

DR. YORKE TROTTER

IN THE CHAIR.

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 ORLANDO GIBBONS, 1583—1625

BY THE REV. EDMUND H. FELLOWES, M.A., MUS.D.

JUST two years ago almost to a day Mr. Holst addressed this Association on the subject of the tercentenaries of Byrd and Weelkes, and in his opening remarks he raised the question as to whether the commemorations of this kind serve any good purpose. His answer was in effect that English people are so slow to appreciate the work of their own musicians that unless centenaries are seized upon as occasions for special advertisement of this or that composer, his name, let alone his works, would remain in permanent neglect. Mr. Holst's opinion on this point was amply borne out by what happened in the months that followed. Before 1923 Byrd's name meant nothing to the vast majority of English-speaking people, and even in musical circles the extent and quality of his music was little known. Then came the tercentenary celebrations; in London, in the provinces, and the Colonies, cathedrals, churches of all denominations, and concert rooms were crowded with appreciative audiences to hear programmes made up exclusively of Byrd's music, and his name is no longer unfamiliar to his fellow countrymen at large.

In this present year we commemorate the tercentenary of the death of another great English musician. Though born forty years after Byrd, Orlando Gibbons survived him barely two years, dying rather suddenly in the prime of life on Whit Sunday, June 5th, 1625.

When their works come to be studied as a whole (and as the years go by more and more of their music is being made available for study in modern editions) there can be little doubt that the general verdict will be that Byrd was by several degrees a greater composer than Gibbons. Their styles are necessarily dissimilar, for Gibbons's serious work only began when Byrd was sixty years of age, and the last forty years of the sixteenth century had seen immense

development in musical thought and expression, while the first quarter of the seventeenth century, during which Gibbons did his work, is generally regarded as one of the most revolutionary periods in musical history; and the new ideas, so much in the air at that time, must have influenced such a composer as Gibbons even though he followed in the main the traditional style of the sixteenth century schools of polyphony.

I do not propose this afternoon to follow up the very interesting theme suggested by a comparison of the works of these two great musicians; it would form in itself a good subject for a complete lecture. Suffice it to say that both produced work in various branches of musical composition, not confining themselves to Church music; both were men of austere disposition and of profound religious feeling; both held official positions of high importance as church musicians and both owe their reputations in the main to the music which they wrote for the Church. Towards the close of the nineteenth century, both were known in cathedral circles by scarcely more than three compositions apiece. Yet strangely enough Gibbons was better known at that period than Byrd, and probably his name was held in higher honour than Byrd's. This may be explained by the fact that Gibbons's service in F was used far more generally than Byrd's "short" service and that Gibbons's anthems, "Hosanna" and "Almighty and everlasting God," were sung with scarcely any exception in all the English cathedrals, whereas Byrd's fame rested solely on "Bow thine ear," which is after all only part of an anthem and was very badly sung as a rule, and his "Sing joyfully," which was in use in scarcely half a dozen cathedrals.

It may perhaps be urged that although Byrd's tercentenary was celebrated with good purpose there is no such need for a similar advertisement of Gibbons, whose name is familiar already. On the other hand Gibbons's name is very far from being as familiar as it ought to be. I will illustrate this statement with a short story which has the merit of being a true one. In the library of the Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club an excellent amateur instrumentalist was handling the volumes of the Musical Antiquarian Society; suddenly other occupants of the room were disturbed by his laughter; on their asking the reason for his merriment, he replied that he had "come across a composer with *such* a funny name—Orlando Gibbons!" Here was quite a good practical musician who never before that day had even heard of the name. There are many more such,

and it cannot be doubted that a successful commemoration of the tercentenary of Gibbons will be the means of making his music more widely known, as it deserves to be, throughout the world.

Orlando Gibbons was born at Cambridge in 1583; the precise day and month are unknown. He was the youngest child of William and Mary Gibbons who for many years lived in the parish of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, the parish church being situated at the back of the market place almost opposite to Christ's. William Gibbons was a musician of some standing, being for many years a member of the City Waits; similar bodies were supported by the municipal authorities of all the leading cities of England at that time and they were composed of men of high efficiency either as singers or instrumentalists. It is not known if William Gibbons was a native of Cambridge but his appointment to the Waits was in 1567. He died in 1595, and both he and his wife who survived him till 1603, were buried at Holy Trinity Church; their wills were proved in the Archidiaconal Court of Cambridge.

