese. It was left to Edward Clark at the BBC, to émigré composers such as Roberto Gerhard, Mátyás Seiber and Walter Goehr and to émigré writers such as Egon Wellesz, Mosco Carner and Erwin Stein, to create an awareness of serialism and to counteract the widespread critical suspicion that greeted all new developments in Britain. However, the causes of antagonism towards serialism cannot be explained merely by the misoneism of the critics: it must be viewed in a wider context. A technique that was seen to espouse conformity, negate variety and represent a 'tyranny' was for many, particularly Gray and Lambert, intimately bound up with a fear of political oppression. For others, such as Sorabji, the idea of a specific method that could be adopted by any composer to provide results that were indistinguishable from those of any other composer employing the same method was connected to the idea of mass production. The notion of a single tone-row generating an entire composition mirrored the value society placed on the machinery that had taken away human participation and interaction. Serialism, like technology, threatened individuality and the expression of a wide range of human sentiments. Christian Darnton and other critics of a socialist persuasion denounced serialism for alienating the mass of ordinary listeners. Art for them implied a certain ulitarian purpose. The long held view that art should have

social relevance was further reinforced by the fact that, with the popularity of the cinema, radio and gramophone, the non-specialist, predominately middle-class audience that valued music primarily as entertainment gradually increased during the 1930s and 1940s. Certain critics attempted to educate this audience: Gerald Abraham in his book *This Modern Stuff* (1933) gave a clear introduction to the subject of modern music and Rollo Myers's *Modern Music: Its Aims and Tendencies* (1923) and *Music in the Modern World* (1939) were both similarly informative in their appeal to the general reader. Yet the view that serialism threatened true musical values in the way that the war was felt to threaten civilized society was widely held by audiences and critics alike. Contemporary tonal music in quasi-traditional forms, such as the symphonies of Bax and Sibelius, reasserted music's ability to express emotions and even pictorial images in a way that was easily embraced by the vast majority of British critics. Serialism, on the other hand, being found to be contrary to nature in its lack of emotional appeal, alienated. Ferruccio Bonavia's response to the new music was shared by many:

> A similar sharp cleavage is to be noted between this [new] music and emotion. Emotion has been said to be the keystone of poetry as of painting, and it has been asserted that only a dunce or a pedant would sit down in cold blood to write an epic. Even more was emotion the keystone of music; the emotion of the new music is the emotion of the multiplication table.
>
> Mere splinters of melody are matched by a system of harmony or counterpoint in which consonance has no part. The outcome is that all the immense richness of modern harmony - the harmony of a Bax or a Bliss - is reduced to nothing, for dissonance is inconceivable without consonance, without a point of rest. (*DT*, 9 Oct 1937: 18)

Increased levels of dissonance, the element of compression, especially in the aphoristic works of Webern, and the lack of lyrical vocality, were found to be unacceptable features of serial music. The antagonism was exacerbated by the fact that serial music tended to be performed in concerts specifically devoted to the promotion of contemporary music. With the reduction of concerts during the Second World War, the divide between concerts specifically designed to appeal to a general audience and those designed for a specialist audience widened.

Widespread non-acceptance of the more progressive contemporary trends in music during the inter-war years can be related to a general lack of vision throughout society. The parallel between Lambert's *Music Ho!* and other literary works expressing the sense of disillusionment characteristic of the 1930s has already been drawn. The effect of

Britain's diminishing status as a world power affected art as well as politics, so that much that was progressive was treated with disdain. Critics during the inter-war years tended to assimilate many aspects of modernism without actually being converted to the modernist cause. It was a period of accelerating technological and sociological change, one in which the revolution of consciousness appeared to be reflected not so much in artistic production as in social style. Other sociological factors, such as the increasing extent to which music became the domain of passive recipients of manufactured music, also played a part in reducing interest in modern music. As in the reaction to the Sitwells and later to Auden and MacNeice, the extraordinary popularity of Lambert's *Music Ho!* reflected the increased fashionable acceptance of the superficially 'advanced' intellectual by a society fascinated by its own cultural diversification. But the deeply entrenched conservatism of the majority of British critics could only ever be superficially disguised.

By the early 1940s many of the old debates that had dominated music criticism for the past few decades had ceased to invite further consideration. Arguments concerning the evaluation of programme music, the nature of national musical identity and the relevance of folk-song, the validity of returning to classical models, the nature of objectivity in criticism and the causes of divergent opinion, had all become worn out through over-exposure. Limitations imposed by the paper shortage reduced the quantity of criticism produced during the Second World War, but this only temporarily put a brake on the development of a younger generation of critics. Among this generation were William Glock, Martin Cooper, Wilfred Mellers, Peter Heyworth (the last of the tradition of polemicists), and somewhat later Donald Mitchell and Hans Keller, who developed new lines of argument. New journals of an international perspective such as *Music Survey*, *The Score*, *Tempo*, and *The Music Review* were set up to cater for a new generation that demanded a new approach. A strain of conservatism still remained - Newman continued to write for *The Sunday Times* until 1958 and Blom for *The Observer* until 1959 - but, following the end of the Second World War, the way was open for a complete reassessment of values.

