

## The Charms of meretricious melody

Rodmell, Paul

DOI:  
[10.35561/JSMI09131](https://doi.org/10.35561/JSMI09131)

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*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Citation for published version (Harvard):*  
Rodmell, P 2013, 'The Charms of meretricious melody: on setting the Creed in Victorian England', *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland*, vol. 9, pp. 3–40. <https://doi.org/10.35561/JSMI09131>

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# ‘The meretricious charms of melody’? On Late Victorian Settings of the Nicene Creed

PAUL RODMELL

In the late summer and early autumn of 1889 a protracted and fractious debate occupied the readers of the journal, *The Musical World*. At its heart was an argument as to how composers of that time should set the Nicene Creed for use in the Anglican Communion service; the chief protagonists were Frederick Harford, a Minor Canon of Westminster Abbey, and Charles Stanford, one of the United Kingdom’s most highly regarded composers.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the debate, even senior members of the Anglican Church, up to the Archbishop of Canterbury, had been drawn into the argument. The debate’s origins lay in two letters from Harford in which he gave detailed guidelines concerning the theological meanings, and grammatical and syntactical constructions of the Creed which, he suggested, should guide composers. Well-meaning as Harford’s intentions were, his highly didactic approach was not universally welcomed. But the debate provides a stimulus for an examination of word-setting in representative examples of one of the most important texts in Christian belief in the context of the late Victorian Anglican Church, and invites an appraisal of the extent to which church composers of the time and, most particularly, Stanford himself, considered the meanings and structures of texts they set on a routine basis. The episode also sheds more light on the contemporaneous politics of music and the dynamics of the relationship between clergy and the increasingly professionalized and confident musicians they employed, at a time when a heightened awareness of music’s importance within the liturgy, both in terms of religious edification and social status, was prevalent.

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<sup>1</sup> This episode was first touched upon briefly by Jeremy Dibble in his biography of Stanford; see Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 212–4. An initial version of this paper was given at the Stanford Society Conference held in Dublin in October 2010.

### The status of church music and musicians

When Obadiah Slope preaches for the first time in Barchester Cathedral, in Anthony Trollope's celebrated novel *Barchester Towers* (1857), one of his targets is what he views as the excessive and inappropriate presence of music in church services:

He could not exactly say, preaching from a cathedral pulpit, that chanting should be abandoned in cathedral services ... He could, however, and did allude with heavy denunciations to the practice of intoning in parish churches, although the practice was all but unknown in the diocese; and from thence he came round to the undue preponderance which, he asserted, music had over meaning in the beautiful service which they had just heard ... The words of our morning service, how beautiful, how apposite, how intelligible they were, when read with simple and distinct decorum! but [*sic*] how much of the meaning of the words was lost when they were produced with all the meretricious charms of melody! etc. etc.<sup>2</sup>

It is not just Slope who feels this way: as Trollope relates a little earlier, Slope is 'hinting that, humble as he was himself, he stood there as the mouthpiece of the illustrious divine who sat opposite to him' and thus it is clear that his views are shared by the newly installed Bishop Proudie (and, implied in many places in the novel, his redoubtable wife). While Trollope's satire is aimed at the internecine warfare practised by clerical factions—Slope's sermon is narrated in the novel's sixth chapter, entitled 'War', and the established characters Archdeacon Grantly and Rev. Septimus Harding are so horrified by it that they move to ban him from preaching in the cathedral again—the real-life relationship between church musicians and clergy in the nineteenth-century Anglican Church was often an equally tangled and difficult one (although such complications have hardly been confined either to that denomination or time).<sup>3</sup> While formal definitions of responsibility were clear and gave complete control to clerics, individual temperaments and relationships also loomed large in day-to-day organization of church services. Disagreements could arise not only from 'management' issues, but also, as exemplified by the attitudes of Trollope's various characters, divergent theological and aesthetic beliefs, subjects which became particularly contentious in the mid nineteenth century, as the differences between the high and low wings of the Church sharpened.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 44–5.

<sup>3</sup> For a real-life example of a battle between a bishop and his flock on this very issue, uncannily similar in essence to Trollope's fictional scenario, see the account of events at Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford, in Harry Grindle, *Irish Cathedral Music: A History of Music at the Cathedrals of the Church of Ireland* (Belfast: Queen's University, Belfast, 1989) 108–10.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief summary of these wings and their positions, the position of the majority 'broad' church between them, and the continuum which existed between all three, see Nicholas Temperley, *The*

The amount and choice of music often gave rise to wrangles in the Anglican Church, firstly because the authorized liturgical manual, the 1662 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer (BCP)*, has few and only passing references to music and gives no guidance at all on formats or styles,<sup>5</sup> leaving nearly all aspects to the discretion of either the presiding cleric or the Ordinary (that is, normally, the Bishop) and, secondly, because the Anglican Church's diverse nature meant that detailed centralized direction was neither expected nor welcomed. The sentiments of the fictional Slope were often duplicated by a real-life suspicion of the 'meretricious charms of melody' and a keen sense of, though no consensus on, what music was appropriate in a church service. While in many instances this debate focused simply on the presence or absence of music (Slope clearly would have preferred no music at all), and on either choral or congregational performance, a tangential consequence of the Oxford Movement's advocacy of greater dignity and ceremony in liturgical services was, in combination with various other pressures, a growth in interest in achieving musical styles that were appropriately devotional, and which paid due intellectual and doctrinal attention to the texts set. In parallel with this, from the 1840s onwards, ran the steady reinvigoration of choirs in cathedrals and other large churches (such as college and school chapels), and the foundation, especially in expanding and wealthy parishes with social ambitions, of similar bodies, that increasingly aimed at a cathedral-like style of choral

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*Music of the English Parish Church*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), i, 249–62 and 268–76.

<sup>5</sup> Nor was there much authoritative guidance in other sources; the twenty-fourth of the Thirty-Nine Articles, stating that 'It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have publick Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people', was taken as requiring the exclusive use of the English language and musically transparent settings, especially when taken in conjunction with Cranmer's frequently reiterated dictum 'for every syllable a [that is, *one*] note'. (The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were promulgated in 1563 and sought to define particular aspects of Anglican doctrine, principally in relation to Roman Catholicism; they are reproduced in the *BCP*. Since 1571 all Church of England priests have been required by law to swear an oath of subscription to the Articles. The Church of Ireland officially adopted the Articles in 1634 as a supplement to the Irish Articles of 1615; the former appear to have taken precedence from the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. Cranmer originally used the phrase quoted above in a letter to Henry VIII shortly after the publication of the first English-language Litany in 1544; see Peter le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England 1549–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 7.) Such vagueness allowed ignorance, prejudice, and selective reference to 'tradition' to become guiding principles; see, for example, Anonymous [attr. John Jebb], *Dialogue on the Choral Service* (Leeds: T. W. Green, 1842), which puts forward the theological arguments in favour of singing parts of the liturgy at the newly constructed Leeds Parish Church. For a broader discussion, see William Gatens, *Victorian Cathedral Music in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 60–81.

service (which in musical aspects was led and dominated by a surpliced choir situated in the East End chancel), at least on Sundays and feast days. In the second half of the century the proliferation of church choirs inevitably induced greater scrutiny of music and musicians than had pertained previously.<sup>6</sup>

Alongside this expansion of choral activity came an exponential increase in the amount of music composed for church choirs, further facilitated by the rapid increase in availability of cheap printed music initiated by Novello & Co.<sup>7</sup> While organist-composers were hardly novel phenomena, they were increasing in number and no longer confined to cathedrals and other large churches. In new suburbs in particular, organists often not only directed but also composed for their choirs and sought to get their music published; it was a badge of honour for an organist's music to be in use in the church in which he (or, very occasionally, she) worked, and supplied a potential means of career advancement within an expanding corpus of professional musicians.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Within the United Kingdom the effects of these changes were most profoundly felt in England, where Anglicanism was dominant; in Scotland, Wales and Ireland the dynamic was very different due to the prevalence of Presbyterianism, Methodism, and Catholicism. In Ireland the situation was further complicated by the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1871. Temperley shows that the expansion of parish church choirs was seen across most of England but especially in rapidly growing cities and non-cathedral towns and their suburbs; in predominantly rural and smaller cathedral-town parishes beyond the cathedral itself growth was rather more muted (280–84). For further discussion see Temperley, i, 244–314, and Gatens; further commentary, with a particular focus on the use of congregational plainchant (referred to by Gatens as the 'ecclesiological' style of worship), is in Bernarr Rainbow, *The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church 1839–1872* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) and Bennett Zon, *The English Plainchant Revival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially 318–46. For a survey of musical activity in Anglican cathedrals in Ireland, see Grindle.