The eldest son of William and Mary Gibbons was Edward. He was a musician of some mark. He graduated Mus.Bac. at Cambridge and was incorporated in the same degree in 1592 at Oxford. Early in 1593 he became a lay clerk of King's College, Cambridge, and in the autumn of the same year he received an increase of 11s. 8d. in salary on succeeding Thomas Hammond as Master of the Choristers. Exactly five years later Hammond resumed his position, and Edward's name is not found again in the *Liber Communarum* of the College. What became of him at that date is not certainly known. The statement that he became organist and Precentor of Bristol Cathedral is disproved by the fact that his name is nowhere to be found in the very complete records of that Cathedral which have recently been discovered. Nor did he take Holy Orders; for it was one of the causes of complaint made against him by the other "Vicars" at Exeter to Archbishop Laud's Commissioners in 1634 that he was a layman and therefore not properly qualified to be a "Priest-Vicar"; he was only appointed to this office by special dispensation from the Bishop of Exeter. The tradition that he was at Bristol is an early one, and it is quite possible that he was for a time in charge of the music at one of the churches in that city. In the will of his brother he was described in 1603 as "of Acton," but research in connection with this clue has so far proved abortive. It is possible that in 1598 he went straight from Cambridge to Exeter,

for Walker in his "Sufferings of the Clergy," mentions that Bishop Cotton brought him there when he was appointed to the See; and that happened to be in November 1598. Walker, however, is another of those who says he came from Bristol, so the point is not made clear. That Edward Gibbons was working at Exeter by 1607 is beyond dispute and he held office as a Priest-Vicar, in spite of his being a layman, as far as can be ascertained, until his death about the year 1650. From time to time he was elected by the College of Vicars Choral to be Custos of their body, an office that was held by one of their number yearly. He married twice and left descendants.

Ellis, the second son of the Cambridge "Wait," was born in 1573 and baptized at Holy Trinity, Cambridge. Besides his two contributions to "The Triumphs of Oriana" no music by him is known, and biographical details are almost entirely lacking. The statement that he was organist of Salisbury Cathedral cannot be supported by any evidence; no mention of his name is to be found in the "Clerk of Fabrik" accounts or in the Cathedral registers. The Chapter Act Books of the date are missing, but the "Clerk of Fabrik" accounts are complete and show clearly that John Farrant succeeded Richard Fuller in 1598 as organist and that he in turn was followed by John Holmes in 1602. Ellis Gibbons was executor of his mother's will in April, 1603, and in the following month he died leaving a widow but no children. His will was proved May 18th, 1603 [P.C.C., 32 Bolein].

Of the third son, Ferdinando, nothing is known. There were also four daughters, three of whom were married. Orlando was the ninth and youngest child; he was born, as already stated, in 1583. Though born in Cambridge he was baptized at Oxford at St. Martin's Church. This church used to be a familiar figure at Carfax, but the tower alone remains and the parish is now incorporated with All Saints', where the baptismal entry dated December 25th, 1583, may be seen. What brought the parents temporarily to Oxford with the infant Orlando is not known, but several incidents connect the family with Oxford; for example, both Edward and Orlando were incorporated at Oxford as holding Cambridge degrees. There were two "Visitation" families of Gibbons resident in Oxfordshire whose coat-of-arms suggests that the coat surmounting Orlando Gibbons's monument in Canterbury Cathedral is a "play" upon it, and the Cambridge family may have sprung from Oxfordshire. The entry in the Oxford University registers concerning the incorporation of Orlando Gibbons at Oxford on July 14th,

1607, as "M.A., of Cambridge" contains an error, for investigation shows that never in the history of Cambridge University did anyone of this name hold a degree in Arts. Joseph Foster is without doubt right in supposing that the registrar accidentally wrote M.A. for Mus.B.; the dates fit exactly, for he took the Mus.B. degree at Cambridge in 1606.

Early in 1596 Orlando's name appears in the *Liber Communarum* as one of the choristers of King's College, Cambridge. He was just twelve years old at the time. He thus became a pupil of his brother Edward. There is no evidence in the College books to show that he became senior chorister. He left the choir at the same time as his brother, in the autumn of 1598, and at this date he matriculated in the University as "a sizar from King's," but his name reappears as a chorister early in the year 1599 intermittently until May. At various dates subsequent to this there are entries in the "Mundum," or account, books, showing that he was paid small sums at certain Festivals; probably not in return for music composed, but for organising performances on festive occasions; similar entries for precisely similar sums are to be found at an earlier date showing payments made to "Mr. Gibbons," referring presumably at first to William, Orlando's father, and later, to Edward.

