

Rivista musicale italiana (1894-1955)

The quarterly music periodical *Rivista musicale italiana* [RMI] was founded in Turin by publisher Giuseppe Bocca (1867-1951) and printed without interruptions from 1894 to 1932. Publication was suspended from 1933 to 1935 due to the publisher's financial problems. The journal resumed publication in Milan in 1936, and was interrupted once again from 1943 to 1945; due to the War. In 1954-1955 the firm was transferred to Rome.

While from its inception a quarterly publication, it reappeared in 1946, publishing three instalments due to economic difficulties in 1947 and 1948; from 1949 to 1955 quarterly publication resumed; its last publication appeared in April-June 1955. From 1894 to 1914, each yearly volume contains an average of 800 to 1,000 pages; from 1915 to 1939, 500 to 700 pages; and from 1940 to 1954, 300 to 500 pages. Each volume is paginated continuously.

Publisher Bocca directed the periodical from its foundation until 1951, the year of his death. In 1951-1953 he was succeeded by Carlo Torreano, and in turn by Luigi Ronga in 1954-55.

The RMI devotes a significant amount of attention to the advancement of musicological studies in Italy, following some isolated efforts during the 19th century. It is particularly noteworthy that the journal assembled as collaborators first-rate young Italian musicologists and historians, who based their contributions not on subjective impressions but rather on primary source material, following a scientific method of study. Furthermore, the periodical was able to attract the collaboration of qualified foreign scholars, especially from Germany and France. A good number of essays are in fact published in the original French, as “the French language has been spoken for many years by persons of culture”.¹

The clear-cut positivistic approach that publisher Bocca conferred on the periodical reveals a clear analogy with that expressed in the *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, a periodical also founded in Turin a few years earlier (1883). The *Giornale* strove to promote erudite studies based on the new historical methodology, namely, that on the philological analysis of documents, which, in the field of music, had been practiced for many years in Germany. The aims of the *Rivista musicale italiana* are clearly expressed in its introductory essay:

To promote musical culture in all possible ways: by offering a synthesis of musical studies produced nowadays with regard to history, aesthetics, philosophy; by presenting topics that deal with musical structures adopted in the various epochs; by reporting on the most recent research in the fields of physiology, psychology, acoustics; by further reporting on what is happening in contemporary music, especially in Italy—resorting, whenever necessary, to the most qualified and impartial critical writings of the most significant musical events, so that the study of art be related to an historical evolutionary context; this is our aim.²

Founded in Turin in 1775 as a family owned publishing firm, in 1890 Giuseppe Bocca became its sole owner. He was an enthusiastic advocate of positivistic theories, which in

¹ La Direzione, “Ai lettori,” RMI, I, 1 (1894): 1-6. All translations are by the author of this text.

² Ibid.

Italy gained prominence in Turin.³ An amateur violinist and a music lover, Bocca organized weekly meetings at his residence, inviting excellent professional instrumentalists to perform a repertory of classical string quartets, especially of Haydn and Brahms. He furthermore cultivated a passionate enthusiasm for Wagner's operas.⁴

Among the erudite scholars who contributed initially to the *Rivista musicale italiana* are Romualdo Giani (1868-1931)—who at times signed his polemical articles with the pseudonym Luigi Pagano and who was decidedly critical of the idealistic philosophy of Benedetto Croce (1866-1952)—Dino Sincero (1872-1923), Carlo Perinello (1877-1942), Giovanni Tebaldini (1864-1952), Nicola D'Arienzo (1842-1915), Luigi Torri (1863-1932), Alberto Gentili (1873-1954), and Luigi Torchi (1858-1920). Torchi in particular—one of the leading figures in nascent Italian musicology—assisted Bocca in editing the periodical from its outset until 1904. A convinced Wagnerian, he devoted himself to the dissemination of Wagner's critical writings⁵ and introduced the periodical to heated debates on aesthetic issues, while maintaining an interest in the rediscovery of the Italian instrumental music tradition.⁶