<sup>7</sup> For discussion of the role of Novello & Co., which was the biggest publisher of sacred choral music in the British Isles in the late nineteenth century, see Victoria L. Cooper, *The House of Novello: Practice and Policy of a Victorian Music Publisher, 1829–1866* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). Most choral music performed in Anglican parish churches in the late nineteenth century was 'modern', as published and affordable editions of music composed before 1800 were comparatively rare; in cathedrals, where music collections had typically been assembled over longer periods, older music was more common but rarely dominant. Performances of music composed before the Restoration were still less frequent. For further discussion and illustrative examples, see Peter Horton, *Samuel Sebastian Wesley: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), and Suzanne Cole, *Thomas Tallis and His Music in Victorian England* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> The College of Organists was founded by Richard Limpus in 1864 with the intention of raising the profession's status, and included encouraging the composition and study of sacred music within its remit; the college experienced an exponential increase in candidates presenting themselves for its examinations over the next thirty years and received its Royal Charter in 1893 (for further information see 'Organists, Royal College of', in J. A. Fuller Maitland (ed.), *Grove's Dictionary of Music and*

Organists were increasingly well trained, although their musical education typically focused on performance and the technical aspects of composition, with less time devoted to the more nebulous subjects of aesthetics and appropriate musical style. Nevertheless, organists were frequently better informed than their clerical masters; while the education of organists was generally improving in the Victorian era, neither an interest in music nor musical training were required for ordination. Consequently, the absolute power that could be wielded by a presiding cleric regarding every aspect of the day-to-day affairs of his parish could lead to tensions with the organist (and other parishioners) on almost any facet of matters musical, and meant that pronouncements, such as Harford's in *The Musical World*, could not be dismissed out of hand, given their potential influence in clerical circles.<sup>9</sup>

### The changing role of the Eucharist

One prominent development in liturgical practice during the late nineteenth century was the increasing importance assigned to the Eucharist. Previously, the full service of Holy Communion had been celebrated only rarely in most churches; the *BCP* requires only that parishioners take communion three times a year, including Christmas and Easter, and leaves the frequency of its administration beyond this to local discretion. This lax requirement, together with a suspicion that the acts of consecration and administration were redolent of Roman Catholic practice, led to the principal services in

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*Musicians*, 2nd edition, 5 vols (London: Macmillan, 1904–10), iii, 564–5. In parallel, music degrees were reformed or instigated at many British and Irish universities, and syllabi were conceived primarily with organists in mind (for further information see 'Degrees in Music', *Grove's Dictionary*, i, 679–85); in many instances, however, no systematic training was provided and universities confined themselves to examining, and conferring degrees. See also Rosemary Golding, *Music and Academia in Victorian Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), and Lisa Parker, 'The Expansion and Development of the Music Degree Syllabus at Trinity College Dublin during the Nineteenth Century', in Paul Rodmell (ed.), *Music and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 143–60.

<sup>9</sup> It is beyond the scope of this article to survey the varying relationships between organists and the clergy who employed them, and relatively few musicians were willing to make their views known while they were still active for fear of alienating their employers, present or future; for some examples, focusing mainly on working conditions in cathedrals, see Horton; Jeremy Dibble, *John Stainer: A Life in Music* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007); Paul Rodmell, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Frederick Bridge, *A Westminster Pilgrim: Being a Record of Service in Church, Cathedral and Abbey, College, University and Concert-Room, with a Few Notes on Sport* (London: Novello, 1918); Barra Boydell, *A History of Music at Christ Church Cathedral Dublin* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004); Kerry Houston, 'Music before the Guinness Restoration, 1750–1860' and 'Restoration and consolidation: music, 1865–1977', in John Crawford and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin: A History* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), 286–307 and 353–82; Grindle.

most Anglican churches being those of Matins and Evensong. On Sundays the former service was normally followed by the Litany and the 'ante-Communion', that is, the Communion Service in the *BCP* up to and including the Sermon, thus omitting the consecration and administration. The theological reassessments initiated by the Tractarians led to a gradual shift in attitudes, however, and, in the second half of the century, many churches introduced a weekly and, in a few cases, daily, celebration of Holy Communion, and placed a greater emphasis on its importance within the liturgy.<sup>10</sup> This, in conjunction with the expanding number of church choirs, led to a rapid increase in the number of choral settings published, including not only new settings by British composers<sup>11</sup> but also English-language adaptations of Latin masses and, later, new editions of pre-1700 communion services. The composition and publication of new settings was particularly important since only in these could one receive music composed specifically with the Anglican communion service in mind;<sup>12</sup> the sixty contemporaneous settings received by the Library of the British Museum in the period 1885–89 (that is, the four years preceding Harford's letters)<sup>13</sup> range in scale and ambi-

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<sup>10</sup> Temperley cites statistics showing that the proportion of churches in greater London celebrating a weekly communion service increased from 6% in 1858 to 54% in 1882 (279) and notes that this trend was not confined to the capital (278–86); the move to what is now considered the 'normal state', wherein the Eucharist is the principal service of the week, took place after the First World War.

<sup>11</sup> It is impossible to give precise figures, but a search of the British Library catalogue implies an increase in production: in 1855–59 three settings were acquired by its predecessor, the Library of the British Museum; in 1865–69, fourteen; 1875–79, thirty-five; and 1885–89, sixty. Due to methodological limitations, these numbers should be treated only as being indicative of a trend.

<sup>12</sup> A typical musical setting of this period comprised the Kyrie (in the Anglican form of short responses to be sung after the recitation of each of the Ten Commandments), Gospel Acclamations, the Nicene Creed, *Sursum Corda*, Sanctus, and Gloria. Although not sanctioned by the *BCP*, in a growing number of 'high' churches, the Benedictus and Agnus Dei were also sung. Although a Latin mass setting could be adapted, the form of the Tridentine liturgy meant that the Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei were usually far too long for practical use in an Anglican service, while the shorter elements (Gospel Acclamations, *Sursum Corda* and a viable Kyrie) were absent. The use of Latin in Anglican services was very rare, the overwhelming opinion being, until well into the twentieth century, that Latin was 'not understood of the people' (see note 5).

<sup>13</sup> The sixty settings of the Communion service acquired in this period are by fifty-four composers; of these, thirty-two have entries in Stephen S. Stratton and James D. Brown, *British Musical Biography* (Birmingham: Stratton, 1897). The composers generally held organists' posts, from the largest churches (Durham and Salisbury cathedrals, and Westminster Abbey) to provincial parishes. Eleven are noted as holding music degrees or doctorates; the actual figure was probably greater. Only one composer had studied at the Royal Academy of Music, and one other at the National Training School for Music (predecessor of the Royal College); two others had been trained in Germany. Five, however, held teaching posts in the London colleges: Charles Stanford and Frederick Bridge (Royal College);

tion from modest unison settings designed for small churches to substantial symphonic conceptions requiring soloists, a large and competent choir, and, in one case, optional parts for trumpets and trombones.<sup>14</sup>

Within these settings the Nicene Creed was one of the two most substantial items (the other being the Gloria). The first and longest of the texts sung at Communion,<sup>15</sup> the Creed had a particular significance; whereas most of the other Ordinary texts normally set to music are hymns of praise (for example the Gloria and Sanctus in the Communion, and also canticles at Matins and Evensong), the Creed is, uniquely, a statement of faith and doctrine, additionally distinctive because of its ubiquity (with variations) in the Christian world. For composers too it was of great importance: the lengthy prose text, which contains some complex syntactical constructions and abstract theological concepts, presented challenges in terms of alignment with a coherent musical structure, creation of an evocative setting, and maintenance of listener interest, as well as the clear communication of doctrine. It was with an eye to this increased musical provision and a concern to preserve a clear and precise comprehension of the text that Frederick Harford wrote, in August 1889, his first letters to *The Musical World* regarding settings of the Nicene Creed.

### Harford’s manifesto and matters arising

Frederick Kill Harford (1832–1906) was something of a polymath. Educated at Rugby School and Christ Church, Oxford, he was ordained in 1857 and became a Minor Canon at Westminster Abbey in 1862, where he remained until his death; although a composer he was never appointed Precentor.<sup>16</sup> He also published original translations

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Charles Warwick Jordan (Guildhall School of Music); William Battison Haynes and George Bennett (Royal Academy). Four others were priests.

<sup>14</sup> The larger settings include those by men working in big city or affluent suburban parishes: Cedric Bucknall (organist of All Saints, Clifton, Bristol), Charles Warwick Jordan (St Stephen’s, Lewisham; this setting has optional parts for brass instruments), and Charles Edward Miller (St Augustine with St Faith, City of London).

<sup>15</sup> The Gloria comes at the end of the *BCP* Communion service.

<sup>16</sup> Harford gained his BA in 1855 and MA in 1858; he was appointed a Minor Canon at Westminster Abbey in 1862. He took no active role in the abbey after 1892 due to ill health and disruptive conduct. In 1898 the Dean and Chapter petitioned for Harford to be removed to an asylum but his friends and trustees disagreed and he remained at Westminster; he had been fined by the police both near the Abbey and outside a restaurant for disorderly behaviour (I am very grateful to Christine Reynolds, Assistant Keeper of Muniments, Westminster Abbey, for supplying this information). Harford’s entry in Brown and Stratton (183) states that he composed several settings of the Te Deum



of Schiller's *Der Taucher* (*The Diver*) and a part of Dante's *Inferno*; in the 1890s he became interested in the restorative uses of music and, via his Guild of St Cecilia (1891–96), was an early practitioner of music therapy.<sup>17</sup>

Harford's first two letters to *The Musical World* sought to give practical guidance to composers intending to set the Nicene Creed.<sup>18</sup> His interest in the text arose because of its antiquity (it was first promulgated in the fourth century), its almost universal use across Christian denominations and sects, and its liturgical role as the statement of faith. For composers, Harford argued, it was vital, when setting the version given in the *BCP*, to understand its linguistic and historic development; in particular, reference to the original Greek, rather than the Latin upon which the *BCP* text is based, would be beneficial, since successive translations had led to some misconceptions as to precise meanings of parts of the Creed. By doing this, Harford believed, composers would be better able to produce musical settings that were fully cognizant of the doctrinal substance of the text.

