

## SOME PROBLEMS OF THE CANADIAN COMPOSER

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I HAVE chosen to speak this evening on the subject of the Canadian composer, first because I feel composition to be of fundamental importance to the musical life of this or any other country and, secondly, because I find that the composer's problems are on the whole less understood than are those of the performer. Within the last ten or fifteen years, creative activity in Canada has grown by leaps and bounds. If we wish to foster this growth effectively we must try in some measure to appreciate the composer's point of view. And the first question is — "What is he trying to say?" To a composer of genuinely creative gifts the initial stages of writing present the least of his problems. A melodic strain, a rhythmical figure, a striking harmonic progression comes into his mind, he knows not how. Perhaps his imagination is fired by a poem, a painting or an historical event which assumes a musical form; perhaps the musical idea comes first and the outside association later. At any rate he can without great effort jot down a few sketches; he has at least a general idea of what he wants to say. The real effort comes later in giving those ideas shape and expression and the effort will be more or less proportionate to the technical skill the composer has acquired as well as to the adaptability of his technique to his creative needs.

His second problem, then, is the development of technique and style. In music, even more than in literature and the plastic arts, style and content tend to become inseparable. Broadly speaking the expansion of his ideas is likely to be matched by increased technical mastery and vice versa although one may at times lag behind the other. A certain technical groundwork is a necessary preliminary to all successful composition and the would-be composer who fears that the study of conventional harmony and counterpoint will hamper his individuality handicaps himself at the very outset. Even if he possesses a natural instinct for such things, a solid technical foundation, far from impairing his originality, will set him free to give rein to his imagination. Building on this solid foundation and on the experience of past ages, he may then proceed to develop a style

suitable to his needs and natural capacities. It may be that, having laid this foundation, he will come to realize that he hasn't very much to say after all. If he is wise he will then turn to some other activity. If he finds that he has a moderate flair, he may turn it to good commercial account by writing pot-boilers. If he lacks creative gifts but does not realize it, he is likely to go on for some time turning out technically finished but dull and conventional works and wonder why he is unappreciated. If on the other hand he possesses creative gifts and burns to give his thoughts to the world but has neglected the fundamental elements of his craft, the result is apt to be clumsy and amorphous, even though showing occasional flashes of inspiration.

Having solved these problems with some degree of success in his own eyes — and perhaps in the eyes of his immediate friends, there still remains the problem of the market — of getting his music performed, published and generally known. This is again closely bound up with the style and content of the music and its relation to the tastes and preferences of his audiences. In the concert field of today the music-loving public relies as never before on the past. The Elizabethans gathered of an evening to sing the madrigals and ballets of Wilbye, Weelkes and Morley or the airs of Dowland and Rosseter, while the churches resounded to the strains of Byrd and Orlando Gibbons. Bach and his German contemporaries supplied, week by week, cantatas and other musical fare demanded by the Lutheran liturgy, while at the same time Handel was purveying operas and oratorios for his English audiences. A little later the guests of Prince Esterhazy were being entertained by the string quartets and symphonies of the Prince's distinguished Kapellmeister Haydn: in fact, throughout the eighteenth century, audiences favoured contemporary music. Read Charles Burney's account of his continental tours in 1773 and you will find that he heard little but contemporary music except in a few churches. The nineteenth century indeed began to lean a little more on the past and even the immense personal prestige of Liszt did not quite overcome a certain amount of opposition to the *avant-garde*, yet on the whole the nineteenth century composer succeeded in winning a place in the hearts of his contemporaries; concert programmes and the repertoire of operatic houses included a substantial proportion of newly written works. What a different picture is presented by present-day musical life! With all the efforts of influential organizations, sometimes backed by wealthy foundations or generous individuals, the great bulk of music heard in our concert halls and opera houses is drawn from the past. Why?

Well in the first place, we are more historically minded than our ancestors. The well informed music-lover is more appreciative of the styles of past ages and his hearing is, on the whole, attuned to their products. The bi-centenary of Mozart's birth this year has given rise to a perfect orgy of Mozartian performances; one wonders what sixteenth century composer (and some of them were very eminent indeed) could have conceivably aroused such excitement in 1756. I am not quarreling with this and yield to no one in my admiration and affection for Wolfgang Amadeus, but merely point out that the tendency to lean on the past is growing. Even the hundredth anniversary of Beethoven's death, in 1927, was celebrated on a more moderate scale. But listening to music, whether in the concert-hall, the opera-house or at home takes time; every work new or old included in our programmes is bound to crowd out another. Are we, in our devotion to the great masters of the past, not doing an injustice to our contemporaries?