In roughly its first twelve years of publication, a number of qualified and experienced foreign scholars contributed major articles to the *Rivista musicale italiana*: Salomon Jadassohn (1831-1902), Arthur Pougin (1834-1921), Franz Xavier Haberl (1840-1910), Guido Adler (1855-1941), Julien Tiersot (1857-1936), Jules Combarieu (1859-1916), Adolf Sandberger (1864-1943), and Jacques-Gabriel Prod'homme (1871-1956), among others. From 1907 to 1919, Fausto Torrefranca (1863-1955), at the time a young

³ The reputation of Bocca's firm was linked to the eminent anthropologist Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), very well-known for his positivistic methods of investigation. In addition to volumes on sociology, common law, and ancient Roman history, the publisher was the first to introduce in Italy the writings of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wilde, and Spencer in the series *Piccola biblioteca di scienze moderne*. Bocca collaborated in the periodical he founded almost exclusively with numerous reviews of books, music editions, recordings, which he signed with the initials "G. B." and "B.". See Guido M. Gatti, "Ricordo di Giuseppe Bocca," *La Rassegna musicale* 21 (1951): 295-97, and "Torino musicale del passato," *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, I (1967): 80-88; G. Dondi, "Bocca," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1968), 10:819-21. See also E. Surian, "Giuseppe Bocca editore musicista della *Rivista musicale italiana* (1894-1955)," *L'immaginario scenografico e la realizzazione musicale. Atti del Convegno in onore di Mercedes Viale Ferrero. Torino, Teatro Regio, 5-6 febbraio 2009. Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 5-6 marzo 2009*, ed. M. I. Biggi and P. Gallarati (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2010): 241-46.

⁴ During the last years of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century Turin's musical life was decidedly characterized by the enthusiasm of its public for Wagner's operas, starting with the performance of *Lohengrin* in 1877 in the city's Teatro Regio, and continuing uninterruptedly in the successive seasons until 1914. It reached its highest point with the Italian première of *Il Crepuscolo degli dèi* performed in Italian in 1895 under Toscanini's direction. The theatre's renovated hall was inaugurated in 1905 with a performance of *Sigfrido*, directed by Toscanini. Contributing to the diffusion of Wagnerian culture were the "Listening Guides" to *Walkiria*, *I Maestri cantori di Norimberga* and *L'Anello del Nibelungo* published in Turin between 1891 and 1896 by the music critic Giuseppe Depanis (1853-1942).

⁵ Like some of the senior Italian musicologists such as Tebaldini, Gentili, Perinello, Torchi also perfected his musical studies in Germany (at the Leipzig University from 1878 to 1883). In the 1890s his translations – the first in Italian – of Wagner's *Musica dell'avvenire* (1893), and *Musica e dramma* (1894) were published by Bocca. For an overall evaluation of Torchi's translations in relation to the Italian cultural context of the time, see M. Giani, "Luigi Torchi traduttore di Wagner," *Tra le note. Studi di lessicografia musicale*, ed. F. Nicolodi and P. Trovato (Fiesole: Edizioni Cadmo, 1996): 93-104.

⁶ In the essay treating this topic that appears in the first volume of the periodical, Torchi discusses for the first time in a concrete way the use of lutes and chitarrone in the performance of the figured bass: "L'accompagnamento degli strumenti nei melodrammi italiani della prima metà del Seicento," *RMI*, I, 1 (1894): 7-38.

musicologist, who subsequently exerted a notable influence on Italian musicology, contributed uninterruptedly to the periodical.⁷

The journal's structure is systematically ordered from 1894 to 1955, with the exception of some new rubrics introduced in 1936 and maintained until the RMI's demise.

1) The opening pages of each fascicle – entitled “Memorie” – are dedicated to musicological studies, at times rather extensive. These are erudite studies on a variety of subjects, generally based on documentary sources, as for example the essays by D'Arienzo on the origins of comic opera, by Torchi on Italian instrumental music of the 17th-18th centuries, and by Torrefranca on Galuppi's keyboard sonatas.

