

***The Musical Journal* (1840)**

The Musical Journal, a magazine of information, on all subjects connected with the science [MUJ] was issued weekly in London on Tuesdays between 7 January and 29 December 1840, under the proprietorship of W. Mitchell and Son at 39 Charing Cross, and printed by J. Limbird at 143, Strand. In all only forty-five issues were distributed, for by Volume II, no. 43, 27 October 1840 the editor became aware of the need for termination owing to the general decline in provincial concerts (the festivals) and professional concerts and operas in London.¹ Thus no issues were published in November, and only three biweekly issues appeared in December.

Each issue contains sixteen pages with the exception of Volume II, no. 28, which has only fourteen. Volume I contains issue numbers 1 through 26 (7 January to 30 June, 1840), while Volume II contains numbers 27 through 46, (7 July to 29 December, 1840).² The journal's 730 pages are printed in single-column format, and the pages are numbered consecutively in each volume. Indices for both volumes are given at the outset of each half-year in the New York Public Library microfilm copy of the journal used for this RIPM publication.³

The names of the editors are not given in the journal, and all texts relating to it, which might be attributed to an editor, are unsigned. In fact, signatures (names, initials and pseudonyms) are given only for those who contributed letters to the editor, and texts borrowed from other publications. According to J. W. Davison, editor of *The Musical World*, British law forbade the identification of all others.⁴ MUJ is, however, thought to have been written and edited by Edward Francis Rimbault and George Alexander Macfarren.⁵ E. F. Rimbault (1816-1876), an organist and a writer on musical subjects, is considered "a pioneer in English musicology."⁶ At the time of editing and writing *The Musical Journal*, Rimbault was also involved with the establishment of the Musical Antiquarian Society and the Percy Society. His writings and editions created from 1841 until the time of his death are numerous, and his legacy has been praised for the "educational effect of his discoveries and revivals on the Victorian public."⁷ G. A. Macfarren (1813-1887) was a noted English operatic composer, theorist and, in later life the music professor at Cambridge University and the principal of the Royal Academy of

¹ MUJ II, no. 43 (27 October 1840): 255-56.

² The headers at the outset of the first page of each issue give only the issue number and date. Volume numbers are given at the foot of the same initial pages.

³ "Selected Music Periodicals Published in London." Norman Ross Publishing Inc.

⁴ For an explanation governing the anonymity employed in the nineteenth century see *The Musical World* 37, no. 28 (9 July 1859): 441-42.

⁵ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online*, s.v. "Periodicals, 3: List: Europe: Great Britain (GB)," <http://www.grovemusic.com> (Accessed 10 November 2004).

⁶ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online*, s.v. "Rimbault, Edward (Francis)" (by W.H. Husk/Nicholas Temperley), <http://www.grovemusic.com> (Accessed 10 November 2004).

⁷ *Ibid.*

Music.⁸ While Macfarren has been described as “a passionate English nationalist ... his views were one-sided and dogmatic, and his enthusiasms were largely negative.”⁹

The content of MUJ is consistently ordered in two parts: first, five or more major articles between which are interspersed poems, anecdotes and brief notices about contemporary music making in England and abroad; and, second, reviews of operas, concerts and published music, and foreign and miscellaneous news. The reviews of operas and concerts are almost entirely concerned with musical events in London. Provincial concert news is limited to a few notices on concerts in cities such as Maidstone, Southampton, Rochester and Hitchin, and on oratorios and miscellaneous concerts given at the autumn festivals in Birmingham, Hereford and Hull. Occasionally there are reports of foreign activities that include brief reviews of operas and concerts in the major Continental centers such as Paris and in various Italian and German cities. A list of “Operas and Concerts of the Week” in London appears regularly, as does a short column “Answers to Correspondents” in which questions about music are explained. In the New York Public Library microfilm cited above, single pages of informative advertisements about music publications appear only on the verso page of the cover and on the final pages of a few issues of Volume II.

The major articles, often in series format, deal with scientific, social and political topics related to music. Aiming to define tonality, acoustical theory is considered in extracts from Kollmann’s study of string vibrations and overtones,¹⁰ and in two series of articles. One of these investigates the relationship between the sounds of nature and musical instruments,¹¹ while the other deals with mathematics and acoustics.¹² A third article continues the initial discussion with observations on staff notation and the science of acoustics.¹³ Articles about the building, tuning and repair of organs, and biographies of organists appear regularly throughout the journal’s run. A nine-part series on the “history of music” from the ancient Egyptians and Israelites to the founding of the London Philharmonic Society in 1813 and the Royal Academy of Music in 1822 is a feature of the second volume.¹⁴ Other topics include psalmody,¹⁵ the moral effects of choral

⁸ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online*, s.v. “Macfarren, Sir George (Alexander)” (by Nicholas Temperley), <http://www.grovemusic.com> (Accessed 10 November 2004).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Kollmann, *The Theory of Musical Harmony* in MUJ I, no. 1 (7 January 1840): 2-4.

