Donald Francis Tovey

The Classics of Music

Talks, Essays, and Other Writings Previously Uncollected

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Introduction

I

In *Essays and Lectures on Music* (1949), the last of the posthumous volumes of Tovey's writings prepared for the press by Hubert Foss, the editor declared that, with the exception of his letters, 'it may be expected that no more words from Tovey's pen will ever be published'. So some explanation is needed for the appearance now of *The Classics of Music*. Essentially, it is that the picture of the range and evolution of Tovey's musical thought painted by the volumes hitherto issued by the Oxford University Press and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music is incomplete in several respects. For example, to take the case of the new 'essays in musical analysis' which appear here: the six well-known volumes of essays bearing that title were collected and published some time before Tovey's death, and as a result there are many later essays—and some early ones which Tovey and Foss overlooked for the six-volume set or which Foss alone passed over for his compilation *Chamber Music* of 1944—which deserve a place in the canon and indeed fill some of the more obvious gaps in it. Then Tovey's work as a journalist, restricted to two fairly brief periods in his career as it was, has up till now gone largely unregarded: protected in large part by the anonymity in those days of contributors to *The Times* and its *Literary Supplement*; but these journalistic pieces—like the critical essays on various composers which Foss suppressed when he assembled the *Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 1944—are worth restoring to the light of day for historiographical reasons, quite apart from the illumination which they shed on their various subjects. Tovey's broadcast talks, still remembered by some listeners of the older generation, are more problematical, but deserve to be printed in part at least. It is true that many of them were more music than talk, that their musical illustrations (as opposed to the whole works often performed during them) are for the most part left unidentified in the surviving scripts, and that the material of some of them is considered by Tovey in other places. Yet a number of topics—Beethoven's C minor Variations, for example, or the function of memory in musical perception—are dealt with in these talks either uniquely or more fully than elsewhere, and they are surely worth preserving on that account. Finally quite a number of little-known essays and lectures appear here which have not hitherto been collected and reprinted (indeed, in several cases

not printed at all). Some of them, dating from Tovey's early years, point the direction in which his thinking about music was to develop; others discuss composers (for instance Hassler, Schütz, Domenico Scarlatti, and Debussy) little treated in the books already published. Among the lectures printed here for the first time are two series: the 1925 Cramb Lectures given at Glasgow University, which had been thought lost but in fact survive almost complete, and eight lectures on Beethoven from 1922, which contain a good deal of material not to be found in *Beethoven* (1944), developing and further illustrating the thought in that unfinished book about the composer whose work was Tovey's deepest concern.

With so much previously uncollected material of significance and interest on hand, I have here adopted a robust policy of inclusiveness, so as to make available in *The Classics of Music* all Tovey's surviving substantial public utterances (written or spoken) which have not already been put into print by the Associated Board or Oxford University Press. Of course this leads to some repetitiousness both within this volume and between it and Tovey's other published writings. It may be observed, for instance, that he dealt with 'tonality' on several other occasions: in the Beethoven book, in *Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* and in *Essays and Lectures*. But in those pieces he was writing for a more sophisticated readership. In the broadcast talks on the subject printed here he cannot use diagrams in the same way; so he exploits analogies of a kind more likely to appeal to his 'ordinary listener'. On the same subject in the Eight Lectures on Beethoven, he gives many more examples taken from Beethoven's work than he does elsewhere. In fact his various approaches to it are complementary, and each is furnished with its own particular insights. Tovey's writings pose the same problems in this respect as those of the Augustan critic Roger North, for he too returned to the same topics; and I have thought it better, as Foss did, not to destroy the integrity of each statement of Tovey's by unnecessary excisions of material duplicated in other places. In any case one does not wish to provoke such things as Helene Hanff's 'hideous nightmares involving huge monsters in academic robes carrying large bloody butcher knives labelled Excerpt, Selection, Passage and Abridged', nor to emulate the 'Chicago Pork-packer' who only earned Tovey's contempt for his pie-making when he cut lengthy passages from the essay on Wagner's operas in the 1929 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.[1]

Of course the contents of *The Classics of Music* vary a great deal in quality and in the polish of their presentation. But an impromptu talk or unscripted lecture is not a deeply pondered essay and should not be considered as such; form and matter are one in both music and writings about music. Bernard Shaw's musical writings have quite properly been published in their entirety: good, bad, and indifferent, profound or silly. So have Evelyn Waugh's letters. One can imagine what either of those gentlemen would have thought had their observations been cut and pruned into neat little bits of literary topiary. Tovey is a figure of

[1] H. Hanff, *84 Charing Cross Road*, in *The Helene Hanff Omnibus* (London, 1993), 219; and see pp. xiv and 317 below.

comparable stature and is as easily capable as either of them of shrugging off his own inequalities. It is true that he relied a great deal on his incredible powers of memory and that this inevitably resulted in mistakes.[2] Also, sometimes the information he had available to him was erroneous or has now been superseded. It must be remembered too that he is often purveying the wisdom of more than half a century ago: sometimes indeed of a full century, as in the note on the trumpet in the 1902 essay on Bach's Second Brandenburg Concerto. Further, Tovey disclaimed any real interest in biography: in the composer-articles for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* the biographical material is often scanty or second hand. The value of these articles lies in the critiques they offer of their subjects' compositions. (Only on Beethoven did Tovey take the biographical side of the article seriously; as a result the *Britannica* piece on him is the only full treatment of 'life and works' that Tovey provided of the composer he most revered.) Again, though he was one of the most perceptive critics of his day, Tovey was not infallible. It is slightly comical perhaps to find him and his colleague Hans Gál coming down in the last essay of all reprinted here in favour of the partially spurious Joseph Haydn Symphony 'Op. X No. 2' (which reminds us of the dispute over the authorship of his D major Cello Concerto). But how many would do any better without Hoboken to hand? Tovey was right far more often than he was wrong; and to present him whole, warts and all, is more historiographically just than would be a selection of the writings of the man who was, after all, by far the most considerable English writer on music in the first half of the twentieth century.

II

Tovey was a man of prodigious gifts, both musically and otherwise. His life has been dealt with thoroughly and sympathetically by Mary Grierson in her *Donald Francis Tovey: A Biography Based on Letters* of 1952. Outwardly it was a calm and not especially eventful life. His early cloistered years, spent under the watchful tutelage of Miss Sophie Weisse (who was well aware that she had an extraordinary talent in her charge), were followed by a period at Oxford as a Nettleship Scholar: the scholarship's intention at that time being 'to enable a student of music to spend some years at Balliol College before completing his musical training or pursuing his profession'. Then came about fourteen years of what was in effect freelance work as a musician, during which he travelled in Austria and Germany and was much involved as a pianist in solo recitals and chamber music in Britain and overseas. He was composing and lecturing too, writing some of his most erudite essays, and contributing to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. From 1914 until his death in 1940 he held the Reid Chair of Music at Edinburgh University. (His candidacy had been supported, *inter alios*, by the Master of the King's Music, the Director of the Royal College of Music, the Editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the Waynflete Professor of Philosophy in

[2] For the treatment of these in this edition, see sections II and III of the note on Editorial Policy above.

the University of Oxford, and the Master of Balliol.) At Edinburgh he founded the Reid Symphony Orchestra. He conducted most of its concerts and played piano concertos with it for the rest of his life, finding this work perhaps the most rewarding aspect of his professional career. Since the Faculty of Music at Edinburgh then only taught in the autumn and spring terms, this left him time to travel; and during the inter-war years he visited Europe frequently, and also lectured and performed in the United States.

Tovey regarded himself primarily as a musician; he disliked and disclaimed the titles of musicologist and scholar—though not to the extent that, as a young man of 24, after a visit to research at the British Museum where he found working difficult, he should not send some suggestions to the Librarian for simplifying procedures![3] He saw his edition and completion of Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge* as his only claim to musical scholarship, and his other writings as a process of popularization in which he said that he was really working 'for people's grandchildren'.[4] In this to some extent he deceived himself. As this volume shows, his written and spoken utterances span a very wide range, from the broadcasts and some of the essays aimed at the music-loving public to lectures for an academic community, and analyses and commentaries which are nothing if not works of scholarship. But it was certainly the experience of music in performance ('in being' he might have said) that most concerned him. As his pupil Henry Havergal put it, 'he didn't care two hoots for an erudition divorced from practical music'; and E. J. Dent rightly observed that he wanted the whole concert-going public to share in his perceptions of music and in the excitement of their discovery.[5] Making music was the real business of Tovey's life; everything else was secondary. But his contribution to the musical culture in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century was enormously enriched by his multifarious activities not only as pianist, conductor, and composer, but also as editor, writer, broadcaster, scholar, and teacher. Each one of these activities impinged upon the others, and it was this, coupled with an alert and enquiring mind in several other disciplines, that made him not only such a complete musician but gave to his scholarship its extraordinary depth and breadth.

III

Miss Weisse brought Tovey up in the belief that he had the makings of a virtuoso pianist of the first rank. He gave his first recital in 1886. By 1892—he was then 17—he had studied the Goldberg Variations of Bach, and a year later he added the Diabelli and Prometheus Variations of Beethoven and the Sonatas Opp. 53, 101, 106, and 109, as well as Brahms's Handel Variations. Thus from his earliest years he showed a preoccupation with works of the greatest magni-

[3] DFT–British Museum, 1899.

[4] E. H. Cameron, 'Personal Recollections of Donald Francis Tovey', unpublished memoir (typescript in the Tovey Archive, Reid Library, University of Edinburgh), 24.

[5] H. Havergal, 'Donald Francis Tovey: Musician and Teacher', Cramb Lectures 1963: University of Glasgow, unpublished typescript, 11. 9; E. J. Dent, 'Donald Tovey', *Music Review*, 3 (1942), 1–9, p. 3.

tude, not to mention formidable technical difficulty. He was to play them frequently in his recitals in London, Berlin, and New York; and some of them were also the subjects of the huge essays written around 1900–1, for instance the studies of Beethoven's Opp. 81*a* and 106 reprinted here. The combination of essays and works on such a scale defeated some of the critics, who found such programme-building fatally tedious and pretentious. Others greatly admired his printed musical analyses, and his playing too, which they found sensitive and responsive to the musical and structural demands of the pieces he played, and always of great tonal beauty.

Tovey's demands upon his audiences, and indeed upon himself, long remained extreme. For example, as part of the Historical Concerts series at Edinburgh University he gave 'Six Recitals of the Pianoforte Works of Beethoven' in the winter of 1916–17, which were later repeated at the University of Birmingham on Friday afternoons between 24 October and 28 November 1919. The programmes were as follows:

I Sonatas Opp. 7; 31 No. 2; 54; 57, and the Bagatelles, Op. 126.

