J. STAINER.

THE

CRUCIFIXION

ONE SHILLING & SIXPENCE.

LONDON: NOVELLO, EWER & CO.

BACH
PRODUCED AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL, 1891.

VENI, CREATOR SPIRITUS

PARAPHRASED BY

JOHN DRYDEN

SET TO MUSIC FOR

CHORUS, SOLO QUARTET (AD LIB.), AND ORCHESTRA

BY

A. C. MACKENZIE

(Or. 46).


THE TIMES.

The setting of the words is admirably designed, the choric material is developed with great skill, and the whole work is in keeping with true devotional feeling. It is carried on continuously from the opening prelude, through several beautiful episodes in which the employment of a solo quartet is recommended though not insisted on by the composer, to a final fugato of wonderful interest and effect. That it should be rather better fitted for church performance than for the concert room is not necessarily a drawback to sound and scholarly a piece of work cannot fail to make a deep impression, if only by its healthy avoidance of all truisms of sentimentality. The orchestration, through very skilful, is not a feature of such paramount importance that the substitution of an organ accompaniment need be dreaded on the score of effect.

DAILY TELEGRAPH.

We know him well as a composer of the romantic school, we now see him in the eye and gown of the learned pedant, but not in the usual sense, of the learned pedant. Counterpoint is here a means, in the hands of a master, to an end about and beyond itself; that is the true use of counterpoint, which per se is only so much "ponderous brass and tinkling cymbals." . . . The finale of the work, a prolonged fugato, with a more important episode for solo voices, is a climax of which any composer might be proud. Indeed, there are few creative musicians of the day who could take a theme and develop it as Dr. Mackenzie with great perseverance and greater skill here works out one of those distant subjects of which Handel was so fond. This splendid effort covers a work which should meet with instant acceptance throughout the country wherever noble and dignified sacred music has admirers.

STANDARD.

Dr. Mackenzie’s latest choral work is homogeneous in structure, and, as the programme annotator says," belongs to "the solid, dignified choral school, which best accords with English ideas of what religious music should be." This view received confirmation from the manner in which the chorus fulfilled their duties this evening; the attack being splendid, and the general precision unfailing throughout.

DAILY NEWS.

The Chiarina is for the most part in the contrapuntal use of music, and in its manner and sentiment; but the composer has obviously endeavoured throughout to establish a close alliance between the music and the text, and the result is a work which, although it may not contain anything particularly novel in design or startling in character, is nevertheless an admirable example of sacred art. Among its happiest features are the setting of the second stanzas, "O source of unceasing light," alternating for a trio of solos and chorus, and with highly effective orchestration; a massive four-part chorus at the words "Proceeding Spirit our defence," and the finale "Immortal honour, endless fame," which is by far the most important number of the Cantata . . . If only for the sake of this fugato, a magnificent example of absolute musicianship, Dr. Mackenzie’s new composition deserves to be taken into favour by choral societies in every part of the country. Its success this evening was unbounded, and at the close of a capital performance the composer, who himself conducted, was twice recalled and heartily cheered by both choir and audience.

MORNING POST.

The treatment of the subject, as might be expected from a musician of the attainments of the composer, is both thoughtful and dignified. The parts are vocal and instrumental, and the effect gained is noble and satisfying without any resort to strain or strainness.

DAILY CHRONICLE.

It affords another instance of the skill with which Dr. Mackenzie attains the loftiest heights, and holds the attention of the listener by means that must be approved by all who are earnest advocates of the dignity of their art. I am inclined to think that in the choral way the composer of "The Air of Shakes" has done nothing better since the series of choruses associated with the procession of the Ark than the concluding portion of the hymn, commencing with the line "Immortal honour, endless fame." The writing here is massive, full of force, and at the same time thoroughly in consonance with the imposing sentiment. It would be difficult indeed to name any modern composition of its kind that can be followed with greater assurance of comprehension of the composer’s views.

DAILY GRAPHIC.

We can freely praise the choral scholarship, the unfolding earnestness, the dignity, and the strength which characterise Dr. Mackenzie’s new Cantata. He is happy in the contrapuntal passages which connect the different sections of the work, and he has kept his best work for the end. The concluding section of the last chorus, after the presentation of the fugato, is really fine music right on to the close of the work.

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