

and congregations. Most of this music can be used both for recital purposes and for voluntaries, ingoing and outgoing.

An admirable introduction to this early organ music is the 'Forerunners of Bach: Hofhaimer to Du Mage', one of the volumes in Joseph Bonnet's 'Historical Organ-Recitals', published in the Schirmer Edition. The volume has been on sale in this country for several years; but judging by the recital programmes printed in this paper, most organists are unaware of its existence. The object of this short article is to draw attention to some of the fine pieces of music contained in the volume. Most organists have a copy of the admirable little booklet 'The Growth of Organ Music', by Dr. C. F. Waters, published by *Musical Opinion*; but they may have found some difficulty in obtaining the 'Alte Meister' volume to which Dr. Waters frequently refers in his chapter on The Establishment of Basic Forms. The 'Forerunners of Bach' makes a very good substitute, as it contains pieces by most of the composers mentioned by Dr. Waters.

The vitality and exuberance of the Renaissance breathes through the Canzona by Andrea Gabrieli, a work that builds up a brilliant climax, to which all the reeds can add their glory. Incidentally, the theme of this Canzona was later used by Bach for his E major ('Saints in Glory') Fugue in Book 2 of the Forty-Eight.

The Canzona is followed by a smoothly flowing Ricercare by Palestrina that would make an ideal voluntary for a Lenten service.

One of the most common features in the music of the seventeenth century was the 'Echo'. Purcell's music contains many examples. In the volume under discussion there is a Fantasia in Echo style by Sweelinck.

This is followed by a Prelude on the Dutch Chorale, 'Laet ons met herten Reijne' by John Bull, Bonnet saying that it is probably one of the first pieces of English organ music to contain indications for registration.

Bach often expresses the sufferings of Christ by chromatic progressions, and in this he was foreshadowed by Samuel Scheidt in his Chorale Prelude on 'As Jesus stood beside the Cross'.

The Salve Regina by Peter Cornet consists of five short movements that were originally used in the

performance of that Latin hymn, the organ playing the odd-numbered verses and the choir singing the even-numbered verses.

Buxtehude is represented by a Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne and the Chorale Prelude, 'From God I will not return'. It is interesting to compare the passage-work of the Prelude with that in Bach's Fugue in D, the last part of the Prelude being very similar to that before the last entry of the fugue-subject in the Fugue in D. The whole work requires some neat and agile pedalling. The Chorale Prelude will provide practice in reading from the alto clef, the left-hand part being written in this clef.

The Toccata in C minor by Muffat consists of five short, contrasted sections. The first is a poignant adagio, the second a rather free-and-easy fugue, the third a quiet movement that breathes an air of mysticism, the fourth a short double-fugue, and the last a high-spirited six-eight movement that works up to a climax over a pedal-point.

The Chorale Prelude 'From Heaven above to earth I come' by Pachelbel consists of a delightful trio, the chorale being in the pedals, and a vigorous fugal movement that breaks out into rushing semi-quaver passages suggesting the flight of the Heavenly Host.

'The Plein Jesu', by Marchand, requires double-pedalling.

An Offerte on 'Vive le Roy' by André Raison opens with a massive Handelian Adagio that contains some powerful suspensions. The following Allegretto requires some neat finger-work for its ornaments.

There is not sufficient space to comment on all the pieces in the book, but perhaps enough has been said to persuade readers to try the pieces for themselves. The volume contains a comprehensive selection of pre-Bach organ music; pieces by the Italians Gabrieli and Frescobaldi, the Spaniard Cabezón, the North Germans Buxtehude and Scheidt, the South Germans Muffat and Pachelbel, the Belgian Peter Cornet, the Frenchmen Marchand, Raison, de Grigny, Clérambault and Du Mage, and the Englishmen, John Bull and Henry Purcell. The men whom Parry described as 'an exceptionally high-spirited group of composers' were something more than mere forerunners of Bach; they were the creators of significant and beautiful music that should find a home in our churches.