In 1604, at the age of twenty-one, Orlando was appointed one of the organists of the Chapel Royal and he held this appointment until his death. Within a year or two afterwards he married Elizabeth, daughter of John Patten, of Westminster. Patten was a man of some wealth and position; he was at one time a yeoman of the Vestry of the Chapel Royal and later he became keeper of the King's Closet. When he died in 1623 he made Orlando Gibbons his sole executor and left legacies to him and his children. Gibbons lived in the early years of his married life in the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, where all his seven children were baptized; his house was where Bridge Street now stands, that part of Westminster being then known as the Woolstaple; this fact is recorded in the Overseer's books of St. Margaret's parish. He held some musical appointment in the Royal Household in 1617, or earlier, for receipts of payment at the rate of £40 per annum in his capacity as "one of his highnes musiciens" are still in existence. In 1619 he received another Court appointment as one of his majesty's "musicions for the virginalles" at a salary of £47. In 1612 Gibbons was under the patronage of the younger Sir Christopher Hatton, who eventually succeeded his more famous namesake and cousin, the Lord Chancellor. Hatton

was consequently the owner of Ely Place, and it seems likely that this was the house in which Gibbons wrote many of his madrigals; for he stated in his Prefatory address that most of them were written in Hatton's house. It seems improbable that he should have lived at Ely Place while he had a wife and family living in Westminster, but it is likely that he acted as household musician to Hatton with a room specially set aside for his use.

In 1622 the well-known incident occurred in connection with the doctor's degree conferred upon William Heather at Oxford. The circumstances are too well known to need relating here, but a word or two may be said in reference to the performance of the anthem "O clap your hands" as the qualifying "exercise" on that occasion. Very little early manuscript text of this fine anthem is known; indeed, none is known earlier than that of the "Gostling" set of part-books now in the library of York Minster. The score of this anthem, formerly in the possession of the late Dr. W. H. Cummings, is frequently referred to by Gibbons's biographers because it is endorsed as having been used for Heather's "commencement song"; but this is not the earliest evidence on the point. This score, which is now in the FitzWilliam Museum, was almost certainly made from the older part-books now at York, in each of which is a similar note about Heather's use of the anthem. The score and part-books alike belonged to William Gostling of Canterbury who owned a splendid collection of early manuscript music books, including the famous Batten organ-book now at St. Michael's College, Tenbury.

It was not until he had served nearly twenty years as organist at the Chapel Royal that Gibbons became organist of Westminster Abbey. He succeeded John Parsons in that office in 1623 still retaining his post in the Chapel Royal. During the two short years of life that remained to him, one important state function took place in the Abbey for which it was his duty to carry out the musical arrangements. This was the funeral of James I. But a glimpse of him on another picturesque occasion is given in Bishop John Hacket's *Scrinea reserata* where the visit of the French envoy to the Abbey with reference to the betrothal of Charles, Prince of Wales, to the French Princess Henrietta Maria is described. Hacket tells how the organ was played on this occasion by Orlando Gibbons who "had the finest hand in England." Gibbons seems in fact to have been universally regarded as the greatest player of his time, for he was similarly described just after his death by John Chamberlain in a letter to Sir

Dudley Carleton. This was high praise when it is recalled that Gibbons was the contemporary of Byrd and Bull, but both these references were subsequent to the death of Byrd. While Gibbons was organist of Westminster some small repairs to the organ were carried out, and the bill was endorsed by Gibbons who informed the Abbey Treasurer that the charges were reasonable. This valuable autograph was recently discovered by Sir Frederick Bridge and is now carefully preserved in the Muniment room at the Abbey.

