

MILITARY MUSIC. By Henry G. Farmer. (Max Parrish; 7s. 6d.)

SACRED MUSIC. By Alec Robertson. (Max Parrish; 7s. 6d.)

MUSIC'S HANDMAID. By Harriet Cohen. (Faber; 10s. 6d.)

PIANO INTERPRETATION. By Donald N. Ferguson. (Williams and Norgate; 15s.)

COUNTERPOINT. By Knud Jeppeson. (Williams and Norgate; 15s.)

Dr Farmer's *Military Music* is an excellent, well-written and beautifully illustrated study of this branch of the art—which is too often overlooked by musical historians—and of its great influence upon music generally, in particular the development of instrumentation: altogether a most readable and valuable little essay.

Mr Alec Robertson had a formidable task in presenting a study of *Sacred Music* in a book of some seventy-odd pages, which include the many attractive illustrations which are a valuable feature of this series. He wisely excludes 'organ music, many excellent church works by small masters and congregational hymns' as well as music which exhales 'a stale or even a rancid piety', and vast works more suitable for the concert hall, in favour of 'liturgical music.' (That would have been a better title). The first-class section on Gregorian music could easily have been expanded and would have made a more satisfactory book on its own. Thus Mr Robertson's *Sacred Music*, though written with charm and authority, is inevitably patchy and lacks the completeness and cohesion it would have had with a more limited scope.

About the last two-thirds of this revised version of Miss Cohen's book are devoted to 'lessons' on various piano pieces by composers ranging from Byrd to Bartok: so distinguished an executant deserves to be listened to with respect, though some may find her tiresomely dogmatic and others may disagree with her over details. Much of the rest of the book is rather pretentious, and the whole thing hovers somewhat uncomfortably between being a piano tutor and a musical critique—its value increasing in proportion as the former predominates. *Piano Interpretation*, subtitled 'Studies in the Music of Six Great Composers', is confined almost wholly to the nineteenth century. It is a not dissimilar study of certain works—perhaps more shapely and palatable than Miss Cohen's, and as rewarding in technical detail. These two books should both be of use and interest to pianists.

Dr Jeppeson has already earned the admiration of all musical scholars by his magnificent study of 'The Style of Palestrina and the dissonance'. The present work on the polyphonic vocal style of the sixteenth century is designed as a text-book for students based on the author's earlier researches. We have long been in need of this brilliant book, which will inevitably supersede all other similar essays.

E. R. TAYLOR.