G. D. CUNNINGHAM: A PUPIL'S TRIBUTE

ONE of the most striking things about an organ lesson with 'G. D.' was the way in which he tackled the music as though he were discovering it for the first time. Though he had hundreds of pupils there was no sign of weariness at the repetition of the same remarks about the same pieces; in fact, he seemed to grow more enthusiastic each week.

I remember well my first lesson. I had practised the Bach Passacaglia and worked it up to a pitch at which I thought nobody could find fault. Nor did G. D. find fault—he just went through it carefully, explained little points, clarified difficulties and opened up a world of new possibilities, making the work into an adventure of endless discovery. I do not remember hearing G. D. destructively critical of anything. He was always ready with creative suggestions, and one of the good habits he encouraged in pupils was that of being constructive in criticism. Only dogmatic in matters concerning absolute accuracy of notes, he taught pupils to think for themselves and respected a point of view which bore the stamp of thoughtful care. Often he would say of a passage, 'I phrase it like this, but don't you do it that way just because I do: my

way is no better than any other.' Perhaps he was right, but such modesty in a great person made a deep impression.

G. D. really enjoyed teaching, and his pupils were a stimulus to him. I shall not forget his excitement at the discovery of some new way of phrasing or fingering a passage, and I was astonished when he found he liked my fingering of a passage better than his own—and noted it down to put it in his own copy! He was always learning and an unquenchable thirst for discovery made him the finest of teachers. His principles were simple: absolute accuracy, thoughtful, consistent phrasing, clear registration and the most faithful respect for the composer's intentions. Having secured all this his next thought was for his audience. G. D. was well aware that the average music-lover listening to a complex work of Bach's could not possibly follow the work like the player with a copy in front of him and years of practice behind him. So he adjusted his tempi and stated his phrases in such a way that the music was clear and intelligible in all its aspects. No wonder then that he was one of the most widely acclaimed organists of his time.

The practical and thorough approach in G. D.'s teaching equipped pupils to be teachers as well as organists. I often wonder what his many admirers could have thought had they known the simplicity which lay behind that masterly playing. G. D. had a reason for everything that he did based on sound, logical thought, and he spent hours practising at tiny

points which an average organist passed over as unimportant.

Once I played a wrong pedal note in Bach's C major Toccata. 'Don't worry,' he said, 'I was making that mistake before you were born.'

ALEC WYTON.

MISCELLANEOUS

Reginald Whitworth's 'The Electric Organ'

Continuing the reprinting of books lost when their stock was destroyed in 1940, *Musical Opinion* now give us the third edition of this capital book. It is the second issue of the second, with some pages of addenda and a new index. My own copy of the first has been gathering dust these nine years in a furniture repository, together with most of my little library, and to see this is like renewing acquaintance with an old friend. I would, if anything, welcome it even more than I did in the *Musical Times* review of February 1931. It seems that the plates have disappeared, and the specifications of electric organs are different; on the other hand, some of the diagrams are new, and the text has lost none of its interest. The book is not only a study of the uses of electricity in organ-building, but, incidentally, a review of the changes that have been brought about in the craft by this convenient but sometimes too tempting medium. Organists will browse long on it, and many others less familiar with our instrument will surely find much to wonder at and admire (30s.).

