

H I S T O R Y  
O F  
M U S I C.

by

Pearle Akin.

## HISTORY OF MUSIC.

Music is an art which employs sounds as a medium of artistic expression for what is not in the province of literature, of sculpture, of painting, of acting, or of architecture. Music embodies the inward feelings of which all those other arts can but exhibit the effect.

In the matter of expression, architecture may be compared with music in the earlier stages of its development, since representing and also prompting a general idea of solemnity or grandeur, or gaiety; but music left architecture far behind when, in later times, it assumed the power of special individual, and personal utterance of every variety of passion. The indefiniteness of musical expression furnishes no argument that music is inexpressive, but is one of the qualities that place it on the highest level of art excellence, enabling it to suggest still more than it displays, and to stimulate the imagination of the witness as much as to exercise that of the artist.

It is common to style music "the universal language"; but the definition is untrue, for in every age and in every clime there are varieties of musical idiom which are unsympathetic, if not unintelligible, to other generations than those among whom they are first current, and, still more the very principles that govern it have been and are so variously developed in different times and places that music which is delightful at one period or to one people is repugnant at another epoch or to a different community.

The earlier forms of music were very simple, the range of tones employed was narrow, and the habits of mind in the people employing them apparently calm and almost unactive. As time passed on more and more tones were added to the musical scales, and more and more complicated relations recognized between them, and the music thereby

became more diversified in its tonal effects, and therein better adapted for the expression of a more energetic or more sensitive action of mind and feeling. This has been the general course of progress from the earliest times in which there was an art of music until now.

The history of music may be divided into two great periods - Ancient and Modern - the Christian era forming a dividing line between them.

There is a trace of the musical instruments used in Egypt as long ago as about 4000 B.C. This interesting people had the curious custom of depositing the mummies of their dead in tombs elaborately hewn out of the rock, or excavated in more yielding ground, in the hills which border the narrow valley of the Nile. Many of these excavations are of very considerable extent, reaching sometimes to the number of twenty rooms. The walls of these underground apartments are generally decorated in a variety of styles. The subjects of decorations embrace the entire range of domestic and public life of the people, among them being many a musical character.

One of the first discoveries of this kind was made by Bruce, an English traveller. He found in a tomb representations of two magnificently decorated harps played by the priests. Since then these harps have been called "Bruce's Harpers". These harps have been represented in many ways by different writers and in some histories they are of a modern form. A long flute is represented as being on the list of instruments at this early date.

In the XXth dynasty, about 1300 B.C. there were harps having twenty-one strings. The instruments were elaborately colored and ornamented in gold and carving. The strings are shorter and probably pitched for the treble register. And another instrument which resem-

bles the banjo is used at this date. When these instruments are played together one person is among them to clap his hands to mark time. Up to this point it will be understood that the musicians represented are men but in later representations women are more common. The instruments of an epoch which was but a few centuries before the Christian era - the harps are of a different construction and lighter in weight - next in honor the lyre, then the banjo and double flute, and a curious instrument of three or four strings, played while carried upon the shoulder. Some of these instruments have been found in a very respectable state of preservation. Wilkinson gives the dimensions of the most perfect one in the British Museum as forty-one inches long the neck occupying twenty-two inches, and the body being four inches wide. The name of this instrument was Te-bouni, of Assyrian origin. It was afterwards known as the "monochord" and by its means all the ancients demonstrated the ratios of the octave, fourth and fifth. Of course no tonal sound of the music which so interested these ancient players and singers, but the sentiment expressed in some of their songs give evidence of a very sympathetic nature. Princely households appear to have a regular staff of musicians, while the people of a lower class had to be content with the temporary services of the street musicians.

For war-like purposes the Egyptians had a short trumpet of bronze, and a long trumpet, something like a trombone, and also had drums of many kinds.

One thing which might surprise us in casting an eye over the foregoing representations as a whole is the long period covered by the glimpses we have of the music of this far away race. From the time of the harpers to the late instruments is about 2000 years - a time

longer than from the beginning of the Christian era until now. In the first place the sense perception was comparatively meager. In sonority nor in delicacy of tonal resource were the Egyptian instruments a tenth part as stimulating as those of today.