¹¹ Alison, “The Sublimity of Simple Sounds,” MUJ I, no. 3 (21 January 1840): 42-43; I, no. 4 (29 January 1840): 51-53.

¹² E. G., “Observations on Harmonic Notes, Musical Sounds in General, and the Scale,” MUJ I, no. 9 (3 March 1840): 130-33; I, no. 10 (10 March 1840): 149-51; I, no. 13 (31 March 1840): 198-202; I, no. 15 (14 April 1840): 227-29; I, no. 16 (21 April 1840): 244-47; I, no. 17 (28 April 1840): 260-62.

¹³ Julius L. Schroder, “The Diatonic Scale and the True Relative Positions of the Sharps and Flats,” MUJ I, no. 23 (9 June 1840): 355-56.

¹⁴ MUJ II, no. 27 (7 July 1840): 4-5; II, no. 28 (14 July 1840): 18-19; II, no. 29 (21 July 1840): 38-39; II, no. 30 (28 July 1840): 52-53; II, no. 31 (4 August 1840): 66-67; II, no. 32 (11 August 1840): 80-81; II, no. 33 (18 August 1840): 98-100; II, no. 34 (25 August 1840): 114-15; II, no. 36 (8 September 1840): 147-48.

¹⁵ MUJ I, no. 8 (25 February 1840): 114-17.

societies,¹⁶ and French composers and their “rights.”¹⁷ The latter is examined by means of a French-language article (in translation) describing a legal case concerning the publisher Mme Lemoine and the ownership of Charles de Bériot’s *Twelve Italian Melodies* arranged for violin and pianoforte. Several articles deal with women composers and the Royal Society of Female Musicians.¹⁸ The Musical Antiquarian Society proposed that a number of compositions in manuscript by early English composers be published.¹⁹

Other major articles include descriptions and analyses of five important oratorios—Handel’s *Israel in Egypt*, *Messiah*, and *Saul*; Haydn’s *The Creation*; and Mendelssohn’s *St. Paul*—all of which were performed during the 1840 season by the Sacred Harmonic Society at Exeter Hall, and by other sacred music choral groups in the environs of London. Each analysis deals with the textual and musical setting of the individual musical numbers.

Musical memoirs, biographies and biographical sketches are a regular feature of MUJ. These include the historical music figures Pope Gregory I and Guido d’Arezzo, the seventeenth-century Vatican composer Gregorio Allegri, and composers Haydn, Nicola Jomelli, Beethoven, Paganini and Robert Schumann. Two singers from an earlier period, both beloved by the British public, Mme Mara and Maria Malibran are featured, as are the contemporary Italian opera singers Giulia Grisi, Giovanni Battista Rubini and Luigi Lablache—all of whom played important roles on the London operatic stage. The biographies of singers contain descriptions of vocal technique and manner of singing. The majority of the biographies are without either signature or source, but the biographies of Mme Grisi and Rubini are attributed to the French writer and editor Marie Escudier, while that of Lablache is attributed to *La France musicale*. Biographical notes are provided for important English cathedral composers.²⁰

The journal published forty-four letters to the editor, generally signed with pseudonyms such as “Agathon,” “Veritas,” “Justitia” and “An Amateur.” The letters deal with the topics of the major articles such as acoustics, the operas and concerts of the London season, historical subjects, organs and organists, and the politics of British life. Of particular interest is a letter from a member of the Society of British Musicians in which the writer comments on the indifferent anti-national attitude of the British royalty to native British music and musicians. To demonstrate this indifference, a record of Queen Victoria’s attendance at concerts by foreign musicians is compared to her lack of attendance at concerts by British musicians.²¹ This subject is pursued in other articles,

¹⁶ MUJ I, no. 20 (19 May 1840): 305-07.

¹⁷ MUJ I, no. 16 (21 April 1840): 247-49, and II, no. 34 (25 August 1840): 121-22.

¹⁸ MUJ I, no. 9 (3 March 1840): 135-36. Reviews of compositions by women composers are found in MUJ II, no. 30 (28 July 1840): 56-57 and II, no. 34 (25 August 1840): 121-22.

¹⁹ MUJ II, no. 40 (6 October 1840): 219-20; II, no. 41 (13 October 1840): 233-35.