Altogether Harford produced twenty-eight points of guidance (presented as twenty-six) that have varying implications for composers; these are shown in full in Table 1. In his second letter, he extended his original remit beyond theological meanings and nuances of translation, and his suggestions thus fall into three groups:

- A: matters of liturgical propriety and musical mood; these include the desirability of an opening intonation sung by a priest, the provision of time to 'make reverence' (bow the head) at the words 'One Lord, Jesus Christ' and the evocation of specific sentiments at particularly striking moments (points 1, 2, 7a, 10, 14, 24);
- B: matters of grammar and syntax relating to translation and, implicitly, faulty punctuation in the English text (3–5, 7b–9, 11, 12, 20, 22);
- C: matters of verbal accentuation, arising from an 'examination made ... of a considerable number of settings of the Creed, viz., those given in Boyce—and nearly all the best that have appeared during the last 30 years' (6, 15–19, 21, 23, 25, 26).<sup>19</sup>

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and Jubilate, a setting of the Evening Canticles, anthems, hymns and a cantata, *Haroun Al Raschid* (1884); little of this music appears to have been published.

<sup>17</sup> See Helen Patey Tyler, 'Frederick Kill Harford—Dilettante Dabbler or Man of Our Time?', *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 11 (2002), 39–47.

<sup>18</sup> See *The Musical World* (hereinafter 'MW'), 3 August 1889, 511–3, and 10 August 1889, 535–6.

<sup>19</sup> MW, 10 August 1889, 535. 'Boyce' refers to William Boyce, *Cathedral Music* (3 vols, London, 1760–63), which was, at the time, still the most easily accessible source of Anglican church music composed

Table 1: Guidance for composers setting the Nicene Creed

These points are summaries of those in Harford's letters to *The Musical World* (3 August 1889, pp. 511–13 and 10 August 1889, pp. 535–36). The original numbering is preserved; while using one series of numbers in the two letters, each letter examines the Creed from beginning to end separately. Names within square brackets are those of the composers whose settings in Boyce's *Cathedral Music* Harford may have been referring to. As Tallis's Communion Service is placed first in the collection, it is possible that Harford's comments are based wholly or mainly on his assessment of this setting alone; references to other composers are based on the present author's examination of the music.

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| <i>I believe in one God the Father Almighty,</i>                                 | (1a) 'I believe in one God' should be intoned, preferably by the Priest, and not set chorally.<br>(14) There should be no break between 'God' and 'the Father Almighty' as they are the same being, although a pause on 'God' is acceptable.   |
| <i>Maker of heaven and earth,<br/>And of all things visible and invisible:</i>   | (1b) The first section, up to 'visible and invisible', 'should evidently be as majestic as possible'; Harford commented that in several settings 'a sense of colossal grandeur in this part has been well obtained'.<br>(15) The correct stress is 'visible and invisible', not 'visible and invisible' in order to emphasize the comprehensiveness of God's creation.   |
| <i>And in one Lord Jesus Christ,<br/>the only-begotten Son of God,</i>           | (2) At 'in one Lord Jesus Christ' composers should 'show reverence to the Sacred Name at the mention of which all bend'.<br>(3) Composers should 'bring out what is one of the special points of the Nicene Creed—the Eternal Sonship of The Divine Word'; in a brief summary at the end of his first letter Harford states that this means 'express "only begotten SON"'.<br>(4) Avoid the temptation to make 'of' a short note in relation to those either side of it, as the text should be understood as 'God is eternally generated from God, Light is communicated from Light' and thus the preferable rhythm is more equal, but without the principal stress falling on either occurrence of 'of', for example: 2/2:   ♪♪   ◦   ♪♪   ◦  . |
| <i>Begotten of his Father before all worlds,<br/>God of God, Light of Light,</i> |  |

between 1550 and 1700, and contains settings of the Nicene Creed by Tallis, Farrant, Bevin, Gibbons, Child (2), Aldrich, Rodgers, Byrd, Purcell, and Blow (3).

Table 1, continued.

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| <p><i>Very God of very God,<br/>Begotten, not made,<br/>Being of one substance with the Father,<br/>By whom all things were made:</i></p>                                     | <p>(5) 'Whom' refers not to the immediately preceding 'Father' but to 'one Lord Jesus Christ'; it is therefore wrong to set 'being of one substance ... all things were made' as one phrase, and a gap should be left between 'Father' and 'By whom'. Harford suggested an interrupted cadence at this point as one solution.</p> <p>After examining Stanford's B-flat Creed, Harford added a note that 'all' should be stressed, and not 'things'.</p>                    |
| <p><i>Who for us men, and for our salvation<br/>came down from heaven,<br/>And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of<br/>the Virgin Mary,<br/>And was made man,</i></p>          | <p>(6) 'Down' ought not to be unduly emphasized as it is an adverb.</p>  |
| <p><i>And was crucified also for us under<br/>Pontius Pilate.<br/>He suffered and was buried,</i></p>   | <p>(7a) 'Mourning and reverence will naturally mark the clause that tells of Our Saviour's Cross and Passion'.</p> <p>(16) The correct stress is 'also' (not 'also'). [<i>Tallis</i>; also <i>Farrant, Bevin, Gibbons, Child, Rodgers, Aldrich</i>.]</p>   |
| <p><i>And the third day he rose again according<br/>to the Scriptures,</i></p>  | <p>(7b) At 'rose again' the correct emphasis is on 'rose'; as Christ was resurrected only once the word 'again' is misleading in its implication if it is stressed.</p> <p>(17) The stress should fall on 'third' and not on 'day'. [<i>Tallis</i>; also <i>Bevin, Rodgers, Aldrich</i>.]</p> <p>(18) Do not stress 'according to the scriptures'. [<i>Tallis</i>; also <i>Farrant, Bevin, Gibbons, Child, Rodgers, Aldrich</i>.]</p>                                      |
| <p><i>And ascended into heaven,<br/>And sitteth on the right hand of the<br/>Father.<br/>And he shall come again with glory to<br/>judge both the quick and the dead:</i></p> | <p>(19) The stress should fall on 'right' to emphasize the difference between right and left, as opposed to hand and foot.</p> <p>(8) 'Again' should not be stressed as Christ's first coming was not with glory but with humility; 'a slight pause on "again" will prevent misunderstanding'.</p> <p>(20) 'come again with glory to judge' is often incorrectly set as one phrase, while the syntax should be conveyed as 'come again with glory, to judge both ...'.</p> |
| <p><i>Whose kingdom shall have no end.</i></p>  | <p>(9) There should be a break at the colon after 'dead' as 'whose' refers not to the dead but to Christ; running straight through would imply the former.</p> <p>(21) Do not stress 'shall'. [<i>Gibbons</i>]</p>   |

Table 1, continued.

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| <i>And I believe in the Holy Ghost,</i>  | (24) Do not emphasize 'I' since the Creed is principally a universal affirmation of faith rather than that of an individual.  |
| <i>The Lord and giver of life,</i>   | (10) 'The passage referring to the Holy Spirit ought to draw forth fervent homage from a musician's soul: yet in this place ... seldom has anything approaching beauty of treatment been even attempted'.<br>(11) There should be a slight pause on 'Lord' in order to bring out the sense of the original Greek ('the Lord and the life-giver') which was partially lost in the Latin 'Dominum et vivificantem'. |
| <i>Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,</i>                                       | (22) Observe the comma after 'Son' as 'who' refers to the Holy Ghost.   |
| <i>Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified,</i>             | (12) 'Who' refers to the Holy Ghost and, in order to emphasize that all three persons of the Trinity are worshipped, there should be a slight pause on 'Son'.   |
| <i>Who spake by the Prophets.<br/>And I believe one Catholick and Apostolick Church.</i> |   |
| <i>I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.</i>                              | (23) Do not stress the first syllable of 'acknowledge', an instance of which 'is found in the setting of an excellent master whose music has been for centuries deservedly honoured'. [ <i>Tallis</i> ; also <i>Aldrich</i> .]  |
| <i>And I look for the Resurrection of the dead,</i>                                      | (13) 'For' should not be under-stressed as it is a part of the verb.<br>(25) Avoid the stress pattern 'I look for'. [ <i>Tallis</i> ; also <i>Farrant</i> , <i>Bevin</i> , <i>Gibbons</i> (not all voices), <i>Rodgers</i> , <i>Aldrich</i> .]  |
| <i>And the life of the world to come.</i>  | (26) Do not stress 'And the life of the world', 'both of which are found in the setting mentioned above [see 23]'. [ <i>Tallis</i> ; also <i>Aldrich</i> .]   |
| <i>Amen.</i>   |   |

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Harford's points are sometimes pedantic or statements of the obvious, but were made with good intentions in a clear belief that anyone hearing a musical setting of the Creed should not be misled as to its doctrinal meaning or emphasis. Point 24, for example, states that the singular person of 'I believe' should not be given undue emphasis within a musical phrase as the Creed is a *collective* affirmation of faith; this reflects a long-standing discrepancy between the Greek and Latin texts as the former

uses the first person plural while the latter employs the singular.<sup>20</sup> There are, however, manifest weaknesses in his arguments: the points within group A are mainly either vaguely expressed or reflect a particular ‘high church’ form of worship not then universally embraced<sup>21</sup> and, despite references to prevailing moods, Harford had nothing to say about the overall structure of a setting, or the use of climaxes and points of repose as a means of stressing certain portions of the text. In groups B and C, Harford, despite his musical knowledge, referred almost exclusively to rhythmic accentuation, with no regard for the potential impact of form, melodic shape, harmonic inflection or progression, syncopation, unison or harmonized singing, homophonic or contrapuntal texture, the use of the organ, or musical style or aesthetics. Overall, while Harford’s points include some sensible and worthwhile advice, they are also somewhat randomly selected, and far from a comprehensive guide for an aspirant composer.<sup>22</sup>

Harford’s letters might largely have been passed over had it not been for Stanford’s response published two weeks later.<sup>23</sup> Given that Stanford was one of the United Kingdom’s leading composers (not least of church music), had been Organist of Trinity College, Cambridge, since 1874, the university’s Professor of Music since 1887, and Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music since 1883, his letter could hardly be ignored. As in much of his correspondence, the points are often valid but are not stated as tactfully as they might have been. First and foremost, Stanford took exception to what he viewed as Harford’s misconceptions of verbal accentuation in older Creed settings; although Harford had not referred to specific works, Stanford inferred, via the reference to Boyce, that Harford was making ‘a most mischievous attack on the old polyphonic masters’ and that he had failed to understand that:

the barline was not the same to them as to us. With us Moderns it marks the accents, with the Ancients it was merely a convenient landmark to facilitate the reading of the notes. Many appa-

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<sup>20</sup> Globally, versions of the Creed have employed both singular and plural; within the Church of England, Harford was ahead of his time: the plural ‘we believe’ was first used in the *Series 3 Holy Communion* introduced in 1973 in anticipation of the introduction of the *Alternative Service Book* in 1980.

