University Music Class Room,

EDINBURGH.

FOUR HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

CONCERT II.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1902.

A Recital of British-Irish Harpsichord and Pianoforte Music (from the 16th to the present century).

Performer:—Miss FANNY DAVIES.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME.

A two-hours' recital can at best only indicate the main features of the achievements and vicissitudes of a period of more than three hundred years, even if the subject, as in the present case, is limited to one branch of the musical art, and that branch has been so intermittently and remissly cultivated as clavier music in Great Britain and Ireland. But for all its slightness such a sketch can be made not only interesting and entertaining, but also in the best sense informing and enjoyable. Although the student of history may regret the absence from the programme of some composers, he is not likely to object to the presence of any, unless it be among those of the still living whose claims to a place in history have not yet been made good, or at least have not yet been judged by posterity.

The greatest period of English clavier music was undoubtedly that of the time of Elizabeth and James I., in the programme called the first period. Then existed what has not existed again in these islands—a numerous and prolific school, which, by its originality and vitality, influenced the development of this branch of the art on the Continent, more especially in the Netherlands and Germany. In William Byrd we have the most perfect and universal genius of the golden age of English music, in John Bull the most brilliant virtuoso, and in Orlando Gibbons the last of the great masters of that great epoch. The speciality of these composers was, in instrumental music, the variation form, the varying of popular songs and dances. We have to note further about this school, that it enormously widened the technique and enriched the peculiar clavier language, indeed, originated a new clavier style, a style truly adapted to the nature of the instrument, and distinguished by lightness of treatment,

and wealth of varied and interesting figure. The air of modernness about many of these early compositions is truly surprising.

Subsequent to this period we meet only with solitary individuals who produce notable clavier music; and they, with one exception, or perhaps two, cultivated this branch subordinately, and even merely incidentally, exercising no influence, and enjoying no reputation beyond their own country. The amiable, solid John Blow, of the second half of the 17th century, wrote chiefly and best for voices; his younger contemporary, Henry Purcell, the most vigorous and exuberant genius among the English musicians of modern times, although throwing off now and then excellent things for the clavier, gave his main strength to the theatre and the cathedral; the pleasing and sometimes happily inspired, but by no means grandly magisterial, James Nares, shows in his musical output less disproportion than usual between the quantity of harpsichord and vocal compositions; and Thomas Augustine Arne, distinguished above all by natural ease and tunefulness, had an absorbing preference for the stage. In fact, it is not till we come, early in the 18th century, to the Irishman John Field, that we meet in the post-Jacobean times with a clavier composer pure and simple, and one of European fame and influence in pianoforte playing and composition. In addition to this supreme distinction, Field has the glory of being the creator of the nocturne, a creation characteristic of the most valuable artistic qualities of the master. Next to him, the delicate-fibred Sterndale Bennett—whom Schumann described as "a poetic beautiful soul," and "an angel of a musician"—proved himself the most original and fertile producer of pianoforte music. In more recent times the British and Irish composers have been too busy with chorus and orchestra, in cantata, oratorio, opera, and symphony, to find leisure to occupy themselves with the poor and humble pianoforte. Notwithstanding this general neglect of the clavier by the composers in these parts, there exists, however, a great deal more of interesting, pleasing, and sterling music of this sort than most people are aware of. In fact, the hearers of the music enumerated in the accompanying programme will very probably come to the conclusion that if the British composers have neglected the clavier, the British public have still more neglected their composers for the clavier.

Programme.

First Period :—

WILLIAM BYRD (b. about 1538, d. 1623) :—

Pavana, "The Earle of Salisbury."

JOHN BULL (b. about 1563, d. 1628) :—

"The King's Hunt."

ORLANDO GIBBONS (b. 1583, d. 1625) :—

Galiardo in C major.

Second Period :—

JOHN BLOW (b. 1648, d. 1708) :—

Chacone in G minor.

HENRY PURCELL (b. 1658, d. 1695) :—

(*a*) Toccata in A major.
(*b*) Ground in C minor.

Third Period :—

JAMES NARES (b. 1715, d. 1783) :—

Two movements from the Sonata in B flat major.

(*a*) Larghetto.
(*b*) Allegro.

THOMAS AUGUSTINE ARNE (b. 1710, d. 1778) :—

Sonata in B flat major.

(*a*) Introduction.
(*b*) Gavotta.

Fourth Period :—

JOHN FIELD (b. 1782, d. 1837) :—

Nocturne in A major.

Fifth Period :—

WILLIAM STERNDALE BENNETT (b. 1816, d. 1875) :—

(*a*) Capriccio in A minor, No. 2 of Op. 28.
(*b*) "The Lake" and "The Fountain," Nos. 1 and 3 of "Three Musical Sketches," Op. 10.

Sixth Period :—

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL MACKENZIE (b. 1847) :—

"Reminiscence," No. 3, of Op. 20, "Six Pieces."

CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD (b. 1852) :—

Scherzo (MS.).

S. COLERIDGE-TAYLOR :—

Characteristic Piece.

EDWARD WILLIAM ELGAR (b. 1857) :—

Concert Allegro (written for and dedicated to Fanny Davies).

FREDERIC H. COWEN (b. 1852) :—

Scherzo.

DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY :—

Andante.

PERCY PITT :—

Etude mignonne.

NORMAN O'NEILL :—

Allegretto grazioso.

ARTHUR SOMERVELL :—

Concert Study (dedicated to Fanny Davies).

DATES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE FOUR HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

November 12, 1902.—"A Recital of French Violin Music, from Senaillé to Rode, interspersed with French Chansons." (Mr MAURICE SONS, Violinist, Miss MARION RICHARDSON, Vocalist, and Mr A. SCOTT JUPP, Accompanist.)

December 10, 1902.—"A Recital of British-Irish Harpsichord and Pianoforte Music." (Miss FANNY DAVIES, Pianist.)

January 14, 1903.—"A Recital of Vocal Solo and Quartet Music, with and without Pianoforte Accompaniment." (The Miss MARIE FILLUNGER VOCAL QUARTET.)

February 25, 1903.—"A Recital of Chamber Music for Pianoforte and Bowed and Wind Instruments."

FREDERICK NIECKS,
Reid Professor of Music.