1. The only recognized association of music critics was the music division of the Critic's Circle. This society was founded in 1913 in order to protect the art of criticism and the interests of its members, who were drawn from critics of each of the performing arts.

2. See Haward, L., (1956).

APPENDIX I

A TABLE SHOWING MUSIC CRITICS OF LEADING BRITISH NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPERS BETWEEN 1894 AND 1945

Anonymity of authorship, the use of *nom de plumes*, and the practice of initialling newspaper music columns have made the use of secondary sources vital to the construction of this table. Often it is impossible to provide the precise dates of a critic's contributions and for this reason the limitary years have been given without months. It is by no means a complete list and many lacunae remain, especially with regard to assistant critics and correspondents. If it has not been possible to ascertain the name of a chief critic, a blank space has been left. The table goes beyond 1945 if a critic dealt with in the thesis became a chief critic after that date. Under each category I have listed miscellaneous newspapers which contained music criticism at some time during the period but where the criticism was either irregular or insubstantial. All the newspapers listed are housed at the British Library Newspaper Division, Colindale Avenue, London.

I) NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

i) Weekly

Title	**Chief Critic**		**Assistant Critic or Correspondent**	
The Sunday Times				
	Hermann Klein	1881-1901	Edward B. Baughan F. Gilbert Webb Alfred Kalisch	
	E. F. Jacques	1901-03		
	Leonard Rees	1904-18		
	H. B. Dickin	1919-20		
	Ernest Newman	1920-56	Basil Maine	1925-37
The Observer				
	E. F. Jacques	1894-1901		
	George H. Clutsam	1908-18		
	Ernest Newman	1919-20		
	Percy Scholes	1920-25		

A. Fox-Strangways	1925-39	William Glock	1934-39
William Glock	1939-45		
Charles Stuart	1945-49		
Eric Blom	1949-59		

Miscellaneous Weekly Newspapers

The Sunday Referee
The Sunday Herald
The Sunday Chronicle

ii) Daily

The Times

J. A. Fuller-Maitland	1889-1911	H. C. Colles	1905-11
H. C. Colles	1911-43	A. Fox-Strangways	1911-
		Dyneley Hussey	1923-46
		Frank Howes	1925-43
Frank Howes	1943-60		

The Daily Telegraph

Joseph Bennett	1874-1908	Robin Legge	1906-08
Robin Legge	1908-31	Herbert Hughes	1911-31
		Leigh Henry	1914;1919
		F. Bonavia	1920-50
		Basil Maine	1925-31
		Cecil Gray	1928-32
		Constant Lambert	
		M. Calvocoressi	
Herbert Hughes	1931-33	L. Dunton Green	
Richard Capell	1933-54	H. E. Wortham	
		G. M. Gatti	
		J. A. Westrup	1934-39

The Morning Post
[Amalgamated with *The Daily Telegraph* in 1937]

Arthur Hervey	1892-1908	F. J. Barrett	1891-1908
F. J. Barrett	1908-		
		M. Calvocoressi	1911-14
H. E. Wortham	1924-25		
Francis Toye	1925-37		

The Daily Graphic

R. A. Streatfeild	1898-1912
Ernest Newman	1923-26

The Daily Mail

J. H. G. Baughan

Richard Capell	1911-14		
Edwin Evans	1914-18		
Richard Capell	1918-33	Edwin Evans	1931-33
Edwin Evans	1933-45	Ralph Hill	1933-45

The Daily News\The News Chronicle

[From 1928 to 1930 - *The Daily News and Westminster Gazette*; from 1930 - *The News Chronicle*]

E. A. Baughan		T. Percy M. Betts	1884-
T. Percy M. Betts	-1904	F. Gilbert Webb	
		Alfred Kalisch	
Alfred Kalisch	1912-32		
Landon Ronald	1932-	Scott Goddard	

The Evening Standard

Harry Trevor	1908-13		
Percy Scholes	1913-20	Herbert Antcliffe	1916-
Ernest Newman	1922-23		
Philip Page	1924-34		
Stephen Williams	1934-39		

Miscellaneous Daily Newspapers

The Morning Leader
The Daily Chronicle
The Daily Express
The Daily Herald

II) PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPERS

The Birmingham Post

S. S. Stratton	1877-1906
Ernest Newman	1906-19
A. J. Sheldon	1919-31
Eric Blom	1931-46

The Manchester Guardian

George Freemantle	-1896		
Arthur Johnstone	1896-1904		
Samuel Langford	1905-27	Ernest Newman	1905-6
		Neville Cardus	1917-27
		Eric Blom	1923-31
Neville Cardus	1927-39	Cecil Gray	1931
	1951-75		

The Yorkshire Post

Herbert Thompson	1886-1936

Miscellaneous Provincial Newspapers

The Glasgow Herald
The Liverpool Daily Post
The Manchester Courier
The Daily Citizen [Manchester]
The Sheffield Daily Telegraph
The Western Mail [Cardiff]

APPENDIX II

A SELECTED CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ONE HUNDRED BOOKS OF MUSIC CRITICISM PUBLISHED IN BRITAIN BETWEEN 1890 AND 1950.