<sup>21</sup> Bowing (or even genuflecting) at ‘One Lord, Jesus Christ’ implies a more ritualistic approach to worship. Regarding the opening intonation, Harford could have referred to the first version of the *BCP* (1549) to support his point.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, one might infer an underlying hostility to the general concept of choral settings of the Creed, given his statement, ‘an important feature—that of the unanimity that exists between Priest and people—is lost when the Creed is sung by the choir only’ (*MW*, 3 August 1889, 512), partially echoing the strictures of the fictitious Obadiah Slope.

<sup>23</sup> *MW*, 24 August 1889, 572–3.

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rently false accents in old music disappear if the music is sung without laying a modern interpretation on the bar line.<sup>24</sup>

Setting aside Stanford's somewhat faulty understanding of the history of the bar-line, his essential point is valid in that a fixed number of beats per bar and commensurate stress patterns were not a characteristic of the 'ancient' style. A perusal of Boyce's *Cathedral Music* suggests that Harford was thinking primarily of Tallis's setting (which happens to be the first in the collection) but several similar 'faults' are also found in those by Farrant, Bevin, Gibbons, Child, Aldrich and Rodgers; these clearly arise due to an assumption by Harford that the music was conceived with a strong 'four beats in a bar' metricality.<sup>25</sup> It was not only in relation to rhythm that Stanford took issue with Harford: he also argued that there had been, over time, a change in aesthetic views: 'Mr Harford forgets that the ancients aimed at producing a general devotional monochrome, not at painting the meaning of each word and phrase in contrasted colour'.<sup>26</sup>

While these broad points may be fair, the second section of Stanford's letter, in which he dealt with Harford's points in turn, included some confused thinking and views as subjective as those of his antagonist. Referring to Harford's point 4 ('God of God, Light of Light'), Stanford stated that:

if 'of' is too much marked it becomes pedantic. The place to explain the meaning of the Latin 'de' is the catechist's class, not the composer's music paper. Beethoven in the Mass in D writes 'Deum de Deo' [4/4: ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪]; yet no setting of the Creed is more accurate in point of declamation, even to the verge of word-painting.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, point 6 is referred to as: 'absurd. "Came down" = descendit. The accent on "down" is not out of place; it is the important word in the sentence'. Meanwhile points 10, 16, and 17 could all be 'overdone' or 'underdone'. In conclusion, Stanford suggested that:

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<sup>24</sup> As note 23.

<sup>25</sup> A concept that is emphasized by Boyce's editorial decision to include barlines throughout his edition. See Table 1 for indications of 'errors' made by Tallis and the other composers. Ironically, both Stanford and Harford could have found several indefensible instances of poor text-setting in the Creeds by Blow (especially in the triple-time sections), which *were* composed at a time when the strong rhythmic impetus indicated by the barline was well-established.

<sup>26</sup> As note 23.

<sup>27</sup> As note 23. Harford's point here related to the use of the preposition 'de' ('Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine') rather than the genitive ('Deum Dei, lumen luminis').

the best advice to the young composer would be to study the Nicene Creed in its Latin form and its settings by Palestrina, Bach and Beethoven, with special reference to their various treatment of the words. These examples will show how the accents and sentiments can be legitimately varied without a loss of sense on the one hand or the adoption of a stereotyped reading on the other. No one is more convinced than I am of the importance of correct accentuation, but I am equally certain that as great mischief can be done by pedantic dogmatism as by careless reading of the sense.<sup>28</sup>

Given Stanford's dismissive tone, it is unsurprising that Harford hit back; after initially stating that 'I ought perhaps to say at the outset that I do not think there is *one single* point in [Stanford's] letter of sufficient importance to call for a serious reply',<sup>29</sup> Harford supplied a detailed response which pointedly examined the Creed from Stanford's own Communion Service in B Flat, Op. 10 (1879), and set out its inadequacies as he perceived them (discussed below).<sup>30</sup> Only to a very limited extent did he concede that any of Stanford's points had some validity.<sup>31</sup>

In the same issue as Harford's response (31 August) were letters from three other correspondents and these were followed by a steady flow of missives until early November.<sup>32</sup> Generally Harford gained more support than Stanford; one writer, 'Musico-Clerical Correspondent', diplomatically attempted to negotiate a *via media*:

Professor Stanford can write music, and he can also write English—pretty strong English, too, sometimes—which cannot be said of all who can write music ...

At the same time, both his criticism and his advice are somewhat vitiated by the prejudice and animus which pervade his letter ... I sadly fear—though I am an ardent admirer of Professor Stanford's music—that, as regards the particular matter in question, he is a great offender—and this may in large measure account for the impatient ring of his attack. His Nicene Creed (in B flat) is one of the finest of modern settings; but the constant repetition of it ... never reconciles me to the obviously false accentuation of one of its finest passages—the *Deum Dei* instead of *Deum de Deo* &c., and this, let the Professor say what he likes, is a very important point ... If we grant that the catechist's class is the (proper) place to explain the meaning of the Latin 'de' that is

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<sup>28</sup> As note 23.

<sup>29</sup> MW, 24 August 1889, 573.

<sup>30</sup> MW, 31 August 1889, 593–5.

<sup>31</sup> Principally in relation to point 6 ('came down from heaven'). Harford consulted 'three scholars of high culture' (MW, 24 August 1889, 573)—Churton Collins, contributor to *The Quarterly Review*, Henry Cope Caulfield JP, and E. Gilbert Highton, Secretary of the Royal Society of Literature, MW—before replying to Stanford's letter; see MW, 31 August 1889, 595–6.

<sup>32</sup> See MW, 31 August 1889, 596–7; 7 September, 615; 14 September, 635–7; 21 September, 654–6; 28 September, 676–7; 5 October, 695–7; 12 October, 711–2; 19 October, 732–5; 26 October, 751–3; 2 November, 770–1.

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no reason why the explanation should be obliterated by the composer every time the words are sung.

Some of Mr Harford's memoranda of advice appear to me to be hypercritical, or perhaps even a little childish. But, apart from detail, the subject is one greatly needing attention even by our very best Church writers ...<sup>33</sup>

A rejoinder to Harford from Stanford, who always had difficulty 'letting go' of an argument, was inevitable.<sup>34</sup> The tone was by turns combative and sarcastic, his mood blackened by Harford's use of his B-flat setting of the Creed as an exemplar. Not to be outdone, Harford came back a week later with a further two pages of commentary, half of which focused upon manners and protocol; sensibly, perhaps, Stanford then retired from the fray.

A final bout of correspondence took place between Harford and Gerald Cobb, who was a published composer of anthems and services, Bursar of Trinity College, Cambridge, and also then a close friend of Stanford. It is not known if Stanford encouraged Cobb; his letters are emollient in tone and focus not on the *minutiae* of Harford's argument but on the relationship between music and text *in toto*.

The association of words with music is an alliance—an alliance, moreover, which is only entered into by one of the parties for the sake of the advantages which the other has to bestow; for why should we *sing* our words at all, and not rest content with *speaking* them, except because we conceive that in calling music to their aid we are thereby adding a beauty and an impressiveness to them which is worth adding ... Now music has its own essential requirements, and where these are not satisfied it ceases ... to exist; its phrases, for instance, must be rounded and complete, not jagged or truncated, and they should balance one another; its rhythm must be clearly defined and emphatic; its accent in any given group of notes must fall on such notes, and on such only, as will transform that group from a void and meaningless consecution of sounds into that which musical instinct will recognise as melody ... And so long as music in a broad and general way tends to emphasise rather than obscure the right and proper sense of the words, and in lesser details gives no violent shock to our linguistic susceptibilities, surely we ought to be content.<sup>35</sup>

Cobb's pragmatic approach did not gain much sympathy from Harford who, in another long letter, cited Cobb's G-major setting of the Creed (published in 1883) in support of his assertions that composers were often deficient in their comprehension

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<sup>33</sup> MW, 31 August 1889, 596.

<sup>34</sup> MW, 14 September 1889, 635–6.

<sup>35</sup> MW, 19 October 1889, 734–5.



of grammar and syntax.<sup>36</sup> After this exchange closed on 2 November, the correspondence ceased.

