Medical treatment was started without further investigation. Three months later her symptoms had progressively worsened, and she was referred to our clinic. Barium studies showed a massive irreducible paraoesophageal hernia. Five days later she was admitted as an emergency after inhaling gastric contents, which led to her death four days later. The incomplete initial investigation of this patient resulted in complacency in management, and the fatal complications developed before surgical treatment could be started.

Case 3—A 60-year-old Asian man had swallowed a dental plate with one attached tooth. Removal was attempted 24 hours later by rigid oesophagoscopy without prior barium studies. This resulted in a massive haemorrhage, and the patient was transferred to us as an emergency. A barium swallow showed that the plate was lying outside the oesophagus. Thoracotomy showed that it was penetrating the descending thoracic aorta, but extraction of the plate caused uncontrollable haemorrhage and the patient died in the operating room. A radiological examination using contrast media before endoscopy might have shown (a) that the plate should not have been removed by endoscopy, or (b) that it had already penetrated the oesophagus—in which case removal by endoscopy would have been contra-

indicated and the surgeon exonerated from any medicolegal responsibility for the perforation.

Comment

In oesophageal disease contrast radiology gives important information that cannot be obtained from endoscopy. The two investigations are therefore complementary and not mutually exclusive, and assessment is not complete until both have been performed. Although there may be logistic difficulties in obtaining barium studies, this must not alter the principle that adequate radiological studies must be obtained before performing endoscopy, whether with the rigid or the flexible endoscope. Regardless of what the practice is in investigating the remainder of the gastrointestinal tract the presence or possibility of oesophageal pathology requires that radiological examination is carried out before endoscopy or similar cases will be seen in increasing numbers.

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Reading for Pleasure

Another sort of reading

CHARLES LANGMAID

In all the contributions to this series it has been tacitly assumed that the sole meaning of reading is scanning a page of printed words. Presumably this could include modern Greek, the Cyrillic script of the Slavonic peoples, or even the complicated ideograms of China or Japan. There is, however, another much more easily available and indeed easily achieved activity, and that is reading music. This constitutes a regular activity of a quite considerable number of the medical profession.

Sight-reading

I first started to master the intricacies of our slightly irrational system of musical notation at the age of 8, and although "reading" applies to the general activity of interpreting the printed symbols on the page its meaning is usually extended and is understood to refer to "sight-reading," which is the skilful reading of a piece of music not previously seen, or at least not practised. My teacher, a church organist, fortunately laid great emphasis on the importance of being a good sight-reader, and I have never ceased to be grateful to him for giving me the firm foundation on which to build a full and fascinating musical life. I was regularly given pieces to play "at sight," and in addition we would, from time to time, play piano duets together. I was thus encouraged to have a considerable repertoire, with broad horizons, rather than to concentrate on a handful of pieces for

an examination. The importance of such sight reading was emphasised by Benjamin Lee.¹

I have often been asked about this gift and whether it runs in the family. Tobias Matthay, the distinguished teacher of Myra Hess and Irene Scharrer, is reported to have said that "piano-playing is no more a gift than is the power of articulate speech." To balance the argument, however, one should perhaps also quote Rubinstein's remark that, "Piano playing is a movement of the fingers; piano performance is a function of the soul."

In my youth music was less readily available on records and, living as I did in Cardiff, the opportunities for hearing live music were distinctly limited. I first became really familiar with Beethoven's Fifth, Schubert's Unfinished, and Tchaikovsky's fifth and sixth symphonies through playing them as piano arrangements. Later I also came to know many works by playing them as piano duets—years before I heard them as live performances. These included symphonies by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, as well as the orchestral suites of Bach and the string quintets of Mozart. It was not only such arrangements for four hands that gave pleasure, however, but also the wealth of original music written for that medium—delights such as Dvorak's Slavonic dances, Brahms's Hungarian dances, and many works by Schubert, but also such original works as Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*, Debussy's *Petite Suite*, Fauré's *Dolly Suite*, and William Walton's *Duets for Children*. Interestingly, the reverse process applied here, and all these works were subsequently orchestrated.