After many years of concert giving with an organization dependent on public support, I am bound to say that our audiences as a whole are definitely conservative in their tastes — more so in Toronto perhaps than in Montreal. This conservatism is by no means confined to Canada. It is discouraging at many of the Philharmonic concerts in New York to see so many people walk out before a new work is to be performed. A few years ago when I was attending the Edinburgh Festival, a newspaper conflict was raging on the subject of modern works; many were in favour of enterprising programmes but it seemed generally agreed that new works had an unfavourable effect on attendances. Later the same year in Berlin I sat in a box with the manager of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, — he was lamenting the smallness of the audience, attributing it to the modern programme.

It is, of course, a natural human instinct to like what we know although some of us are too distrustful of what we don't know. One is reminded of the story of Charles Lamb who, when asked by a friend to "come and meet Mr. So-and-So", replied: "I don't want to meet him, I don't like him." "But", said his friend, "you don't know him!" "That's why I don't like him", rejoined Lamb. I am afraid that far too many people are of his way of thinking; to be sure they may be protecting themselves from unpleasant or boring experiences but, on the other hand, they may be missing some very delightful and enriching ones. After all our best friends were at one time strangers and perhaps some of our most valued friendships were at first hard to culti-

vate.

These observations may seem trite and obvious but they deal with an attitude which must be overcome if musical composition in Canada is to progress. Whether we like it or not, our composers are almost all contemporary and most of them speak in a contemporary idiom. It would be futile for them to do otherwise. They cannot, even if they would, produce more Beethoven symphonies or Mozart operas. On the other hand we need not assume that the most adventurous are necessarily the most original or that their works will outlast those of their more conservative brethren. During the second half of the nineteenth century Liszt was regarded as the prophet of the *avant-garde* and Brahms as the hidebound reactionary. Yet of Liszt's many symphonic poems only one — "Les Préludes" — finds its way with any degree of regularity on to our programmes, whereas all the Brahms symphonies are staple articles of diet. In the end, it is the innate quality of the work that gives it endurance and quality can manifest itself in any medium.

The accusation most often levelled at the modern composer is that his music is cacophonous and ugly. Now I venture to say that no composer is deliberately ugly unless he is attempting to express an ugly emotion or pictorial idea, or unless he is intentionally employing cacophony for the sake of contrast. Beethoven, in introducing his Hymn to Joy and Human Brotherhood, begins with a fortissimo chord that includes every note of the harmonic minor scale: the effect does not startle our audiences as it doubtless did his but it is still arresting enough and acts as a high-light to what follows. However, this is admittedly a special instance and hardly analogous to the practice of the present-day composer who deliberately discards all those key-relationships that are the foundation of the great classics. Naturally most people find this bewildering and perhaps even repulsive. We may or may not like the products of the twelve-tone system of Schönberg and his followers; we may or may not approve of Stravinsky's frequent subordination of all other musical elements to that of rhythm; we may or may not see eye to eye with Hindesmith's theories on "Gebrauchsmusik" (functional music); we may be either attracted or repelled by the dry, unemotional qualities of Eric Satie. But at least we should try to approach them on their own ground — try to see some logic in their methods before reproaching them for failing to please and convince us. To understand all is not necessarily to love all, but it is at least a necessary preliminary to forming sound judgments.



Up to now I have been speaking for the most part of modern music in general rather than of Canadian music in particular. Our musical background is European rather than native, and it so happens that Canada's cultural coming-of-age is taking place in a period of change and experimentation in music. Yet the music offered by our composers is by no means as novel as many people imagine. In his stimulating book "Music Ho!", the late Constant Lambert points out that most of the experiments that form the basis of the new music were carried out before the first World War. (As his book first appeared in 1933, the expressions "pre-war" and "post-war" refer to the war of 1914-18.) Says Mr. Lambert:

"To the seeker after the new, or the sensational, to those who expect a sinister *frisson* from modern music, it is my melancholy duty to point out that all the bomb throwing and guillotining has already taken place. If by the word "advanced" we mean art that departs as far as possible from the classical and conventional norm, then we must admit that pre-war music was considerably more advanced (if that is any recommendation) than the music of our own days. Schönberg's "Erwartung", for example, still the most sensational essay in modern music from the point of view of pure strangeness of sound, was actually finished in 1909. If your ear can assimilate and tolerate the music written in 1913 and earlier, then there is nothing in post-war music that can conceivably give you an aural shock, though the illogicality of some of the present-day pastiches may give you a "rare turn" comparable to the sudden stopping of a life in transit." But, Mr. Lambert goes on to say, the interruption of the war as well as other causes delayed in England the knowledge of many of these works; therefore, he says, "there is a large mass of the public that has only become modern-music conscious since the war, and they are hardly to be blamed if they lump the two periods together as "modern music." And in his preface to the 1948 edition, Mr. Lambert says of his book that "though a period piece, it still, as far as I can judge, presents the public with the problems that face the contemporary composer."

In Canada, broadly speaking, such knowledge has been delayed still longer; only in the last ten or twelve years has music of this type begun to attract the attention of the average music

lover and even many a professional musician is strangely ignorant of its various trends. The Canadian works which scandalize so many are therefore much less "advanced" than they seem; whether admired or not, they do not startle European audiences. Our audiences, I am afraid, have not yet learned to discriminate; the more conservative reject well constructed and expertly written contemporary works on the ground of "ugliness" while I am afraid some of the *avant-garde* accept what a more critical listener would dismiss as mere musical doodling. One of the chief obstacles to appreciation is the single performance: so many works are played once and laid aside indefinitely. I well remember the lady who said to me, after I had conducted a new work: "Please don't play that thing again or I might get to like it — and I do hate it so!" Nowadays so much new music is pressing for attention and there is so little public demand for it that the butter must be spread very thinly: a single performance of a new and abstruse work can bewilder even the most astute critic. The experiment might be occasionally tried of presenting a new work twice on the same programme; such an event would, I fear, have to be heavily subsidized because of its effect on the box-office, but it would be worth trying. Many a Canadian work of significance could be played twice in the time allotted to, say, the thousand and nth performance of Tchaikovsky's B flat minor concerto.

The gramophone record has presented us with unprecedented opportunities for repeated hearings of almost any music we can spare the time to hear. It is an even more important factor than radio in broadening public appreciation for the best in music; almost anyone can, if he will, become thoroughly familiar, through frequent repetition, with the standard or lesser-known classics and even with a good deal of contemporary music. In this field however, the Canadian composer suffers from especial handicaps. His name is not widely known outside of his own country; even within it, where performances are bound to be comparatively few, all the valiant efforts of the CBC and others on his behalf have succeeded in publicizing him only to a very limited extent. The larger recording companies therefore do not find him commercially profitable and we have practically no support from governmental or private sources such as many other countries enjoy, to redress the balance. Consequently, regularly marketed recordings of extended works by Canadian composers could almost be counted on the fingers of one hand.\*

\*For a useful list of recorded Canadian music (i.e., composed or performed by Canadians) see the bulletin of the Canadian Library Association for April, 1956.

The International Service of the CBC has, indeed, been responsible for recording a considerable number of Canadian works and fulfils in this respect a function similar to that of the British Council in Great Britain. But these recordings are made almost exclusively for distribution abroad through our embassies and other agencies and are not suitable in Canada through the regular channels and by the ordinary buyer. Thus arises the paradoxical situation where Canadians may well know less of the music of their own composers than do people of other lands. I am bound to add however that the CBC itself makes frequent use of the recordings of its International Service, whereas some of those sent abroad seem to have lain neglected in the office quarters of our representatives. Recently-established Canadian companies, such as Beaver and Hallmark, have rendered a most valuable service in recording Canadian performing artists; so far as our composers are concerned, Hallmark has at least tried out the temperature of the water, so to speak, by putting in a toe or two, but financial restrictions have not allowed its directors to venture far.

I stress the importance of the recording problem for the reason I have given — that it facilitates repeated hearings which in turn facilitate the formation of sound judgments. I shall return to this point but, for the moment, let us turn again to the concert field.