II Sonatas Opp. 2 No. 2; 27 No. 2; 31 No. 3; 101, and the 'Venni amore' Variations, WoO 65.

III Sonatas Opp. 10 No. 3; 78; 106, and the Prometheus Variations, Op. 35.

IV Sonatas Opp. 27 No. 1; 31 No. 1; 53; 109, the Andante favori, WoO 57, and the C minor Variations, WoO 80.

V Sonatas Opp. 10 No. 2; 90; 110, and the Diabelli Variations, Op. 120.

VI Sonatas Opp. 13; 28; 81*a*; 111; the Fantasia, Op. 77, and the 'La stessa, la stessissima' Variations, WoO 73.

Interestingly, he would dearly have liked to play the virtuoso concertos such as Tchaikovsky's First in B flat minor, but he was never asked to do so in the early part of his career, and he did not perform them later in his own concerts at Edinburgh. He did, however, play such big works there as the Brahms Second Concerto and Dohnányi's *Variations on a Nursery Theme*; and of course throughout his career he performed an enormous amount of ensemble music: with Joseph Joachim and the Joachim Quartet, Mühlfeld, Casals and Suggia, the d'Arányi sisters, Adolf Busch, Louis Fleury, Frank Bridge, Percy Such, and many others.

It is difficult to know what his playing was really like in his prime, from 1900 to the late 1920s. By the early 1930s he was already suffering from arthritis (which he called 'gout') in his hands and feet, which severely affected his technique and pedalling; but he never really stopped playing, and performed several Mozart concertos, such as the D minor K. 466, as well as Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth Concertos, in the last years of his life, when his technique was getting very smudgy indeed. The BBC no longer wished him to play his own musical illustrations to talks after 1935, and surviving tapes of some of these justify their decision. (On one of them Tovey also sings—vilely out of tune—a passage from Brahms's Requiem; but he never claimed to be a singer.) A few recordings

survive from these late years, including a performance on the piano of his completion of Contrapunctus XIV from *Die Kunst der Fuge* and, with Adila Fachiri, the first movement of Bach's Violin Sonata in A major (BWV 1015) and the whole of Beethoven's Violin Sonata in G major, Op. 96.[6] Modern listeners would probably find these performances somewhat sentimental in tone and indulgent in their use of rubato. The ensemble is not particularly good; even the rhythm (for example, the triplets in bars 47–8 of the first movement of the Beethoven) is somewhat imprecise, and the doubling of the bass-line in octaves at the end of Contrapunctus XIV sounds very nineteenth century and Busonish. But one should remember that some of the finest musicians of the day held Tovey in great veneration as a performer; Casals said that any artist should feel honoured to stand on the same platform with him.[7] Positive critical opinion could perhaps be represented by the response of Richard Aldridge, music critic of the *New York Times*, to a typically ambitious American concert in 1928: 'Donald Francis Tovey might have taken as his motto for his recital last evening in the Town Hall one which is inscribed over one of the great music schools of Europe, "Res severa verum gaudium"—the severe thing is the true joy. He presented a program such as perhaps no pianist has ever presented before in this town; one which made the highest demands upon the hearer's receptivity and understanding no less than on the pianist's knowledge and technical powers, but which amply rewarded those who yielded them. Tovey is a learned man, a great scholar. As a pianist he is an artist fired with the beauty and poetry of the material on which he is working, and armed with the power to make it glow and pulse with eloquence: clearly, lucidly, sanely. Tovey's playing was a notable achievement. It was a noble and convincing performance. On the whole, the recital was of unique, unhackneyed character, enjoyed by such as were willing to concentrate attention unusually and forego the easier way to pleasure.'[8]

If it is unfair for us to judge Tovey's piano-playing on so little direct evidence, with regard to his conducting judgement is impossible since there are no extant recordings at all. It seems his technique was not altogether adequate, which led to occasional breakdowns in performance; but he was not complacent about it. When his old friend Fritz Busch visited Edinburgh in 1934 to receive an honorary doctorate, Tovey asked him to come early: 'it is really extremely urgent that you give me some advice concerning various technical aspects of my conducting.'[9] Later, he remarked that he still noticed 'many uncertainties' in his beat, though he did not think that it had reached 'Furtwängler's state of Holy Trinity vibrato'. His criticism of other conductors' work was generally limited to purely musical considerations, though he did feel that Sibelius should not conduct his own works as 'he gets slower & slower & explores every bit of

[6] See Stewart Deas, 'Donald Francis Tovey: The Creative Scholar', *Recorded Sound*, 59 (1975), 456–60 (with discography).

[7] Interview with Ethel Smyth, *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Mar. 1936.

[8] From an advertisement panel placed by Tovey's American agent in *Musical Courier*, 12 Jan. 1928.

[9] DFT–F. Busch, Feb. 1934.

lichen on the bark of the first tree he has planted'.[10] But whatever the defects of Tovey's own conducting (and of the Reid Orchestra's playing),[11] many of the better informed admired the integrity and shaping of his performances; and there were golden opinions of his abilities as an orchestral and choral trainer. Vaughan Williams's reaction, in a letter to Tovey after stepping in at the last minute to conduct a performance of his own *Sea Symphony*, was: 'Both your chorus and orchestra are so *musical*—and I know to whom they owe *that*.'[12] Players, and the students who attended as part of their degree studies, gained much insight from his rehearsals—though these were not always the calm and dignified affairs, all sweetness and light, one might suppose them to have been. The clarinettist in the Reid Orchestra was an Italian player, Enrico Bernini. In his youth he had played under Verdi; and when Tovey asked him what Verdi was like, Bernini replied that he was 'a tall man with a red beard and a very bad temper just like you'.[13]

However, the Reid Concerts, given mainly in the Usher Hall, did not draw large audiences, even when Tovey had some of the greatest musicians of the time as soloists: Casals, Suggia, Sammons, Beatrice Harrison, Jelly d'Arányi, Adolf Busch, Fanny Davies, Dohnányi, Wittgenstein, Horszowski, Serkin, Goossens. There would be a thin attendance of Edinburgh society (mostly Tovey's friends) in the grand circle, an upper circle pretty well peopled with students and the like, and acres of uninhabited stalls. When Tovey was shown the photograph of the orchestra which appears as Plate XIII of this volume, he simply remarked, 'It's very good of the audience.'[14] He felt the need for the patronage of the snobs, if only for their money. As it was, he felt not merely their indifference but their active opposition too. Perhaps, as Dent implied, he was wasted in Edinburgh. ('There are many passages in his writings which suggest that he was surrounded by people of more than average stupidity and old-fashioned prejudice.'[15]) And this in spite of his ambition to create a local orchestra comparable in quality with the admired Meiningers,[16] his great concern for the welfare of his orchestral players, and his declared wish to help the cause of Scottish music.

Relatively few performances of Tovey's own compositions were given in Edinburgh (though those few did include the première performances of *The Bride of Dionysus* and the Cello Concerto). In his early days before the First

[10] DFT–Weisse, 25 Apr. 1934.

[11] 'The orchestra is playing magnificently, in spite of some nerve-racking weaknesses in one or two aged & deaf wind-players' (DFT–Weisse, 6 Nov. 1937).

[12] Vaughan Williams–DFT, 10 Dec. 1938.

[13] Cameron, 'Personal Recollections', 9–10.

[14] Ibid. p. 16; cf. DFT–Weisse, 19 Oct. 1936. The Reid Orchestra's management had to ring alarm bells on occasion: 'It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the continuance of these Concerts ultimately depends *entirely* on public support, and that only a generous increase in this support, which at present is far from adequate, can enable the Committee to carry on a series which has fully established its claim to be one of the outstanding features of Edinburgh musical life' (from the coming-season publicity leaflets for both 1926 and 1927).

[15] Dent, 'Donald Tovey', 9.

[16] He pointed out that the illustrious Meiningen Orchestra came from a town smaller than Edinburgh ('about the size of Moffat'); see p. 757 below.

World War on the other hand, his chamber works had featured prominently in the concerts at 'Northlands' at Englefield Green in Surrey, where Miss Weisse ran her select school, in Tovey's St James's and Chelsea Concerts programmes, and in the Classical Concerts Society series managed by his friend and supporter Edward Speyer. Joachim too had made some of them known in Germany before his death in 1907. Tovey had won the Nettleship Scholarship at Oxford on the strength of a second symphony, written during the period of his studies with Hubert Parry and later suppressed. His Oxford letters are brimming over with ideas for works, many of which never came to fruition. To keep his counterpoint well oiled, he exchanged puzzle canons for several years with F. S. Kelly (later killed in the First World War), just as Brahms and Joachim had done.[17] Composition was certainly important to him at that time and he must have hoped that his pieces would eventually find their own way in the world. But certain things rankled over the years. The Piano Concerto of 1903, which he had first performed with Henry Wood, had been poorly received, and the critics had been deeply incensed by Tovey's huge essay 'The Classical Concerto', in which he had rather unwisely sought to display the superior tradition to which by implication his own concerto, unlike other recent works, belonged. (When the Concerto was broadcast in 1935 it was presumably the memory of this that led to his declining at some length to provide any commentary on it at all.[18]) And a period of coolness between Tovey and Miss Weisse followed on his discovery of the fact that she had been partly responsible for financing the publication of his early works by Schott; he had thought that they had earned their place in the catalogue simply on their own merits and in fair competition with other works. But when publication led to their being better known in mainland Europe, this only served to emphasize their comparative neglect in Britain. As a musical gossip columnist put it in the *Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1913: 'I hear that Mr Donald Tovey, of whom Joachim wrote, only a year or two ago, that "of all musicians now alive Tovey is without any doubt the one who would have interested Brahms the most," is creating a widespread interest in Germany. Casals, the Klingler Quartet, Adolph Busch, Julius Röntgen—distinguished son of a distinguished father—and many more are playing the Tovey chamber music all over the Continent. Does any compatriot of the composer ever look at his music?'

After the Edinburgh appointment, Tovey's development of the Reid Orchestra took up much of his time. Whatever the reasons, he lost confidence in his powers as a composer, the Cello Concerto for Casals being the only large-scale work wholly composed after the Great War. Other ideas came but they were never worked out. In 1937, for example, he was thinking of '*Zuleika*, A Symphonic Prose—dedicated with an open letter to Max Beerbohm', author of

[17] Subjects for canons crop up in letters to several correspondents. Tovey could never resist a contrapuntal challenge, even finding an unlikely counterpoint to the *Art of Fugue* theme in 'We won't go home till morning', stated as the chorale 'Nun zieh'n wir erst gen Morgen heim'; see John Whitfield, 'A Noteworthy Centenary', *Music Teacher*, Dec. 1975, 22–3.

[18] See pp. 214–15 below.