While still living at home I bought my own piano and, with two instruments in one room, explored works for two pianos, both original and arrangements. Also during the war I occasionally played, with three kindred spirits, eight hands on two pianos. The music available was mainly arrangements of

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orchestral works, but it was a thrilling experience, even if it were to be termed more "physical" than "musical."

After seven years' lessons on the piano I started playing the organ and derived great pleasure from exploring the major organ works of J S Bach, Händel, Mendelssohn, and others. For several years I officiated regularly at church services, weddings, and funerals, as well as helping out fellow organists as a locum. Playing other instruments is one of the fascinating sidelines of playing the organ, and my interest and enthusiasm has remained undimmed.

A visit to Germany would seem unfulfilled if I could not locate and play some new organs. I recall with particular pleasure the organ in the Bach-church (St Blasius) in Mühlhausen, Thuringia, a beautiful little Silbermann in the musical instrument museum in Leipzig, the one in St Elizabeth Church at Marburg, and the organs—no fewer than four!—in the cathedral at Freiburg im Breisgau in the Black Forest. The organ at the Schloßkirche in Lahm, near Coburg, was played by Johann Lorenz Bach (1695-1773), a second cousin of JSB, and this has survived in almost its original condition. Those were the days before built-in obsolescence.

Union of words and music

As well as all this activity I also sang. A recent speaker on the BBC programme "One pair of ears" expressed it very well when he said, "Song is the earliest of all art forms." There is something special about the union of words and music, as Milton recognised in his "At a solemn music" when he wrote:

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of heav'n's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse.
Wed your divine sounds and mixed pow'r employ
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce.

In the year of the Great Armada (1588) that great English composer William Byrd wrote about singing, and among its advantages he listed the following:

"First, it is a knowledge easily taught, and quickly learned where there is a good Master, and an apt Scoller.

(2) The exercise of singing is delightfull to Nature & good to preserve the health of Man.

(3) It doth strengthen all the parts of the brest & doth open the pipes.

(4) It is a singular good remedie for a stutting & stammering in the speech.

(5) It is the best means to procure a perfect pronounciation & to make a good orator.

(6) It is the onely way to know where Nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voyce: which giuft is so rare, as there is not one among a thousand, that hath it; and in many, that excellent giuft is lost, because they want Art to expresse Nature.

(7) There is not any Musicke of Instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the voyces of Man, where the voyces are good, and the same well sorted and ordered.

(8) The better the voyce is, the meeter it is to honour and serve God there-with: and the voyce of man is chiefly to be employed to that end.

omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.

Since singing is so good a thing,
I wish all men would learne to sing."

It was soon after this that Thomas Morley (1557-c1603) published *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, which was dedicated to "... the most excellent Musician Maister William Birde ... in all love and affection to you most addicted." At that time it was assumed that any educated person could take his part in singing madrigals, ballets, or catches, and this was certainly an eminently civilised way of passing the time in the days when it was necessary to make your own entertainment. Very early in his book Morley describes the scene: "But supper being ended and Musicke books (according to the custome) being brought to the table, the

mistress of the house presented me with a part earnestly requesting me to sing; but when, after many excuses, I protested unfainedly that I could not, everyone began to wonder. Yea, some whispered to others, demanding how I was brought up; so that, upon shame of my ignorance I goe now to seeke out my old friend, master Gnorimus, to make myselfe his scholar."

I have sung as part of a group that met regularly to rehearse (and later perform) madrigals and also on numerous occasions in ad hoc groups, taking advantage of a fleeting opportunity to sing all the music available, often going on far into the night.

There is a particular charm about many of the words that are set by the composers of madrigals and often a wealth of philosophy as, for example in "What is our life?" by Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625), a setting of words by Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618).

What is our life? a play of passion,
Our mirth the music of division.
Our mothers' wombs the tiring houses be,
Where we are dressed for this short Comedy.
Heaven the judicious sharp spectator is,
That sits and marks still who doth act amiss.
Our graves, that hide us from the searching sun,
Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.
Thus march we, playing, to our latest rest;
Only we die in earnest, that's no jest.

Fascinating, and also instructive, are the words of Weelkes's "Thule, the period of cosmography" and its second part "The Andalusian Merchant."