The general circumstances of Gibbons's death are well-known but the details have been told with no little inaccuracy. In the first place, the marriage of Charles I. did not take place in Canterbury and never was intended to. It took place in fact at Notre Dame in Paris, on May 1st, 1625, and Charles, not being present, was represented by the Duke of Buckingham. Much delay occurred before the Queen came to England, but at length Charles arranged to go to Canterbury to await there the arrival of his bride at Dover. He arrived at Canterbury on May 31st, but further delays occurred and the Queen did not reach England until June 12th. On the following morning the King met her in state at Dover and after a feast at that town they travelled together to Canterbury where a banquet was given the same evening. There was no religious ceremony of any sort in Canterbury Cathedral on this occasion. After staying two nights at Canterbury the King and Queen set out for London. As the Queen was to arrive at Dover with a large and splendid retinue it was important that Charles should have with him all the appurtenances of Royal Majesty; not the least of these was the Chapel Royal, a term that has never correctly denoted bricks and mortar, but the whole *personnel*, together with all the plate, vestments, books, etc., belonging to the establishment. For centuries it was the custom of the Sovereign to take with him the Chapel Royal, in this sense, whenever he travelled in State. So on this occasion not Gibbons alone, as has been so generally stated, but the whole of the Chapel was summoned to Canterbury to attend on the King. Nathaniel Giles, for instance, was summoned "cum tota capella regia," and set out for Canterbury from Windsor on May 21st. Nor is there a vestige of evidence to show that Gibbons was commissioned to write any special music for this occasion. Meanwhile, during the period of waiting at Canterbury for the Queen's arrival Gibbons was seized with an apoplectic fit and died quite suddenly on June 5th. In those days sudden death was so commonly associated with the dreaded black death that grave alarm was created

by this occurrence, and the Court doctors were summoned to make a *post mortem* examination. They found all the symptoms of apoplexy and reported accordingly. Hawkins and many others have stated quite incorrectly that smallpox was the cause of Gibbons's death. On June 6th, the body was buried in Canterbury Cathedral and a monumental tablet was shortly afterwards placed on the north wall of the Nave. The inscription was surmounted by a bust of the composer and his coat-of-arms. The Latin inscription has rarely been correctly printed; one lamentable error is to be found in Dart's "History of Canterbury," Hawkins' "History of Music" and in several more modern books: the concluding words of the inscription involve a characteristic pun which is entirely destroyed, apart from the nonsense made of the sentence, by reading *moerentissimo moerentissima* for *merentissimo moerentissima*.

Gibbons had three sons and four daughters. His eldest son James died in infancy. Christopher the second son was organist of Winchester Cathedral and subsequently of the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey. The other son, Orlando, died unmarried at Exeter in 1653, and nothing else is known of him; and two at least of the daughters married and settled in the neighbourhood of Exeter. His widow does not seem to have survived him very long. It has been stated that her will was proved on July 30th, 1626, but this must be an error; her will has not been found, but letters of administration of Orlando's property were granted to Elizabeth his widow, on July 13th, 1626, a fact that proves she was still alive at that date.

I have dwelt at considerable length on these biographical details because so many incorrect details have been handed down from one historian to another without much investigation of the evidence on which they are founded. I have been engaged this year in studying the subject and sifting the evidence in connection with the Gibbons Volume of Tudor Church Music in the Carnegie edition, which is shortly to be published, and I must take this opportunity of acknowledging the help of the Trustees, without which it would not have been possible to make such full investigations, and many of the details in my paper are stated to-day for the first time.

Passing to Gibbons's music, it must be observed in the first place that he wrote nothing for the Latin rites of the Church as far as is known. This is not perhaps a matter to cause surprise when it is remembered that after Gunpowder Plot, which took place when Gibbons was only just twenty-two



years old, much more stringent measures of restraint were imposed upon recusants and all those who favoured the unreformed rites. It was once suggested that Gibbons's anthem, "Hosanna to the Son of David" was originally composed to Latin words; all the early manuscript texts go to disprove the theory, and the words, instead of being a poor translation of the Latin, as one writer submitted, are from the text of the Genevan Bible which was in common use in Gibbons's day.

Gibbons's church music divides itself into two distinct styles. On the one hand he looked back to the sixteenth century and wrote in the classic manner of the great polyphonists. On the other hand he looked forward and aimed at developing the "verse" anthem with passages for solo voice accompanied either by the organ or by stringed instruments. He was not of course the first composer to exploit the verse anthem, for Byrd had already worked successfully in this field, as for example in his "Second Service with verses to the Organ," as he described it, and again in such anthems as "Hear my prayer," and "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine indignation." But Gibbons certainly carried this style of composition a considerable distance further than Byrd; a particularly good example of an anthem of this character is "This is the record of John," which goes far to bridge the gap between Byrd and Purcell. This is a particularly fine piece of work, daringly experimental at that date, yet free from all traces of immaturity. The solo passages are very remarkable for the perfection of their phrasing and the directness of their dramatic expression, as well as for the beauty of their melodic outline.

[Illustration: "This is the record of John."]