2) A rubric entitled “Arte contemporanea” features critical essays dealing with a variety of topics, regarding for the most part contemporary music. These frequently include very detailed analyses of the literary text and the music of individual contemporary works recently premièred in Italy by Italian and foreign composers. In the first yearly issues a certain prominence is given to essays dealing favourably with Wagner or very critically with the “Verismo” operatic movement, as for example the essays by Vincenzo Tommasini on the important role exercised by Wagner in the history of German national culture, and Torchi's analysis of *Salome* by R. Strauss, a composer considered a follower of Wagner. Of particular significance are the articles by Tommasini on Debussy, by I. Pizzetti on *Pélleas et Mélisande* and on Dukas's *Ariane et Barbebleu*, operatic works that had recently been introduced in Italy. The propensity to discuss the most recent cultural events continues with regard to Strauss's *Elektra*, with essays devoted to this opera by Alceo Toni, Torrefranca and Tebaldini. This rubric also features various articles on the psychology of music, on physical acoustics, discussions on matters concerning the reform of musical studies in Italian conservatories,⁸ while articles about legislative problems pertaining to music copyright are frequently signed by Nicola Tabanelli.

3) “Recensioni” [Reviews], a rubric usually arranged in various sections: books on history, biographies, sacred music, the theory of music, scientific research, aesthetics, music criticism, pedagogy, legislation, musical editions, and books on Wagner. This rubric constitutes a particularly important tool for bibliographical information.

4) “Spoglio dei periodici” [Selection of periodicals] lists articles from Italian and foreign periodicals of some importance, at times accompanied by brief summaries; this rubric generally appears in each issue.

5) “Notizie” – “Vita musicale” from 1936 –, is devoted to notices on the various musical activities of theaters, concert associations, music institutes, new operatic works, musical competitions, obituaries, etc.

6) “Elenco dei libri”, “Elenco della musica” [Lists of books, Lists of music] which cite authors/composers, titles, and publishers.

⁷ At the outset of his musicological career Torrefranca had the support of publisher Bocca, who printed in 1910 Torrefranca's study on music aesthetics, *La vita musicale dello spirito*, and soon thereafter (1912) his famous pamphlet strongly critical of Puccini, *Giacomo Puccini e l'opera internazionale*, which generated a wide-spread uproar and fierce reactions among lovers of the famed composer's music.

⁸ Giacomo Orefice, “Conservatorio o università musicale?” RMI, XXV, 3 (1918): 461-80.

Between 1907 and 1918 the periodical's prevailing positivistic position is tempered and some space is assigned to essays following Croce's aesthetics, which at the time were widely disseminated in Italy. Furthermore, RMI somehow disengages itself from German methodologies with which Italian musicology, represented by Torchi, had heretofore sympathized. For Torre Franca, for example, Strauss is a "decadent" composer, and Torre Franca firmly opposes the introduction of Strauss's recent operatic works in Italy.⁹ In the same years and those following the First World War the periodical tends to present various essays and shorter writings aimed at the rediscovery of Italy's musical past, interpreted in a nationalistic fashion.¹⁰ While writings by the older collaborators continue to appear, there are contributions by young musicologists at the outset of their careers, among them Guido Pannain (1891-1977) from 1914; Andrea Della Corte (1883-1968) from 1915; and Guido M. Gatti (1892-1973) from 1919. Noteworthy is Pannain's position in defence of Croce's aesthetics, while at the same time contributing significant essays employing philological and documentary methodologies.¹¹

Between 1925 and 1930 RMI is characterized to some extent by Giani's¹² biting and sharp criticism of Croce's aesthetic writings, which Giani ironically terms "Vangelo" [Gospel] and "Breviario" [Breviary],¹³ while the periodical also gives voice to critics and musicologists, such as Pannain, who oppose the positivistic methodology.