Thule, the period of cosmography,
Doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulphureous fire
Doth melt the frozen clime; and thaw the sky.
Trinacrian Etna's flames ascend not higher.
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.

The Andalusian merchant that returns,
Laden with cochineal and China dishes,
Reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns
Amidst an ocean full of flying fishes;
These things seems wondrous . . .

"The Silver Swan" by Orlando Gibbons is a great joy to sing, and I cannot resist quoting the last couplet:

"... more geese than swans there be,
more fools than wise!"

There are so many treasures in the music of this period that one has to avoid merely giving a catalogue of titles. Nevertheless, one would not only sing such secular works but would try Byrd's settings of the *Mass*, in three, four, or five parts, as well as such works as Palestrina's *Missa Brevis*, his *Missa Papae Marcelli*, as well as his *Missa Assumpta est Maria* (in six parts if you were lucky enough to have sufficient tenors to divide into two parts). When participating in vocal music of any sort I am constantly fascinated by the mutual contribution of words and music (cf Milton), so that almost always one, in isolation, will tend to remind you of the other. This is so with numerous passages from the Bible: "Rejoice, in the Lord alway," "My beloved spake," by Purcell, or "Blessed be the God and Father" (S S Wesley), and particularly with the passages used in Händel's *Messiah*. On hearing these passages read in church there is nearly always an immediate reminder of the musical setting and a suppressed urge to burst into song.

When working at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, after the war I managed to sing in the Bach Choir under the inspired direction of Thomas Armstrong. In the relatively short time that I was there I had the pleasure of singing, in addition to Bach and Händel, Verdi's *Requiem* and Delius's *Appalachia*.

In 1935, the year I qualified, our family doctor retired and was replaced by Dr Alexander Essex, who was not only a superb violinist but also had an unquenchable enthusiasm for music. He was a wonderful "reader" and was prepared to

tackle almost anything put in front of him. His enthusiasm was also infectious, and together we explored a large amount of the repertoire for violin and piano. We played not only sonatas by Bach, Händel, Mozart, Beethoven, Grieg, Schumann, Brahms, and Delius but also much of the light musical repertoire, including those delightful pieces by that doctor manqué Fritz Kreisler. When other players were available we played piano trios or even larger chamber works. How delightful are the two piano trios of Schubert (Op 99 and Op 100, before Deutsch took over the catalogue); but we have also played the two piano quartets by Mozart as well as the one by Schumann (Op 47) and the piano quintets by Schumann (Op 44), Brahms, Dvorak (with the lovely 'cello tune in the opening bars), Elgar, and Dohnányi. When a double bass was available we would arrange a "Trout" party, when we would meet and perform that marvellous work by Schubert. In our house at various times we have also performed the Brandenburg concertos Nos 2, 4, 5, and 6, and played the others at public performances. Other concertos and chamber works of Bach were also played as well as some of his vocal works such as Cantata movements, when the necessary forces were available.

Recorders and clarinets

One of the disadvantages of playing the piano is that you do not normally have an opportunity of taking part in corporate—for example, orchestral—music-making. I was certainly aware of this gap in my experience but never felt competent to take up a string instrument at such a late stage. In 1940, however, as a result of quite a sudden impulse, set off by an advertisement in the *Musical Times*, I bought a descant recorder. This stimulated my interest, and soon I bought a treble instrument. This was rather a superior model in tulip wood with an ivory mouthpiece made by Robert Goble, who at that time was still working in Haslemere. I derived great pleasure from the new repertoire opened up, playing Händel sonatas on the instrument for which they were written, and works by Loeillet, Bononcini, Schickhardt, Pepusch, and other eighteenth-century composers, of whom probably the most important for recorder players was Georg Philip Telemann. In the 1940s it was certainly recorder players who were most familiar with his music, and I like to think that in those far-off days we represented the vanguard of the present-day "early music revival." We played not only solo sonatas but also trio sonatas with a second recorder or with violin or oboe. It was also at this time realised that several Bach church cantatas included the recorder in their instrumentation, rather than the transverse (or German) flute. Several delightful arias with recorder obbligato repay study.

