

## The RCO Library: its history and development

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The library of any academic institution will reflect both the history of that institution and its well-being, or otherwise, both intellectually and financially. Thus the RCO Library has had its periods of expansion and neglect – of fortuitous acquisition and deliberate pillage – and these may be traced, alongside the daily history of the College itself, in the sequence of, progressively, Records, Calendars, and Year Books which rest on its shelves.

From the short history of the College which appears in the Calendar for 1928-9 we learn that

The early activities of the College were in the first instance directed towards the encouragement of the composition of church and organ music, by the institution of prize competitions, and also by arranging for the delivery of lectures, the first series of such taking place between October 1864 and March 1865. Indeed, by the time of the first *Conversazione* on 17 February 1865, the College had nearly 150 Members.

Unfortunately, many of them seem to have entered the composition competitions, achieved publication, and placed the results in the College Library, and if these form some of the least distinguished items in the catalogue, the breadth of some of the lectures was immensely more impressive.

In 1865, Hopkins spoke on 'The progress of organ building from the time of Smith and Harris down to the time of the Great Exhibition of 1851', Rimbault on 'The early English organ builders and their works, from the 15th century to the period of the Great Rebellion', and John Hullah on 'The history of musical notation'. The Library acquired all the editions of Hopkins' and Rimbault's 'The Organ' from the first appearance of that celebrated book in 1855. A full programme of groups of annual lectures reached a high point in 1910-11, when Walter Alcock spoke on 'Extemporization', Alfred Hollins on 'The modern concert organ and concert organ music', Charles Pearce on 'Plainsong; its use and influence in modern composition', and Frederick Shinn on 'The chorale prelude from Samuel Scheidt to Max Reger'.

The whole series of these lectures is preserved in the Records and Calendars, and a proportion of them retain their value today, but hitherto, although the College had been building up its own collection of theoretical writing by internal gestation, no overall planned expansion of the Library, nor of the

areas it should properly cover, had been contemplated, and, as the Calendar for 1927-8 admitted:

The College Library has been formed entirely by gifts from those interested in the College ... the fact that the Library has been accumulated solely in this manner, and not by purchase, will explain the presence of many odd volumes and incomplete sets of books and music ...

It goes on to list some of the sudden influx of bequests in the first 25 years of this century.

The most important and extensive of these came on the death of John Belcher in 1911. He had been responsible for renovating the façade of the Kensington building and for making a number of structural alterations when the College first moved there in 1904. As the executor of John Ella (1802-82), he had himself inherited a part of the huge collection of important manuscripts, letters, and printed books and music that Ella had accumulated during his long and influential life as impresario, violinist, and founder of the Musical Union chamber concerts. The College rather unwillingly accepted part of this material which, looking at what lists of it survive, was of immense value and interest. Of its fate we shall learn more later. Also from this time came the estate of John Norbury – a long-serving College Treasurer – whose collection of drawings of organs across the breadth of Europe is, along with the three volumes of notebooks and similar drawings by Sperling, the most celebrated and valuable of the organographical items owned by the College. In 1917 came the manuscript volume of early to mid-18th century English organ music from T. L. Southgate – to remain locked away until rediscovered and studied by Dr Diack Johnstone in the last twenty years. Much of the best of its contents has now been included in published anthologies, but this handsome-looking and eminently readable volume could well be issued complete in facsimile.

The unexpected nature of the sources of some of the College's acquisitions is illustrated by a letter from a Miss E. A. Wright who wrote, on 18 September 1922 from St Helens, Isle of Wight:

Enclosed are some letters dated 1840 relating to a "Memorial" apparently concerned with Cathedral Services ... It appeared to me that they were of interest to musicians but I suppose of no value otherwise.