²⁰ MUJ II, no. 38 (22 September 1840): 182-84; II, no. 39 (29 September 1840): 203-05; II, no. 40 (6 October 1840): 212-14; II, no. 41 (13 October 1840): 226-30.

²¹ MUJ I, no. 26 (30 June 1840): 402-06.

one of which includes reproduction of memorials (letters) addressed to the Queen and Prince Albert requesting support for British musicians.²² These were rejected by the royal officials of St. James's Palace.²³

The London season of 1840 featured works of Italian operas at Her Majesty's Theatre (formerly the King's Theatre) from late February to early July under the management of the French actor and entrepreneur Pierre François Laporte (1799-1841).²⁴ The performances of fifteen Italian operas by Bellini (5), Donizetti (4), Saverio Mercadante (1), Mozart (2), Giuseppe Persiani (1) and Rossini (2), and the management, singers and dancers who participated are the subject of thirty-five important articles, reviews and letters to the editor.

Complaints about the predominance of Italian opera at Her Majesty's Theatre began before the 1840 season was underway: the twice-delayed opening on account of the lingering of the Italian singers in Paris,²⁵ the "filthy" and decayed condition of the auditorium and orchestra pit, and the difficulties encountered by the orchestral musicians²⁶ playing under Michael Costa's conductorship²⁷ were central to the discussion. As the season progressed, the main problem appears to have centered on the excessive fees paid to baritone Antonio Tamburini,²⁸ and the evident decline of tenor Giovanni Battista Rubini's vocal abilities.²⁹ Performances given by the sopranos Giulia Grisi and Fanny Persiani, the bass Luigi Lablache, the tenor Mario among others were rewarded with excellent reviews.

A season of German opera by a company of singers and musicians from Mainz was given at the Prince's Theatre. The repertory offered London audiences performances of Weber's *Der Freischütz*, Marschner's *Der Templar und die Judin*, Gluck's *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Spohr's *Jessonda* and Mozart's *Titus*. Two English operas, *Mabel, or the Gypsy's Vengeance* and Barnett's *The Mountain Sylph*, were both performed at the Covent Garden Theatre, but were received with apathy by the gentry.³⁰ A scheme to establish a season of English opera by Eliason was reported a failure.³¹

²² MUJ I, no. 26 (30 June 1840): 402-06. This correspondence is signed by eminent British musicians including G. A. Macfarren and Sterndale Bennett.

²³ MUJ II, no. 27 (7 July 1840): 2-4.

²⁴ For a biographical sketch of Laporte and a discussion of his tenure at Her Majesty's Theatre, see *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, s.v. "Laporte [Delaporte], Pierre François [Francis]."

²⁵ MUJ I, no. 7 (18 February 1840): 97-98.

²⁶ For a complete list of instruments constituting the orchestra at Her Majesty's Theatre see MUJ II, no. 23 (9 June 1840): 272.

²⁷ MUJ I, no. 12 (24 March 1840): 187-88; I, no. 18 (5 May 1840): 280-81; I, no. 19 (12 May 1840): 291-97.

²⁸ MUJ I, no. 18 (5 May 1840): 278-80; I, no. 22 (2 June 1840): 337-38.

²⁹ MUJ I, no. 24 (16 June 1840): 369-71; I, no. 26 (30 June 1840): 406-07.

³⁰ MUJ I, no. 9 (3 March 1840): 142.

³¹ MUJ II, no. 34 (25 August 1840): 113-14.

Of great importance to provincial musical life were the various choral festivals held during the autumn months. Differences of opinion about the merits of various performers at the Birmingham Musical Festival elicited an interesting article from the journal's editor. To circumvent the hostilities the editor relied only upon his own reporter and on "the opinions of several professional friends" to report on the festival's varied roster and repertory.³² A large number of English singers including Charlotte Ann Birch, Mrs. Knyvett, Elizabeth Rainforth, John Braham and Henry Phillips are featured in many positive festival reviews. A rather negative account is given of the French soprano Julie Dorus Gras, who was subject to disapprobation for her late arrival at the festival and her manner of singing in broken English.³³

Moreover, the fact that the Hereford Musical Festival (as reported in the journal) was seriously marred by the selection of Luigi Lablache as bass soloist rather than the Englishman Henry Phillips, became a subject extensively treated in correspondence.³⁴ The failure of the Hull Musical Festival owing to "ignorance and quackery" is explained in an article borrowed from the *Times*.³⁵