From 1928 to 1932 the articles and reviews of Filippo Brusa (1878-1949) and Ettore Desderi (1892-1974) played an important role in determining the position that the periodical would follow with regard to contemporary music. Desderi deals with the new tendencies of contemporary music in a series of articles dedicated to its various compositional characteristics—such as form, rhythm, orchestration, the use of the

⁹ Fausto Torre Franca, "Il *Rosenkavalier* di R. Strauss," RMI, XVIII, 1 (1911): 147-79; "R. Strauss e l'*Elektra*," RMI, XVI, 2 (1909): 335-84; "La nuova opera di Riccardo Strauss [*Ariadne auf Naxos*]," RMI, XIX, 4 (1912): 986-1031; on the lack of originality of German musicians: "La lotta per l'egemonia musicale nel Settecento," RMI, XXIV, 3 (1917): 343-78, XXV, 1 (1918): 1-28, and XXV, 2 (1918): 137-75; and on the need to renovate Italian music criticism "Il futuro genio della critica musicale italiana (appunti per una profezia-programma)," RMI, XV, 2 (1908): 401-10. See also Torre Franca's position taken against Herbert Spencer's positivistic doctrines in "Le origini della musica," RMI, XIV, 3 (1907): 555-94.

¹⁰ Torre Franca's essay "La creazione della sonata drammatica moderna rivendicata all'Italia," RMI, XVII, 2 (1910): 309-58 contests the excessive importance Riemann assigns to the innovations presumably introduced in the 18th century by the Mannheim symphonists. See also his articles on the origins of the symphony: "Le origini della sinfonia," RMI, XX, 2 (1913): 291-346, and "Le origini della sinfonia. Le sinfonie dell'imbrattacarte (G. B. Sammartini)," RMI, XXI, 2 (1914): 97-121, and XXII, 3 (1915): 431-46; and on Italian instrumental music of the 18th century: "Le origini dello stile mozartiano," RMI, XXVIII, 2 (1921): 263-308; XXXIII, 3 (1926): 321-42; XXXIII, 4 (1926): 505-29; XXXIV, 1 (1927): 1-33; XXXIV, 2 (1927): 169-89; XXXIV, 4 (1927): 493-511; XXXVI, 3 (1929): 373-407. These articles were subsequently included in the volume *Origini italiane del romanticismo musicale*, published by Bocca in 1930.

¹¹ See for example, Pannain's essays on medieval manuscripts and theoretical treatises and on musical life in Naples in the 19th century: "Note di archeologia musicale. Paleografia neumatica e ritmo gregoriano. Alcuni codici inediti della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli," RMI XXVI, 3 (1919): 486-517; and "*Liber musicae*. Un teorico anonimo del XIV secolo," RMI, XXVII, 3 (1920): 407-40; and "Saggio su la musica a Napoli nel sec. XIX. Da Mercadante a Martucci," RMI, XXXV, 2 (1928): 198-208; XXXV, 3 (1928): 331-42; XXXVIII, 2 (1931): 193-206; and XXXIX, 1 (1932): 51-72.

¹² Giani generally signs his contributions with the pseudonym Luigi Pagano.

¹³ Luigi Pagano, "Il vangelo e il breviario. Celebrazione dell'estetica crociana," RMI, XXXII, 4 (1925): 571-98; "Socrate e la pulce," RMI, XXXIII, 1 (1926): 77-102; "Sillabario d'estetica," RMI, XXXV, 3 (1928): 442-53; "La favola dell'aridità," RMI, XXXVI, 2 (1929): 311-12; and "Il parto settimanale," RMI, XXXVII, 2 (1930): 249-54.

choir¹⁴—articles subsequently included in the volume *La musica contemporanea. Caratteri Tendenze Orientamenti* published by Bocca in 1930. As a composer Desderi was a traditionalist, who proposes the use of Palestrina's sacred polyphony in contemporary music. For the periodical he writes a considerable number of reviews of works by various contemporary composers, Ravel, Honegger, and Vaughan Williams among others.

