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THE ORCHESTRA.

VOLUME I.

TECHNIQUE OF THE INSTRUMENTS.

BY

EBENEZER PROUT, B.A. (London).

*Hon. Mus.Doc. Trin. Coll. Dublin and Edinburgh,
and Professor of Music in the University of Dublin.*



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PREFACE.

At length, after two and a half years of arduous work, the author has the satisfaction of offering to students the first part of his promised treatise on the Orchestra. The delay in its appearance has been due, partly to increasing pressure of professional engagements, but far more to the laborious preliminary investigations necessary to enable him to do some measure of justice to his subject.

In order that he might have at hand, when required, suitable examples illustrating every point that it might be needful to refer to, the author, before writing a single line of the text, examined nearly every orchestral score in his library. He consulted many hundreds of scores by the great masters, varying in length from a few pages to six or seven hundred, or even more. He made a list of some fourteen hundred passages for quotation or reference—far more, of course, than it would be possible to make use of, because, without such a list at his side, he knew that he would probably waste hours in hunting for a particular illustration when he required it. The result has fully justified his method of procedure; for the actual writing of the volume has occupied a comparatively short time. The preliminary work, on the other hand, required more than a year and a half to complete it.

In planning the present work, it appeared advisable to deal first with the instruments of the orchestra individually, leaving till later the important subject of their combination, though this is of necessity incidentally shown to some extent in the examples given. After two preliminary chapters, treating of the qualifications needful to the student, of the composition of the modern orchestra, and of the arrangement of the score, the various departments of the orchestra, strings, wind, and percussion, are taken in turn, and the mechanism, character, and special features of each instrument explained in detail.

Without going deeply into scientific problems, it has been necessary to touch from time to time on questions of acoustics ; for otherwise it would have been impossible to explain many points connected with the technique of the instruments. No further knowledge of acoustics is required than the student can obtain from such a work as Mr. Sedley Taylor's 'Sound and Music.'

In dealing with the different instruments, the author has endeavoured above all to be practical—with what success readers must judge. Many of the hints here given to students have been furnished to the writer by orchestral players, and much is to be learned from these gentlemen by those who have the opportunity of associating with them.

It will be seen that no mention is made in this volume of such instruments as are peculiar to military bands. Only those are spoken of here which, with more or less frequency, make their appearance in the regular orchestra. Scoring for a military band is a special subject, which lies apart from the scope of this work. Should space permit, (which, however, appears doubtful,) a supplemental chapter on this subject may possibly be added to the next volume. In any case, the present work, being a treatise on the orchestra proper, would be complete without it.

It will be seen that, although the organ is enumerated in Chapter II. among orchestral instruments, no mention is made of it later in the volume. The omission is intentional. What it is needful that the student should know about its technique will be found in Chapter XIII. of *Applied Forms*, while the subject of its combination with the orchestra will be dealt with in the second part of the present work.

The author's experience as a teacher has convinced him that many students do not know some of the instruments of the orchestra by sight,—cannot, for instance, distinguish between an oboe and a clarinet. It has therefore been thought advisable to give illustrations of most of the instruments spoken of. In a few cases this has been unnecessary, either because, as with the harp, everybody knows the shape of it, or because, as in the case of the serpent, the instrument is no longer in use.

The author offers no apology for the large number of musical examples contained in this volume. He has had more than one reason for introducing so many. In the first place,

he believes that nothing is so stimulating to the imagination of the student as the examination of passages from full scores. When a lad, his own enthusiasm for the art of orchestration—an enthusiasm which has never since abated—was first aroused by studying the few and short passages quoted in Hamilton's 'Catechism of Writing for the Orchestra'; and long before he had a large collection of scores of his own, he was familiar with every example to be seen in Berlioz's 'Instrumentation.' The author believes that that which was so beneficial to himself will also be found useful to the student.

Another great advantage in such short extracts as those here given is, that they are of much assistance in enabling the student thoroughly to master score-reading. If he has before him the score of a symphony or an opera, his attention is liable to be constantly distracted by the music as a whole; he will probably skim over passages to get the general impression of the melody or harmony, to say nothing of the chance of his being utterly lost in an elaborate score. But with short passages of only a few bars, in which there are few or no empty staves, his attention is concentrated, not distracted; and he will probably study these bars until he has at least a fairly good idea of the effect intended by the composer. Such a volume as the present, in which the effect of the examples in the earlier chapters is for the most part by no means difficult to realize, offers the student a graduated course of score-reading, such as he cannot possibly obtain by studying the works from which the various quotations are taken.

In the selection of examples two considerations have guided the author. Firstly, such illustrations have been chosen as best showed the special features of each instrument separately. In many cases important solo passages are given, and though the combination of the various instruments is touched on from time to time, no attempt has been made to deal with it systematically; this branch of the study belongs properly to the second part of the work. The other point is, that the author has tried, as far as possible, to avoid giving quotations from scores which were likely to be easily accessible to the student; such, in most cases, are only referred to. For the same reason, comparatively few examples are given which are to be found in the large treatises of Gevaert and Hofmann, though these books, being expensive, are not in the possession of all students. With the exception of some half dozen