Certainly of interest, but also of considerable value, for, along with letters from distinguished figures of the time, we find a long tirade by Samuel Sebastian Wesley on the same subject as his famous pamphlet 'A few words on Cathedral

Music ... with a Plan of Reform', and pre-dating it by nine years. This letter, which vividly depicts the life and trials of a cathedral musician of the time, is reproduced in full in the Appendix on p.67, and it ends characteristically:

I am very sorry to perceive that you instead of applying to first rate Musicians for their signature and them only have obtained the names of persons who can have no influence in such a matter – names I never heard of and whose only influence will be to prevent others from subscribing at all. I am sure you will not think worse of me for speaking my mind thus.

One wonders ... but to return to that important Calendar entry for 1927-8, which states that

For some time past the Council have felt that more use would be made of the College Library if Members were acquainted with its contents. Hitherto the only list of these is in the form of three large typed volumes kept at the College. It has now been decided to publish a list of the books and music in the Library, and a study of this will show that the Library possesses many books of a character interesting to those engaged in historical research. The list of books and music will be published under three headings:-

List A will comprise textbooks on Music, Historical, Biographical and Critical works, and works on Music generally.

List B. Orchestral and Chamber Music, Full Scores and Parts.

List C. Church and Organ Music, Oratorios, Operas, &c.

These three headings were later altered and expanded to five: List A, the Textbooks, covered as much as 30 pages; List B, now only orchestral scores and parts, covered 11 pages; List C became chamber music scores and parts, at 16 pages; List D was a 3-page 'short selection of works of historical interest'; and List E 'Sacred and secular vocal music for solo voices or chorus' covered 31 pages. Curiously, the organ music was not listed, and the Library was clearly still envisaged as a general one by the completion of the publication of these lists in 1930. It was primarily for reference only, though the extensive holdings of both orchestral and chamber music instrumental parts could be borrowed on payment of 10/6d security. The third edition of Grove's 'Dictionary of Music and Musicians' was acquired by 1932-3, along with Cobbett's 'Cyclopaedia of Chamber Music', and for want of further evidence the Library now entered a phase of quiet inactivity for thirty years, with one important exception, the arrival of the Sir Walter Parratt papers in 1948.

Besides containing programmes of Parratt's often highly individual concerts during his time as Master of the Music to Queen Victoria, Edward VII, and

George V, and interesting ephemera such as the signed supper menu of 1911 at the Athenaeum for a distinguished gathering of those born – like Parratt himself – in 1841, there is a bulk of correspondence dealing with the coronation of Edward VII, including ten letters from Elgar, of which this is typical:

20 April 1902; My dear Parratt, With this I send a copy (proof not fully corrected) of the 'Coronation Ode' for performance at Covent Garden. I am anxious to have the honour to be allowed to dedicate it to the King and shall be very much obliged if you would very hurriedly bring the matter forward for me. In the multitude of so-called coronation music, this is the only piece commissioned. If the matter comes before the King, I should like it to be understood that the work is not a "stiff" conventional setting, and I have introduced the theme of the Trio of the March in D which H. M. liked at the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society's concert. It will be scarcely possible, I suppose, to have H. M.'s opinion on this, but I hope he will be pleased when he hears the work. I feel rather reluctant to trouble you, but your former kindness makes it somewhat easy. Trusting you are all well, and with our kindest regards, Believe me, Yours very sincerely, Edward Elgar. I hope you will like the work. I need not say what extreme gratification it will give me to hear that the dedication is accepted.

Only at the end of 1992, these papers, and Parratt's attendant manuscripts, came into their own, when plans were carried out to record the organ Parratt designed in Windsor Castle. In reciprocation for the College's assistance, copies were presented from the Windsor archives of the detailed and forthright correspondence between Parratt and Willis during the building of the instrument, which perished in the disastrous fire at the end of that year (but for the recording made in the nick of time – a compact disc of which may be borrowed from the Library).

The period of slumber which had begun in 1933 was to be shattered on 25 March 1964 by a meeting of the Library Sub-committee, chaired by Sir Jack Westrup, at which it was decided to appoint – for the first time – a Librarian, responsible for:

The compilation, in the first instance, of a list of books and music for purchase, together with details of publishers and prices. The list to be submitted to Council for the necessary funds.