After resuming publication following the suspension in 1933-35, the editors of the periodical confirm its position maintained previously in the first fascicle of 1894, namely, "we believe that it conforms still nowadays to our aims".¹⁵ Nevertheless,

Today times have changed [...]. Musical practice has evolved enormously [...]. Radio broadcasts, the gramophone, sound films have introduced new elements of attraction to the masses and to individuals. The *Rivista* does not exclude these realities: it is open [...] to all currents of thought that intend to have a presence in the field of music.¹⁶

From 1936 to 1943 the periodical's editor, Giuseppe Bocca was assisted by the Milanese music critic Luigi Rognoni (1913-1986). During this period of editorial collaboration Bocca assigns even greater attention to contemporary music, yet continues to publish erudite musicological and historical studies. Rognoni promptly sets in motion a debate on Croce's aesthetics by publishing a review-article¹⁷ by Antonio Banfi (1886-1957), a Marxist oriented philosopher with whom Rognoni had studied. Banfi's essay focuses on the numerous contradictions inherent in the musical aesthetic of Alfredo Parente (1905-1985), a devoted follower of Croce and author of the volume *La musica e le arti* (1936). Banfi's collaboration had, nevertheless, no following, and the debate on music aesthetics was not resumed. Rather, the periodical concentrates its attention mainly on problems concerning contemporary music¹⁸ and music instruction¹⁹; on notices about operatic and concert activities; of premières of new works performed in Italy and abroad, with reports from correspondents in Milan, Rome, Naples, Genoa, Florence, Paris, and Venice (its contemporary music festival). A new rubric is also introduced in 1936 – "Musica incisa" [Recorded music] – which contains reviews of recordings, including jazz, which for the most part are signed by either Rognoni or Bocca. Another new rubric – "Nuove incisioni" [New Recordings]– lists the principal new recordings.

From 1946 to 1955 the periodical maintains the traditional structure and its well-known musicological orientation. Among the scholars who contribute historical essays are Robert Aloys Mooser (1876-1969), Sebastiano Luciani (1884-1950), Benvenuto Disertori (1887-1969), Nino Pirrotta (1908-1998), Remo Giazotto (1910-1998), and Claudio

¹⁴ Ettore Desderi, "Le tendenze attuali della musica," RMI, XXXV, 2 (1928): 244-62; XXXV, 4 (1928): 588-601; XXXVI, 1 (1929): 100-16; XXXVI, 3 (1929): 575-93; XXXVII, 2 (1930): 255-76; XXXVIII, 2 (1931): 247-77; and "L'originalità," RMI, XXXVIII, 1 (1931): 52-77.

¹⁵ La Direzione, "Ripresa," RMI, XL, 1 (1936): 1-2.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Antonio Banfi, "A proposito di un'estetica musicale," RMI XL, 3 (1935): 528-33.

¹⁸ See for example Alfredo Casella's article "Problemi della musica contemporanea in Italia," RMI, XLI, 3 (1937): 460-69.

¹⁹ Notably the proposal to introduce the teaching of music in Italian schools at all levels; see Edoardo Roggeri, "Musica pedagogica e musica rivelatrice (Un po' di esperienza di concerti scolastici)," RMI, XL, 2 (1936): 322-25.

Sartori (1913-1994). Essays of music criticism are assigned mainly to Desderi, Guglielmo Barblan (1906-1978) in 1946-49, to Della Corte in 1951, and to Luciano Tomelleri (1913) in 1953.

During the brief Roman period (1954-1955), when Luigi Ronga (1901-1983) assumed RMI's direction, the periodical's typographical design changes, a new rubric, "Le ricerche d'archivio," [Archival research] is introduced in the third issue of 1954, and a new presentation is adopted as follows: "I saggi" [Essays], "I ritorni" [Revivals of music of the past], "Le letture critiche" [Critical literature], "Le recensioni" [Reviews], "La vita artistica e culturale" [Artistic and cultural life], and "La rassegna della stampa" [Reviews of the press].