A. F.

Mr. W. H. Whitehall's Recitals

Playing on the Father Willis organ in St. Dunstan's Church, Liverpool, Mr. W. H. Whitehall has recently given a series of three recitals of music by early German, French, Dutch and Spanish masters, with some examples from the works of J. S. Bach. His programmes were of absorbing interest, and his attempts to perform the music in the style of its period were for the most part successful. The organ is a typical Willis three-manual of the eighties with the usual unenclosed choir, and a fairly complete range of mutations on the great, providing the player with enough stops of a kind suited to old music in these departments at least—the swell contains nothing beyond a fifteenth in this direction, there being no mixture or twelfth. Mr. Whitehall's use of the material available was extremely skilful, and his perception of the musical style of such composers as Cabezón, Heredia and Cabanilles among the Spaniards and Gabrieli and Le Bègue of Italy and France respectively, was beautifully evident in his careful and sympathetic performance. With the pre-Bach Germans he was less successful, treating Buxtehude (*Wie schön leuchtet* and Toccata in D minor) in altogether too academic and restrained a manner for the essential vigour and extrovert quality of this great master's style to penetrate to the listener's consciousness; and much the same criticism must be levelled against his treatment of Sweelinck's rather rambling Chromatic Fantasia, though he dealt faithfully with the latter's 'Echo' Fantasia.

It may be questioned if it was wise to include so many Bach pieces in his programmes, however desirous Mr. Whitehall may have been to show how the greater man developed from his predecessors. Had he any authority for giving us the pedal ostinato in *In dir ist Freud* on stops of eight-foot pitch? The result was to deprive this majestic prelude of most of its points. In *O Lamm Gottes unschuldig* (the three-verse setting from the Eighteen Chorales), the pedal chorale of the third verse was played simply as a bass to the manuals—surely a complete misunder-

standing of Bach's evident intentions. Even if the St. Dunstan's pedal reed was too 'snorty' for Mr. Whitehall's purpose, some way of making the pedal tell out in contrast to the manuals was surely to be found; and the climactic chromatic chords near the end quite failed to make any effect at all. In the G major prelude and fugue (that with the 'My Spirit was in heaviness' theme) Mr. Whitehall was so anxious to avoid all suspicion of being a virtuoso that the result was almost characterless, and once again, the harmonic climaxes were completely ineffective. Did Bach really mean his music to sound like this? All the evidence points in another direction.

These criticisms apart, however, tribute must be paid to Mr. Whitehall for his courageous evocation of the spirit of the pre-Bach writers, in which otherworldliness and un-sophistication was the chief impression, together with clarity of outline and beautifully-modelled decoration and ornamentation. The player eschewed reed tone almost entirely (but were not the reeds among the most important stops of baroque organs?) and the swell pedal was also left severely alone. This latter fact brought out the fine, clean lines of the organ and emphasized the beauty of its static tonality. Mr. Whitehall's enterprise and scholarly approach to a difficult period, so entirely alien to the romantic organ of the nineteenth century, put his hearers deeply in his debt. Unfortunately those hearers were abominably few, only a handful of Liverpool's hundreds of organists and organ-lovers turning up to make the acquaintance of some of the most significant music in the repertory of their instrument. Those who stayed away will perhaps not be aware of what they missed, but it seems a pity that so much fine work on Mr. Whitehall's part should be so ill-rewarded.

S. DE B. T.

The G. D. Cunningham Memorial Fund

A tablet is to be erected as a memorial to Dr. Cunningham in the Birmingham Town Hall and a prize fund has been established for the encouragement of young musicians. This project provides an opportunity for all his admirers to pay tribute to this fine organist's memory in a practical fashion. Contributions should be sent to 'The G. D. Cunningham Memorial Fund', The Lord Mayor's Parlour, The Council House, Birmingham 1.

The London Society of Organists opened its autumn session on October 2 with a 'President's evening' arranged by the President, Mr. R. Silby Lewis, at St. George's (Hanover Square) Institute. There was a record attendance of over two hundred members and their friends.

The autumn meeting of the Hymn Tune Association was held on October 5 at King's College, Strand. The Rev. R. L. Shields presided. Membership of the Association has increased to 3,670. Mr. Herbert Westerby is the honorary secretary.

At the re-opening of the organ in St. Barnabas's Church, Pimlico, on September 16, Mr. Allan Brown gave a recital. His programme included works by Bach, Handel, Franck and Wolstenholme.