In subsequent years the purchase of further books and music and any other necessary expenditure, from an annual grant to be determined by Council.

The compilation of a card catalogue.

These further aims were also determined:

- That the Library should become a fully comprehensive collection of
- a) books in all languages dealing with the history and construction of the organ, with organ music and its composers, and with church music and its related subjects, together with a certain number of reference books and histories dealing with music in general;
  - b) organ music of all periods, and important collections of church music (such as 'Early English Church Music') and the appropriate volumes of other collections (such as 'Musica Britannica');
  - c) gramophone records of organ music and any records of church music that may be presented to the Library.

That a record-player fitted with earphones should be purchased to enable Members visiting the Library to listen to records without disturbing other users of the building, and that steps should be taken to ascertain the cost of such equipment.

Less than a month later 'it was reported that the Library consists at present of 450 books, 50 volumes of bound organ music, 90 full scores, 8 lengthy runs of musical periodicals, 2000 copies of sheet organ music and 1000 pamphlets relating to organ and choral work. It was decided to aim at building up the collection systematically by making suitable purchases ... Complete bound sets of the organ works of standard organ composers should be acquired as well as choral works. Several sets of the examination pieces will be kept readily available for reference. A collection of organ and church music recordings should be built up and a single form of player provided...The compilation of a Library Catalogue, with cross references, was considered, beginning with new accessions.'

The modern revival of the Library had begun, but at what a cost. Westrup, now President of the College, proceeded like a surgeon before the days of anaesthetic. To finance the sweeping advance of activity, he sold at auction the major part of the magnificent Ella Bequest (for only £800) and secured a grant of £2000 from the Pilgrim Trust, in their words, 'to pay the salary of an expert to catalogue the Library, and to purchase the necessary books and music to increase its usefulness'. Fortunate in Unity Sherrington as their expert, she had barely finished the comprehensive card catalogue still in use today, when, at the death of J. Albert Sowerbutts in 1970, the College found itself in receipt of not only the largest, but certainly the most important, bequest in the history of the Library. A contemporary of Herbert Howells, Sowerbutts had been Honorary Secretary of the College 1950-63, and alongside a long teaching career, he also found the time to compose (not very interestingly) and the resources to collect not only a truly comprehensive body of international contemporary music for organ, but also a clearly directed corpus of

antiquarian books and music. Unlike Ella's, Sowerbutts' collection is directly germane to the College's academic domain, and it replaced within a mere four years the loss of the historical element so essential to an academic library. The importance of its quantity as well as its quality to the overall character of the Library holdings may be grasped from an inventory of 1973: here the main library occupied 189' of shelf space, to which the Sowerbutts collection added another 151'. It is not possible here, by listing composers' names and titles, to give a meaningful picture of its value. Suffice it to say that, for the performer, there is a particularly comprehensive corpus of first editions of English and German organ music from the 18th and 19th centuries (including a number of titles of which the RCO copies are the only ones known), of now mainly out-of-print editions of the more esoteric areas of the French Symphonic School 1890-1960, and of the British repertoire from the same period (including almost the complete works of Lemare, both original and arrangements), besides the anthologies of Best, Diebold, and Joubert which provide a handy perspective of generally unexplored, but by no means uninteresting, aspects of the European scene 1860-1914. For the scholar, there is an enviable collection of antiquarian books from the 17th-19th centuries covering both history and theory, comprehensive runs of many 19th-20th century periodicals, first and collected editions in full score of sacred music from the Tudors to Walmisley, an important collection in the realm of hymnody, and, in the secular field, volumes (both manuscript and printed) of catches, glees, and Pleasure Garden songs from Greene and Boyce to Attwood and Goss.