Running in parallel to this general exchange of views were two further aspects of the debate. Firstly, in order to add weight to Harford's argument, *The Musical World* elected in early October to approach as many senior clerics as possible and elicit their opinions on the most contentious points in the Harford/Stanford fracas, focusing on Harford's points 4, 5, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 25.<sup>37</sup> The majority of respondents backed Harford and only on point 25 was his view rejected.<sup>38</sup> Of greater significance is the number and the identities of the men who expressed an opinion; alongside sixteen bishops, many deans, and ordained headmasters of leading public schools, were the leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in Britain, cardinals Manning and Newman, the archbishops of Canterbury,<sup>39</sup> Armagh, and Dublin, the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and William Gladstone, the former Prime Minister. It is a moot point as to how many of these men were interested in musical settings *per se*, or were becoming entangled, as men all intensively coached in classical languages, in the niceties of translation and meaning as expressed in Greek, Latin and English, but it is significant that so many men of high status expressed their opinions on such specific issues, and puts into context the conditions in which composers of Anglican church music were then working, and the pressures they might come under if their offerings were deemed inadequate. 'From this result, obtained from the highest theologians and scholars in this kingdom,' commented *The Musical World* complacently, 'it will be seen that the "hints" for Church composers put forward in our issue of August 17 were both in the main and in detail correct; and that the objections that were raised against them during eight or nine weeks of discussion must be considered absolutely invalid'.<sup>40</sup>

The second parallel aspect, initiated by *The Musical World* at the same time as the publication of Harford's original letters, was a competition:

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<sup>36</sup> MW, 2 November 1889, 770–1.

<sup>37</sup> MW, 12 October 1889, 711.

<sup>38</sup> MW, 19 October 1889, 732–3.

<sup>39</sup> After the preliminary results were given, MW stated that 'when the result of an enquiry is fully known we purpose to submitting it to the highest Ecclesiastical Authority (under Her Majesty the Queen) in this Kingdom; and the opinion of the Archbishop of Canterbury [Edward White Benson], as Patriarch of the Church in England and her dependencies, will, if given, naturally have more weight than any other' (MW, 12 October 1889, 704).

<sup>40</sup> MW, 19 October 1889, 733.

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The perversions of sense by wrong accent in the settings of the Nicene Creed, to which attention has been drawn in our columns by Canon Harford, will no doubt have astonished our readers both lay and clerical. We ourselves were, we confess, so much surprised that in view of the importance of the matter we have examined at least twenty settings of the Creed by the best modern composers, the result, we grieve to say, being to show that Canon Harford's criticisms are rather under than over-stated.

To the end that this matter may receive from musicians the attention which it deserves, the Proprietor of the *Musical World* has decided to offer three prizes for settings of the Nicene Creed, which, upon examination by competent judges, shall be found free from the errors pointed out in our last and present issues. The prizes (of 12, 5 and 3 guineas) will be awarded in order of musical merit; correct accent, both grammatical and rhetorical being a *sine qua non*.<sup>41</sup>

Sixty-eight entries were submitted, and judged by George Martin, Joseph Bridge and Edgar Jacques;<sup>42</sup> a quarter were eliminated on the grounds of faulty word-setting. Martin believed that 'in all probability our best-known Church composers have not competed, and that doubtless the works sent in are mostly by rising and certainly promising young composers ... although there is no composition of absolutely first-rate importance ... two-thirds of the works reach a high standard of excellence'.<sup>43</sup> The three prize-winners were subsequently announced as Thomas Tertius Noble, Philip Armes and William Cruickshank.<sup>44</sup> The award of first prize to the 22-year-old Noble must have been a cause of wry amusement in some quarters, as he was then a student at the Royal College and being taught composition by Stanford; within a few months he was appointed Stanford's deputy at Trinity. Whether Stanford encouraged him to enter the

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<sup>41</sup> *MW*, 10 August 1889, 523.

<sup>42</sup> Martin (1844–1916) was a pupil of Stainer, gained his MusBac from Oxford in 1868, became deputy organist at St Paul's Cathedral in 1876, and succeeded Stainer there in 1888; he was also Organ Professor at the Royal College from 1883, and a composer of church and organ music. Bridge (1853–1929) was the younger brother of Frederick (organist of Westminster Abbey), and successively held organist's posts at Rochester and Manchester cathedrals, Exeter College, Oxford, and Chester Cathedral (1877–1925); in Chester he revived and conducted the Triennial Festivals, at which several of his own works were performed. He gained his MA at Oxford in 1878, and MusDoc in 1884. Jacques (1850–1906) was editor of *MW* (1888–91) and *The Musical Times* (1892–97), sometime music critic of *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times*, and author of many analytical programme notes for concerts at the Queen's Hall, London.

<sup>43</sup> *MW*, 9 November 1889, 783.

<sup>44</sup> *MW*, 23 November 1889, 825. Noble (1867–1944) was later organist of Ely Cathedral (1892–98), York Minster (1898–1913) and St Thomas, Fifth Avenue, New York (1913–43); he is now best remembered for his Evening Service in B Minor. Armes (1836–1908) held posts at Rochester and Chichester cathedrals before being appointed organist at Durham (1862–1907); he gained his MusBac (1858) and MusDoc (1864) from Oxford. Cruickshank (1854–1934) gained his MusBac from Oxford in 1885 and worked in southern Scotland until moving to Burnley in 1880.

competition in the hope of cocking a snook at *The Musical World* is unknown; in any case, Stanford must have felt that he had had something of a last laugh. Noble's setting was published, as part of his Communion Service in A, in the early 1890s; Armes's setting in G was also issued, with a note that the Creed had gained second prize in the competition; Cruickshank's setting does not appear to have been published.

### **Musical repercussions and responses**

While Harford may not originally have set out with Stanford's B-flat setting in his sights, was he right to direct so much opprobrium at it? Do other aspects of the setting convey the moods and meanings of the text in ways that Harford failed to consider? An examination of this version, and comparisons with Stanford's other settings and a selection of those by other composers, allow an appraisal of his approach to the Creed and, by implication, other liturgical texts.

Although Harford's choice was motivated by purely personal feelings, it is also emblematic, for Stanford's B-flat Service had made a huge impression upon musicians within the Anglican Church after its publication in 1879, and had rapidly become the model for many other composers. As shown by Jeremy Dibble, 'Stanford in B flat' had brought a previously unheard of level of thematic unity and integration to the Anglican service, due to its use of instrumental forms and symphonic concepts.<sup>45</sup> The daring application of these techniques to a genre which had hitherto essentially adhered to the episodic method of composition established in the Elizabethan period had proved hugely influential, in effect breaking a long-standing taboo that had separated Anglican service repertory from the secular world.<sup>46</sup> But, from Harford's perspective, Stanford's new emphasis on musical integrity came at the expense of the nuanced expression of the text. An examination of Stanford's Creed does, therefore, confirm Harford's appraisal if using his own particular criteria, and demonstrates that Stanford was more often concerned with the marriage of music and text and the general impression created than with the niceties of doctrinal and syntactical correctness enumerated by Harford. In particular, Stanford's desire to maintain harmonic and

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<sup>45</sup> See Jeremy Dibble, 'Stanford's Service in B-flat Opus 10 and the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge', in Gerard Gillen and Harry White (eds), *Music and the Church*, Irish Musical Studies, 2 (Blackrock: Irish Academic Press, 1993), 129–48.

<sup>46</sup> The use of instrumental forms and key structures can be seen in some earlier nineteenth-century anthems, for example, S. S. Wesley's *Ascribe unto the Lord* and Goss's *If we believe that Jesus died*, but in service music they were rare, Wesley's Service in E being an excellent though sporadic example. For a brief examination of the sacred/secular divide advocated by many Victorian church musicians, see Gatens, 60–62.

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rhythmic momentum led him to join lines of text together and to omit the breaks advocated by Harford, potentially obscuring their meaning; although some of these 'flaws' can be eliminated by the pragmatic insertion of breaths, the goal-directed nature of the music certainly does not allow for the level of projection and profound comprehension of the text that Harford desired. In Harford's view, Stanford's setting contravened no fewer than ten of his criteria (2, 4–6, 12–15, 22 and 24); a literal reading suggests that Stanford was also at fault in respect of a further three (9, 18 and 26). For illustrations from the opening of the setting, see Example 1.

Example 1: Stanford, *Service in B Flat*, Op. 10 (Creed, bars 1–22).

The image displays a musical score for the opening of the Nicene Creed, featuring a Priest and a Choir (Soprano). The score is in B-flat major and 4/4 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 120. The lyrics are: "I be-lieve in one God The Fa-ther Al-migh-ty, Ma-ker of heaven and earth, And of all things vi-si-ble and in-vi-si-ble: And in one Lord Je-sus Christ, the on-ly be-got-ten Son of God, Be-got-ten of his Fa-ther be-fore all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Ve-ry God of ve-ry God,". The score includes several annotations: "inappropriate break" under the first line, "incorrect stress" under the second line, "no relaxation of tempo to allow for reverence" under the third line, and "inappropriate under-emphasis of 'of'" under the fourth line.

Conversely, however, Harford's concentration on rhythm and punctuation blinded him to the strengths in Stanford's setting, and there are several purely musical devices that create a rhetorical structure which underlines the meaning of the text. For example, the use of the opening intonation ('I believe in one God')<sup>47</sup> as a recurring theme, usually in the organ, creates structural integrity, but also brings extra emphasis to the words 'And I believe in the Holy Ghost' (bar 79), the first recurrence of the words 'I believe', albeit some two-thirds of the way through the text (see Examples 1 (intonation) and 2; also Examples 3 and 6a).

<sup>47</sup> Based upon the plainchant opening of 'Credo I' as given in the *Graduale Romanum* (Tournai: Desclée, 1979), 769.

Example 2: Stanford, Service in B Flat, Op. 10 (Creed, bars 79–81).

[Firmly and not too slow  $\text{♩} = 120$ ]

Tenor & Bass

*mf* And I be - lieve in the Ho - ly Ghost,

Organ

Meanwhile, an unprepared shift to the flattened submediant (bar 36), together with a stark change of texture and marked slowing of the pace of harmonic change, transforms the musical mood for the passage referring to the incarnation, emphasizing its significance and separating it from the preceding and succeeding text (Example 3).

