

## *La Musica* (1857-1859)

The large space dedicated to the detailed treatment of technical topics, ranging from counterpoint to acoustics, makes the second Neapolitan *La Musica* somewhat special in the panorama of nineteenth-century Italian music periodicals.

There are no links with the previous namesake except for the usual theater chronicles. The topics covered are strictly related to the scientific aspects of music, without incursions into other artistic or cultural fields. This focus reveals the growing interest in the technical aspects of music which emerged at mid-century in Italy, and especially in Naples where the upheaval of ideas from the tide of positivism appears to have developed with greater vigor.

Founded by the Baron Giuseppe Staffa and carrying the subtitle “periodical for the furtherance of the science and art of sound,” the journal began publication on 1 June 1857, slightly more than a year after the termination of the first Neapolitan *La Musica*. The initially regular bi-monthly publication schedule came to suffer delays and interruptions, until the journal was obliged to cease publication on 15 June 1859. In all, forty-two issues were published, each of eight pages.

Baron Staffa, author of a harmony and composition method and director of the orchestra at the Teatro del Fondo and at the Teatro Nuovo, signed the greatest number of the articles. From the beginning he defined the technical and scientific nature of the journal, called upon expert collaborators and reprinted earlier scientific studies in serial form. Staffa’s primary conviction was that a modern didactic text on music theory was lacking. He intended to close this gap through pertinent offerings in his periodical.

The few but qualified collaborators who contributed in a decisive way to the scientific value of the journal include don Marzio Gaetano Carafa, prince of Colobrano, the author of a long series of articles on the physics of acoustics (more precisely on the propagation of sound waves). Some articles carry the signature of Raffaele Napoli, author of a pamphlet on the phenomenon of harmonic resonance and an authoritative commentator on the works of Verdi. Beginning with issue number nineteen of 1857, Giuseppe Pintado’s 1794 treatise on counterpoint and a more recent “memoria” by Paolo Anania De Luca entitled “Novello sistema di tonometria” began to appear in serialized form. Both publications continued through the later numbers of the journal until its cessation, and—together with the contributions of Staffa and the prince of Colobrano—they constitute the journal’s core.

With time the direct participation of Baron Staffa was less regular and during a temporary absence Raffaele Napoli assumed the direction of the journal. In num-

ber seventeen dated 1 April 1859 a notice informed the readers of a suspension during the months of April and May, the result of "country holidays." When on 15 June 1859, the journal resumed publication, a second note alerted the readers to another suspension which, in reality, translated into the definitive cessation of the journal. The demise of *La Musica* was probably caused by many factors: Staffa's state of health, economic problems (in this regard it is noteworthy that the subscription price was lowered at the beginning of the second year in order to encourage a wider diffusion of the periodical), and perhaps also the social and political difficulties which took place during the spring and the summer of 1859 following the second war of independence.