The Hebrews came second in this list, their music was very large and important; yet they did not elevate their music to an art. There are no evidences of progression in the instruments by this race. Though in the course of the centuries the instruments or harp changed its form somewhat, and perhaps had an increased number of strings; the flute was multiplied into several sub-varieties; and the horn was added. There were also the sistra, those metallic instruments serving in the temple service the same purpose that the bells serve in the mass at the present day - that, namely, of letting the distant worshippers know when the solemn moment has arrived. In the temple service sometimes as many as 4000 musicians were employed. But according to Josephus this great number was increased in still later years, the numbers given being 200, 000 trumpeters and 40,000 harpers, and players upon stringed instruments. This shows the importance of music among the people at that time, but as years advanced they seemingly stood still in the art of music. Likewise the instruments underwent little change.

In the time of Moses, and for some time later, women had no status in the public service; but in later days of the second temple the women singers are an important element of the display. There are several instances of some sort of an instrument apparently consisting of metallic plates or rods, played by means of a hammer. Many have considered these to have been the original type of the modern instru-

ments of percussion, where metal plates are vibrated by means of hammers or mallets.

Our word "music" comes from the Greeks. Their meaning of it including pretty much all that they had of a liberal education; such as grammar, history, rhetoric, mathematics, poetry and song and music itself the art of tone-sequence, they called harmony. The entire course of the Greek history of music may be divided into four great divisions through the period of 1300 years. The first division began at a date of about 1100 B.C. when the Homeric poems began to be chanted or sung by travelling minstrels, this lasted just about two hundred and fifty years, when next choral and patriotic song began to be developed. Gradually step by step from the choral singing they gave contestant musicals in different towns for their native town. Then they would have one speaker, and a number of singers to dance around the speaker after he finished his say. Another speaker added - the result of this is the drama.

The changing of costumes were extremely slight, merely a different head dress, a mantle or some slight modification of appearance more or less symbolical in character. All of their dialogues were delivered in a musical voice and it is believed that each player carried a cithara for the purpose of accompaniment.

Previous to the time of Socrates, orators in addressing popular assemblies, lawyers in pleading cases, and all public speakers appear to have made use of the cithara as a sort of accompaniment if for no other purpose than to assure themselves of securing a proper pitch of the voice.

The flute or wind instruments were so hard to blow that the players wore bands over their cheeks because there were cases on rec-

ord where in the contests, they broke their cheeks by the wind pressure.

Very important developments of the art of music took place in India but the dates are uncertain. The art of inciting vibrations of a string by means of a bow was discovered; and our violin had its origin there. They had many forms of guitar, instruments of percussion, and the varieties of viol, as well as trumpets and the like. The national instrument was the vina. This was sort of a guitar, its body made of a strip of bamboo eight inches wide and four feet long. Near each end a large gourd was fixed, for reinforcing the resonance. In playing it was held obliquely in front of the player like a guitar, one gourd resting upon the left shoulder, the other under the right arm. It was strung with six strings of silk and wire, and had a very elaborate apparatus of frets, much higher than those of a guitar, many of them movable, in order to permit modulation into any of the twenty-four Hindoo "modes".

The instrument had a light thin tone, not unpleasing, the Hindoos carried the theory of music to an extremely fine point, having many curious scales, some of them with twenty-four divisions in an octave, twenty-two being the usual number. The pitch of each note in every mode was accurately calculated mathematically, and the frets of the vina located thereby, according to very old theoretical works by one Soma, written in Sanskrit at least as early as 1500 B.C. The theoretical part of music as carried by the Hindoos was ridiculed by the European people - they thought it something utterly impossible - but when they studied the vina - they were easily convinced of the exactness of their theory. Harmony was unknown to this class.

The Kin and the Ke are principal instruments of China. The

Kin is a sort of a guitar. But of their culture the Ke is the main instrument. The Ke is entirely unlike anything on the list so far, but the Japanese Ko-Ko is most likely derived from it. The Ke has fifty strings of silk. It is played with the fingers, or rather plucked with the fingers. In earlier times the Chinese had the pentatonic scale, approximately the same as that of the black keys of the piano. Later it was enlarged to seven notes in the octave, and it is claimed by some that long before the Christian era they had a complete chromatic scale of twelve tones in the octave. Chinese music has always been monodic, and they use a great variety of melodic shadings composed of intervals of small fractions of a step - these they call lu. There are movable bridges which can be placed in such way as to divide the strings of the Ke at proper proportions of its length for producing the lu. The places for the fingers upon the finger board are marked by small brass points. They can produce a tremolo similar to that produced by our modern violin.