Example 3: Stanford, Service in B Flat, Op. 10 (Creed, bars 32–41).

Choir

[*dim.*] our sal - - - va - - - tion came down from Heaven.

Organ

[*dim.*]

Intonation Intonation

*pp* And was in - car - nate by the Ho - - - ly Ghost

*pp*

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Example 4: Stanford, Service in B Flat, Op. 10 (Te Deum, bars 90–95).

[With breadth and not too slow  $\text{♩} = 80$ ]

Choir *f* Thou art the King of Glo-ry, O Christ.

Organ *f*

Example 5a: Stanford, Service in B Flat, Op. 10 (Creed, bars 67–71).

Choir *ff* Fa-ther. And He shall come a-gain with glo-ry

Organ *ff*

Example 5b: Stanford, Service in B Flat, Op. 10 (Creed, bars 87–90).

Choir *f* Son, Who with the Fa-ther, and the Son

Organ *f*

Later, the organ fanfare motif that leads to ‘And he shall come again with glory’ (bar 67) and ‘Who with the Father and the Son’ (bar 87) is taken from the earlier Te Deum, where it first appears at ‘Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ’ (bars 90–94), thus unifying two movements musically (in separate services, Matins and Communion) but also doctrinally, by linking mention of the relationship between Father and Son in both texts (Examples 4, 5a and 5b).

Perhaps most impressively, a chromatically ascending melodic line over a dominant pedal at the words ‘And I believe one Catholick ... remission of sins’ (bars 96–103) brings a cumulative effect to these words and the maximum possible weight to the following clause, ‘And I look for the resurrection of the dead’, at the return of the tonic chord (bars 104–10; Example 6a), the music of which also recalls two important parts of the Te Deum: ‘Holy, holy, holy’, bars 38–41, and ‘O Lord, in thee have I trusted’, bars 244–48 (Example 6b). The unexpected appearance of A flat at ‘the dead’ (bars 109 and 110) and the subsequent French Sixth allow a move to an implied C major at ‘And the life of the world to come’ (bars 112–6), emphasizing the difference between earth (B flat) and heaven (C). There is ample evidence, therefore, to suggest that Stanford considered the theological meanings within the texts, and responded to them in his setting, even if he focused more on general concepts than the level of intricacy advocated by Harford.

Stanford himself pointed out that the B-flat Service was the product of a relative tyro (he was 26 when it was first performed) and that he ‘did not pin his [present] opinions to a work written some twelve years back’.<sup>48</sup> An examination of his other polyphonic Creed settings, of which one (in F, Op. 36) is roughly contemporaneous with the Harford debate and the remaining four post-date it, is therefore valuable in terms of contextualization and seeing if Stanford was consistent in his approach.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> MW, 14 September 1889, 635.

<sup>49</sup> The exact date of composition of the Service in F is unknown as the autograph manuscript does not survive; it was reviewed in *The Musical Times* (1 December 1889, 744); no reference is made here to the debate in MW, and the writer stated that Stanford had set the words ‘effectively, reverently, and in all cases after the fashion that is necessary to secure acceptance and approval by church musicians’. The four later settings are those in A (Op. 12, composed in 1894/95), in G (Op. 81, 1902/03), in C (Op. 115, 1909) and the Festal Service in B flat (Op. 128, 1911). Excluded from discussion here are the Latin setting in the Mass in G, Op. 46 (subsequently published in an English arrangement), and a unison setting published in 1922.

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Example 6a: Stanford, Service in B Flat, Op. 10 (Creed, bars 96–114).

Choir

*f* And I be - lieve one Ca - tho - lic and A - pos - to - lic Church. I ack - now - ledge one

Organ

Intonation Intonation Intonation

*f*

And I look for the Re - sur - rec - - -

Bap - tism for the re - mis - sion of sins, And I look for the Re - sur -

Intonation Intonation

*ff*

tion

rec - tion of the dead, *pp* And the life

*pp*



Example 6b: Stanford, Service in B Flat, Op. 10 (Te Deum, bars 38–41 and 244–48).

[With breadth and not too slow  $\text{♩} = 80$ ]

Choir *ff* Ho - - - - - ly. Ho - - - - - ly

Organ *ff*

*ff* O Lord, in Thee have I trust - - - - - ed

*ff*

The F-major service was one of Stanford's first compositions in a consciously antiquarian style and was clearly intended to echo some of the ethos and methods of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (its published subtitle includes the phrase 'set to music in the key of F with the greater third'); this may have led him to make more concessions to purely musical considerations than usual.<sup>50</sup> If Stanford's letters were known to Stanford when he was composing this setting, there is little evidence that they influenced him in any way. There is no opening intonation (indeed, the B-flat

<sup>50</sup> Shortly after this episode, Stanford studied with England's then acknowledged expert on modal counterpoint, William Rockstro, as part of his preparation for the composition of the oratorio *Eden*, Op. 40; a study of modes and Palestrina became an integral part of Stanford's own composition teaching from the mid 1890s.

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Creed is the only one of his six polyphonic settings to have one<sup>51</sup>) and, likewise, Harford's exhortation to stress the first syllable of 'invisible' (point 15), which is surely correct, is ignored, and Stanford again placed a greater emphasis on the second syllable in his approach to a D-minor Phrygian cadence (Example 7).

Example 7: Stanford, Service in F, Op. 36 (Creed, bars 8–14).

Musical score for Example 7, Stanford, Service in F, Op. 36 (Creed, bars 8–14). The score is in F major, 4/4 time, marked Moderato. It shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "And of all things, all things vi - si - ble and in - vi - si - ble: in - vi - si - ble".

The dominant half-close here allowed Stanford to restate the opening musical material at 'And in one Lord Jesus Christ' but he thereby contravened Harford's point 2 by allowing no additional time for reverence. At 'God of God' (bars 28–9), however, despite Stanford's dogged advocacy of Beethoven, equal emphasis is placed on the preposition as demanded in Harford's point 4 (2/2: ♩ | ♩ |) and Stanford also conforms to point 5 by breaking between 'Father' and 'By whom' (bars 42–4). At 'And the third day he rose again' though, Stanford stressed 'day' in all four parts and also 'again' in the dominating soprano line (points 7b and 17), and it is difficult to see anything other than a musical motivation for contravening Harford's interpretation of the text (to say nothing of the stress placed by Stanford on 'And') (Example 8).

Example 8: Stanford, Service in F, Op. 36 (Creed, bars 93–99).

Musical score for Example 8, Stanford, Service in F, Op. 36 (Creed, bars 93–99). The score is in F major, 4/4 time, marked Moderato. It shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "And the third day he rose a - gain ac - cor - ding to the Scrip - tures, And the third day He rose a - gain ac - cor - ding to the Scrip - tures, And the third day He rose a - gain ac - cor - ding to the Scrip - tures,.".

Further on, at 'And he shall come again ... have no end' (bars 109–26), Stanford contra-

<sup>51</sup> The Service in B Flat is, likewise, the only one of the six communion services to have an intonation at the beginning of the Gloria.

vened three of the four relevant points (8, 9 and 20); the failure to break at 'dead: whose' was purely motivated by the desire to resolve the suspended fourth on the former word and to maintain a continuous sound, yet it would be possible to insert a clean break here without either removing the suspension or upsetting the tactus (Example 9).

Example 9: Stanford, *Service in F*, Op. 36 (Creed, bars 109–19).

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano setting. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system (bars 109-114) features a vocal line starting with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and the lyrics: "And He shall come a - gain with glo - - - - - ry to". The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support. The second system (bars 115-119) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "judge both the quick — and the dead: Whose king - dom, — whose Whose king - dom". The piano part continues with sustained chords and moving lines.

There are further examples in this Creed of contentious word-setting; in part this is attributable to Stanford's intention that the service should be performed unaccompanied but, overall, it is difficult to see the justification for some instances of word-setting which, while not distorting the meaning of the words beyond comprehension, seem eccentric.

An examination of the four later settings reveals an equally varied approach to both overall sense and verbal accentuation. Despite Harford's assertion, Stanford never stressed the first syllable of 'invisible' and only in the *Service in F* are the three words 'God of God' equally emphasized. Elsewhere there are varying stress patterns:<sup>52</sup>

*Service in A*: And the *third* day he *rose* again

*Service in G*: And the *third day* he *rose* again

*Service in C*: And the *third* day he *rose* again

*Festal Service in B flat*: And the *third* day he *rose* again

<sup>52</sup> Bold type indicates the word or syllable with the greatest stress.

Similarly inconsistent is the approach in the later passage discussed above:<sup>53</sup>

Service in A: And he shall *come again* with *glory* to *judge* both  
the *quick* and the *dead*: (/) whose *kingdom* / whose *kingdom* / shall *have no end*.

Service in G: *And* he shall *come again* with *glory* to *judge* both  
the *quick* and the *dead*: / whose *kingdom* shall *have no end*.

Service in C: And he shall *come again* with *glory* / to *judge* both  
the *quick* and the *dead*: / whose *kingdom* / shall *have no end*.

Festal Service in B flat: And he shall *come again* with *glory* (/) to *judge* both  
The *quick* and the *dead*: / whose *kingdom* / shall *have no end*.

