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Francis Hueffer (1845–89) was born and studied music in Germany, but moved to London in 1869 to pursue a career as a critic and writer on music. He edited the series ‘The Great Musicians’ for Novello and Co., was music critic of *The Times*, and was an early advocate and interpreter to the British of Wagner. His *Musical Studies* of 1880 is a collection of essays on Beethoven, Chopin, French opera, Schopenhauer (‘among the numerous German metaphysicians, the only one who has said anything worth listening to about music’), and of course Wagner: an article on the Ring written before the first performance of the complete cycle, and an account of that performance at Bayreuth. The collection finishes with the provocative essay ‘The chances of English opera’ (1879), which contrasts the lively opera scene in the rest of Europe with the lack of a tradition of English opera.

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A Series of Contributions

FRANCIS HUEFFER



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MUSICAL STUDIES

A Series of Contributions

BY

FRANCIS HUEFFER

AUTHOR OF

“RICHARD WAGNER AND THE MUSIC OF THE FUTURE,” ETC.

EDINBURGH: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK

1880

P R E F A C E.



THE character of this book is sufficiently explained by its title. It is, and pretends to be, nothing but a collection of articles on various musical topics republished from the newspapers and magazines in each case specified. In order to preserve their temporary character, alterations of the contents, and even of the form, of the essays have been, with few exceptions, purposely avoided. Whether their republication is warranted by the matter and manner of these essays it is not my province to decide. But to those who object on principle to the perpetuation in book form of such fugitive pieces—and the author himself is not wholly free from such a prejudice—it may be answered, that the present volume is part of an unmistakable movement in modern literature. The vast development of periodical publications within the last quarter of a century has drawn the best literary and scientific workers into its vortex. Few

authors nowadays can withstand the temptation of the immediate and vast publicity conferred by the prestige of a first-class Review; fewer can materially afford to give years of, in most cases, ill-requited labour to the composition of a book. Books, in the proper sense of the word, that is, organisms developed from a central idea, are in consequence becoming rarer and rarer in our literature, and collections of essays take their place. The influence of such a system on the reading public is too obvious to require explanation, supply and demand following the same law of reciprocity in literature as in other merchandise. If even illustrious scientific men give way to this general tendency of the age, the musical critic may claim the same indulgence for his modest offering. The æsthetical literature regarding music in this country is indeed so scanty, and so wholly out of proportion with the general and serious interest of late taken in the art, that any earnest and conscientious discussion of musical topics should not be wholly unwelcome. And to those two epithets, if to no others, the author believes his work to be entitled.

Before concluding these remarks, it is necessary to add a word of explanation as to the appearance in a book of musical essays of an article on Schopen-

PREFACE.

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hauer, the pessimist philosopher. Schopenhauer is, amongst the numerous German metaphysicians, the only one who has said anything worth listening to about music, and in whose system the art plays a prominent, one may say, vital part. Moreover, the results of his speculations have been essentially adopted by the greatest living composer, Richard Wagner. In these days, when it has become a common affectation to speak of music as a science, and when the monstrous proposition is started that composers, as composers, would be benefited by knowing the exact number of vibrations required for a particular note, musicians and amateurs may not unfairly be expected to show some interest in the metaphysical questions connected with the art.

THE AUTHOR.

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