

instruction resembles that of other English teachers in being concerned largely with touch and relaxation. Five of the nine chapters of this book deal principally with touch and physical/mental preparation, with strong insistence on the mental act. The gymnastics of virtuosity and such elements of playing and interpreting as rhythm, dynamic, tone gradation, phrasing, accentuation, the percussive and evanescent aspects of sound, are either only touched on or omitted, and certain problems which evidently lie beyond the scope of this book are provided with no other signpost than that the reader should seek expert guidance. But whose? Mr. Hope's special instruction seems to be aimed at the advanced student who is on the brink of public concert work (the book would also be useful for the serious amateur) and to be designed as a corrective. His able analysis of common faults (for which antidotes are suggested) and his repeated insistence on conscious preparation and conscious control imply that the diseases of stiffness and vagueness in the native pianist are still rampant. But unfortunately his constructive and encouraging advice is hampered by a circumlocutory and repetitive style and by the perpetuation of such well-known ambiguities as 'amount of tone' and 'tone colour.' Rubato is poorly defined. Mr. Hope is much happier in illustrating and in giving practical advice than in scientific definition: and the book has a particular value in that it stimulates the reader to think for himself.

Trevor Fisher

LETTER

THE EDITOR *TEMPO*

21st September, 1956.

SIR,

Recently a composer was asked to write a new work for Military Band: his answer was brief—which one?

Colonel Miller's excellent article in *Tempo* 40 brings this question into relief and it would seem opportune to take stock of the instrumentation of our military bands in relation to other countries.

There is no international pattern for the constitution of a band as there is for the symphony orchestra, and this would seem a logical step to take now that international pitch has been established.

The British military band slowly evolved for the dual purpose of marching and concert performance, with marching as the primary

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consideration. This has resulted in a hotch-potch of instrumentation incomplete in almost every family, with a preponderance of brass.

On visits to continental military band festivals, in company with Colonel Miller, it was possible to study the sound quality of *Musique de la Garde Republicaine*, *Les Guides Belges* and other famous bands from Holland, Italy, Spain and Luxembourg. At that time it seemed to me that our own Grenadier Guards Band was limited in tone colour by instrumentation. We lacked a complete family of Clarinets from high *Ab* to contra bass, the family of flügels and the complete family of Saxophones. A string bass was used, but only one.

To-day our military bands are even more restricted in tone colour, seldom possessing even one bassoon and often sadly lacking in oboes, flutes and a complete quartet of horns. Rarely do we hear the bass clarinet and never the alto. The complement remains the same, with the brass even more dominant.

The limitations dictated by necessity in the past—cost of instruments, shortage of certain players—have somehow been twisted into virtues.

When discussing this with an American friend, an authority on wind bands, Dr. W. Revelli, of Michigan University, it was interesting to hear the American wind band is very strongly influenced by the Continent. For concert performances his own band often has 12 flutes, 5 oboes, 1 cor anglais, 30 *Bb* clarinets, 1 *Eb* clarinet, 4 bassoons, 6 alto clarinets, 4 bass clarinets, 2 contra bass clarinets in *Eb* and 2 contra bass clarinets in *Bb*, (67) woodwind in all, with a brass section of 46 players in conventional proportions. The same band on the march or "on the grid" as he called it, is altered to less bass and more saxophone in the woodwind, and more bass in the brass and less trumpet. Marching music is specially arranged and full consideration is given to the medium for which it is to be used.

This need not be the solution to the instrumentation of our military bands, but I feel the composer who was asked to write for "a military band" would have enjoyed his task more with these tone colours to play with, and the open air orchestra would be more interesting to listen to and a more satisfactory one in which to play.

Yours etc.,

ERIC A. MCGAVIN.

BOOKS RECEIVED

"MUSIC AND MUSICIANS" by Alec Robertson, Published by The University Press Cambridge for The National Book League.

Price 2s. 6d.

"THE CASTRATI IN OPERA" by Angus Heriot. Published by Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd., 7 John Street, London W.C.1.

Price 30s.

"THE HOFFNUNG MUSIC FESTIVAL" by Gerard Hoffnung. Published by Dobson Books Ltd., and Putnam and Co. Ltd., 42 Great Russell Street, London W.C.1.

Price 4s. 6d.

"SCHUMANN" by Joan Chissell (Master Musicians Series). Published by J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 10-13 Bedford Street, London W.C.2.

Price 10s. 6d.

"ZUR OPER DER GEGENWART" by Armin Schibler. Published by Bodensee-Verlag Amriswil.

Price Sfr 3.65

"40 CONTEMPORARY SWISS COMPOSERS" by the Swiss Composers' League, Published by Bodensee-Verlag Amriswil.

Price Sfr 12.50

"HARMONY" by Peter Wishart. Published by Hutchinson's University Library, London.

Price 10s. 6d.

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