Doubtless, therefore, Harford would have had ample material for further correspondence. In these instances it is hard to escape the conclusion that Stanford regarded musical integrity as a higher priority than absolute clarity of textual meaning, preferring to leave the latter to the 'catechist's class'. And yet, in other places, this inconsistent approach allowed him to emphasize different aspects of the Creed text in a way that formulaic speech recitation would ignore: in both the A and G settings, for example, at 'And the third day ... heaven', a chromatic ascent in the organ pedals (from B flat to F in the former, and from E flat to B natural in the latter (Example 10)) creates a forward momentum and sense of excitement wholly generated by the music, bringing both a literal and metaphorical rise to the text dealing with the resurrection and ascension.

Similarly, while Stanford always, unsurprisingly, set apart the sections dealing with the incarnation and crucifixion by changes of texture, his differing approaches subtly shift the emphases within the text. Only in the C-major service, for example, is the role of Pilate highlighted, by means of a deft chromatic side-step (a previously stable A-flat tonality moves to V<sup>7</sup> of V before an unexpected enharmonic shift at 'Pontius' treats the applied dominant seventh as a German Sixth, allowing for a bass line descent to A natural and an (unresolved) cadential 6/4 in D minor) (Example 11).

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<sup>53</sup> Where '∿' represents continuous singing, '/' represents a substantial break and '(/)' a very short one.

Example 10: Stanford, Service in G, Op. 81 (Creed, bars 81–97).

Tempo Primo [Allegro]

The musical score is presented in four systems. Each system contains a vocal line (Soprano and Bass) and a piano accompaniment (Right and Left Hand). The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Tempo Primo [Allegro]'. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *cresc.* (crescendo). The lyrics are: 'And the third day he rose a - gain ac - cor - ding to the scrip - tures, and as - cend - ed in - to *ff* heaven'. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line with chords and moving lines in the right hand.

And the third day he  
rose a - gain  
ac - cor - ding to the scrip - tures,  
and as - cend - ed in - to *ff* heaven

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Example 11: Stanford, Service in C, Op. 115 (Creed, bars 55–67).

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the phrase 'And was made man,' with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system continues the text 'And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate', also marked *p*. The organ part provides a harmonic accompaniment throughout, featuring a prominent descending line in the right hand and a more active bass line. The choir part is primarily vocal, with some instrumental-like passages in the organ.

Likewise, the varying position and length of transitional passages introducing or succeeding the incarnation text stress alternatively the descent from heaven (Services in C and A), the act of incarnation (Service in G), and the Holy Ghost and the Virgin (Festal Service in B flat). While these variations may have irritated Harford, they could, perhaps, provoke a more thoughtful response in the listener than might have been the case with learnt-by-rote recitation.

What of other contemporaneous settings of the Creed? An examination of a sample of nine Creed settings acquired by the British Museum in the mid 1880s does not suggest the level of disregard for text-setting that one might infer from Harford's letters, but even such an experienced and highly-regarded composer as Stainer would not be above criticism.<sup>54</sup> While his F-major service (a much less ambitious setting than any of

<sup>54</sup> The settings were: John Stainer in F (1884); Frederick Bridge in G (1885) and D (1886); Cedric Bucknall in B flat (1885); Charles Warwick Jordan in E (1885); Bertram Luard Selby in C (1885);

Stanford's, being principally episodic in form, homophonic in texture, and incorporating an almost entirely subordinate organ part) clearly indicates an awareness and sensitivity to the nuances of the text, there are also some curious aberrations which are clearly the result of musical considerations taking precedence (Example 12).

Example 12: Stainer, *Service in F* (1884), *Creed*, extracts. Elucidatory comments by the present author.

[Allegro] A little slower Slow

And of all things vi - si - ble and in - vi - si - ble: And in one Lord Je - sus Christ

illogical gap and jarring tempo change incorrect stress (Good) Slower tempo for reverence

Be - ing of one sub - stance with the Fa - ther By whom all things were made,

(Good) 'one' given weight (Good) 'all' given weight

And was cru - ci - fied al - so for us un - der Pon - tius Pi - late

illogical gaps

Other incorrect stress patterns include 'according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven' and 'the remission of sins'. Stainer consistently stressed 'I believe' and even repeated these two words as isolated statements at the end of the movement, allowing 'Amen' as an alternative.

While none of the other settings would satisfy Harford on every point either, the highest number of faults found was six, the most frequent being in relation to the

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Charles Edward Miller in D (1885); Herbert Hall Woodward in D (1885) and Charles King Hall in C (1886). Ironically, given that Bridge was Organist at Westminster Abbey, the weakest of the eight settings both in terms of Harford's criteria and in musicality is Bridge's unison setting in D, which is devoid of almost any memorable melody, lacks any conception of form, and which eschews even passing modulation from the home key; the forced accentuation at 'God of God, Light of Light' (3/2:  $\text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} - | - \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} - |$ ) with accents marked on both 'of's, and an identical approach (but in 2/2) in his G-major service, leads one to wonder if Harford had already spoken to Bridge years before he wrote to *The Musical World*. The eccentricity of Bridge's D-major setting is further shown by his employment of the theme 'And he shall reign' from the 'Hallelujah' chorus of *Messiah* at the words 'Whose kingdom shall have no end', a quotation used nowhere else in the service, and which is the only part of the Creed not in triple time.

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opening intonation (1a, 14), the stress pattern of 'visible and invisible' (15),<sup>55</sup> and the absence of rests or pauses to clarify syntax at points indicated by the (sometimes implied) presence of punctuation marks (5, 8, 9, 12, 20, 22). In reference to Harford's Group B, therefore, there was an unresolved tension, the difficulties usually arising because of the desire to run clauses together in order to preserve musical momentum and, often, periodic structures.

The two published prize-winning settings by Noble and Armes inevitably follow Harford's guidance to the letter. While Armes's setting is functional and workmanlike (it is, like Stainer's, episodic, homophonic, and largely lacks an independent organ part), the version by the young Noble shows some originality, and it is easy to see why it won the competition since, as well as being faithful to the guidelines, it clearly endeavours to create a setting with purely musical interest. There is some adventurous writing, most notably the syncopated setting of 'God of God, Light of Light', placed over alternating B-flat-major and augmented-F chords, and made the more striking by the initial unprepared harmonic shift (Example 13), and the deft chromatic passage at 'He suffered and was buried' (Example 14). Noble's setting does, however, illustrate the musical difficulties generated by Harford's rules, as it contains frequent tempo changes and rarely attains the sort of consistent goal-orientated momentum that is characteristic of all of Stanford's versions.

Example 13: Noble, Service in A (Creed, bars 22–26).

The image shows a musical score for a choir and organ. The top system is for the choir, with a tempo marking of [Allegro] and a quarter note equal to 132. The lyrics are: "of His Fa-ther be-fore all worlds, God of God, Light of Light". The bottom system is for the organ, with a dynamic marking of [mf]. The organ part features a syncopated setting of "God of God, Light of Light" over alternating B-flat-major and augmented-F chords.

<sup>55</sup> This particular point is a curiosity: in the course of researching this article over fifty settings, published between 1880 and 1930, were examined and a substantial majority use the stress pattern 'invisible', despite Harford's unanswerable logic.



Example 14: Noble, Service in A (Creed, bars 61–70).

Very slow (più mosso)

Bass Solo

*mp* Pon - tius Pi - late, He suf - fer - ed And was bu - ri - ed, was bu - ri - ed.

Organ

Example 15: Harwood, Service in A Flat, Op. 6 (Creed, bars 1–13).

Slow

Allegro moderato

Choir

(Intonation from Merbecke.)  
PRIEST, or all the TENORS and BASSES *f* The Fa - ther Al - might - y Ma - ker of heaven and

*f* I be - lieve in one God

Organ

And of all things *rall.* *Slower*  
earth, And of all things vi - si - ble and in - vi - si - ble: And in one Lord Je - sus Christ,

Neither Noble's nor Armes's settings appear to have become well-known but, given the increase in the volume of communion services composed in the late Victorian period (see note 11) this is unsurprising. There is some evidence, however, that Harford's letters influenced composers in the years immediately following their publication: an examination of fourteen randomly selected settings acquired by the British

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Museum library between 1890 and 1894 suggests that while nine were not influenced by Harford, five almost certainly were.<sup>56</sup> Basil Harwood's A-flat setting, for example, observes Harford to the letter in the first section (Example 15); later there are some 'errors', an instance of the composer appearing to hedge his bets on point 6 (by repeating the words 'came down from heaven' and changing the emphasis in the reiteration; Example 16a), and a novel solution to point 9 (the insertion, in the lower three voices, of an additional declaration, 'He shall come'; Example 16b) but, overall, the concordance with Harford's criteria is striking. Likewise, Arthur Page's F-major setting, although musically pedestrian, appears almost certainly to have been influenced by Harford (in the opening passage points 1a, 2, 3, 14 and 15 are scrupulously obeyed; Example 17).

Example 16a: Harwood, Service in A Flat, Op. 6 (Creed, bars 36–43).

Slow  $\text{♩} = 76$

*cresc.* *dim. e rall.*

*mf* Who for us men, and for our sal - va - tion came down from heaven, came down from heaven,

Example 16b: Harwood, Service in A Flat, Op. 6 (Creed, bars 74–81).

Allegro  $\text{♩} = 104$  And He shall come a - gain with glo - ry to judge both the quick and the

*f* with glo - ry

dead: Whose king - dom shall have no end.

*ff* He shall come Whose king - dom shall have no end.

<sup>56</sup> It is impossible to be sure that Harford's guidance influenced the composition of these settings (by Basil Harwood (in A flat, 1892); John Jeffries (A flat, 1892); Arthur Page (F, 1893); Rev. T. Eykyn (G, 1894); and Bertram Luard Selby (B, 1894)) but the level of consistency with Harford is suggestive.