Zuleika Dobson: a jest, no doubt, like his mock-Strauss tone poem *Also Sprach die Reine Vernunft* (or 'Thus Spake Pure Reason').[19] But not a note was set down on paper. As early as 1902 he had begun to find his fluency departing, and other difficulties arose later: in 1925 he was declaring himself 'miserably depressed by trying to begin quite a dozen promising compositions every one of which leads me only into a desperate sense of its utter absence of connexion with what the present-day musician is thinking about. Bach was, of course, in the same situation, but he had a technique & scope which contained practically none of my difficulties, and the producing of his work depended on nobody else's approval, any more than a clergyman's sermons. I daresay I've been pulled down by illness; but I did not expect it was going to be as dismal a failure to get back to composition as I found it just now.'[20] Nine years after that, he was 'disconcerted . . . at finding so little difference' between several of his substantial pieces: 'here are three works dated 1903, 1913 & 1933, my pianoforte concerto, my symphony, & my 'cello concerto, which could never be put into the same programme because several of the main themes have marked features common to all three works!'[21]

In the 1930s the BBC thought about broadcasting some of Tovey's music. There were doubts, however. Adrian Boult observed that 'The position of Tovey as a scholar and as a pianist is very different from his position as a composer, and though I think you would feel that compositions of so eminent a Professor are entitled to special consideration, it is not easy to determine how far in this direction one should go.'[22] In 1929 a BBC sleuth (his initials were DMC) had gone to Edinburgh to hear *The Bride of Dionysus*, the opera on which Tovey had worked from 1907 to 1918. He made a lengthy report. R. C. Trevelyan's book was very poor, he thought, with no idea of dramatic situations or stage effect; the music was all monologues with no sense of progression to any goal and little variety of tone. There was nothing modern in it, nothing of which Beethoven would have disapproved, and it was full of reminiscences of 'Bach, Weber, Wagner (frequently), Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák, and even Sullivan's *Golden Legend* . . . in some places, so obviously reminiscent, that I find myself wondering whether Professor Tovey were not deliberately "pulling our legs". Knowing his whimsical humour as I do, I feel sure that he is capable of that sort of mischief and of carrying it out very deftly.'[23] Even Thomson, the Scottish Regional Director of the BBC, was unwilling to do *The Bride*, bearing in mind 'the risks contingent on Professor Tovey's personality and limitations as a conductor'. It is only fair to mention, however, that there were many who found much that was admirable and beautiful in the opera.

Nevertheless, in 1935 (the year of Tovey's knighthood) the Piano Concerto was broadcast, and two years later the BBC's Programme Committee again concluded that a major work should be given on the air, though none of the members registered any enthusiasm for Tovey's compositions, and Clarence

[19] See Grierson, 106. [20] DFT–Weisse, (?) 1925. [21] DFT–Weisse, 25 Apr. 1934.
[22] Memo, 7 Dec. 1931 in BBC Written Archives: D. F. Tovey/Composer File.
[23] Undated memo, BBC File (as n. 22).

Raybould roundly declared that he had 'never yet been able to find any "music" in this admittedly distinguished man's work'.[24] Still, programme time was found, and the Cello Concerto and parts of *The Bride* were broadcast over the next few years. Tovey had been furious when a proposed transmission of the Concerto with Casals had been withdrawn in 1936; and had written to Boult about it, particularly incensed by the implied insult to Casals, and bitter too at the loss of an opportunity for the work to be commercially recorded.[25] The concerto was eventually broadcast on 17 November 1937, and was introduced by an article on 'Sir Donald Tovey and his Work' in the *Listener* for 10 November written by Tovey's old friend Ernest Walker.

A revaluation of Tovey as a composer is due. His works were by no means universally condemned by the critics, and part of the maltreatment by some of them may be put down to causes other than purely musical ones. His music has been mindlessly criticized for its tonal idiom by those who forget that Dvořák was still alive when Tovey was writing his early chamber works, and that the last of his larger compositions, the Cello Concerto, came out less than a year after the death of Elgar. Stanford told Joachim that 'a composer who writes a [piano] concerto like Tovey's Op. 18 is to be reckoned with', and Stanford was not exactly liberal with his commendations. Casals was a personal friend and the dedicatee of the Cello Concerto; but it is still worth remembering that he looked forward to the first performance as 'la plus importante date de ma vie de musicien', and later declared it to be 'the finest violoncello concerto ever written'.[26]

IV

Of Tovey's work as a teacher little need be, though much could be, said here. Everything he did, outside composition and actual performance, was in a sense educational. In his *Essays in Musical Analysis*, journalism, broadcasts, and *Britannica* articles he addressed the wider public; in his lectures usually an academic audience; in his Reid rehearsals he was training an orchestra of musicians as well as his students (who also took part in what would nowadays be called workshops); and then there were the articles, papers, and other such things addressed to the real scholars: 'Contrapuntists of the Golden Rule' like Schweitzer, the dedicatee of his edition of Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge*. At every level, unless there were mean and petty jealousies to obstruct, he met with a responsive, if sometimes awed reception. One anecdote from the best account of his work as a teacher, Henry Havergal's Cramb Lectures at the University of Glasgow in 1963, can stand for the wealth of stories to do with his actual classroom behaviour. Havergal contrasts the lash of Stanford's tongue in such a context ('All rot, my boy') with Tovey's gentler methods: 'One of his favourite ways

[24] Memo, 22 Mar. 1937, BBC File.
[25] DFT–Boult, 31 Oct. 1936, BBC File.
[26] Grierson, 282; *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Mar. 1936 (Casals interviewed by Ethel Smyth). See further Jeremy Upton's note accompanying the transfer to CD of a live recording of the concerto made on 17 Nov. 1937: Symposium 1115 (issued 1992).

of teaching composition was to set one to write movements for two unaccompanied string instruments, as might be 2 'cellos. This gives a chance for the maximum speed and flow of thought with the minimum of writing. I remember taking him a first movement for violin and viola which I thought rather good. He played the first eight bars and then, instead of saying "all rot my boy", he said "this becomes rather irrelevant at the ninth bar: now let us look at one of the great openings". We spent three and a half hours contemplating the chord of E flat. It was of course the opening of "Das Rheingold" . . . That lesson in musical proportion and the "Time-scale" taught me more about composition than any teaching based on my efforts.'[27]

This is not the place to assess Tovey the educator's writings on music in evaluative detail. He marks out his own limits very clearly. 'Archaic' music before 1500 had virtually no interest for him; he regarded it as outside the range of his aesthetic system, geared as this was to music as a tonal art. This attitude compromises his approach to the music of the High Renaissance (of which he had a vast knowledge); yet that period emerges for him nevertheless as the 'first maturity' of music and its 'Golden Age'. At the other end of the scale, twentieth-century music found favour with him only if it was tonally organized, whether in the classical or the Hindemithian sense. Composers who worked in other systems, he confessed, 'speak a different language which I do not know'.[28] He regretted the use of the piano as a percussion instrument, and could see little in Stravinsky's irregular metres but the creation of artificial problems for conductors. He deplored what he saw as the loss of any real concept of musical movement in twentieth-century compositions and the general loss of any sense of direction in recent developments; and though he tried hard to be tolerant of schools other than the one to which he himself belonged, he found it difficult to resist a jibe at atonality or polytonality whenever the occasion arose.

These attitudes inevitably influenced his own compositions, and also limited the repertory of more recent works performed by the Reid Orchestra (beyond the limitations unavoidably imposed on it by the orchestra's size). Debussy, Sibelius, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst, and Walton he played and wrote about with considerable enthusiasm; but Schoenberg, Berg, Kodály, Bartók, Nielsen, Stravinsky, and Prokofiev never (though he did at one point think of programming the latter's 'Classical' Symphony, for all he deplored that it was minor Clementi which appeared to represent Prokofiev's idea of the 'classical').[29] And one suspects that when, for example, Eugene Goossens' Oboe Concerto was on the programme, it was because Leon Goossens was already to play some Bach and persuaded Tovey to take a more recent work from his repertoire too. With hindsight it can be seen that Tovey was very little better

[27] 'Donald Francis Tovey', II. 14. Havergal's unpublished lectures furnish a very perceptive, sensitive, and balanced assessment of Tovey's many qualities. On Tovey as teacher, see also Whitfield, 'A Noteworthy Centenary' (n. 17 above).

[28] Cameron, 'Personal Recollections', 21.

[29] 'I shall be frankly prokovative [*sic*] in my pogrom-notes as to the new classicism and its firm identification of Mozart with the sonatinas (not the sonatas) of Clementi' (DFT–Grierson, June 1934).

than, say, Schumann in sorting out the geese from the swans among his own contemporaries; and personal friends like Joachim, Röntgen, and Bantock (whom he bracketed with Elgar) tended to be elevated well beyond their deserts as composers. His real commitment, though, was to what he felt to be 'the greatest composers of the greatest periods' who worked roughly between 1500 and 1910. Still, some strong prejudices remained even within those dates. The seventeenth century to him was simply a period of chaos and experiment 'choked with weeds'; he could find no great composers at all between Victoria and Purcell, with the exception of Schütz at his best (though he did allow Monteverdi 'a spark of genius').[30] He greatly admired Handel, but his view of Handelian opera, which was based on little enough experience of the works on the stage, must now seem calculated to infuriate rather than enlighten. Bellini, Rossini, and others of the nineteenth-century Italian school (Verdi excepted) were tried and found wanting; and his writing about them often emerges as tongue-in-cheek, if not pure silliness. Then one sometimes suspects that he was inwardly fighting the classicists' battle with the New German School all over again: except for magnificent pianism and a masterly command of the orchestra, Liszt exemplified for him what was most meretricious in musical art ('the worst influence that ever came into any art since the decline of the Roman Empire'),[31] and Richard Strauss, for all his gifts, seems to have come not far behind, at least in the younger Tovey's view: later he was to have more time for the composer of *Elektra* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Dvořák he admired, but a shade patronizingly, one feels, identifying faults in that composer's works which are often all too redolent of those in his own: 'I don't care much about technical flaws; I could have saved Dvořák about four pages of sheer waste in his F minor trio [Op. 65] & shewn him how to make it ever so much more transparent in many passages; yet I regard that work like so much of Schubert as a most noble monument of genius & am certain that it will some day outweigh all contemporary chamber-music except Brahms.'[32] The achievements of Mendelssohn and Berlioz were, he found, unequal; and he rated them a good deal lower than Chopin and Schumann, who in different ways meant a great deal to him.[33] The works of 'transitional' figures bored him, and lesser composers he tends to see only from the point of view of greater ones: Cherubini stands as much in the shadow of Beethoven as Couperin does in Bach's.