Three publications offer a basic index to given years of the journal's run:

- "*Rivista musicale italiana*". *Indici dei volumi I a XX (1894-1913)*, ed. L. Parigi (Turin: Bocca, 1917).
- "*Rivista musicale italiana*". *Indici dei volumi XXI a XXXV (1914-1928)*, ed. A. Salvatori and G. Concina (Turin: Bocca, 1931).
- *Indici della "Rivista musicale italiana". Annate XXXVI-LVII (1929-1955)*, ed. F. Degrada (Florence: Olschki, 1966) ("Quaderni della 'Rivista italiana di musicologia", 1).

Among the authors that signed their contributions with only initials or with a pseudonym, the following have been identified with certainty:

A. B.	Arnaldo Bonaventura
a. ban.	Antonio Banfi
A. Bon.	Alfredo Bonaccorsi
a. boni.	Angiola Maria Bonisconti
A. C., a. c.	Alberto Cametti
a. cap.	Antonio Capri
A. D. C., A. d. C., a. d. c.	Andrea Della Corte
A. E.	Abele Engelfred
A. G.	Alberto Gentili
A. U.	Alfred Untersteiner
b. b.	Bianca Becherini
b. dis.	Benvenuto Disertori
B. M.	Bruno Mugellini
B., b.	Giuseppe Bocca
Ben. Dis., ben. dis.	Benvenuto Disertori
C. J.	Carlo Jachino
c. pe.	Carlo Perinello
C. S.	Carlo Sincero
C. So., c. so.	Carlo Somigli
D. A.	Domenico Alaleona
d. de pa.	Domenico De' Paoli
E. D., e. des.	Ettore Desderi
E. de S.-A.	Ella de Schoultz-Adaiewsky
J. L.	Elisabeth Jeanette Luin
e. rogge.	Edoardo Roggeri

f. fa.	Fabio Fano
F. G.	Federico Ghisi
F. T.	Fausto Torrefranca
f. va.	Francesco Vatielli
g. a.	Guido Agosti
G. B., g. b.	Giuseppe Bocca
G. Bar., g. bar.	Guglielmo Barblan
G. C., g. c.	Gaetano Cesari
G. F. M.	Gian Francesco Malipiero
G. F., g. f., g. fa.	Giulio Fara
g. m. g.	Guido Maggiorino Gatti
G. M.	Gino Monaldi
G. Pan., g. pan.	Guido Pannain
G. T.	Giovanni Tebaldini
Gi. Ro., G. R.	Gino Roncaglia
I. P.	Ildebrando Pizzetti
il discolo	Giuseppe Bocca
J. C.	Jules Combarieu
J. P. G.	Jacques-Gabriel Prod'homme
l. c.	Louis Cortese
L. de la L.	Lionel de La Laurencie
L. R.	Luigi Ronga
l. roc.	Lodovico Rocca
l. rogn.	Luigi Rognoni
L. T.	Luigi Torchi
Luc. Tom., luc. tom.	Luciano Tomelleri
Luigi Pagano, l. p.	Romualdo Giani
M. M., m. m.	Massimo Mila
M. P.	Mario Pilo
N. Pirr.	Nino Pirrotta
N. T.	Nicola Tabanelli
nic. costar.	Nicola Costarelli
O. C.	Oscar Chilesotti
o. t., o. ti.	Ottavio Tiby
R. G.	Romualdo Giani
R. L., r. l., R. Lun., r. lun.	Renato Lunelli
T. G.	Giovanni Tebaldini
T. W.	Taddeo Wiel
u. s., u. ses.	Ugo Sesini
V. F.	Vito Fedeli
v. m.	Virgilio Mortari
V. R.	Vittorio Ricci

The present publication was based on the collection of the periodical in the Biblioteca del Conservatorio di musica "G. Rossini", Pesaro. A copy of the missing 1955 issues was supplied by the RIPM International Center, Baltimore.