Example 17: Page, Service in F (Creed, bars 1–22).

In strict time  $\text{♩} = 100$

*ff* The Fa - ther Al - might - y, Ma - ker of

I be - lieve in one God,

heaven and earth, And of all things vi - si - ble and in - vi - si -

ble: *pp* And in one Lord Je - sus Christ, *mf* the on - ly be - got - ten Son of God,

Slower  $\text{♩} = 120$

Clearly, therefore, Harford's letters were not merely of academic interest for the large number of senior clergymen who responded to the journal's survey, but had a material, if temporary, impact on the way in which composers might fashion their music, although Stanford, and many others, were left unmoved. Precise attention to detail, however, does not equal inspiration and Stanford's settings, while they may at times compromise the text, are musically much more successful and arguably, therefore, also more spiritually enervating.

### Consequences and conclusions

By the end of the nineteenth century Anglican clergymen who thought, like Obadiah Slope, that the 'meretricious charms of melody' were best left outside church, were far fewer in number than when Trollope wrote *Barchester Towers*. Changes in attitudes over several decades meant that, by 1900, the performance of music was overwhelm-

ingly accepted, services were led in most urban and suburban churches by surpliced choirs, and the interests of the clergy were drawn to the quantity and nature of the music rather than its presence or absence.<sup>57</sup> The exponential increase in volume of printed music available for church choirs of varying sizes and abilities bears witness to the vast expansion in provision between 1850 and 1900,<sup>58</sup> a level of activity which was sustained in England until after the Second World War. It is not surprising, therefore, that new music would come under periodic scrutiny and be subject at times to detailed and occasionally pedantic criticism. While the impact of Harford's intervention in this ongoing debate may have been somewhat fleeting, it is clear that his letters did influence some composers for at least a few years after publication, thus shedding more light on this fundamental aspect of the dynamic between musicians and clergy in the late Victorian Anglican Church. The supporting activity of *The Musical World*, in its promotion of a competition, and its canvassing of the opinions of the 'great and good', illustrates the level of interest that could be generated by the rapidly expanding print media. That many senior clergy were prepared to express an opinion on aspects of Harford's advice also demonstrates that composers could be subjected also, if only occasionally or briefly, to clerical position and influence.

To a large extent, documentary evidence of the relationship between musicians and clergy has focused hitherto on interactions between specific individuals (for examples see note 9 above), and these are inevitably selective since few musicians in the pay of the Church were prepared publicly to air differences with their employers; a journal such as *Organist and Choirmaster*, dedicated to the interests of church musicians, includes in the 1890s virtually no comment on the working relationships of priests and organists, despite their undoubted importance to many readers. For men such as Stanford, Bridge, Stainer and Wesley, who either made public comments or have been the subject of in-depth study, the difficulties exposed are more typically differences of temperament, clerical ignorance or indifference to music, and lack of autonomy in music selection, rather than the aesthetics of the music they themselves wrote or performed. Despite their unusual nature, therefore, Harford's letters are, due to their

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<sup>57</sup> While Harford was critical of the text-setting in Stanford's B-flat Creed, he did not, at any point in his letters to *MW*, castigate Stanford on the grounds that its musical style was inappropriate for a piece of church music, either in terms of its failing to be sufficiently reverential or for an inappropriate reliance on secular modes of expression: for Harford this debate was not so much one of musical aesthetics in a sacred context but of technical precision.

<sup>58</sup> For many years in this period *The Musical Times* came with the free bonus of an easy piece of sacred or secular choral music, a marketing ploy by its publishers, Novello & Co.; *Organist and Choirmaster*, which commenced publication in 1893, also included complimentary musical items.

focus on compositional techniques and values, and their publication in the media, valuable, as they exemplify a specific concern of direct relevance to composers that had a traceable impact on music produced.<sup>59</sup>

Although it is difficult to document substantially, it is evident that Anglican church musicians of this period (like those in many other times and places) stood in an ambivalent position: attitudes within the Church were highly diversified with each parish having its own dynamic; consequently, while a ‘well-tempered’ musician might find a church with a priest whose attitudes complemented his own, and be left to his own devices, it might take only the words of one eagle-eyed or fractious cleric to upset the delicate balance maintained within individual parishes. The controversy which surrounded the publication of *The English Hymnal* in 1906 exemplifies this: although generally welcomed on musical grounds, if contemporaneous reviews are accepted as representative,<sup>60</sup> the book soon became bogged down in a wholly non-musical dispute, focused on the texts of a small number of hymns which appeared either to invoke the prayers of saints or the Virgin Mary, or to imply that the Anglican Church had accepted the doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>61</sup> Church musicians, although not directly affected in purely professional terms by this fracas, could not have avoided being drawn in to an extent. In order to secure continuous employment, therefore, especially in cathedrals and other large churches, in which being organist or choirmaster might well be the employee’s primary source of income, not ‘rocking the boat’ in any respect was the safest approach. For a composer such as Stanford—unusual among contemporaneous composers of church music in that, after 1892, he held no church post—there was undoubtedly a greater sense of freedom; not only was he not directly beholden to the clergy but his reputation ensured the interest of publishers, who could

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<sup>59</sup> Such focused ‘guidance’, although unusual, was not unique: Rev. W. C. Bishop offered similar, though rather more generalized, advice for musical settings of the Te Deum (see *Organist and Choirmaster*, 1 December 1893, 63–4).

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, *The Musical Herald*, 1 September 1906, 276–7; *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review*, 1 September 1906, 887–9; *The Musical Standard*, 8 September 1906, 144–5; *The Academy*, 15 September 1906, 245–7; *Athenaeum*, 29 September 1906, 360–61; *The Musical Times*, 1 October 1906, 682. Beyond criticisms relating to individual hymns, the main reservations expressed were in relation to the large amount of plainchant, the inclusion of several ‘Moody and Sankey’ items, and the absence of any tunes by Stainer. Only the review in *The Academy* anticipated the subsequent doctrinal dispute.

<sup>61</sup> Some bishops attempted to ban the book in their dioceses, although it was only within their power to make recommendations; a revised version with the controversial hymns removed was issued early in 1907. For illustrative examples of correspondence on the subject, see *The Times*, 3 November 1906, 13; 10 November, 8; 14 November, 4; 1 December, 14.

be almost certain that sacred choral music composed by him would sell well.

Clearly Stanford's views on word-setting were, in many respects, opposed to those of Harford. For Stanford, the success of the purely musical aspects of a setting was more important than the *minutiae* of verbal stresses and syntax and, while he did not aim at the 'devotional monochrome' of the 'polyphonic masters', sacrifices were made in relation to grammatical clarity and verbal accentuation in order to accommodate harmonic progressions, regular phrase lengths and other formal structures; but while the B-flat Creed undoubtedly contains some faults in the details of the text setting, few others achieve a similarly impressive combination of dexterity and drive. His other communion services too, although broadly set out on the same plan, each show subtly differentiated approaches to the text, providing variety and interest while never undermining the essential meanings of the words. This is the best illustration that Harford's letters, while well-intentioned, were pedantic and overly prescriptive.

Although Stanford's compositional approach was not affected by his spat with Harford, it is tempting to speculate that it was an episode at the back of his mind when he gave his paper 'Music in Cathedral and Church Choirs' at the Church Congress in 1899.<sup>62</sup> Here Stanford argued that the responsibility of churches was to promote the best in music, regardless of fashion, and advocated, in particular, the purging of music not specifically written for the Anglican Church, and the return of pieces composed before 1700 to the music lists of cathedral and parish choirs. Although his remarks were focused on the selection of music to be performed, there were some pointed words directed at the clergy:

Formerly the monk was a more learned and cultivated musician than his servant, the organist or choir-trainer. He therefore rightly dictated the choice of music, of which he was a master. The positions are now reversed. The organist is the learned and cultivated musician and the clerical official has not (save in a very few instances) qualified either by study or research for a task demanding exceptional musical skill and routine ... What would be said if an organist claimed control over the subjects and tendencies of the sermons to be delivered by the clergy?<sup>63</sup>

Fleeting though Harford's influence may have been,<sup>64</sup> an examination of his letters and the varying responses of composers and other clerics shines a light on the poten-

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<sup>62</sup> Reproduced in Charles Villiers Stanford, *Studies and Memories* (London: Archibald Constable, 1908), 61–9.

<sup>63</sup> Stanford, *Studies and Memories*, 65–6.

<sup>64</sup> For example, Noble's later communion settings (in F (1908), G minor (1913) and B minor (1930)) do not suggest that he took Harford's guidance permanently to heart, while an examination of other

tially fraught working relationship which existed between church composers and their employers, the clergy. While the latter were sometimes ill-informed, and occasionally even hostile to the presence of music in church altogether, they were responsible for its management; obedience to their authority was both expected and received, though not always with alacrity. Increasingly well-educated and professionalized musicians, on the other hand, were ever more inclined to compose for the choirs of the churches that employed them: in part this was expected, but it was also a symbol of status for both the church and the organist. It was normally a necessity therefore that composers produced music which accorded with the clergy's concept of what it should be, from the simple considerations of length and scale, to the nitty-gritty of correct accentuation and syntax. The exchange between Harford and Stanford is a vivid illustration of potential tensions between priests and musicians that could arise if the wishes of the former were not implemented by the latter. While Harford's particular obsession and level of pedantry were found but rarely, his robust sparring with Stanford is emblematic of the strained relationships that have existed between clerics and composers of past, present and, almost certainly, future.

Paul Rodmell

University of Birmingham

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twentieth-century settings, such as those by Harold Darke, Herbert Howells and John Ireland, show approaches to the text often at odds with that advocated by Harford.