Gibbons was not always completely successful in his verse anthems, and in some of them, as, for instance, his Easter and Christmas anthems, "If ye be risen again" and "Behold I bring you glad tidings," there is a certain poverty and thinness which can only be excused on the ground of experiment; and, indeed, it must be confessed that Gibbons's work in the verse anthem is with few exceptions on a much lower level than that of his purely polyphonic music. For the same reason, although it is laid out on a more pretentious scale his Service in D minor is greatly inferior to the well-known Service in F, which is polyphonic throughout. The solo and verse passages in the D minor service for the most part are dull and uninspired, and some of the full choral writing is protracted and lacking in interest while there

are some few passages where the actual technique of vocal writing is well below first-class rank. It is strange that Gibbons himself seems to have preferred the verse anthem to the polyphonic type if we may judge from numbers, for out of some forty anthems which are known to us to-day no fewer than twenty-five are verse anthems against fifteen of the older kind. Yet due credit must be liberally extended to Gibbons, who, in the true spirit of the Elizabethans, preferred to explore new methods and new designs even if first-rate success was not to be secured in so doing. It would have been easier for the man who could write "Hosanna to the Son of David" and several other glorious things on the same lines, to have confined his efforts to these safe and well-trodden paths; but by courageously venturing into new and unknown regions he did perhaps more than anyone else to prepare the way for Blow, Pelham Humphrey, and Purcell. This must be reckoned a great achievement even if but few of his own verse anthems are worthy of performance to-day.

As to his polyphonic anthems little need be said here. There are not a great number; only fifteen are known, and of some of those complete text is wanting, yet almost all of them are gems of the first water. "Hosanna" is well known and universally acknowledged as a masterpiece. "Lift up your heads" and "O clap your hands" are almost on the same level. Then in quiet contrast are the exquisite small prayers such as "Lord, increase my faith" and "Almighty and everlasting God," perfect in the tenderness of their appeal. One example of this class will now be sung; it is probably unknown to most of the audience this afternoon, but it should certainly have a place in the repertory of every English Cathedral.

[Illustration: "Lord, in Thy wrath rebuke me not."]

Time will not permit discussion this afternoon of the settings of the *Preces* and *Psalms* by Gibbons, but it may be mentioned that these "Psalms" of Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons and others constitute a very important feature in the history of psalm-singing, being in fact very closely related to the so-called double Anglican chants of a later date. Gibbons wrote sixteen hymn-tunes for Wither's "Hymnes and Songes of the Church," published in 1623; and one more is in manuscript at Christ Church, Oxford.

As a madrigal-writer Gibbons necessarily followed the polyphonic style; and here, as in his unaccompanied anthems, he proved himself to be one of the outstanding figures in that great group of composers. Gibbons was indeed at his

very best as a madrigalist. The character of his work in this department is even more austere than that of Byrd. Neither of these wrote any *fa las*, or ballets, and both of them chose some severe and solemn subjects for their madrigals or motets, call them by what term you will. But whereas Byrd could on rare occasions be gay, as, for instance, in "Come, jolly swains"; "Though Amaryllis dance in green" and "I thought that love had been a boy," nothing so light as these is found in Gibbons's set. The nearest approach to light-heartedness is shown in his "Trust not too much, fond youth," but even this has a somewhat sombre ending. On the other hand the austere and splendid "What is our life?" plainly reflects the character and personality of the composer. Nothing of the kind can be found to match this noble madrigal, the words of which are generally attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh. Full of picturesque detail, it is nevertheless treated with a uniformity of purpose which binds it together with a perfect sense of proportion. Stern in character, too, is the setting of Joshua Sylvester's "I weigh not Fortune's frown nor smile," the four stanzas of which form four consecutive numbers in this set of madrigals. Most of Gibbons's madrigals are exceedingly difficult to sing with telling effect, partly because of the severity of their subjects, and partly because of the intricacy of the part-writing which is of unusually independent character, woven together with strands of greater length than was the case with most of the later polyphonists. For this reason in Gibbons's work it is a matter of special difficulty to decide which voice is to be prominent here and which there, and how each is to contribute in turn to the general effect; these are important details that must be considered in almost all madrigals, but Gibbons's more than all others are rendered ineffective and fail to please if each voice part is striving for equality of importance, if not for pre-eminence, throughout the composition. And the temptation to err on these lines is not minimised by the fact that the melodic material of each voice part is as a rule so consistently interesting and beautiful. Among the simpler numbers of this set are "Ah, dear heart" and "Dainty fine bird," which are characteristically madrigalian, and the well-known "The silver swan" is universally acclaimed as the most perfect thing of its kind. It may be observed that in design "The silver swan" closely follows the "Ayres" of the lutenists; it is frankly melodic with little repetition of the verbal phrases and the second section of the music is repeated with the last couplet of the six-lined stanza.