Tovey was inescapably a man of his age, and strongly influenced in his opinions by such mentors as Joachim, Parry, and Miss Weisse; yet it is surprising how often he anticipates later thinking about music and musical practices, simply because he concentrates on music as a 'thing' in itself: conceived in relation to its own materials, coherent in relation to its own developed forms, and, one

[30] E&L 333; *MAEB* 143.

[31] DFT–Richmond, (?) 1905.

[32] DFT–Hausman, (?) 1900.

[33] In a delirium at the height of a severe illness the year before his death, Tovey 'for a time was not sure whether he was himself Schumann, or whether some mystic union between the dead Schumann and himself could have happened' (anonymous account of Tovey's health in the summer and autumn of 1939 by a doctor connected with Westminster Hospital; typescript in the Tovey Archive, Reid Library, University of Edinburgh).

hopes, performed and experienced in a manner consistent with its own aesthetic criteria: criteria which are expanded (or contracted) as the art develops. This enabled him to suspect Haydn's so-called 'Op. 3' quartets of being at any rate a 'bowdlerized' text long before scholars began openly to question their authenticity, and he was one of the first to query the status of the Quatuor Concertante for Winds (K. Anh. 9) traditionally ascribed to Mozart. Even as a boy of 15 he complains about inappropriate style and cuts in a performance of *Messiah*: it was 'too Barnbyish' and with 'too much left out'.[34] Later he rejects changes in orchestration and the massive and ill-balanced forces then so often used in Baroque choral works, and he pleads for the appropriate use of continuo instruments—double continuo if need be—and a recognition that 'the Handelian organ has a sublimity that it were a blasphemy to misuse'.[35] This early advocate of correct performance practice will devise methods of avoiding the tyranny of four-in-a-bar in the singing of Renaissance motets, and direct a Mozart concerto or a Bach cantata from the keyboard: 'In [J. S. Bach's] *Vergnügte Ruh*' [BWV 170] the chief difficulty is the wonderful organ obbligato. Richard Strauss, in his edition of Berlioz's *Instrumentation*, has an amusing diatribe on the difficulties the orchestral conductor has with the organist who "sits enthroned in inaccessible glory and combines the majesty of a royal person with the rudeness of a bellows-blower". But the fault is not always on one side. The modern conductor became necessary and convenient as soon as all trace of the *continuo* system had vanished; but as long as that eighteenth-century method prevailed, the *maestro al cembalo* was, and still is (if he can be obtained), infinitely the more practical person. Every feature of the music was designed for control from the keyboard, and often, as in the present instance, for control from more than one keyboard. The same remarks apply even to such later works as Mozart's concertos; the system of directing them from the pianoforte . . . is the right method where the pianist knows the score and the conductor can play the pianoforte; it helps the orchestra to play the music like chamber music.'[36]

By 1893, the 18-year-old Tovey had read and (!) approved Dannreuther on ornamentation, and he was always an advocate of the use of a pure text and appropriate conditions of performance. As regards the former, he did not achieve what he wanted in the Associated Board edition of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas (on which he collaborated with Harold Craxton), with its abundance of slurs which are not Beethoven's. He disliked Craxton's extra accents, and wrote rather tetchily about a misplaced concern on the Board's part for teachers: 'What they *demand* (& are used to getting) is directions for training animals for a circus. These "instructive" editions, from Bülow downwards, are utterly destructive of all use of the musical understanding; & Bülow himself, though often profoundly penetrating, set a bad example of sheer mendacity whenever

[34] Grierson, 14.

[35] RCP, 10 Mar. 1938 (in a short note on the Overture to Handel's *Occasional Oratorio*).

[36] NRC, 11 Mar. 1916; the passage was omitted when Tovey's note on the cantata was reprinted in *EMA* v. 66–70.

he chose to disagree with the composer.'[37] Grützmacher, who 'revised' Beethoven's Violoncello Sonatas, was a commentator, he thought, who could shed only 'genteel dinginess on any subject whatever'. Tovey ironically notes five simple rules for turning a good edition into a 'Leipzig Conservatoire' one like Grützmacher's with very little trouble. ('When the composer has written something which strikes the editor as unusual, the editor shall tacitly substitute what he himself would have written in the circumstances', etc.)[38] For Tovey, as ever, such impertinence towards the classics of music was a cardinal sin.

V

Looking at the mass of Tovey's writings about music gives the impression of a wholly 'occasional' writer: only lifting his pen in response to a particular commission, an invitation to lecture or review, or the prospect of a concert which needs analytical notes. But this was not his attitude at the beginning. In the 1890s he conceived a plan to write *The Language of Music*, a mighty treatise to end all treatises; and it was the early stages of his work on this that provided him with a systematic philosophical base which was to underlie all his later writings.

The genesis of the projected book can be traced through letters to Miss Weisse and others. It was triggered off by an undergraduate essay he had been set at Balliol on 'The Moral Influence of Music' and by discussions he had had with fellow students; and it was originally to consider 'Musical Art-Problems and how they have been treated'. 'I want my style', he writes, 'to be of the Hadow order without the particular cases. The meaning of which dark saying is that I wish to illuminate *general* principles of musical aesthetics by general principles of other aesthetics. For instance if I lay down as a general rule that in a first movement episodic matter in the development, or a sudden new section of Adagio or of free declamation is generally exceptionable & always exceptional I think it would be neither snobbish nor superfluous to prove the principles which underlie this by the analogy of the "Unities" of the Classical Drama.' Some of Tovey's problems had already crystallized and were to be resolved in a series of essays on 'the Concerto, the instrumental fugue, the growth of differentiation between choral & instrumental forms; and, for problems yet unsolved, Modern Organ Music. A great deal of the business would mean neither the mention of one composer nor one real technical term for pages together: & the allusions to other arts would be broad ones of the kind I suggested just now. What do you think?' he asks Miss Weisse. 'It wouldn't cut out our project of working together over the Beethoven concertos, because I should deal with the composers of concertos only as actual examples of what I should prove concerning the inevitable growth of the form.'[39]

The first chapter to be written, however, was general in character and was entitled 'On the position of music in Art, & the true method of artistic criticism'. Bach's and Handel's reworkings of their own and others' materials were now interesting him, and he thought they would provide fruitful matters for

[37] DFT–Craxton, (?) 1930. [38] See p. 69 below. [39] DFT–Weisse, 10 Nov. 1895.

discussion. A little later 'Chapter II: On Limitations' had been reached, though Tovey was already beginning to sense his 'frightful long-windedness & frequent obscurity' of meaning. He wanted to get the whole thing down in draft: 'If I were too careful of the style & manner now I should never get to the real gist of the book at all.'[40] A year later three chapters were finished and the book had become, in intention, 'a complete system of aesthetics and criticism' with the title 'The Language of Music'. One chapter (presumably chapter 2) he thought 'most tremendous', 'tracing the whole growth of an art from the nature of artistic limitations. Not a historical sketch, but a logical one; & I'm showing how circumstances modify it. I've hit on a gorgeous way of keeping the argument together . . . by cutting the [tangential] discussions & grouping them in a set of Essays at the end. Thus Book I. Part I. Main Argument (5 chapters) Part II. Essays & Illustrations, on points raised in Part I.'[41]

By the spring of 1899 the treatise had acquired a Book II and was 'tumbling slowly into shape and terseness'; but the huge essays associated with his London concerts in 1900 intervened, and then the notes he wrote for Speyer's programme books in connection with the London visit of the Meiningen Orchestra. However, he assured Speyer in 1903 that there was to be no more prose from him 'except my big book at which I have been working steadily since 1896'.[42] It was not to be. Soon the articles he was commissioned to write for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* were absorbing much of his energy and such time as was not given to concerts and composition. The treatise was laid aside and not much heard of again until 1934, when Tovey confessed publicly in the Philip Maurice Deneke Lecture at Oxford that, though it had been one of his 'naïve undergraduate ambitions to make a contribution to aesthetic philosophy by a systematic review of music', forty years on he came to them 'with empty hands'. Such 'philosophic rudiments' as he might have developed 'died of examination in the year 1898' (which was not quite true), and since then he had 'studied nothing but music'.[43] In fact the book's substance was to be absorbed into his later writings and lectures, particularly the two lecture-series which were collected together after his death as *A Musician Talks* (1941) and which remain his most extended statement on musical aesthetics.

The non-completion of *The Language of Music* started a trend in Tovey's writing career. It became characteristic of him that, by the time he got down to work on one subject he was already embarking on another; with the result that, as his publisher's editor Hubert Foss observed, he had to have most of his books 'made for him'[44] from scattered papers and unfinished drafts. But there was also another factor. In the last analysis, strange as it may seem in someone so profuse and seemingly articulate, Tovey distrusted words about music. Artistic devices were the 'ideas' of music; words could only represent 'particular cases of ideas'. Music, then, could only be explained in terms of itself—an interesting anticipation of Hans Keller's view—and if there was a 'literature' of music it

[40] DFT–Weisse, 3 Apr. 1897; 3 July 1897.
[41] DFT–Weisse, 14 June 1898; (?) 26 Oct. 1898.
[42] DFT–Speyer, 23 Nov. 1903.
[43] *E&L* 160.
[44] *MT: IM*, p. v.

consisted of that music itself rather than in all the books written about it. (Seen in this light, his cadenzas to several classical concertos, three of which were published in 1937, have a special significance: they are a form of music criticism in terms of music only.) Perhaps for this reason, especially in his early years, Tovey found writing in prose about music difficult; and throughout his life his drafts were usually a mass of alterations and corrections designed to eliminate some of the verbosity, diffuseness, and anfractuosity to which he was prone. The early essays on 'Performance and Personality' and 'Permanent Musical Criteria' reprinted here are unnecessarily verbose, and he was brought up against this failing in 1902 when, while he was attempting a reply to Horace Wadham Nicholl's journal article 'Bach's Non-Observance of Some Fixed Rules', another scholar contrived to dismiss it in 'three snorting sentences' in the journal's next issue. Later, however, he would strongly object if he felt that he had achieved a concise result which a publisher wished to pare down even further, as in the case of his introductions to each work in the Associated Board edition of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas.[45]

Nothing was ever to cure Tovey of the arts of digression and repetition. The latter he defended by observing that it was necessary to repeat truths until everyone had grasped them; the former was, as often as not, undertaken to accommodate those humorous asides which are the bane of those who would prefer a more ponderous or orotund manner from a professor. And his humour, with its overtones of Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, and Hilaire Belloc, is as much part of the man as his vivid prose style: the 'bickering ghosts' of the return of the Scherzo in the finale of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (though admittedly purloined from Homer); the sound of the oboe 'like the taste of lemon squash'; the purple patches fairly widely distributed; the garbling of names (especially in the correspondence: 'Kunsterfuge'—a new kind of subterfuge; 'Thicksides and Arribottle' for Thucydides and Aristotle).[46]

VI

Tovey was publishing essays on particular musical compositions almost as soon as he was publishing anything at all; and the last writings of his that he saw in print were the preface to an edition of a symphony he ascribed to Joseph Haydn and a note on Sibelius's *Pohjola's Daughter*, the latter written for the programme of the last Reid Concert he conducted, on 9 March 1939, the year before his death. Like these, all the 'essays in musical analysis' of the intervening years stemmed from a burning desire to communicate his understanding of a composer's intentions; and nearly all—the set of essays in connection with the London visit of the Meiningen Orchestra being the major exception—were stimulated by his own impending performances either as conductor or pianist.