Apart altogether from audience resistance, several factors little known to the average person tend to hinder the presentation of new works. Costs of rehearsal time, for instance, have in our generation increased to an unprecedented extent, and a new orchestral work — even if of moderate difficulty — takes more rehearsal time than does one familiar to the performers. Moreover in most cases (especially in Canada) it has to be read from manuscript and sometimes the manuscript is none too clear. First performances also present the hazard of possible mistakes in the parts; correcting these makes further inroads on rehearsal time. Finally, the modern composer, relying on the skill of the modern performer, often writes passages of extreme difficulty which can be executed only after much practice. Nor is resistance to new works confined to audiences; there are usually at least some members of an orchestra or choir whose enthusiasm is difficult to arouse. They will even feel resentful if an inexperienced composer presents them with passages that "lie" badly for their instrument. All this causes delay and costs money. On the other hand a new work, if reasonably well written, offers a challenge which many performers are eager to

meet and, as I have said, there is always at least a minority among the audience to welcome novelties. Thus the pros and cons achieve some kind of a balance and the work gets done.

Meanwhile, what of the composer himself? What is his reward? Unless he has a flair for writing popular song-hits or musical revues, he cannot expect any great financial return and even in these fields success is hedged about with difficulties. The vogue of any popular song is generally very short-lived and calls for much so-called "plugging." Powerful interests outside this country are active in this operation and any response Canada can give is bound to be feeble in comparison. You may say our composer should work through an American or English publisher, and indeed he often does or tries to do so. But the man on the spot has a great advantage, especially if he has already won some measure of success. As for the big musical show, even if we produced another Rodgers and Hammerstein, (and there is no fundamental reason why we should not) what chance would they stand in Canada of having their work staged in the expensive and elaborate fashion demanded by present day audiences?

Two new possible sources of substantial income have in our day presented themselves to the Canadian composer, namely film music and background music for radio and television shows. I say "substantial" only in relation to the income of the more serious composer; a successful lawyer or stockbroker would probably regard it as a miserable pittance. In both cases the composers in question rely to a great extent on publicly subsidised bodies — the National Film Board and the CBC. The former has on its regular staff some three or four composers and occasionally commissions background music from others. The CBC engages composers to provide background music as occasion offers and, in some cases, this may be fairly frequently. Yet even so successful a man in this field as Lucio Agostini has recently gone to Hollywood. In any case the number of lucrative openings for writers of background music in this country is bound to be small and its highly specialized technique takes time to acquire.

Another field to which the Canadian composer may look for at least a moderate return is that of short choral works for churches, schools and competitive festivals. Even here he is limited by the provision of our Copyright Law which prohibits the collection of performing fees from churches and educational institutions. However, if he writes well, he stands a pretty good chance of finding a publisher and, if he is lucky, of collecting something worthwhile in royalties. It is not likely that, if we had a chance

of looking over his income tax returns, we would be impressed by the amounts recorded, but at least it is something. Sales of drawing-room songs — once so lucrative — have, of course, dropped almost out of sight since music in the home became largely a matter of twisting knobs: in fact very few such works are published nowadays.

But if financial returns are meagre in the case of the composer of light music, they are still more so in the field of serious and extended compositions. I know of no composer in Canada who makes his entire living, or even a substantial part of his income, by writing music of this type. He is not likely to get his extended works published; look through Helmut Kallmann's Catalogue of Canadian Composers published a few years ago and you will see that the vast majority of published works are songs, short piano and violin pieces and choral numbers for church or school use. Works for orchestra and chamber groups are almost all in manuscript — which is not surprising in view of the great expense involved in printing them — and whatever monetary return they bring to the composer consists almost entirely of performing fees collected by the Composers, Authors and Publishers Association or by BMI Canada. Naturally any work not performed brings in no return of this nature unless it has been commissioned, which happens only occasionally and frequently leads to but one performance. However, as the Canadian poet John Reeves says, "somehow or other people go on creating things" and of late years the output in Canada has been surprisingly large. Composers making their living by teaching and other forms of musical activity or even — as in the case of one of our most gifted composers — by driving taxicabs and the drudgery of music-copying — have enough faith in themselves to continue writing in the hope that their work will be eventually recognized. Lack of sufficient time to develop their powers is of course a fearful handicap; I fancy they would all agree that, given a reasonable amount of leisure, they would write better. But to what extent are they writing, or can they be expected to write music recognizably Canadian?