Apart from this set of madrigals Gibbons wrote a rather lengthy medley for voices and viols, incorporating a large number of London "cries." In this piece he used the traditional musical phrases associated with the various "cries." The interest of this composition is mainly antiquarian, for the music of many of the cries would not otherwise have survived. Dering and Weelkes wrote similar compositions, and Dering also wrote a set of "Countrye Cryes." There is no reason to suppose that either of the two anonymous sets of "cryes" in manuscript in the British Museum is the work of Gibbons

[Illustration : "Fair is the rose."]

I pass now to Gibbons's instrumental music. I have already quoted evidence to show that as a performer he was unrivalled in his own day as an executant in keyboard music ; that he wrote finely for the keyboard instruments of his day is not therefore a matter of surprise. But the fact that Byrd and Bull, who were respectively forty and twenty years his senior, invited him to unite with them in the production of "Parthenia" when he was still quite a young man, shows clearly in what high esteem they held him. That was in the year 1611. Gibbons contributed six pieces to this collection, including the very fine "Fantazia of four parts," "The Queen's Command," and an interesting Prelude. More than thirty more of Gibbons's compositions for the virginals are to be found in various important manuscript collections of the period, notably in Benjamin Cosyn's book in the Royal Collection, now in the British Museum, and in the Drexel collection in the New York Library.

It is curious that the compiler of the famous FitzWilliam Virginal Book, which was put together about the year 1621, should have almost completely excluded Gibbons from this very large collection. No more than three of his pieces are included ; one of these is given without the composer's name, and one is attributed to another composer. Whether this was due to any personal feeling cannot now be ascertained.

Miss Margaret Glyn, who has made a special study of the subject, has compiled a complete list of Gibbons's known keyboard works together with the manuscript authority for each.

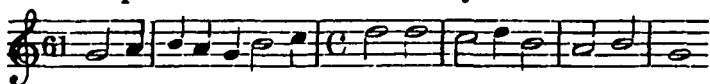
It remains now to speak of Gibbons's chamber music for strings. Of this he has left a larger store than most of his contemporaries. Nine fantasies of three parts were published in his own day ; fifteen more are in manuscript in Marsh's Library, Dublin. Nos. 9 to 12 of these latter are also in the

library of Christ Church, Oxford; there is a three-part Galliard in Marsh's Library. Two interesting fantasies for string quartet are at Christ Church and one of these will be played in a few minutes. There are three "In nomines" for quintet and one for quartet. Four fantasies for sextet are at Christ Church, but one of these is no more than a fragment; and an attractive Pavan and Galliard is in Marsh's Library and also in the Bodleian. Altogether there are nearly forty of Gibbons's compositions for strings surviving to-day. Of these I may add that the six-part Pavan and Galliard, the two quartets and the nine three-part fantasies have been recently published in score and parts under my editorship in modern notation; copies are on the table for those who care to see what Gibbons's work was like.

A few words must be said with reference to the technical features of these works. The string music of these composers has been much misunderstood by modern players. Addressing this Association two sessions ago Sir Frederick Bridge said that Gibbons's Fancies (or Fantasies) have the atmosphere of Church music, and that knowing them from the Musical Antiquarian Society's edition he had "never taken to them at all." Another member of this Association, a string player, told me recently that he once played one of the Gibbons's three-part Fantasies from this same edition and thought it the dullest thing he had ever played. But all this is due to a misunderstanding of the music. If the quartets of Beethoven and Mozart were set out in notes of twice the length and without any bow marks, they would look unlike string music and modern players would have great difficulty in grasping the shape of the phrases quickly. Conversely, if the notation of the Tudor string music is presented in modern terms on the basis of the crotchet unit, not only does it immediately become alive, but it will be apparent that these composers evolved a definite string technique of their own. Again, the freedom of rhythmic treatment, which now at last is being generally recognised in the madrigals and church music of the polyphonic writers, is often also a notable feature of their chamber music. If the varied rhythms are ignored or wrongly phrased it cannot cause surprise that the music may sound dull. The following examples will serve to illustrate the foregoing remarks.