[45] Bach: *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft*, 3 (1901–2), 671–85; 4 (1902–3), 173–4; Beethoven: DFT–Craxton, (?) 1930.

[46] *B* 17 (cf. *Odyssey*, II. 34–43); Cameron, 'Personal Recollections', 5; DFT–Weisse, 20 Dec. 1931; DFT–Weisse, 20 June 1897.

The title 'Essays in Musical Analysis', which later came to be closely associated with Tovey, was first adopted for his lengthy exegeses—'programme notes' would be too trivial a term—of works like Bach's Goldberg Variations and Beethoven's 'Hammerklavier' Sonata. These were written for his London recitals of 1900–1 and published for him ('on a soft, rough paper that turns noiselessly') by Joseph Williams. The intention was that they should be read prior to the concert, having been published about a week beforehand—a provision that was rarely met. Tovey emphasized that only the profuse musical quotations should be used during the concert, as a kind of visual aid to the aural experience of the music. He was pleased with these first essays: 'They're a mighty fine feature, Madam', he wrote to Miss Weisse on 23 August 1900. But critical reaction to them was mixed. With a schoolmasterly condescension the *Musical Times* said that they showed 'much reading and much thought, also intelligent insight into the music; if less bulky they would, however, probably prove more serviceable.' The *Manchester Guardian* found Tovey's playing of the Goldberg Variations a performance of 'exceedingly fine distinction, [such that] even a hyper-critic has reason to say that a really engrossing musical genius has swum into our ken', adding that 'the analytical programme is, in its own way, a work of admirable talent. The English of it is nervous, significant and equipoised.'[47] Others, however, were vitriolic. J. S. Shedlock in the *Athenaeum* declared that Tovey should neither attempt to play Beethoven's Op. 106 in public nor foist upon it an essay which was 'half padding'. Tovey was furious, and, writing to Edward Speyer about the distribution of later analytical pieces to critics and others, remarked, 'If you send one to the Athenaeum, give the critic my love & tell him not to be a silly ass or I'll write an article about his own stupid book on the "Pianoforte Sonata" [which had appeared in 1895] that will make him feel bad inside.'[48]

In 1902 he wrote 'Analytical Notes' for the programme booklets for the five concerts given that year in London by the Meiningen Orchestra. Many of these analyses were reworked more or less extensively when Tovey later performed the same works with the Reid Orchestra in Edinburgh, and so were included in the six-volume *Essays in Musical Analysis* published between 1935 and 1939; but several were not and hence are reprinted here. Speyer, the concerts' impresario, was at first worried by the bulk of what Tovey gave him, which drew this response: 'I'm afraid I simply can't do the thing differently: & to make the attempt would simply be to abandon your only reasons for my undertaking the work at all. The most elaborate things in my analysis are the merest hints of what a real study of the music ought to reveal; and I can't abandon them without simply forfeiting the confidence of those readers who have done me the honour of thinking I have something to say . . . Analysis on this scale has *absolutely no use* except for its musical quotations. If there is to be any letterpress it had much better be of such a character as to demolish the idea that everything in classical music is obvious to the meanest capacity. I know it isn't obvious to

[47] *Musical Times*, June 1901, p. 399; Grierson, 96.
[48] DFT–Speyer, 2 Nov. 1902; cf. Grierson, 88, 95.

me . . . I would suggest (a) considerable advertising of the programmes; (b) a shilling as the price; & (c) as you intended, the sale of them beforehand . . . Will you decide on the *title* yourself? I should suggest "Analytical Notes"; "Essays" I don't like; as, in interests of brevity, I've boiled it down to a form which I would rather not call an Essay as I've other things to write and don't want this work (— though it's among the hardest I've ever done) to get confused with it.'[49]

When he took up the Reid Professorship at Edinburgh, Tovey wrote notes for the Music Faculty's 'historical concert' series, for the New Reid Concerts of 1916, and for such of his Sunday Evening Concerts as had notes at all (very few in fact). He also wrote the notes for virtually all the Reid Symphony Orchestra's concerts, from his establishment of the orchestra in 1917 to his last concert with it in 1939. (Most of the notes by other hands for these were written either by visiting composer-conductors such as Ethel Smyth or by Tovey's assistants Mary Grierson and Henry Havergal.) Already by 1922 the reputation of Tovey's Reid Concert notes had led Hubert Foss to suggest that they might be collected and published by Oxford University Press. Tovey was keenly interested: he had entertained the notion twenty years before of collections of his London analytical pieces, and it had been an unfulfilled plan of his before starting the Edinburgh orchestral concerts to 'produce all my analytic propaganda in the form of a little permanent volume of essays, saleable beforehand and independently, as well as at the concerts'.[50] But as usual, he was dilatory about putting the notes into book form, always preferring to write new essays rather than to collect old ones. By 1930, however, a four-volume format had been agreed which by 1933 had grown to five volumes and on publication emerged as six. The title, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, is something of a misnomer; but it had by then been associated with Tovey for three decades. (For instance, he was described as the author of essays in musical analysis in the notes on contributors to the 1910–11, 1922, and 1929 editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.) What Tovey writes in the Reid programmes is really musical commentary. The twentieth century—a century Tovey was *in* but not *of*—has come to expect something more rigorous from 'analysis': something more in the manner of Tovey's own *Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas*, though even descriptive analysis of this sort has come to be looked down on by more theoretically rigorous analysts.

The volumes of *Essays*, as they appeared, became required reading for Tovey's students and for his faithful Edinburgh audience. When earlier notes were reprinted in a Reid programme in the late 1930s, it was 'by permission of the Oxford University Press'; but sometimes they were not reprinted at all, the listener simply being referred to the collected edition. As Tovey put it in a Reid programme of 31 January 1935, 'two volumes of these programme notes have now been published in a convenient form by the Oxford University Press, and three more, plus a glossary and index, will be issued by the end of the year.

[49] DFT–Speyer, 25 Oct. 1902.

[50] St James's concert programme, 22 Nov. 1900; DFT–Speyer, 15 Nov. 1902; DFT–Lodge, 12 Apr. 1916.

Nearly two hundred works are dealt with in these five volumes, which are handy in form and will take no inconvenient room on bookshelves. In these circumstances it would be a useless extravagance to us, as well as unfair to the publishers, to go on reprinting full analyses which are now available in permanent form.' But the *Essays* were read far beyond Edinburgh. The volumes were on the whole very well received by the critics—indeed acclaimed by some—and went through numerous impressions in succeeding years. On the appearance of later Tovey gatherings made by Foss, the *Chamber Music* volume, *Beethoven*, and *Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Edward Sackville-West in a retrospective general criticism of Tovey's writings felt obliged to complain only of 'the dreadful jokes with which Tovey playfully trounces the reader as his method of pretending he is not a highbrow writer': the product, Sackville-West thought, 'of a vile tradition in our universities that a wholly serious subject had better be approached in a mock-serious manner'.[51] Even the Index in Volume VI of the *Essays* is bent to this end (see, for example, 'Agnostic', 'Critics', and 'Monster'), as are Tovey's inventions of the 'Tschopsztiksy School of Pianoforte Playing' and 'Herr Hammerfaust von Tastenbrecher, Professor of Pianistics in the University of Weissnichtwo'. But as we have seen, Tovey's humour has to be accepted as part of the man, like his desire to shock. Indulging the latter, he fully expected to be 'boiled in oil' for his essay on Mahler's Fourth Symphony in 1936, and he was pleased with his humour at its subtlest when he noted thirty-four years earlier that the *Daily News* had considered his Meiningen essay on Strauss's *Don Juan* 'the best and most sympathetic yet produced! As I had extra difficulty (& not complete success, to those who can read between the lines) in concealing my detestation of the whole Straussian Lebensanschau[u]ng, this made me rather chortle.'[52]

Though the latest of the supplementary essays printed in Volume VI of the *Essays* were actually written in 1937 and Tovey seems, in the 'Retrospect and Corrigenda' in that volume, to brush aside the possibility of further collections, he nevertheless laments the omission of treatment of works like Schumann's Second Symphony, of more Haydn symphonies and Mozart piano concertos—particularly the D minor, K. 466, which he thought Mozart's finest— as well as Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony. (His essay on the last, he notes rather oddly, 'arrived too late for inclusion'; in fact he had written it in 1933 and it was probably omitted by oversight.) Strangely enough, in the three remaining years of his life, Tovey, whether consciously or unconsciously, filled a number of these gaps with performances of, and hence notes upon, pieces such as Schumann's Second and Dvořák's Eighth Symphonies, more symphonies and concertos of Haydn and Mozart, and so on. these late essays are reprinted in this volume, together with substantial earlier Reid pieces missed (or dismissed) by Tovey and Foss. Also included are the lengthier notes which Tovey wrote for performances of his own works. These are exceptional in that normally he would

[51] 'The Higher Criticism of Music', *New Statesman and Nation*, 9 Dec. 1944, pp. 392–3.

[52] *EMA* vi. 133; DFT–Dent, 20 Nov. 1936; DFT–Weisse, 19 Oct. 1936; DFT–Speyer, 15 Nov. 1902.

write no more than what he called a 'thematic epitome'—more music than letterpress—to introduce works of his own to the public. Printed copies of such epitomes dating from the earliest years of the century survive in the Tovey Archive at the University of Edinburgh,[53] but are not reproduced here.

VII

It was inevitable that someone who showed himself to be such a stylish writer on music should be approached to write for the papers. However, apart from a little reviewing and obituary-writing quite late in his career, Tovey wrote *for* the journalistic press (as opposed to *to* it in the form of Letters to the Editor) only briefly, between 1902 and 1911. He was asked by Bruce L. Richmond, the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* who remembered him as an undergraduate contemporary at Oxford, 'if it would suit your inclination to let us have occasionally an article on a musical subject'.[54] The writers' anonymity in the *Literary Supplement* no doubt suited Tovey at that time: he had received some wounding criticism himself at the hands of the London press and would hardly have relished identification with newspaper critics of the day such as Shedlock, or J. F. Runciman of the *Saturday Review*. His responses to Richmond's invitation are reprinted here.