A few minutes ago I remarked that, in music more than in most of the arts, style and content tend to become inseparable. A novel may be regarded as distinctively Canadian irrespective of its style on the strength of its dealing with a typically Canadian milieu; a landscape painter can, in the length and breadth of Canada, find countless subjects recognizably Canadian, however individual his interpretation of them. But in music the subject does not in itself give any local or national flavour to the work.

A composer may entitle a piece "Sunset on the St. Lawrence", "Noon on the Prairies" or "Evening in the Rockies" without revealing any national traits in the music itself. On the other hand, when Borodin writes his picturesque sketch "On the Steppes of Central Asia", although — apart from the suggestion of caravans — he might equally well have been setting his scene in Saskatchewan, the music is unmistakably Russian. When Wagner opens "Das Rheingold" in the depths of the Rhine we might perhaps guess that he is trying to evoke the picture of a mighty river though it might equally well be the St. Lawrence or the MacKenzie; we should however be aware of the Germanic quality of the music. I have intentionally refrained from taking as my examples works strongly influenced by national folk-songs or the rhythms of national dances, to which so much Spanish, Czech and Hungarian music owes its distinctive flavour. How can we in Canada expect to develop a similarly national style based on folk material? Even that of French Canada — the most extensive and the best preserved that we have — is largely European in origin, although the words have in some cases been adapted to the Canadian scene. Many works by both French and English speaking Canadians based on this material have been written and performed, yet collectors like the indefatigable Marius Barbeau express disappointment that so little use is made of them and that dust is gathering on the recordings of several thousand songs lying in the National Museum. Doubtless other collectors like Helen Creighton and Louise Manny have felt similarly disappointed. Most of our younger composers seem indisposed to use folk material — some of them maintaining that it has already served its purpose — and not a few able critics question its suitability for thematic use in symphonic music. It is true that one often finds a strong national flavour in the work of composers who rarely if ever make use of folk-songs: Sibelius, for instance, seems to us typically Finnish and to his fellow-countrymen he almost embodies Finland. Elgar's music, while borrowing German symphonic technique, could not be anything but English. In point of fact the great composers of any country contribute as much to giving it a national character as does its folk-song. Canada is rapidly maturing as a nation but innumerable elements of her population have yet to be completely assimilated. Perhaps the time is not far distant when a Canadian Sibelius or Elgar will give musical expression to all that we feel about our country; in doing so he will probably exhibit national traits almost unconsciously and his music will by its innate quality transcend national boundaries.

In the meantime, let our composers concern themselves with simply writing the best music they can. The best of it is already very good, but I would hesitate to call much of it typically Canadian, nor do its composers with a few exceptions, particularly wish it to be so.

The onus of responsibility for producing a great body of musical literature does not rest on the shoulders of the composer alone; it must find a receptive audience. I have pointed out that our concert-going and radio-listening public is reluctant to accept the unfamiliar. That is of course true to a large extent in other countries but in most cases to a lesser degree. It is asking too much of our audiences to accept, from patriotic motives, a great deal of music they dislike, but if the old is judiciously mixed with the new in our programmes they can at least be tolerant and patient; in the end dislike may well change to respect and affection. Music is meant to be enjoyed and to inspire; if it does neither, it fails of its purpose and the completely uncompromising composer is likely to suffer neglect, although a great personality may in the end fight his way through. To achieve complete rapport between composer and audience concessions must at times be made by both. The composer must have some audience in mind; failing to persuade his own contemporaries, he may console himself by reflecting that future generations will hail him as a master. But he can be far from certain of this, for the music of the past that survives (except on library shelves) bears much the same proportion to what has become submerged as does the portion of an iceberg that is seen above the sea. Some composers are perhaps a little too concerned about preserving their artistic integrity, and their conscientiousness does them credit; if their creative gifts and technique match their self-confidence they are likely to be justified sooner or later. If not, they will almost inevitably go to swell the ranks of the forgotten. Nor does an occasional compromise necessarily affect a man's finer works. Even Beethoven wrote what he must have recognized as mere pot-boilers without sacrificing the quality of his masterpieces.