For the College exhibition in aid of the Queen's Jubilee Appeal in 1977, the richest amalgam of items from all the important bequests was assembled – letters and manuscripts by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Rossini and Wagner, printed early editions of Tomkins and Purcell – for, as it turned out, the last time. The pressures of today on security and insurance dictated that the greatest items in the College's collection should go for safe-keeping, and ease of access for the general scholar, on permanent loan to the British Library, where they may be seen today. At the time of this transfer, in 1982, the last of the 'irrelevant' items from the Ella Bequest were sold, and the proceeds formed a limited acquisitions and conservation budget in the last years of the College's life in the Kensington building. By 1989 James Dalton had become interested in the welfare of the Library, had commissioned a report from the Faculty of Music Librarian at Oxford, and had settled an acquisitions income on the Library, henceforward to be known as the Dalton Bequest, with the avowed intention of rounding out and updating the holdings of both books and music.

In April 1990 a new Librarian was appointed, to be faced immediately with one pressing problem, and a number of smaller ones. The former was to have the Library moved from four rooms in Kensington to one room at St

Andrew's, Holborn within seven months. The latter included the pruning of duplicate runs of – especially – periodicals, and unpacking and placing alphabetically, in specially ordered boxes, the sizeable bequests which had lain unattended since their arrival. In all, besides the designing of custom-built shelves on which to put them, there were 34,000 catalogued titles of books and music to move and 91 shelf feet (49' of sheet music, 42' of books) to catalogue on arrival, besides 1600 33rpm and 150 78rpm recordings. The largest books were the two volumes published in 1883 and 1891 of A. G. Hill's 'The Organ Cases and Organs in the Middle Ages and Renaissance', which measure 1'6" high, 13" wide, and 1 3/4" thick. They are closely followed by a lectern-sized Book of Common Prayer of 1875 for St Mary Magdalen, Old Fish Street, while the famous 'L'Art du Facteur d'Orgues' by Dom Bedos de Celles, first published in 1776 – and a monument to the engraver's art – is only slightly smaller. The smallest book in the Library is – if you have the eyesight to read it – a beautifully printed nineteenth century word-book 'The Psalmist; or, Select Versions of the Psalms, from various authors' measuring just 2 3/4" high, 2 1/2" wide, and 3/4" thick.

'With the move to St Andrew's', the Librarian wrote, 'the opportunity has been taken to institute some useful improvements in the services that the Library can provide for Members. It is anticipated that, once the cataloguing of a number of sizeable bequests is complete, offprints of the Library Catalogue will be made available for the first time so that Members who are at present unable to visit the Library in person may become more aware of the considerable riches it contains and extend their use of it. There will be annual supplements reflecting current acquisitions until such time as the whole catalogue can be computerized. The Library has this year acquired a copy of those sections of the BBC Catalogue most relevant to Members' needs and the possibility is being explored of on-line access to the British Library Music Catalogue to broaden the information base immediately available to Members in search of source material. Further, new equipment to provide high-quality electrostatic reproduction of non-copyright material in a wide variety of formats has just been purchased.

'Side by side with the process of conservation and an ordered programme of rebinding, the daily up-dating and improvement of the stocks of solo organ music is made possible by the Dalton Bequest, with particular emphasis on the filling of gaps in all historical periods, the acquisition of the most reliable editions of earlier music, and a vigilant appraisal of the contemporary scene. Other areas of expansion are an increase in the number of works for concertante organ together with their orchestral parts available for hire to Members, and similar facilities for a quantity of festal hymn settings. An increase in the number of new textbooks reflecting changes in the examination syllabus is also in hand. The periodicals have been reorganized to improve

access and Members should know that, apart from complete 'runs' of, for example, *The Musical Times* (from 1844) and (in the present century) *The Organ* (together with their indices), substantial holdings of such rarer journals as *The Harmonicon* and a full range of contemporary issues relevant to the organ are available.