His first assignment was the London Music Festival of 1902. This featured an important series of concerts promoted by Robert Newman and Henry J. Wood at the Queen's Hall. Wood shared the conducting with Ysaÿe (who also appeared as a solo violinist), Nikisch, Weingartner, and Saint-Saëns. The concerts were received with fairly general acclaim by the Press. Ysaÿe apparently had limitations as a conductor, but Nikisch and Weingartner received lavish praise, Nikisch being immediately re-engaged for further concerts. Tovey heard both Weingartner ('whose reputation as an orchestral conductor stands among the highest', trumpeted *The Times*) and Nikisch ('the sensation of the Festival'),[55] and stands almost alone in some of his reservations about their work. Nobody else seems to have noticed Nikisch's high-handed travesty of the trio to the Scherzo of Schubert's 'Great' C major Symphony; but probably the work was not then so very well known. (Tovey was never overawed by the reputation of podium giants; in later life he confessed to Miss Weisse, for instance, his disappointment with Toscanini's reading of the first two movements of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.)[56] Richard Strauss, who was in London that year, was another figure about whom Tovey at the time had strong reservations; but Strauss too was greeted warmly by most of the press.

[53] Surviving epitomes include the Violin Sonata, 3 Duets for Oboe and Piano, the Trios in B minor and C minor, and the Quintet in C major. (The so-called 'Analysis by D.F.T.' of *The Bride of Dionysus* published in 1929 is also omitted here since, aside from the introductory essay which is reprinted in *E&L* 353–60, it consists almost entirely of salient themes surrounded by plot summary.)

[54] Richmond–DFT, 11 Mar. 1902.

[55] For critical acclaim, see *Musical Opinion*, June 1902, pp. 665–6; *The Times*, 5 May 1902; *Musical Times*, June 1902, p. 403.

[56] DFT–Weisse, 6 Nov. 1937.

In addition to the London Music Festival, the visits of the Meiningen Orchestra and the Joachim Quartet made 1902 something of a vintage year in London musical life. However, in his piece for the *Times Literary Supplement* on Joachim, Tovey can hardly be considered wholly disinterested. The Quartet were annual visitors to London; Tovey had known and performed with Joachim—in letters he sometimes calls him 'Uncle Jo'—since he was a boy; and as a young man he joined the group in performances of piano quintets (see Plates IV and V). So he naturally leapt to Joachim's defence when it was hinted that the violinist was getting too old for his job, becoming (as *The Times* for 7 May 1902 put it) 'the butt of much cheap wit and cheaper cynicism' now he was 'past the age when most professional musicians have retired to their well-earned rest . . . his bowing arm being a little stiffer than of old, his fingers having lost something of their pristine suppleness'.

Beyond concert-reviewing, it was natural that the *Times Literary Supplement* should ask Tovey to do review articles on some of the volumes of the *Oxford History of Music*, one of the most important musical publications of the early years of the century. But he clearly had little time for Fuller Maitland's contribution to it, and was perhaps slightly embarrassed at having to deal with W. H. Hadow's. He had known Hadow quite well since his Oxford days, and in fact breached his anonymity by writing to Hadow on what he hoped would not be a bitter bone of contention: 'I've just sent off a review of your volume to the Times and I hasten to say much more impudent things to you [here] than will find their way into the Times:—I don't like anything that looks like an attack, and if I can do anything to prevent such an impression I shall be very grateful to you. [But] I have ventured to fall foul of your views about fugues—Beethoven's in particular . . .'[57] In fact Tovey would have preferred to review music rather than books on music. He wrote to the Editor asking if it would be 'possible for the Litt. Supp. to send me certain kinds of music to review? Musical literature (except for rare things like the Oxford History) bothers me a great deal; it's all either nebulous or dull, & often entirely beneath criticism both on its musical & on its literary side . . . a good score is incomparably more important than all the books about music ever written.' And he never did review Peter Cornelius's *Letters* which Richmond sent him, declaring that he simply dare not risk publishing his views on the musical party politics involved in the controversy between the Weimar group and the Joachim–Brahms faction (though one would have thought that by this time that affair was almost a dead letter). He flatly, and at great length, refused to review Rutland Boughton's *Bach* (1907) as a triviality unworthy of notice.[58] And significantly, aside from his warm welcome for Stanford's little treatise on composition, his last pieces for the *Times Literary Supplement* in those years were not reviews at all but celebrations of the achievements of two musicians of great importance to him: an article on Schumann prompted by anniversary events at Bonn and by Tovey's feeling that in 1906 Schumann's work was still

[57] DFT–Hadow, (?) Nov.–Dec. 1905.

[58] DFT–Richmond, (?) 1905; (?) 1907.

misunderstood and under-played, and an obituary the following year for Joachim, the Sarastro to Tovey's Tamino.[59]

By 1905 Tovey was becoming very well known for writings on music which were elegant in style, perceptive and challenging in their judgements, and clearly the work of an English scholar and gentleman. Hence Hugh Chisholm, editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, asked for his assistance in planning the musical content of its Eleventh Edition, which at length appeared in 1910–11. Tovey complied, and was paid a '£20 general-advice-&-editing fee'. In addition he undertook a substantial number of articles himself, and for the next few years he was heavily involved in writing them. The demands of the task were reflected in his letters: 'Woe is me!' he writes to Edward Speyer; 'I am so pressed with work that I daren't propose to try & come on the Saturday . . . I am trying to finish the Encyclopaedia articles at a rate of 8000 words a day, & I must sit tight.' From the first, Chisholm was pleased with what he was given. Tovey had been unsure whether he would be, 'because I have had one or two little experiences which indicate that my work is sometimes considered rather eccentric, and I thought you ought to have a good chance of making sure it wasn't too cranky before making definite arrangements. It's a great relief to me that you like it.'[60]

He took great trouble with his pieces. Armed with the relevant article (if there was one) from the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia*—the Tenth Edition simply being the addition of some supplementary volumes (little concerned with music) to the Ninth—he dictated its text with revisions and additions as he went along. At least that was his original intention; but the changes were often so extensive that, as in the case of 'Cherubini' for example, there had to be a virtual rewriting. 'Every statement had a twist that made it hopeless . . . It's just the same with the biographical part of Beethoven & Bach: hardly a statement conveyed the right impression. And this isn't a question of tastes or opinions.'[61]

Tovey contributed all the new formal and aesthetic articles on music to the 1910-11 edition, and a considerable body of biographical-critical ones too. In the initial distribution of the space allocated to music he pointed out where economies could be made: 'Ophicleide', he declared, occupied four columns in the Ninth Edition though it was not even worth one (six lines would be nearer the mark); and in any case 'I assure you that the subject is of considerably less importance, even to specialists, than the triangle or the big drum!' He no doubt noted too some more general imbalances—or what would doubtless have struck him as such: 'Beethoven' in the Ninth Edition had received much less space than the contiguous 'Bees'. He was nevertheless concerned about the great length of some of his own contributions. When the edition was finally being assembled and cuts were being asked for, he tried hard to be accommodating. However, he told Chisholm, with regard to his pieces on 'Rhythm' and 'Wagner', that he would be 'sorry to lose any of the material, for they are among

[59] Joseph Kerman, 'Tovey's Beethoven', in A. Tyson (ed.), *Beethoven Studies*, 2 (1977), 172–91, p. 173.

[60] DFT–Speyer, 12 June 1906; DFT–Chisholm, (?) 1905.

[61] DFT–Chisholm, (?) 1905.

the most important parts of my group [of articles] & probably the best I have done'.[62]

Among the pieces on composers, Tovey wrote on many of the major figures (J. S. Bach, Handel, Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, etc.), rewriting or lengthily replacing a good deal of work in the Ninth Edition by W. S. Rockstro, Francis Hueffer (born Franz Hüffer and once music critic of *The Times*) and others. Still, certain composer-articles one might have expected him to write himself he assigned to notable colleagues: Dent (the Scarlattis), Hadow (C. P. E. Bach, Haydn, Schubert), Fuller Maitland (Brahms). It is equally unexpected that he should have himself undertaken Monteverdi, for whose music he had very little sympathy—though more than the previous *Britannica* writer: the Ninth Edition article on Monteverdi has to be seen to be believed.[63] Tovey also dealt with the great continental composers of the High Renaissance—Palestrina, Lassus, and Victoria—of whose music he had a knowledge unsurpassed at the time; his copies of their collected works, now in the Reid Library at Edinburgh, are very copiously annotated in his hand. And he volunteered and carried through smaller first-time entries on composers whom he usually put into the category of Interesting Historical Figures. For instance he writes to Chisholm *re* the start of the alphabet: 'There are the *Anerios*, Arcadelt, and Aichinger (who are all really quite as big men as, say, Beaumont & Fletcher), *Benda*, whose melodrama is an invention of first-rate importance however one may disapprove of it, *Boccherini* & *Dittersdorf* without whom I don't see how you can define early sonata styles, & *Bruckner* who is, however little one likes him, the crucial instance of the break between Wagnerism & the sonata style.'[64]

The Twelfth and Thirteenth Editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* were reprints of the Eleventh with sets of three supplementary volumes apiece, to which Tovey only contributed a pair of revised and updated final sections to his central article on 'Music', sketching recent developments as he saw them. But when the *Encyclopaedia* was revised and to a considerable extent remodelled for the Fourteenth Edition of 1929, Tovey, now named Associate Editor with responsibility for European Music, added a few new composer-articles and brought his reflections on recent trends to their final state. His contributions still did not go back any earlier than Lassus and Palestrina, however. As he told J. L. Garvin, the *Britannica*'s new Editor-in-Chief, he had heard disturbing news of a 'Gothic' concert; but 'I needn't have worried, that concert didn't go further back than Machault . . . I was afraid it was going to add six more centuries to our range of intelligible music: and I've got about as much as I can digest.'[65] To Tovey, as we have seen, pre-sixteenth-century music was musical archaeology which he confessed to be beyond the range of his technical and

[62] DFT–Chisholm, June 1910.

[63] *EB* 9. xvi (1883), 785–6: 'His knowledge of counterpoint was limited, and his ear imperfect . . . He was the first composer to use unprepared dissonances—employing them first in his madrigals, the beauty of which they utterly destroyed . . . [In Venice] he composed much sacred music, the greater part of which is lost—a circumstance the less to be regretted, since his *Vespers* and *Masses* bear no comparison with those produced by his predecessors in office.'

[64] DFT–Chisholm, (?) 1906.

[65] DFT–Editor, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 26 Aug. 1928.

aesthetic vocabulary and understanding—indeed, in his view, beyond the understanding of his age.