From the Christian era to that of Palestrina, A.D. 1000 is one of apprentice work, in which the details of art were being mastered, but no music was produced. In the Roman empire, or in the south of Europe for about 800 years the Greek principles remained more or less in force. The church is here the foremost influence and its part in the transformation is very important.

In north of Europe the Goths, Celts, and Scandinavians built empires and impressed their enthusiastic and idealistic natures upon the whole form of modern art.

The Saracens conquered a foothold in the south of France about 819, and remained there for twenty years. Their influence



was very important in the development of music, and became still more active after the crusades, where the armies of the west came again in contact with this peculiar civilization and also was the work of the professional musicians, who, from about 1100 in the old French school, commenced the development of what is now known as polyphony which culminated in the hands of the Netherlanders, about 1580, Palestrina himself being one of the latest products of this school.

Modern music differs from the ancient in two important particulars - Harmony and Tonality. "Harmony" is the use of combined sounds. By "Tonality" is meant the dependence or interdependence of all the tones in a key upon some one principal tone called the key-tone.

The Celts appear upon the field of history several centuries before the Christian era. Caesar's account of them leaves no doubt of the place which music held in their religion, education, and natural life. The minstrel was a prominent figure, ready at a moment's notice to perform the service of religion, patriotism or entertainment. In the British Museum there is a manuscript supposed to have been begun in the eleventh century, containing much music for the harp. Among it are exercises in the curious notation of the Welsh, in which chords are freely used, and in positions suggesting the immediate occasion of their introduction - that, namely of supplementing the small power of the instrument by sounding several tones together, which, as octaves were impossible outside the middle range of pitch were necessarily chords.

Ireland only uses and delights in two instruments - the harp and tabor. Scotland has three, the harp, the tabor, and the crowth. Wales uses the harp, pipes and the crowth. But the brilliant time

of Ireland was the reign of Sir Brian Boirohen in the tenth century. After his victory over the Danes, and their expulsion from the island, he opened schools, and colleges for indigent students, founded libraries and encouraged learning heartily. He was one of the best harpers of his kingdom. His harp is preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and a well made instrument; although somewhat out of repair. It is about thirty inches high; the wood is oak and arms of brass. Twenty eight strings fixed in the sounding table by silver buttons in copper-lined holes.

King Alfred also established a professorship of music at Oxford, where the university properly so-called, did not yet exist, but a school of considerable vigor had been founded. Many reasons might be given for believing that the art of music was more carefully cultivated in England at this time than in any other European country. For instance, at Winchester, in the year 900, a large organ was built in the cathedral - larger than had ever been built before. It had four hundred pipes, whereas most of the previous organs had but forty or fifty pipes. "Round" singing was brought to a high degree of popular skill.

Iceland was the foremost musical center of the civilized world in the ninth century. Another popular instrument of music in all parts of Britain from the earliest of modern times, was the bag-pipe, and some one said of its music is like a "tune tied to a post". This instrument still survives in Scotland.

In the twelfth century among the Nonbadours religious and secular songs were composed. And the earliest comic opera of which we have any account. And the singing or musical exhibit given by the Nonveres and Minnesingers has had a great influence upon the musical

people.

The first Christian hymns and psalms were probably sung to temple melodies brought from Jerusalem by the apostles. As new hymns were written, (something which happened very soon, under the inspiration of the new faith and hopes), they were adapted to the best of these melodies, just as has been done continually down to nearly our own time.

The principal masters known to us now, were all, or nearly all, connected with the cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris and several of them with the university of the Sorbonne. This was succeeded by Gallo-Belgic school - which was active between 1350 to 1432. Next in turn was the Netherland school, 1425 to 1625. During this time the first musical dictionary was printed. After this school there were charitable institutions, which took poor boys from the streets, furnishing them with a living, the rudiments of an education, and musical training enough to them available in the service of the church. In about 1536 a priest in Italy begged for alms nine years, at the end of this time he had enough money to build a conservatory, and the first year there were eight hundred students studying music. Organs were used in churches, and pedals were first applied.

The four-line staff has remained in use in the Catholic Church until the present time, and with it the square notes. The five line staff came into use about 1500.

A diminutive lute has come down to our own days under the name of a Mandolin. The viol was a favorite with many amateurs until late in the eighteenth century.

Before 1600 the organ had attained its maturity, and had become furnished with its distinctive characteristics as we have it

at the present time.

There is no trace of the origin of dramatic song, the beginnings of free instrumental music, the discovery of the art of voice training and the formation of what is called the old Italian school of singing.

The  
-  
in  
r  
d  
n  
t