'Advantage has been taken, in the last few months, of a single grant to augment the College's archive of sound recordings by the purchase of 584 compact discs and tapes (together with a custom-built cabinet to house them), covering not only solo organ performance but relevant concerto and choral repertoire particularly in those areas beyond the main stream, both to enrich awareness of it, and to stimulate, it is to be hoped, even the most enquiring of Members.'

It was clear from the outset at Holborn that the improvement of Library services to Members outside London, easy borrowing of holdings by post, provision of electrostatic copies, and information by telephone were of prime importance, and, alongside the cataloguing and integration of the bequests into a printed format general catalogue, essential. Concurrent with this, a flexible and positive approach to personal callers to study, to listen, or to borrow, needed to be communicated to break down both the newness of the Holborn location and any remnant of the necessarily stricter approach to borrowing dictated by the disposition of the Library rooms in Kensington. On all these points there may be recorded a measure of success. A complete catalogue of the organ music acquired to the end of 1992 in page rather than card format is available, and thereafter a supplement of new accessions is to be produced annually – that for 1993 is now on sale. The incidence of borrowing is up: for the three years before 1990, entries in the old ledger totalled 11 pages; they run to 42 pages for the three-year period from 1990, the rising trend being maintained today. The deliberate acquisition of compact discs has, for the first time, allowed Members to take sound recordings out of the Library on loan – of considerable popularity in some quarters. With the demise of the old loan ledger and its replacement at the beginning of the academic year 1993-4 by standard library procedures, borrowing is quicker and more efficient, as will be the reminders to those whose returns are overdue.

Also during the first two years at Holborn, the position of the most valuable holdings was reviewed, and the material already on permanent loan to the British Library in 1982 was joined first by the Norbury Drawings and the Sperling Notebooks. A set of transparencies of the former made through the generosity of Susi Jeans, and a microfilm of the latter, remain in the Library for reference, and arrangements have been made with the Students Room, Department of Manuscripts, at the British Library to allow easy access to Members who do not hold a regular Reader's Pass there. From the Sowerbutts

bequest, two collections of letters (one in loose leaves needing a new specialist conservation binding) were also transferred, together with a recent gift from Sir Thomas Armstrong of a fascinating sequence of S. S. Wesley letters. We read earlier of Wesley sharpening his verbal claws in cathedral surroundings; in a letter from the Sowerbutts collection, he is doing battle with the Great Western Railway over a delayed parcel, to which the hapless clerk replies in exquisite copperplate hand. Yet another letter, from the Armstrong volume, shows him mellower in old age, but still in difficulties on the railway – this time the GWR's great rival, the London and South Western:

Dear Dr Ash, On getting into the train at Oakhampton, I found, when too late, the Coachman had not given my Coat to the Railway porter. I sent for it by the Guard, who returned to Oakhampton by [the] next train, & said he would send it to Exeter before my train left, which was not done. I guess the Coachman had taken it away to where the Coach stops, & if you could see him tomorrow afternoon & rescue it I should feel thankful. The truth is the poor lad had been exasperated by the Proprietor of the Coach ... & was longing to "knock his head off" "knock him down" &c. &c. all thro' the journey & at the Station I heard him telling the Station Master of his Wrongs. Hence, he paid not much attention to my Luggage & the Coat was not seen & I forgot to ask ... I am quite knocked up with the 12 hours journey. Faithfully yours, S. S. Wesley.

But, to leave the past and look to the future, the academic year 1993-4 will be the first to produce in any quantity the real 'new' treasures of the Library. By deliberate policy a full programme of acquisitions was held back while the new structures and old loose ends fell into place and income from the Dalton Bequest built up. Now, with the resources ready, a massive but carefully reasoned trawl of publishers' current catalogues has been embarked upon in logical progression. Here will be the 'new' treasures – the latest (and often very expensive) textbooks, editions of early music, new editions of the central repertoire, a wide range of contemporary compositions, source material in facsimile, instrumental parts for concertos and selected vocal works, with the avowed aim that the academic parameters of the College's activities will be complemented by as comprehensive a Library in its subject as any to be found outside the public sector.