As for revision of existing material in line with Garvin's policy of making all the articles in the new edition 'more concise and perspicuous', Tovey was asked to cut his original contributions down in size somewhat. He tightened many of them up considerably, though initially rather unwillingly; but he later confessed that he was glad 'that the shortening had to be done; for the rewriting has more than doubled the force of the reasoning and about doubled the information.'[66] However, after the Fourteenth Edition had appeared, he told Harold Craxton (through whom the Associated Board was requesting a slimming down of Tovey's prefatory notes to the Beethoven sonatas) that it was 'bad enough to have had the Chicago Pork-packer making pie of my *Encyc. Brit.* articles *after* I revised their proofs'.[67] This is every author's complaint. One recalls A. E. Housman's fury when he found that his publishers had tinkered with the punctuation of his poems after he had corrected the final proofs. But Tovey may have had particular grounds for resentment. It is conceivable that he himself originated the very considerable, albeit tolerably tactful, reductions in length from the Eleventh Edition of his critical appraisals of Benda, Cherubini, Dittersdorf, Spohr, and Weber; but the Fourteenth Edition's cutting-down of his Wagner article—the original length and quality of which Tovey had been at especial pains to defend—is another matter. The essay is stripped of over 5,000 words, the cuts are crudely made, and the resultant tatterdemalion piece includes no discussion of *Tristan*, *Meistersinger*, or *Parsifal*. There is a grim irony in the Chicago Pork-packer's especially hacking at an article on a composer whose operas Tovey was to become famous for defending against those conductors who cut 'bleeding chunks' from them in the concert-room!

When Hubert Foss proposed a reprint by Oxford of all Tovey's major *Britannica* articles in one volume, Tovey was enthusiastic. He envisaged that in the biographical sections material surviving from the Ninth Edition should be set in a smaller typeface, and he hoped he might be allowed notes and musical examples.[68] But in the event (and after a gap of seventeen years which included Tovey's death), only the articles on forms and techniques were reprinted, as *Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This would have disappointed Tovey. In a sense the more extensive biographical-critical articles in the Fourteenth Edition, certainly the ones signed 'D.F.T.' there, can be seen as his Pantheon, though admittedly with some important fragments of the frieze missing. They represent his world-view of Western music in the perspective of the 1920s: a period piece maybe, but also the coherent view of one very distinguished scholar. The Beethoven article has some importance too as the only complete 'life and works' that he achieved of the composer who meant most to him. In the Preface to the Fourteenth Edition, Garvin singles out 'Dr D. F. Tovey's Beethoven' as 'one of the finest things in this work, [and] worthy of it

[66] DFT–Editor, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 26 Aug. 1928.
[67] DFT–Craxton, (?) 1930. [68] DFT–Foss, 25 Feb. 1927.

are his other studies of personalities in music'. These personality-studies deserve their reprinting in this volume.

VIII

Tovey's introduction to public lecturing was, on his own admission, a baptism of fire. His paper 'Permanent Musical Criteria' was delivered to the Musical Association (now the Royal Musical Association) in London on 14 June 1904. About a year later he sent it to Hugh Chisholm as a sample of the kind of writing—indeed one of the few literary as opposed to analytical things he had published by then—which Chisholm might expect to receive from Tovey as his contribution to the *Encyclopaedia*. It was sent with some reluctance: 'I venture to enclose a paper I was misguided enough to read to the Musical Association, which received it with resigned disgust. I have torn out the discussion, which was entirely fatuous, my reply included. (I was too much surprised [by the remarks of T. L. Southgate and Heathcote Statham] to say anything to the purpose.)'[69]

Tovey had misplaced his notes for the middle part of his paper; and if his reply in the discussion following was a disappointing example of him thinking on his feet, at least this was something he developed later to an extraordinary extent. However, the occasion rankled in his mind, as the pencilled marginalia in his copy of the text as finally printed testify. And the worthy Doctor Southgate became for him typical of the whole breed of musicologists with whom he was most anxious not to be confused and whose trivial pedantries he came utterly to despise. They for their part no doubt resented instruction from this young Oxford upstart, just as the critics were incensed by those interminable and otiose analytical essays which so disturbed the soporific delights that were the proper expectation of the inhabitants of the sofa stalls at any decently conducted recital. But Siegfried must ever break the rune-laden spear of Wotan before moving on and up to scale new heights.

'Permanent Musical Criteria' was not included by Foss in his Tovey collection *Essays and Lectures on Music* in 1949, and neither were two slightly earlier essays, 'Performance and Personality' and 'The Enjoyment of Music', which open the somewhat heterogeneous collection of 'Pieces on Several Occasions' collected here. But the two have some interest, in spite of their occasional verbosity and opacity, as the first of Tovey's many essays to appear in print, and as pointers to future developments. They were written soon after he came down from Balliol, presumably at the request of his Oxford friend Ernest Walker, who edited the *Music Gazette*, the rather short-lived house journal of Joseph Williams, publisher of Tovey's earliest analytical pieces. Of the essays which follow them and the Musical Association paper here—essays which take us to the very end of Tovey's writing career in 1939—perhaps only three call for special comment: the pieces on the St Matthew Passion under Fritz Busch, on

[69] DFT–Chisholm, (?) 1906.

German music from the Renaissance to Hugo Wolf, and on the 'duplex-coupler' piano of Emanuel Moór.

Tovey became acquainted with Adolf Busch in 1912, and soon counted him and his brother Fritz among his dearest friends. Fritz was Director of Music at Aachen, and Tovey went there in January 1913 to play his Piano Concerto in A major under Fritz's direction. In the following December his Symphony in D major received its première there, and next April Tovey was invited back to play continuo in the St Matthew Passion. Never backward in any didactic exercise of a practical nature, he wrote his article 'On the Performance of the St Matthew Passion' to enlighten its German audience on the subject of double continuo. The coals were conveyed to Newcastle in no uncertain manner, for his contract meant that the article was carried in no less than six Aachen newspapers.[70] (Perhaps he wrote the piece in German himself: its manner is slightly stilted and it is not entirely free from grammatical error.) At the time Tovey was well known for his improvised continuo realizations in Bach, which no less a person than F. T. Arnold was to describe as 'a thing not to be forgotten'.[71] Tovey generally used the pianoforte in accompanying Baroque works, though he preferred the sound of an early fortepiano and was no stranger to the harpsichord. The texture of his realizations can be judged from the continuo part for Nos. 4–24 of Bach's B minor Mass, which, exceptionally, he wrote out for another performer, and from his remarks on the performance of the Trio Sonata from Bach's *Das Musikalische Opfer*.[72]

'German Music', written for *German Culture*, a collection of essays by Edinburgh academics edited by W. P. Paterson and published in 1915, was deliberately omitted by Foss from *Essays and Lectures* as 'a contribution to a volume long out of print . . . not thought suitable for inclusion'. Why it was excluded is not clear: perhaps because of its considerable length; perhaps because there may be an important section of the essay missing; perhaps because in 1949 some British readers might have found it excessively pro-German.[73] Its author, however, set enough store by it in the mid-1920s to include it in the bibliography to his general article on 'Music' as it appeared in the Thirteenth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. He also set great store at that time by Emanuel Moór's development of the 'duplex-coupler' pianoforte, believing that both for performance and as an aid to composition it had an assured future. He demonstrated its capabilities on several occasions (see Plates XIV and XV) and himself acquired two such instruments, a grand and an upright. He even told Miss

[70] DFT–Weisse, April 1914; Grierson, 166–7.

[71] *The Art of Accompaniment from a Thorough-Bass* (London, 1931), p. ix. Cf. Pt. II, Sect. 13, n. 1 below.

[72] *EMA: CM* 4–8.

[73] See Pt. VI, Sect. 6, n. 25 below. It is noteworthy that the *TLS* review of *German Culture* (25 Mar. 1915)—much of which concerns itself with Tovey's chapter—does not see anything unpatriotic about the book. Foss in 1945, however, thought that the chapter read 'rather exaggeratedly after 12 years of Nazism' (OUP, Trevelyan, 28 Nov. 1945, Tovey Archive), though it had its admirers in the 1940s, notably Hugh Allen, who thought it 'one of the most interesting' of Tovey's essays (Allen–Newman, 17 Jan. 1943, Tovey Archive).

Weisse that 'the ordinary pianoforte will be extinct as the Dodo in ten years'.[74] But it was the Moór piano that suffered that unhappy fate. Tovey had ignored economic factors: the Moór mechanism could not be fitted to existing pianos and Moór pianos were very much more expensive than conventional instruments. Moreover, the existing piano repertory would have had to be republished in its entirety if it was to be playable on the new instrument, and conversion courses to it would have been necessary for every virtuoso—surely an insuperable obstacle. Nevertheless, Tovey's article makes some interesting points of general musical relevance about the aesthetic issues involved when music is played on instruments more fully developed than those for which it was conceived.

Though Tovey never addressed the Musical Association after his paper on 'Permanent Musical Criteria', over the next ten years he gave a number of lectures, many of them in connection with Miss Weisse's Northlands Concerts, with which he was deeply involved throughout their existence.[75] And after his appointment to the Reid Chair at Edinburgh University in 1914, with his big set of contributions to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* behind him, Tovey became well known as a lecturer. Several of his later lectures were edited by Foss for *Essays and Lectures*, but a number of things escaped the net. The Eight Lectures on Beethoven of 1922 are perhaps the most important of these. In May 1906 Tovey had signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Methuen for a book on 'The Life of Beethoven', to be about 75,000 words long and to be delivered to the publishers in 1908. In that year its deadline was postponed to 1909, but still nothing came. Even after the Great War Methuen were still hopeful: they wrote again in 1922, 1923, and finally in 1924.[76] They should not have given up so easily: the Beethoven book was maturing slowly, even if it was never to be finished. Tovey certainly started work on it in 1906, some of it was in typescript in the 1920s, and what there was was retyped and probably added to in 1936, ready for the eagle-eyed Foss to pick up the fragments and for the Oxford University Press to publish them under the title *Beethoven* in 1944. But the Eight Lectures of 1922 contain a great deal of Beethoven material that does not overlap with that volume. The lectures may well have been delivered in Edinburgh. Tovey was giving Workers' Educational Association and university extension classes there at about this time, and they may have been prepared for these; for though the level at which they are pitched seems impossibly high, that by no means rules out Tovey's giving them to such an audience. The admiring Janet Grierson (later Janet Teissier du Cros) recalls in her Edinburgh memoir of the years around 1920 that it was at such classes of Tovey's that she 'strove to follow his verbal wanderings through the workshops of great music, as he sought to explain to us in words—never for him an easy manner of expression—by what

[74] DFT–Weisse, Aug. 1921.

