

La Musica (1855)

The publication of the Neapolitan weekly *La Musica* comes at a time of increased interest in journals devoted specifically to music. In 1852 the *Gazzetta Musicale di Napoli* began publication and the following year saw the inauguration of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze*, both coming alongside the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* (founded in 1842) and *L'Italia Musicale* also of Milan (founded in 1847). Like the two Milanese periodicals, the Neapolitan and Florentine journals were supported by music publishers; Girard & Co. (later the Stabilimento Musicale Partenopeo) supported the *Gazzetta Musicale di Napoli* and G. G. Guidi, the *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze*. While born without any direct ties to a music publisher, *La Musica* appears to be modelled after the *Gazzetta Musicale di Napoli* whose typographic style it copied and whose articles it occasionally reprinted. With issue number 11, the publisher Clausetti, Ricordi's representative in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, began sponsoring the journal.

The director and proprietor of *La Musica* is the same Pasquale Trisolini who was also active as the editor of the Neapolitan *Gazzetta* from its very beginning. His reasons for creating a second journal reflect perhaps an effort to maintain complete editorial independence from the dominance of publishing and related business interests.

The activities of Pasquale Trisolini, a particularly lively figure in musical criticism during this period, still await precise definition in the panorama of nineteenth-century Neapolitan musical culture. He emerges from the pages of *La Musica* as a strong defender of the Italian musical tradition tied to the art of singing. Particularly attentive to the works of the two major contemporaneous Italian composers, Verdi and Mercadante—a great deal of space is devoted to their most recent operas—Trisolini also focuses attention and expresses perhaps greater sensitivity toward the operas of new composers.

La Musica, *Giornale letterario-artistico-teatrale* is composed primarily of reviews, news and notices with its preeminent interest being that of opera. Occasionally some space is reserved for the spoken theater, for the figurative arts, and, to a lesser degree, for concert performances.

Trisolini wrote most of the articles, frequently without signing them. His signature appears at times with the last name written-out completely and preceded with the initial of his first name, with the initials P. T., and finally, with only the initial of his last name, T., which may also indicate the last name of Antonio Tari (see below). Contributors to the journal included Michele Ruta, at that time critic of the *Corriere del mattino* in Naples. Of particular interest is Ruta's series of essays of a pedagogical nature which treats the primary musical forms and which provides

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historical information on their origins. This series refers to celebrated composers and includes advice and suggestions to young composers to whom the series is dedicated. Other contributors were Neapolitan intellectuals involved more or less directly in the city's musical life, including the philosopher Antonio Tari, who was actively involved in politics, and who dealt with music in a way completely unlike that of a dilettante.

Reviews and the musical notices from outside Naples are frequently drawn from news and articles that appeared in other Italian and foreign periodicals as was common journalistic practice during this period. In the last issues, a gradual decrease in the number of musical reviews corresponds with an increase in the number of feuilletons, and in the amount of poetry, of short novels, and of notices on extra-musical topics. Such a "drying up" of the original focus of the journal, which was probably provoked in part by competition from the already established *Gazzetta Musicale di Napoli* (on which Trisolini had been collaborating for some time), may explain its sudden disappearance.