

THE ORCHESTRA

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649195053

The orchestra by G. Francesco Malipiero & Eric Blom

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G. FRANCESCO MALIPIERO & ERIC BLOM

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11206 2/5 17

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BY

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Translated from the Italian by ERIC BLOM

PRICE 1/6 NET CASH

J. & W. CHESTER LTD.

London :—11, Great Marlborough St., W. 1 Genève :—9-11, Place de la Fusterie.

Seuls Dépositaires :

France :

ROUART, LEROLLE & CIE,
29, Rue d'Astorg, PARIS.

Holland :

BROEKMANS & VAN POPPEL,
92, Baerlestraat, AMSTERDAM.

Belgique :

MAISON CHESTER,
86, Rue de la Montagne, BRUXELLES.

Italie :

PIZZI & CIE,
Via Zamboni 1, BOLOGNA.

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ML455
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CONTENTS.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

PREFACE

| | Page |
|---|------|
| I. THE ORIGIN OF THE ORCHESTRA - | 9 |
| II. THE ORCHESTRA FROM BEETHOVEN TO WAGNER - - - | 16 |
| III. THE MODERN ORCHESTRA - - | 24 |
| IV. VOICE AND ORCHESTRA IN THE MUSIC-DRAMA - - - | 34 |

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

In acceding to the publishers' request to translate this fascinating little book, I knew that, apart from accepting a most interesting task, I was laying myself open to a certain amount of controversy with the author: a fact that only increased my alacrity in setting to work on this English version.

The composer of the "Sette Canzoni," the "Impressioni dal vero," and many other works that have helped to make of the modern Italian school so remarkable a movement, is far too original and trenchant a personality, both as a musician and as a writer, not to raise some differences of opinion on certain points; but it is precisely this fact that makes the present work one of exceptional interest.

The faithful transcription from one language into another of thoughts of so subjective a nature is fraught with some dangers: they are all too easily coloured by the views of a translator who is not content with a purely mechanical literal rendering of every word. The author has been good enough, in many cases, to accept the liberties I have taken with his text in trying to convey his meaning rather than his exact words—a proceeding often necessitated by the varying shades of subtlety between the two languages—but wherever he has been unable to agree with my version, I have yielded to his superior right to claim full responsibility by reverting to a closer adherence to the original.

A book on the orchestra by a writer who is himself one of the most remarkable orchestrators of our time, cannot fail to appeal to all who are interested in the subject; but it should do more than that, for the shrewd and illuminating observations on music generally with which the little work is tightly packed, make it a most valuable addition to every music-lover's library.

ERIC BLOM.

London, September, 1921.

PREFACE.

"Plutarch despises those philosophers who urge us to action but who fail to demonstrate by their works, or their precepts, how the advice is to be carried out; he compares them to a man whose lamp needs refilling with oil, but who rests content to stir it with a small metal point in order that it may still give out light though lacking oil.

"I have often reflected on this very admirable precept, and it has induced me to discourse on the Art of the Goldsmith."

Thus spoke Benvenuto Cellini in the preface to his "Treatise on the Art of the Goldsmith."

I have taken the liberty of borrowing from him Plutarch's concept, in order to explain how I came to write about the Orchestra. This little book is not meant to be a Treatise, it is merely a collection of observations which I could have developed on a much vaster scale, if only I had had the desire to do so.

G. F. M.