[75] There survives in the Tovey Archive a bound set of typed-up notes taken by an admiring pupil, Ilsa Leviseur Cohen, from the lectures Tovey gave (mainly on musical forms) at Northlands in 1910–11.

[76] Documents in Tovey Archive, Reid Library, University of Edinburgh.

means and with what precise tools emotion may be translated into the language of music'.[77] Most of the Beethoven lectures open with what is obviously a carefully prepared statement; but when Tovey moves over to the piano to illustrate his remarks, the tone becomes decidedly more colloquial: something carefully preserved by the shorthand writer, who was determined not to miss a word. As a result the Eight Lectures are probably one of the best and most complete examples of Tovey's style of lecturing that survive, for Foss, in the many lectures he edited, clearly removed nearly all references to the musical illustrations Tovey invariably played.

Two years later, Tovey visited the University of California at Santa Barbara to give eight lectures at the School of Arts summer course between 8 July and 16 August 1924. The printed prospectus gave the titles as: 1. The Range of Music; 2. The Historical View of Music; 3. Rhythm, Melody and Harmony; 4. Musical Art forms [I]; 5. Musical Art Forms [II]; 6. Instruments and Players; 7. The Composer; 8. A Classical Composition analysed on the Foregoing Principles. This series typifies the kind of approach and subject-matter with which he later dealt in broadcasts and in lecture series such as those at the Universities of Glasgow and Liverpool. There were two series of Cramb Lectures at Glasgow, the first in 1925 called 'Music in Being'. All but one of these lectures survive in a stenographer's typed-up copy similar to the copies of the Beethoven lectures. Tovey had arranged to give them in the winter of 1924–5, but severe ill health following his American trip meant that the date had to be put back to the spring, and he was still frail even then. In the shorter term the Cramb Trust's remit was simply to arrange for the delivery of ten lectures which dealt with some aspect of the art of music;[78] in the longer term it hoped to contribute to the establishment of a chair of music at Glasgow University: something which indeed followed in 1929. Significantly the University's Principal used his complimentary closing remarks after Tovey's last lecture of the series to make the case for such a chair.[79]

Tovey's response to those remarks included a hint that he would be happy to return to Glasgow for more lecturing, and he was duly invited to give a second series of Cramb Lectures at Glasgow in 1936 ('The Integrity of Music'), as well as the Alsop Lectures at Liverpool in 1938 ('Musical Textures'); both were edited by Foss and published under the general title *A Musician Talks* in 1941. We are afforded an amusing glimpse of Tovey at this time in a letter from Professor A. Y. Campbell, Gladstone Professor of Greek at Liverpool, to his wife, who was then staying in Cambridge. Professor Campbell had already attended the first two Alsop Lectures when he wrote 'Tovey is a miracle. I went to both [lectures]. First impression, v. tall man, large; formal dress, huge tail-coat, v. proper striped trousers, all correct; pleasant expression, of the *genial*-professorial type; *all* v. professorial—& a few wisps of grey hair have somehow

[77] J. Teissier du Cros, *Cross Currents: A Childhood in Scotland* (East Linton, 1997), 162. Such classes boosted the Reid Concerts' audiences: 'I get an excellent gallery, thanks to . . . my WEA' (DFT–McEwan, 14 Feb. 1922).

[78] Miller–DFT, 21 Nov. 1924.

[79] See Part IV, Sect. 2, n. 114 below.

disarranged themselves, right on *top*, & are ramifying into the air. Agreeable delivery, amusing illustrations and analogies from *non*-musical spheres; a mind packed full of *knowledge*, not only of *all* music, but of literatures, languages, culture generally; colloquial expressions now & again, for vividness or force; a good deal of incidental humour, wit, epigram. And then at last he sits down at the piano & you think "he *must* not play well" because (1) anybody so learned about music has no business to be a good executant, it isn't *fair* (2) his fingers are gnarled and cramped (he *does* in fact suffer from gout in the fingers—?& legs). And then lo & behold out comes the most lovely sequence of sounds—fine touch, sympathetic rendering, *no* mistakes. Then you realise that all the people you'd heard before whose performance was in that class were playing & had regularly played *for money*—& here is a man whose playing has habitually *not* been for that object. How different; pure music, nothing meretricious. I thought I'd try to represent the effect by a sketch [Plate X], but all that the sketch illustrated—amusingly enough, I think—is my quite *ludicrous* inability to draw.'[80]

IX

All who knew Tovey regarded him as a born talker, and given a piano he could be a source of entertainment and enlightenment for hours on end. So it is not surprising that, perhaps at the suggestion of his friend Sir Walford Davies (himself a highly successful exponent of the unscripted radio talk), Tovey was invited to give a number of BBC broadcasts in the 1920s and 1930s.[81] Nothing survives of those apparently given in 1926 and 1933. In 1934 he gave a series on Beethoven's keyboard works, and like Sir Walford he simply sat at the piano and spoke impromptu. All he provided for the BBC was a series of headings:

1. The C minor Variations.
2. The dramatic quality of Beethoven's music.
3. Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation.
4. Sonata and Rondo form: the E minor sonata, Op. 90.
5. Extension of the range of tonality, or harmony on a large scale.
6. The same continued, plus mystery, humour and tragedy.
7. The 'Appassionata' Sonata, Op. 57.
8. Development—the fallacy of the belief that music becomes 'logical' by the derivation of themes from one another; good composition in music is like good composition in prose or verse.
9. Rhythmic resources.
10. Origins of the later style; Sonatas in F sharp major, Op. 78, and C sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 2.
11. Musical texture in detail: counterpoint and Beethoven's harshness.
12. The same continued.

[80] A. Campbell–O. Campbell, 28 Apr. 1938. (Letter and drawing kindly donated to the Tovey Archive by Laura Campbell.)

[81] He was giving occasional broadcast talks to schools from Edinburgh as early as 1924 (Marshall–DFT, 18 Nov. 1924).

13. The dramatic impulse of Beethoven's fugues.
14. The plan of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata, Op. 106.
15. Performance of Op. 106.[82]

Tovey stressed in the first of the twenty-minute broadcasts that they were not going to be talks illustrated by music, but music illustrated by talk: every third broadcast would be a performance of a work previously discussed, and in fact he played in their entirety the Variations in C minor and the Sonatas Opp. 57, 78, 90, and 106, the last being accommodated in an extended forty-minute programme. Although Tovey regarded himself as a popularizer of music rather than as a scholar, it cannot be said that his selection of sonatas pandered in any way to popular taste.

For legal reasons the talks were taken down in shorthand and converted into typescripts which now survive on microfilm in the BBC Archives. It is amusing to compare the style of these scripts with the measured prose of Tovey's publications as edited by Foss. Almost every other paragraph begins with 'Well', or 'Now', or 'Well now' and there was clearly a good deal of hesitancy—sometimes a donnish searching for the right word, at others the halting delivery and um-ing and er-ing of Everyman. In fact Tovey was a nervous and inexpert broadcaster. He frequently overran his time, much to the annoyance of the broadcasters who followed him, compounding the issue and arousing the ire of the BBC by throwing out remarks in the programmes to the effect that twenty minutes was a ridiculously short time to deal properly with any musical subject, especially sonatas which took at least that time to play.

The talks were variously received: some found them enlightening and memorable; others found them puzzling, and the mannerisms and voice of the speaker infuriating and condescending. One listener, thrown by some of Tovey's characteristic classical references and philosophical terminology, wondered whether he ought not to have a copy of Aristotle or a Greek lexicon handy to the wireless to aid his comprehension. Nevertheless, Tovey was invited to continue with a further series in 1935 for which he proposed the title 'Musical art-forms as Means of Expression: the relation between Form and Matter'. This time there was no schedule of topics, which was just as well, for Tovey himself conceded that as a speaker he was inclined to follow the example of the cat 'which at any moment jumps in quite unpredictable directions'.

A memorandum from the Music Programme Advisory Panel after the Beethoven series noted that Tovey was 'above the heads of the ordinary listener'. After the second series: 'He is not easy to listen to', and later: 'would it be wise [for him] to write out more?' In fact, for his next series in 1937, 'Music and the Ordinary Listener' (clearly there had been words spoken to him about this uniquely BBC conception of humanity), Tovey did read from fully prepared scripts. The difference in style from the other two series is very evident, though his nervous delivery can still be felt in the two talks which survived on

[82] Details in this and the following paragraphs are from the BBC Written Archives file, Sir Donald Tovey: Talks/1934–39.

disc and have subsequently been transferred to tape. But the Advisory Panel were busy with their pencils once again. 'His voice and manner in the last series of broadcast talks made it impossible to consider him for a future series', writes Julian Herbage (unerringly putting his finger on the very defect Herbage himself shared with Tovey). Clarence Raybould's notes read: 'Disappointed. Too involved and muddled. After the broadcast couldn't remember what it had all been about.' On the other hand Arthur Bliss had heard the first one and had 'liked it extremely'. One listener was to write some months later complaining of Tovey's disappearance by then from the broadcasting scene and declaring that he could remember everything that had been said in the earlier broadcasts.

A long memorandum from G. R. Barnes dated 28 June 1937 reads: 'DFT refused to rehearse. By using a script his manner at the microphone has greatly improved since his last series. He can make his reading perfectly informal. His playing was very careless, due partly to the gout in his right hand. The first talk ("What the composer expects from the listener") using counterpoint as the illustration was very good if at times rather heavy going for the ordinary listener. The remaining talks were miles above the ordinary listener's head, and no protest of mine or Sir Walford Davies, could bring him to earth.' Another member of the panel also had praise only for the first talk. Thereafter Tovey, he thought 'got higher and higher and foggier and foggier'. G. R. Barnes added, 'Agreed not to use him again in this series ["The Foundations of Music"] unless he can bring himself to speak to a much more elementary audience.'

Notwithstanding, Tovey was asked in 1939 to do the first broadcast National Lecture in Music. There were some pungent memoranda relating to this too: the lecture must be scripted and he must not talk from the piano like Walford Davies—'we know he is a failure at that'. Barnes noted that he 'should not play his own piano illustrations'; and another note recommends that he should be given fifty minutes and the planners 'should allow for the inevitable overrun'. Tovey offered a subject such as only he, or more recently Hans Keller, could have devised—'The descriptiveness of absolute music and the absoluteness of descriptive music'—though it was not proposed to use this as the actual title for the lecture, which was to concern itself very much with Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, the Sanctus in particular. But it was not to be. Tovey was ill, and by the time he had partially recovered, the Second World War had been declared. He wrote puckishly asking if Barnes would please postpone the war, but Barnes replied that this was not in his power. The BBC was to be confined to one programme for the duration of hostilities, so plans for the National Lecture were abandoned. And in the first summer of those hostilities Tovey died.

M.T.