*Appendix*

*S. S. Wesley's reply to the author of a proposed Memorial on Cathedral Services.*

[The] Close  
[Exeter Cathedral]  
25 April [1840]

Dear Sir,

I have still to regret that there are parts of ye Memorial wh. are to me unsatisfactory, and wh will I am sure be treated by our Chapters with something very like ridicule. I know not what opportunities you may possess, or those with whom you are acting (ye names of whom, by ye by, I think I ought to have been made acquainted with) of learning ye feelings of ye Chapters on ye musical matters of their Churches but *I* have means of knowing that there are several portions of this Memorial wh. either *want force* or have really not that consequence wh. every thing should possess on such an occasion, there are also omissions wh. I consider most untoward.

Before I subscribe my name to ye Memorial I must be satisfied on ye matter of our engaging to attend every service "until death" of ye Ch. to wh. I belong if you insist thus on a point wh. will be ye means of depriving me of ye advantage of attending Pupils at a distance, and how many do ye suppose I possess within such a distance as ye Cathedral hours would allow me to attend. I say, that if you suggest such a matter to ye Chapters you must also ascertain what compensations we should – who are similarly placed – require for ye loss of pupils, and also when you have ascertained this whether ye Chapters have any fund from wh., supposing they were inclined to do so – they would apply such a sum to us by way of compensation for ye said loss. Now are you aware that there are numerous Country professors who would not give up their trading for a thousand a year, and are you prepared to advise ye Chapters to offer a thousand a year, wh. is more mind you than most Canons get themselves, to ye Musical Profession for such a purpose, – have you asked Mr [Zechariah] Buck what he earns at Norwich [Cathedral Organist, 1819-77], my predecessor made 1400 a year by teaching, I do nothing like this myself, but like all men I live in hope and pray don't you be ye person thus to injure my family and myself.

I say all this to remind you of what I had previously said on ye point, that most deputies *play better* than ye principals – what is to hinder my deputy from being Organist of a Cathedral to-morrow, perhaps of Exeter Cathedral, and why should he be less fit to play as deputy than as principal, and again do you think it fit that any man of eminence in our profession, and I conclude that it must be your wish that men of eminence should join Cathedrals wh. mark you, they do not do, with few exceptions, at present, I say do you think it "dignified" (don't laugh at ye word) that in ye eyes of ye public, such persons

should, by Members of their own profession, be called upon to engage to attend and play ye Organ part of ye music they may have prepared themselves for performance twice a day from year's end to year's end from ye moment of their appointment to ye day of their death or thereabouts – neither ye public or ye Chapters desire such millhorse duty at their hands, and why should you suggest matters wh. tend to no public good and wh. are fraught with injury and mischief to ourselves. Again you talk of giving increased power to Musicians under a Dean or Precentor – pray explain this – if any first-rate man [Ignaz] Moscheles [pianist and composer, 1794-1870] for instance is preparing a piece of music for public performance do you mean to suggest that it will be better composed and performed by being under ye superintendence of parties who can know nothing about Music, do you think Mr Moscheles had not better be left to his own ideas on ye points, and that he would be prepared, and with patience too, to subscribe to ye opinions of those who possess just that kind of knowledge – or none – wh. is described as ye worst of all kinds – “a little” you know ye proverb “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing”, surely – ye “dignity” of our profession will be better sustained by our asserting ye necessity of ye Musical arrangements being placed more securely in ye care of *first rate* Musicians, and how do we prove such a necessity to exist by proposing that our reforms are to take place under ye patronage of parties who know little or nothing of our art – the Clergy will despise, and ye public laugh at us for this. I do not see that this point need be *mentioned by us*, let others find it out – it should be our part to take a due position in ye matter, and not to propose to bend about thus, and to treat our ideas with so little reverence as to consider that they must be any way inferior to those of parties who are profoundly ignorant of Music and Musicians.