To our audiences in Canada I would say: Approach a new work in a receptive mood — if possible with eager anticipation, but at all events with an unprejudiced mind. The composer has probably laboured hard to give you his message and if he speaks a language unfamiliar to you, at least give him your full attention and perhaps in the end you will discern something of what he has to say. His work may or may not be important, but give him the benefit of the doubt and in the end you may



well be surprised and delighted. Of one thing you may be sure: music as we know it is a comparatively young art and still holds undreamed-of future possibilities. This or that composer, having discerned this, may stumble in his efforts to open up new paths, and the new paths may, even at that, turn out to be blind alleys. But never forget that it depends on you as well as on him whether or not Canada expresses herself worthily in music.

In addition to more receptive audiences and performers able and willing to present his music, the Canadian composer usually needs more concrete assistance. Sympathy with his efforts will not pay the rather formidable costs of copying scores and parts or of having them reproduced by photographic and similar processes. No publisher however well-wishing can afford to take more than limited financial risks — and in the case of extended orchestral works the risk is considerable. So far as I know, no symphony or symphonic poem by a Canadian has ever been printed. Sympathy will not make scores accessible to conductors and other possible performers nor provide funds to ensure that more Canadian music will be recorded. Sympathy will not send the music abroad, where the potential market is so much more extensive than here. All these things call for a measure of organization and in this matter not a little has been accomplished since the end of the last war. In forming the Canadian League of Composers some years ago a group of composers themselves took an important step in the right direction. In the last two years they have received valuable help from a group composed chiefly of laymen (Canadian Music Associates) and are able to present each season several programmes of works by their members. Through the efforts of the Canadian Music Council the Department of External Affairs has been induced to photostat and send abroad a number of Canadian works for a string or chamber orchestra, thus to some small extent supplementing the recordings of the CBC's International Service. Much attention was aroused in the United States a few years ago by a concert of Canadian works given in Carnegie Hall, New York, under Leopold Stokowski. It naturally sustained a considerable financial loss which was met by Broadcast Music Incorporated—usually known as BMI. Previous to this, the Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada (CAPAC) had underwritten a similar concert in Toronto under my direction; more recently the same organization, co-operating with our zealous Ambassador to France, M. Désy, and the French National Radio, arranged a Canadian orchestral concert which took place in Paris last January. Most helpful of all, of course, has been the

CBC, part of whose regular policy is to present as many Canadian works as can be fitted into its schedule. A symposium comprising several concerts of Canadian music was organized and carried out some years ago in Vancouver by the British Columbia Arts Council. I mention these instances as indicating that our composers are not by any means entirely neglected. But much more remains to be done and we look forward eagerly to the establishment by the Canadian Government of a Canada Council to operate on lines suggested in the Massey Report of 1950. Meanwhile voluntary bodies such as the Canadian Music Council, severely handicapped by lack of funds and depending on voluntary effort, do what little they can. In an age when the government of practically every civilized country is concerned with disseminating and publicizing its nation's cultural wares, we still lag woefully behind. We are losing more than we realize. Apart from all other considerations, I am convinced that music can be an important factor in promoting world peace; after singing with a man you are less likely than before to quarrel with him.

I would not suggest that it is our patriotic duty to love the music written by our composers; such an attitude would spell defeat in advance. Music is neither better nor worse for being written by Canadians: it should be and in the end will be, judged on its merits. We in Canada are too apt to boast of our vast natural resources; after all it is by sheer luck that we have fallen heir to them. We can and do take legitimate pride in the energy, skill and effort put into their development. In the realm of the Fine Arts, however, we are apt to suffer from a national inferiority complex: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" In the case of music as in many other lines of activity, this attitude has led to our losing some of our most promising men and women to other countries. Let us not be over-boastful of what our composers have done; no one in his senses would dream of comparing it with the product of many more mature lands. But we are already making our contribution to the musical literature of the world. Let us recognize its right to be heard and encourage it by a judicious measure of propaganda, using the word in its best sense. Many a Canadian performer has proved his worth at home and abroad: the best are recognized as second to none. Musical composition, though less widely recognized, is in the long run more important; through our creative output we shall be ultimately judged as a musical nation. Perhaps we shall succeed in winning an important place in the musical world; perhaps we shall fail. No amount of effort will produce a great composer;

“the wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth”. But if our composers fail, let it not be through indifference and neglect on our part.