1890

1891

1892

Hadow, W. H., *Studies in Modern Music*, I

1893

Parry, C. H. H., *The Art of Music*

1894

Fuller-Maitland, J. A., *Masters of German Music*

1895

Hadow, W. H., *Studies in Modern Music*, II
Newman, E., *Gluck and the Opera*

1896

Grove, G., *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies*
Hadow, W. H., *Sonata Form*

1897

1898

Runciman, J. F., *Old Scores and New Readings*
Shaw, G. B., *The Perfect Wagnerite*

1899

Newman, E., *A Study of Wagner*

1900

1901

1902

1903

1904

1905

Dannreuther, E. G., *The Romantic Period*, vol VI of *The Oxford History of Music*
Johnstone, A., *Musical Criticisms*
Newman, E., *Musical Studies*
Walker, E., *Beethoven*

1906

Baughan, E. A., *Music and Musicians*
Newman, E., *Elgar*

1907

Newman, E., *Hugo Wolf*

1908

Colles, H. C., *Brahms*
Newman, E., *Richard Strauss*
Wallace, W., *The Threshold of Music*

1909

1910

1911

Parry, C. H. H., *Style in Musical Art*

1912

Antcliffe, H., *Living Music*
Colles, H. C., *The Growth of Music* [- 1916]

1913

Dent, E. J., *Mozart's Operas: a Critical Study*
Runciman, J. F., *Richard Wagner: Composer of Operas*

1914

Newman, E., *Wagner as Man and Artist*

1915

1916

1917

Scholes, P. A., *Everyman and his Music*

1918

1919

Newman, E., *A Musical Motley*

1920

1921

Turner, W. J., *Music and Life*

1922

1923

Blom, E., *The Stepchildren of Music*
Calvocoressi, M.-D., *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism*
Heseltine, P. (= P. Warlock), *Delius*

1924

Dyson, G., *The New Music*
Evans, E., *The Margin of Music*
Gray, C., *A Survey of Contemporary Music*
Hadow, W. H., *Music*
Scholes, P. A., *Crotchets*
Turner, W. J., *Variations on the Theme of Music*
Wortham, H. E., *A Musical Odyssey*

1925

Blom, E., *The Stepchildren of Music*
Calvocoressi, M.-D., *Musical Taste and How to Form it*
Newman, E., *A Musical Critic's Holiday*

Toye, J. F., *The Well-Tempered Musician*

1926

Dent, E. J., *Terpander, or Music and the Future*
Howes, F., *The Borderland of Music and Psychology*
Turner, W. J., *Orpheus, or the Music of the Future*

1927

Buck, P. C., *The Scope of Music*
Newman, E., *The Unconscious Beethoven*
Sullivan, J. W. N., *Beethoven: his Spiritual Development*
Turner, W. J., *Beethoven: the Search for Reality*

1928

Blom, E., *The Limitations of Music*
Colles, H. C., *Voice and Verse: a Study in English Song*
Grace, H., *A Musician at Large*
Gray, C., *The History of Music*
Hadow, W. H., *Collected Essays*
Turner, W. J., *Musical Meanderings*

1929

Langford, S., *Musical Criticisms*

1930

Maine, B., *Reflected Music and Other Essays*

1931

Gray, C., *Sibelius*
Newman, E., *Fact and Fiction about Wagner*
Tovey, D. F., *Musical Form and Matter*
Toye, J. F., *Giuseppe Verdi: his Life and Works*

1932

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Sorabji, K. S., *Around Music*

1933

Abraham, G., *This Modern Stuff*

Evans, E., *Stravinsky: The Firebird and Petrushka*
Turner, W. J., *Facing the Music*

1934

Lambert, C., *Music Ho!*
Newman, E., *The Man Liszt*
Toye, J. F., *Rossini: A Study in Tragi-Comedy*
Turner, W. J., *Berlioz: the Man and his Work*

1935

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Tovey, D. F., *Essays in Musical Analysis* [- 1939]

1936

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1945

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Maine, B., *Maine on Music*

1946

Walker, E., *Free Thought and the Musician*

1947

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1948

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1949

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1950

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While a complete bibliography of all critics dealt with in the main body of the thesis has been provided in terms of their published books and pamphlets, extending where necessary beyond 1945, it would go far beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt to list every single article they wrote. Instead, each of the periodicals or newspapers to which a critic contributed has been listed, as far as it has been possible to ascertain, with the limitary dates of his contributions being given if they constituted a regular feature of the publication. If no date is given, then the critic's articles were scattered or occasional.

The order adopted for each author is as follows: books, articles within books, editions of books, editions of lexicographical works and periodicals, each listed chronologically, followed by newspapers and periodicals containing contributions which are listed alphabetically. Introductions and prefaces to books by other authors and contributions to dictionaries have not been listed.

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