Firstly, as regards string technique, take the six-part string fantasy of Byrd in the 1611 Set and compare the section in triple measure as set out in the original edition and reproduced in the same terms in "English Madrigal School," vol. xvi, p. 172. Then look at the same passage as set out

in my working edition of the score. I will now play a few bars on the violin and I am sure you will agree that this is pure string writing and not a vocal technique, and that the atmosphere of the church is entirely absent.



becomes (transposed)



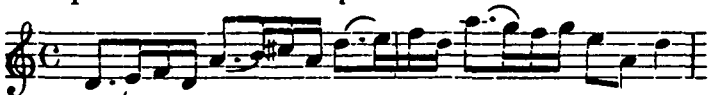
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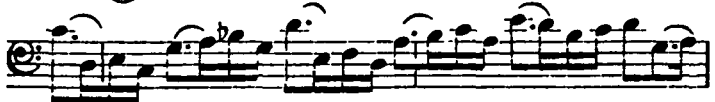
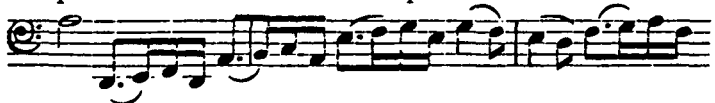
The same principle applies to all this music, and Gibbons is no exception. As regards free rhythmic treatment some convincing examples are to be found in No. 8 of his printed three-part Fantasies. This opens as follows:—



if phrased thus it makes nonsense:—



The bass has a splendid passage in this same Fantasia, running quite regardless of barlines and with complete independence from the other two parts:—



I think if Sir Frederick Bridge had been alive to-day he would have frankly admitted that this is pure string writing and shows no trace whatever of the ecclesiastical atmosphere. I am confident that anyone who will glance at the scores of the Gibbons three-part Fantasies in my edition will agree with me on this point.

As a final illustration you shall hear one of Gibbons's String Quartet Fantasies :—

[Illustration : String Quartet Fantazia No. 2.]

It has been impossible in the short time at our disposal to do more than touch upon some points of interest in Gibbons's work, and many have had to be omitted altogether. I hope anyone will come and look at the scores of the chamber music and other works of this composer in modern editions which are on the table and I may conclude with a hope that all musicians will unite in paying due honour to Orlando Gibbons on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of his death.

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#### DISCUSSION.

Dr. YORKE TROTTER : I think you will agree that we have had an instructive lecture, which I hope you have all enjoyed as much as I have myself. I should like, before we pass on to any discussion, to propose a vote of thanks to Dr. Fellowes for his lecture. And we must also thank with all our hearts the ladies and gentlemen who have so kindly come here to illustrate the lecture. Whilst we are thanking people we ought also to thank Sir Hugh Allen and the authorities of the Royal College of Music for giving us the use of their Hall for this lecture, the room we have had at the University of London not being available for us to-day.

We have all realised, I think, what a great man Gibbons was. It is very difficult to compare him with a man like Byrd who came before him. Byrd was more of a pioneer than Gibbons. Yet Gibbons has a wonderful individuality of his own, an individuality that shows itself not only in his anthems, but in his virginal music, and in the concerted music we have just now heard. Gibbons was a very great man. Of course he did not live to a very great age ; he died when comparatively young but he left behind works which enable us to see what a wonderful composer he was.

Dr. FROGGATT : In the story of Gibbons's career there is one detail which has always puzzled me ; and if Dr. Fellowes can enlighten me on that point I shall be very grateful.

Gibbons was appointed to the Chapel Royal in 1604. In 1610 (that is the date given by all the authorities I have consulted), he published nine Fantasies for viols, and on the title-page he is described as late organist of the Chapel Royal. There is neither date nor printer's name on the title page. We know that he died organist of the Chapel Royal.

Dr. FELLOWES: No satisfactory explanation has yet been discovered. We do not, as a matter of fact, know precisely when the work in question was published. I have made a special point of examining the Registers of the Stationers' Company, and there is no entry whatever of that work there. It is possible that the title page in which Gibbons is described as "Late Organist of the Chapel Royal" was a second edition and was printed after his death. That is the only thing I can suggest. This is likely to remain a puzzle so far as I can see.

Mr. ARNOLD F. JONES: We have all felt that the music we have listened to is very beautiful, and we want to give our old composers the high position which they deserve. But it is a question as to how far our emotional sense at the present day really responds to this old music. I am not saying this with any thought of decrying the beauty of the music. It seems to me that in the general attitude towards it there are two camps. There is the first camp—I am not including Dr. Fellowes—represented by such enthusiasts as Mr. Dolmetsch and Mrs. Wodehouse with their antique music, who seem to wish to make us believe that their music is superior to the music written at the present day, or rather to the music written within, say, the last hundred years. I think that we should try and put things in a proper perspective, for this attitude of exaggerated praise tends to make the people in the other camp reject their music as "dull." It is not dull; it is very, very beautiful; at the same time I think we must be content to feel that this music really satisfies only a very small part of our musical emotions, but it fills a niche that is not filled by any other music.