As to “anthems and services being performed for ye first time” why I venture to say there is not a Choir in England wh. would make such an attempt, I can only say, if there is, and I were Dean of such a Choir they should never do it twice, I would have them all discharged at ye shortest possible notice, if you know of such a Choir pray do not expose its weakness thus, if ye men wont practise they are unfit for their places, and if it is desirable to make such a provision I mean one for ye encouragement of practice Meetings (and no one is more satisfied of ye necessity of doing so than myself) pray let us suggest it in other terms than those I read now, I assure you ye remark of a Chapter to such a Paragraph would be

“The Chapter Clerk is desired to inform ye Choir (of so and so)” that if they attempt again to introduce Music into the Ch. service wh. has not been duly practised that they will be considered unfit for their Offices and new appointments, wherever it may be possible, made in their stead”

As to ye Practising Room, why we have one at Exeter and I think such a little matter should not be with so much consequence[;] the fresh points for us to effect are these – more voices to the Choir – more money for the Organist and more work of the kind of compositions and superintending the

performance of such music and better organs – now these are each very difficult of attainment and should be introduced in terms *every way unobjectionable*. I repeat – ye wording of this Memorial is faulty and weak, and it dwells on points unfit for ye notice of ye Clergy or ye public and which will do harm and no good of such I have now written, as hastily as possible.

I will try and get rewritten one or two of ye objectionable paragraphs and notice it to you for your approbation or if you wish ye immediate return of ye Memorial you shall have it but it must be without my signature.

Yours truly  
S. S. Wesley

P.S. I have been absent for a few days and take the earliest opportunity of writing by the by – what authority have you, or have ye Clergy, for teaching ye Choristers to be Professors of Music – surely you cannot intend to create such a swarm of Professors in the Country – All that Statutes require is ye proper performance of ye Ch: duties. Do you suppose that any one will undertake to make Musicians of ye Boys on any terms wh. ye Ch: can supply – and do you suppose that ye Ch: can be properly occupied in making ye little boys Musicians its object is to make them religious, good heavens! I would not undertake ye Musical Education of one single boy for less than 300 pounds, they are my avowed terms. Are ye Chapters to give me £300 with every Boy who may enter ye Choir – ten professional pupils at once!! good gracious, what can you be thinking of who propose such a thing. We shall be dreadfully quizzed if we go on thus. The little boys must be taught their notes – pray go and ask Mr Moscheles what he will take to make a little boy a musician of him for I venture to say he will tell you £1000 Since writing all this It occurs to me that if you wished to have a specimen of the kind of treatment your Memorial is likely to experience from the Chapters I will undertake to show it to an individual who holds an important position in a Chapter and obtain for you his sentiments as to what he shall determine himself on seeing the said Memorial in due form, and what the Chapters generally will be likely to say as far we can judge on ye matter. My own conviction is that if ye matter is properly brought forward, something may be done – if *improperly*, as I fear it is about to be nothing will be done and a good opportunity and all ye trouble will be thrown away.

I am very sorry to perceive that you instead of applying to first rate Musicians for their signature and them only have obtained the names of persons who can have no influence in such a matter – names I never heard of and whose only influence will be to prevent others from subscribing at all. I am sure you will not think worse of me for speaking my mind thus.

[Within a few weeks of the writing of this letter, the Chapter of Exeter Cathedral passed (on 16 May 1840) the following resolution, that 'Dr Wesley

be informed that he is not to give lessons on the organ either to his apprentices or to any other person, the order not being meant to extend a prohibition to the apprentices to practise any service for use in the church'. Wesley resigned on 20 November 1841, and his successor, Alfred Angel, was informed that the same restriction applied, together with the necessity of Chapter approval of the introduction of any new music; further, 'the music for the week and allocation of solos is to be decided at Saturday Chapter meetings'.]

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## The Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain

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