London concerts by choral societies and concert societies are dealt with on a regular basis. Foremost are reviews of the performances of major oratorios by Handel, Haydn and Schneider (*The Deluge*), and anthems by Reformation composers all given by the Sacred Harmonic Society at Exeter Hall. The amateur society's installation of a new organ in their hall is also considered.³⁶ Another amateur society, the Choral Harmonists gave concerts at the City of London Tavern performing Haydn's *Te Deum* and Spohr's *The Last Judgment*, while the Cecilian Society offered King's Anglican Evening Service and Handel's *Joshua* in various London venues. The sixty-fourth season of the Concerts of Ancient Music was made difficult by the retirement of conductor Charles Knyvett and the search for a replacement. George Smart, Henry Bishop and the Duke of Cambridge undertook these duties.³⁷

Reviews of eight concerts given by the Philharmonic Society at the Hanover Square Rooms are featured prominently in the journal, and provide ample evidence of the generally conservative repertory, the selection of the vocal and instrumental soloists, and the difficulties of achieving high quality in orchestral playing. As a permanent conductor had not been appointed, the Philharmonic Society concerts were conducted by four different musicians: Cipriani Potter, Ignaz Moscheles, Sir George Smart and Henry Bishop with varying results of orchestral discipline and interpretation. The journal's reviewer addressed this serious problem as it affected the success of the performances of

³² MUJ II, no. 39 (29 September 1840): 191-200.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ MUJ II, no. 34 (25 August 1840): 111-13; II, no. 35 (1 September 1840): 138; II, no. 36 (8 September 1840): 143-46; II, no. 37 (15 September 1840): 170-72.

³⁵ MUJ II, no. 42 (20 October 1840): 252-53.

³⁶ MUJ I, no. 3 (21 January 1840): 34-36.

³⁷ MUJ I, no. 6 (11 February 1840): 95; I, no. 7 (18 February 1840): 98; I, no. 8 (25 February 1840): 127.

symphonies by Mozart, Beethoven, Spohr and others. The Societa Armonica offered an exclusive series of six orchestral concerts with the assistance of the singers from Her Majesty's Theatre. The fifth, sixth and eighth symphonies of Beethoven were featured. The conductor, Henry Forbes, was found wanting in his control of the orchestra and said to demonstrate a lack of organization and purpose in his programs.³⁸ The problems were serious and to reinforce the matter the journal printed an anonymous letter on the subject of laxity in the discipline of orchestras.³⁹ The British penchant for part-song singing is reflected in reviews of the meetings by the Catch Club, the Adelphi Club, the Liverpool Beef-steak Club and the Glee Club, and reports on the prizes offered for original compositions by these institutions.⁴⁰

Many vocal and instrumental concerts are reviewed. The musicians performing at these concerts include the pianists Sigismond Thalberg, Mme Belleville-Oury, Julius Benedict, the violinists John Cramer, Henry Hayward and Bernhard Molique, the clarinetist Henry Lazarus and the horn player Puzzi. A host of well-known British singers performed regularly at these concerts and at the choral concerts including Charlotte Ann Birch, Elizabeth Rainforth, John Parry, Maria Hawes, Alfred Novello, as well as the roster of foreign singers engaged for the Italian opera season at Her Majesty's Theatre. The Quartette Concerts, a series of chamber music concerts, presented pianoforte trios and string quartets by Beethoven (including the late quartet, op. 127), Sterndale Bennett, Corelli, Mozart and Spohr. Franz Liszt's concerts in London and the provinces elicited many articles and reviews. Great interest is shown in the articles about the problems encountered during a tour of the provinces by Liszt's concert party, which included violinist Frank Mori and singers of the Italian opera. The failure of this last undertaking is explained in a letter to the editor from the singer John Parry.⁴¹

Reviews of published music are a regular feature in MUJ. The numerous pianoforte pieces reviewed—quadrilles, waltzes, marches, rondos and arrangements of favorite melodies from popular operas—are, for the most part, by composers or amateurs unknown today. Vocal music, however, is reviewed in even greater abundance. This repertory includes glees, ballads, canzonets and songs. Collections of sacred music, sacred songs and anthems are also considered in the review sections. An important publication that receives an extensive review is William Chappell's *A Collection of National Airs, Consisting of Ancient Song, Ballad and Dance Tunes*. Included in this publication is an essay on English minstrelsy.⁴² Chappell's work was the basis of much subsequent research into the national music of Britain.

³⁸ MUJ I, no. 19 (12 May 1840): 302; I, no. 21 (26 May 1840): 334; I, no. 22 (9 June 1840): 348.

³⁹ MUJ I, no. 19 (12 May 1840): 302.

⁴⁰ MUJ I, no. 3 (27 October 1840): 43; II, no. 45 (15 December 1840): 45: 301-02.

⁴¹ MUJ II, no. 39 (29 September 1840): 205.

⁴² MUJ I, no. 16 (21 April 1840): 251-54.