This morning I happened to miss the train at Charing Cross to which I was taking my small boy; and so we spent the time waiting for the next train by visiting the National Gallery. We went into the rooms where are shown the comparatively modern paintings, such as the Constables and Turners, and my boy thoroughly enjoyed looking at them; they were real live pictures, and meant something to him, even though as old as Constable and Turner. Then we wandered into the Italian rooms, and, of course, we found them



very beautiful. But somehow, we felt their lack of power to waken any great emotional response, and we could not feel quite in living sympathy with these old Italian painters as we did, for instance, with Turner. I think one has somewhat the same sort of feeling in regard to this old music.

Dr. Fellowes mentioned one little incident which took place at the Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club. I happen to be a member of that Club, and I wish to dissociate myself from all connection with the incident!

Dr. FELLOWES: Mr. Jones has carried us into deep waters in speaking of a subject which is not quite relevant to the present lecture, but which, nevertheless, is profoundly interesting. First of all let me say as one who is interested in Tudor music, that the instrumental music of that period must be regarded as experimental; Byrd and Gibbons were writing chamber music a century and a half before Haydn. But they laid the foundations of chamber music and that was a very great achievement. The foundation was well and truly laid, but the glorious edifice reared thereon by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and the rest was yet to come. In regard to the Tudor instrumental music we clearly say that it was only experimental. But the vocal music of the period reached the highest possible pitch of development along its own particular line; these composers raised a perfect and beautiful edifice upon the foundations that were laid for them by the people who lived a century or so earlier.

All composers, great and small, have written some dull music. If music sounds dull there may be three possible explanations. It may be the composer's fault; again it may be the interpreter's fault in giving a dull rendering of the music. Once again the listener may be a person of dull intelligence.

I should like Mr. Jones to marshal half a dozen people who say that Tudor music is dull and let them hear the English Singers sing Wilbye's *Stay*, *Corydon* or Byrd's *Ave verum* and if they vote these dull they must be classed as dull people themselves. But this music has in the past earned the reputation of being dull because it was so generally sung in a dull manner; it used to be sung at too low a pitch and too slow. If you take a piece of fabric and look at it through a powerful microscope you will find it coarse, you can only see the threads, there is no beauty in it at all. If you look at the thing as a whole in the ordinary, normal way, as intended by the one who worked it, then you find it is in reality something very beautiful. In the same way if you take a piece of music and play it very slowly then you fail

to appreciate it and may vote it dull. But put it into focus, then you get the thing as a whole and find it beautiful.

An interesting experiment can be made by playing Byrd's "Short" Magnificat as slow as it will go on the gramophone, it sounds extraordinarily like it used to sound in Cathedrals in old days, and the very same record is beautiful at the proper speed and pitch. If there is an isolated piece of Tudor music that is dull, and there certainly are such pieces, say so frankly; admit that it is not good enough and put it on one side. There will be plenty left.

Mr. JEFFREY PULVER: It would probably interest instrumental musicians to know to what extent this Viol Fantasia has been transposed.

Dr. FELLOWES: The quartet has been transposed up a fourth to bring the viola part within its range. It is curiously written. It is described as being "for double bass," by which is meant—for two bass instruments. I think it is wise as a rule to transpose this music up for modern instruments. Gibbons's three-part fantasies I have kept at the same pitch in my recent edition.

Mr. PULVER: The necessity for transposing viol music is due largely to the enormous compass of the old instruments. The downward range of the tenor viol, for example, went far beyond the lowest note of the modern viola.

Dr. FELLOWES indicated assent.

The vote of thanks proposed by the Chairman was carried by acclamation.

The Proceedings then terminated.

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N.B.—The singers were members of the Morley College choir, conducted by Miss Jane Joseph. The string players were the lecturer, Mrs. F. G. Joseph, Miss Irene Bonnett and Mrs. Edward Street.

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POSTSCRIPT.—A few details in this Paper have been slightly modified in my "Orlando Gibbons: a short account of his life and work" (Clarendon Press), published a few months after this Paper was read.

E.H.F.