Playing the recorder gave me a different sort of dexterity with my fingers, and quite soon afterwards I bought a clarinet. Frederick (Jack) Thurston, then in the BBC orchestra, had written a splendid tutor for the instrument and with the help of this I was largely self-taught, although for a short time while at Plymouth I had lessons from Corporal Negus of the Royal Marine Band. In my next posting I was fortunate enough to meet other wind players, and we explored the repertoire of wind chamber music. What joy it is to be an active participant, rather than a passive listener, in such works as the Mozart quintet (K 452) or the Beethoven quintet for piano and wind (oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon), the Mozart clarinet trio (K 498), the clarinet quintet (K 581), as well as the two divertimenti for two clarinets and bassoon. We also enjoyed the Beethoven trio for clarinet, violoncello, and piano (Op 11) and the clarinet quartet by Carl Stamitz. At the same time I was not neglecting my piano playing, and one marvellous "find" was the trio by Poulenc for oboe, bassoon, and piano. How witty this is, as are so many other works by this brilliant and jocular French composer.

In addition to chamber music I not only helped in the orchestra at Sherborne School but was also second clarinet in the Yeovil Philharmonic Orchestra. Through this association

with the Yeovil music club I had in 1946 the opportunity of accompanying that distinguished oboe player Léon Goossens, who had come to give a recital. This started a friendship that has endured to the present day, and on several occasions I have accompanied his recitals for the medical students or the Music Club in Cardiff. He helped us in one concert at Llandaff Cathedral, given by an orchestra composed of doctors and medical students, when we gave the first performance in Wales of the concerto by J S Bach for oboe d'amore. This had been arranged by Sir Donald Tovey from the keyboard concerto in A major (BWV 1055) and was probably the original version of the work. At this same concert my senior registrar Peter Rack played the *Suite in B Minor* for flute and strings (BWV 1067) and with another old friend we played the two concertos for two clavers, in C minor and C major.

Seeing with your ears

Since 1956 I have owned my own harpsichord and have greatly enjoyed playing basso continuo, not only in eighteenth-century chamber music but also in many of the great choral works of J S Bach and others. These have included the *St Matthew* and the *St John Passions*, the *Mass in B Minor*, *Christmas Oratorio*, *Magnificat*, and many of the church and secular cantatas. There have also been numerous performances of Händel's *Messiah*, both as a singer and as a keyboard player, including two television performances at Christmas in Llandaff Cathedral. Other works by Händel have included his "*Brockes Passion*," *Samson*, *Semele*, *Acis and Galatea*, and *Apollo and Daphne*. Other composers include Heinrich Schutz and Henry Purcell.

Playing a figured bass part gives great satisfaction and a keen sense of creative participation. I attribute my familiarity with the keyboard to the period when I was first in medical school and, forsaking the printed page, I mastered the art of playing by ear and reproducing the current hit tunes played each night on the wireless by such splendid bands as Ambrose, Lew Stone, Roy Fox, Jack Payne, Harry Roy, and, later, Henry Hall.

This illustrates another facet of reading—that is, by hearing a tune it is possible to picture it on the page, so that you can "see with your ears." By a similar process in reverse it is possible to "hear with your eyes" and by looking at a printed score hear the music in that inward ear "which is the bliss of solitude." I would not wish to exaggerate my skill in this direction, but I have no difficulty in reading a melody, a hymn tune in four-part harmony, a string quartet by Mozart, or even one of his symphonies.

Apart from this there is a distinct aesthetic pleasure in having (and holding) a full score written by a master, even when, as in some modern works, it is too complex and complicated for it possibly to be "read." Further, if one accepts the hard work and agony of composition, it is remarkable to contemplate the sheer physical sweat necessary just in setting down on paper such a score as the "Rite of Spring." It is interesting that Stravinsky himself said that even when he had composed certain sections of this work at one particular stage he "did not know how to put it down on paper."

I know that other members of the profession in various parts of the country share my enthusiasm and enjoyment of this active participation in music making and there must be many who would produce their own special list of works. I hope that others will feel able to understand the great pleasures I have received in a lifetime of reading.

(PS I also read WORDS.)

Reference

- ¹ Lee B. Personal view. *Br Med J* 1971;ii:428.

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